

Crosscurrents

December 2011/January 2012



Pebble Hill Presbyterian Church | 5299 Jamesville Road | DeWitt, NY | 13214 | 315.446.0960 | www.phpchurch.org

To the Pebble Hill Congregation...



We thank you for all the wonderful work you do,
and for your kindness and support over this past year.

We wish you all a Blessed Christmas season,
and that the peace of God will dwell with you richly in the coming year.

From the Pebble Hill Church Staff,

Pastor Pete, Bette, Rebecca, Bob, Cindy, Kathy, Nancy, Pat, Carla

The Church at Worship December/January

Worship at 9:30 on Sunday mornings except for Christmas Day and New Year's Day at 11 a.m.

December 4

2nd Sunday of Advent

Mark 1:1-8

"The Beginning of the Gospel"

Sacrament of Communion

December 11

3rd Sunday of Advent

Advent Play, *Child of God*

Advent Festival follows

Wed, December 14

Advent Taize Vespers – With all the hustle and bustle of our preparations for Christmas it is good to have a chance to slow down, quiet our spirits, and come together to share in silence, prayer, song and candlelight. You are invited to come to Pebble Hill on Wednesday, December 14 at 7:00 p.m. for a service of worship in the Taize tradition. With the sanctuary bathed in candlelight, we will gather to pray together, observe times of silence, and sing the beautiful, simple chants of the Taize community. Taize worship is particularly appropriate for the Advent season, as we prepare our hearts to receive God anew through the humble birth of the Christ child.

December 18

4th Sunday of Advent

Luke 1:26-38

"Let it Be"

Receive Christmas Joy Offering

December 24 – Christmas Eve

5:30 p.m. Family Service

11:00 p.m. Service of Lessons and Carols

December 25 – Christmas Day

11:00 a.m. Informal Service of Stories and Carols

January 1

First Sunday after Christmas –
Worship at 11:00

January 8

Celebration of Epiphany

Epiphany Play, *Return of the Magi*

Sacrament of Communion

5:00 p.m. *Epiphany Jazz Vespers*

January 15

2nd Sunday after Epiphany

John 1:43-51

"How Does He Know Us?"

January 22

3rd Sunday after Epiphany

Psalms 62

"For God alone . . ."

January 29

4th Sunday after Epiphany

Mark 1:21-28

"The Holy One of God"

November Session Notes

Don Pair reported on the status of our "Raise the Roof" project. There is good news! See his report below:

Sanctuary roofing project

Last Friday we had a consulting engineer do a pull-test on the cement panels that make up the base of the sanctuary roofing system. This test was done to assure all involved that the cement panels were in good condition. The results were very positive. The roofing company we have selected will now submit an updated

quotation. If acceptable, we will ask Session for approval to sign a contract and construction would start in the Spring.

Fund-raising is coming along very well and we anticipate reaching our target. The response has been terrific and the committee would like to thank everyone.

– Don Pair

Commitment Sunday results were reported (see page 3).

The Session has been discussing the book "Governance and Ministry" over the last several months, and a winter leadership retreat is being planned to determine the direction of changes in our governance structure at Pebble Hill. Such changes will seek to:

1. Have a unified structure for making governance decisions that articulates our mission and vision, evaluates program, and ensures the responsible use of resources;
2. Have a unified structure for making operational decisions that delegates authority and requires accountability;
3. Establish and maintain a creative, open atmosphere for ministry.

Another discussion focused on categories of church membership. This discussion is spurred by the New Form of Government in the Book of Order for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), which stipulates that there is no longer the category of "inactive membership." This has provided the Session with the opportunity to reflect together on the meaning of membership – a good discussion to be having. Stay tuned!

A Successful Commitment Sunday – “Pledge to Growth”

The preliminary results of our Commitment Sunday stewardship program were shared with the congregation at the Commitment Sunday luncheon following worship on November 13. At this point we estimate that our total anticipated income for 2012 will be \$321,962, a \$4,000 increase over 2011 income, an increase of 1.34%. Given that we’ve had a brief but successful campaign for a much needed roof repair already this fall, not to mention the general state of the economy, this is an excellent result. Final figures will be known in the next few weeks, and will be used for our budget planning and preparation. The 2012 church budget will be presented at our annual congregational meeting on February 5.

Thanks very much to John Fayos and Deedee Elleman for serving as this year’s Commitment Sunday campaign co-chairs, to Kristin Rubino (and Bella) for coordinating the luncheon, and to our bookkeeper, Cindy Wakeman, who puts in lots of extra hours at this time of year! The congregation has made a “pledge to growth,” and we will continue to grow as we commit ourselves to Christ and his church by sharing our love, our talents and our gifts.

Congratulations LarScenia!

LarScenia Thomas, formerly our Ministry Intern and Bible study leader for the last three years, was received as a Candidate for Ordained Ministry by the Presbytery of Cayuga-Syracuse on November 19 at their meeting in Fulton. Several of her Ephesians Fellowship Bible Study community from Pebble Hill were with her for this occasion. At the meeting LarScenia shared her statement of faith and answered questions about her understanding of God’s call in her life. We are blessed to be a part of LarScenia’s journey of faith and call to ministry, and pray God’s blessings as God continