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December 2009 Newsletter

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# MILLWOOD PRESS

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## Advent a Time for Waiting

By Rev. Craig Goodwin, Pastor

I did my best but I literally couldn't keep Christmas boxed up until the first Sunday in Advent. Last night the girls insisted on getting out what they called "those characters", otherwise known as the Nativity. Before I could explain that we weren't decorating for Christmas until after Thanksgiving, I heard the boxes tipping over and the tissue paper rustling. "Dad, where are those characters? You know, the camel and stuff."

Part of the reason I want them to wait is that our Millwood Presbyterian community is doing something special this year with our nativities. Each Sunday we'll reflect on the Nativity scene, looking at the events of Jesus' birth from the perspective of the various folks that gathered around the manger.

Along with inviting you to worship and sing and pray together this Advent I want to invite you into a shared ritual, you could even call it a family or household liturgy. Instead of putting out all the figures of the Nativity, we're going to get everything set up and each week add the featured character from that Sunday's worship. For example, on Sunday, November 29, the first Sunday of Advent, we'll look at Mary and her experience around the manger. That Sunday afternoon, I encourage all of us to gather with the members of our household or, if you live alone, for a time of personal devotion, and introduce Mary to the nativity scene, read the scripture passage related to her experience around Jesus' birth and say a prayer. That's all there is too it.

As I've already discovered, the hardest part of this whole arrangement is waiting to put them all out. In the Goodwin house we've got more than one nativity so we'll let the kids put out all the

characters in one of them but reserve one for our weekly time of reading and prayer. I don't want to take away all the tension of waiting though. Waiting is actually the central theme of the season of Advent. We're called to live in the anticipation of God's salvation coming into the world.



For most of us in North America waiting is not our greatest strength. We live in a culture that celebrates immediacy and works hard to limit waiting. But these aren't the rhythms of God's people as we come to know them in the Bible.

I'm reminded of the way missionary kid Greg Mortenson, author of *Three Cups of Tea*, describes the indigenous Pakistanis he works with; "...waiting was as much a part of their makeup as breathing...Patience was their greatest skill."

That is an apt description of the people I encounter in the Bible. It is part of the character God seeks to build in us today. There is a reason Paul starts his poem with "Love is patient," and there is a reason that when God shows up after millennia of waiting, it's in a small town in a manger in the person of a baby who needs years to grow and mature into the work that awaited him.

I look forward to sharing this season with you. Here's the schedule of nativity characters and look for a study guide on the first Sunday of Advent; Dec. 6 - Joseph's, Dec. 13 - Shepherd's and Animals, Dec. 20 - Angels, Dec. 24 - Jesus, Dec. 27 - Caesar, and Jan. 3 - The Magi's Perspective.

## Advent and Christmas Schedule of Events

### December 4, Friday

Christmas tree lighting at the Inland Empire Paper Mill with Santa and Singing at 6 pm

### December 6, Sunday

Northwest Blood Center Blood Drive, 9 am to 1 pm in the Church Parking Lot

### December 13, Sunday

9:30 am One Unified Worship Service featuring Children's Program  
10:45 am Christmas Tea in the Fellowship Hall

### December 20, Sunday

9:30 am and 11:00 am Worship - Christmas Joy Offering will be received at both services

### December 24, Thursday

5:30 pm Christmas Eve Family Candlelight Service  
7:00 pm Bell Choir Concert  
7:30 pm Christmas Eve Traditional Candlelight Service

### December 27, Sunday

9:30 am One Unified Worship Service

## Youth News

By Brandon Comella

The middle school retreat is officially over and the high school retreat is almost here. Once again, Riverview Bible Camp did a great job in hosting many Presbyterian Churches from Spokane and the surrounding cities with quite a few middle school students for the annual winter retreat. Things were cold as usual up there, but that never seems to stop the youth from having an amazing weekend. We learned lots of new songs, as well as doing many activities that gave us a cool look at who Jesus is and how personally close He is supposed to be in our daily lives.

We are now looking forward to taking some high school students to our winter retreat up at Camp Spalding. We are joining about seven other youth groups around the Presbytery for this fun-filled weekend. The high schoolers that are going range from students who have had a close relationship with God, as well as some who are very new to their faith. Please pray for us while we are on this retreat. Pray that the youth can have a great time and grow closer and closer to Jesus Christ.

If you have any questions about the youth ministry or would like to get involved in any way, please feel free to contact me at: [Brandon@millwoodpc.org](mailto:Brandon@millwoodpc.org) or 481-5720.

### Deacon Food Bank

The Food Bank assists those in need in our church and in our community. This ministry is available every time the doors are open here at MCPC. Because of your donations, we have been able to help feed many over the years from the shut in to the new born. The commodities for December are cranberries, olives and Pork – N – Beans. Thank you again for giving to the Deacon Food Bank.

## Children's Ministry

By Kim McGiveran

It's my favorite time of year – practicing for the children's Christmas Program! I love working together with the talented team of mothers as we rehearse for our program. Matty Moore and Heather Schultz have been choreographers and choir directors as they teach our children the lyrics and movements to our songs. Shannon Sweatman, Beth Aaron, Cindy Ames, Sadie Mitchell, and Rebecca Novak have been helping to direct our young actors with their speaking parts. Thank you all so very much ladies!

Please make a note that December 13 at 9:30 am, our children will perform our *Special Delivery* Christmas Program. Rachele Ventura will accompany our children's choir on the piano. We hope you enjoy our performance!

In January we will be starting new workshop rotations in our elementary classes. *We Believe* (9:30 am) will begin the unit on David, and the *Lighthouse* (11 am) will begin the unit on Jonah.

I am very pleased to announce that the new Christian Education Supply Room is now completed! All supplies are moved out of the Lower Conference Room and into our new room (by the elevator). Additional storage has been made in my office, as well as in the classrooms. I will be more than happy to show teachers and volunteers where all supplies are now kept.

Our church has a very dedicated team of painters who have been working hard painting the hallways, classrooms, and staff offices in the Christian Education wing. They have been putting in countless volunteer hours into this project. Thank you so much Carolyn and Bob Sheppard, Becky Anderson, Frank Nearing, and Allen Vinther. Our church is very blessed to have them in our congregation!

## MCPC to have Monthly Food Bank Distribution

On November 13 we held out second food distribution in partnership with 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvest and their mobile food bank. 22 volunteers helped distribute 7,921 pounds of fresh food to 189 households. In all, 692 household members were served.



The response has been so positive to these two events, we have reached an agreement with 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvest to hold a regular monthly distribution on the second Fridays of each month from 12 pm to 2 pm in the church parking lot. We're looking for area businesses and organizations to sponsor each distribution with a \$600 donation to 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvest Food Bank. Contact the church office if you have any leads on potential sponsors.

Our next distribution will be on December 11, from noon to 2 pm. There will be free produce and perishable products for low income families and those in need of food assistance. No appointment or documentation is necessary to participate. You must be present in order to receive food. We will be distributing food rain or shine! Please bring a box to take your food items home in. Don't forget to tell friends and neighbors you know who may be in need.

For more information or to volunteer, please call Randy Schacht, 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvest Representative at: 252-6247 or Pastor Craig at: 924-2350.

## Christmas Food Baskets

We distributed 55 Thanksgiving Food baskets this year. Special thanks to Hutton Settlement for helping. The Deacons have begun gathering food items for Christmas baskets. Please help us to help others in need by donating holiday food items to our pantry as Christmas sales days approach. Please stock up on canned goods such as sweet potatoes, cranberries, evaporated milk, pumpkin pie mix, packaged stuffing mix, olives, and pre-formed graham or vanilla wafer pie shells. Also watch for those turkey bargains. We will need about 40 turkeys. Please take your food donations as well as any names of families that need a basket to the Church no later than Sunday December 18. During the weekday, your donations can be placed in the Deacon Food Bank box located in the Entryway or taken to the Church Office.

## Years to Seconds

By Gary Sardam, Endowment Trust Treasurer

**"The gift that keeps on giving."**

A friend from Reardan, WA, gave me this story from the *Huckleberry Press*, June 4 – 10, 2009 issue, Published in Fruitland, WA. Ruth V. from Tum Tum writes:

*Be Careful What You Ask For*

Smith climbs to the top of Mt. Sinai to be close enough to talk to, GOD. Looking up, he asks the Lord, "GOD, what does a million years mean to you?" The Lord replies, "A minute." Smith asks, "And what does a million dollars mean to you?" The Lord replies, "A penny." Smith asks, "Can I have a Penny?" The Lord replies, "In a Minute!"

How fortunate that the Lord, moved time for the MCPC Endowment Trust, and years were turned to seconds.

**When I leave this world . . .  
Will I have made a difference?**

## Christmas Trees for Latin America

It had been our tradition for many years to invite the congregation to purchase Poinsettias in honor of, or in memory of someone, with the names of the honored and remembered listed in the Christmas Eve bulletins. The Poinsettias were displayed in the Sanctuary during the season of Advent and taken home on Christmas Eve by the people who purchased them. Two years ago we started a new tradition that honors folks in our Christmas Eve bulletins and helps people in need. Instead of paying \$10 for a short lived poinsettia we invited the congregation to buy 10 trees to be planted in deforested regions of Latin America through a Christian mission agency. So far over 1,300 trees have been planted as part of this new tradition. And the trees that were planted two years ago when we started are now a few feet tall.

We invite you this year to continue the tradition and make a \$10 donation in honor of or in memory of someone. We will list the names of those honored and remembered in the Christmas Eve bulletins.

Checks should be made out to Millwood Community Presbyterian Church, marked "Christmas Trees". The deadline for getting names in the Christmas Eve bulletin is Sunday, December 21.

## Christmas Tree Lighting December 4

You are cordially invited Friday, December 4, at 6 pm to the Millwood Community Christmas tree lighting and refreshments at the Inland Empire Paper Mill.



## Christmas Tea Dec. 13

December 13, we are combining our morning worship services to one service at 9:30 am so that we can all gather together for the Christmas Tea at 10:45 am in the Fellowship Hall.

Join us after the 9:30 am worship service in the Fellowship Hall around the piano for a good-old-fashioned sing-a-long or spend some time chatting with friends. We promise to provide plenty of holiday music, food, fellowship and cheer. We once again will have many beautiful Christmas quilts on display. Bring your families, neighbors and friends. This is for everyone. To volunteer please contact Cindy Ames at: 892-4051.

## Buying a Christmas Tree?

Are you going to buy a Christmas tree this year? Please consider making your purchase at the Hutton Settlement Christmas Tree Farm. Many of the residents at Hutton are active attendees here, at MCPC, and Young Life. Your purchase of a Christmas tree directly supports them.

The Hutton Settlement provides homes for displaced children. One of the programs their residents participate in is the Christmas tree farm. Through this program, residents are learning about agriculture, customer service, and business skills.

Friday November 27, 12-4 pm  
Saturday November 28, 12-4 pm  
Sunday, November 29: 10 am - 6pm,  
Week days after November 30, 2-7 pm  
Weekends after N30, 10 am-6 pm

They will continue until they sell out of trees. The Hutton Settlement is at: 9907 E. Wellesley. Offerings this year are: Grand Fir, Nobel Fir, and Douglass Fir. They also have live potted Colorado blue spruce trees, which are 20 inches tall.

## Women's Eat & Greet

The Women's Eat & Greet will not meet in December but will resume on the third Friday in January. Join us at The Crossing Youth Center, January 15, at 6 pm for Women's Eat & Greet. This is a great time of food and fellowship also a great opportunity to get to know each other beyond Sunday mornings. Please bring a main dish or salad to share. Dessert will be provided. Hope you can come!!! Please call Cindy Ames at: 892-4051 to R.S.V.P. or for questions.

## Presbytery Scholarship Offered by Presbyterian Women

This scholarship is for Presbyterian students seeking a college education at a 4-year accredited college in the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest. Any American or foreign-born student who is a member of a Presbyterian Church in the Presbytery of the Inland Northwest, has a 3.0 GPA or better, has completed 2 years of college, and is entering his/her junior or senior year of college or is in graduate school. The application must be completed in full and submitted by March 1 of each year. Please contact the Presbytery offices to get an application at: 924-4148.

## Young Lives By Shauna Edwards

During the month of November, we held a Thanksgiving themed club... we had a turkey dinner, an apple pie making station, gobble gobble bibs and shirts, and also made scrapbook "Thank you" cards to the ladies who donated so many diapers & wipes at our "Pampered" spa day! Meghan Baker spoke at club and we were excited to have her. She totally related to where the girls were coming from! She was a teen mom and had an amazing story to tell about her journey to Christ and her life now with her four girls and awesome husband Loren.

Please call me 326-2859 if you are interested in volunteering. Thanks for all you do!

## Presbyterian Women

The PW meeting December 3 will have a Christmas theme with carols, poetry, special music, and a guest speaker from Liberty Park Child Development Center.

Kristi Yoemans is coming to accept our gift-wrapped books for the children at LPCDC. She will bring us up to date on this historic Presbyterian ministry to low-income families and answer our questions about the Center.

All members of the church are invited to participate in this Christmas project of providing a special book to each of the 65 children attending LPCDC. A gift tag with To:\_\_\_\_\_, From: Your name, and the name of the book (on the back of the tag) will help the staff match gift to child. They will be handed out by Santa at a Christmas party on December 7. Any extra books will supplement the Center's library.

Women of Millwood and friends are warmly invited to this special day which starts at 10 am with a Bible study on Joshua, "The Land of Promise, or the Promised Land?" led by Pastor Craig Goodwin. The Bible Study will be followed by a short business meeting, the Christmas program at 11:15 am, and lunch served by the Martha/Ruth Circle at 12 pm.

## Blood Drive December 6

December is usually a rough month for the Northwest Blood Center. Because the Northwest Blood Center anticipates a shortage this year, the Deacons are coordinating a blood drive here, at the Church, Sunday, December 6, from 9 am to 1 pm. Please sign up in the Entryway if you would like to be a donor.



## Liberty Park Child Development Center Presents Dinner By Candlelight

*Featuring Whitworth University Choir*

*Friday, December 11, 2009 at 6:00 pm*

Once again you are invited to Liberty Park Child Development Center's annual "Dinner by Candlelight...a dinner that makes a difference" which will be held at First Presbyterian Church, Spokane, 318 S. Cedar.

The concert is a wonderful way to enjoy the Advent Season. Come early for a festive and delicious dinner and avoid the rush for parking and seating.

Proceeds from the dinner will benefit Liberty Park Child Development Center's ministry to children and families. Call now to reserve your places at both the dinner and the concert.

For dinner reservations: Call Marianne Frase 466-2555. The cost is \$25.00 per person. (Tables for eight are available by reservation.)

For Concert tickets: Call Dick Barney 467-9397 to purchase tickets or at: [www.whitworth.edu/music/tickets](http://www.whitworth.edu/music/tickets). Tickets go on sale early November and you are encouraged to order early. The cost of the choir tickets is \$18.00, discount for seniors and students \$15.00.

Thank you for supporting the ministry of the Center!

## Navigators Meeting

December 18

The annual Navigator Christmas Luncheon will be Friday, December 18. The program will begin at 12 pm in our Fellowship Hall. Do you want to know what the program is? We can't tell you because it is a surprise! You will just have to come to find out and experience a festive and joyous holiday room filled with warm relaxing fellowship and entertainment you are sure to enjoy. The always delicious Christmas potluck lunch will await you. We are asking for a donation of \$5.00 per person.

## Singles Group Gathering

The singles Group has decided not to meet December 13. Instead, please join us in the Fellowship Hall after the church service December 13, for the Christmas Tea.

## MCPC Church Position Open

We are accepting applications for the position of treasurer in the church. Job descriptions and applications for for this 15 hour a week job are available in the Church Office.



*Whitworth University Choir Presents  
"Ye Shall Have a Song", December 11, 6 pm, at  
First Presbyterian, Spokane.*

## Missions Monthly Update

By Bronwyn Worthington

Have you considered **Alternative Giving** this Christmas? Check the information table in the Narthex for gift catalogs from your favorite charitable organizations such as Hefer International and World Vision. You'll be amazed at how little is needed to provide others in third world countries with a means of caring for themselves and their families.

**Operation Christmas Child** was a great success. With help from the children who attended Vacation Bible School, 70 boxes have been collected. What a blessing it will be to children around the world to receive! Join with those from Samaritan's Purse who are praying that the Lord will send the boxes to children needing a physical and spiritual touch from God.

The union **Gospel Mission Barrel** has been filled! Thank you for sharing with those in our area that have no home of their own.

The Deacons gave 50 families Thanksgiving baskets this year. They will be doing **Christmas baskets** soon so the Deacon Food Bank will need to be refilled. The Deacon Food Bank continues to stay open during the holidays to serve those in need in the neighborhood and the church during the holidays in addition to giving Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets.

Remember the **Christmas Joy Offering** is to be received during December. More information about where these funds are used will be available in the Sunday Bulletin during the month of December, leading up to the collection on December 20.

January will once again be **Baby Food Month**. Please bring you baby food to church any Sunday during the month of January a

and place it in the Baby Gift Boxes in the Narthex. It will all be gathered up and sent to the Walt Shields Baby Care Program at the Mission Avenue Crisis Center. Thank you again for your generous support of this program where we can all help a baby grow strong and healthy.

**Interfaith Hospitality** gives us the chance to open our hearts to the homeless in our area during January 3-10, 2009. Please consider how you might be of help in this important MPCC ministry.

## Year End Giving

Take advantage of the charitable tax deduction for gifts made before December 31. Evaluate the benefit of donating appreciated assets versus cash. Giving appreciated assets allows you to avoid the capital gains tax and you may claim the fair market value as your contribution.

Allow enough time to complete your charitable gift transaction. The time required will vary with the type of asset to be donated and the gift option you choose. Consider the variety of gift options available to you, such as a charitable gift annuity or a charitable trust, which would also provide you with income. Please contact the Church Office with any questions about year end giving.

All donations must be at the church or postmarked by December 31 to count toward your 2009 giving record. Thank you for your generous support of the ministries at Millwood Community Presbyterian Church.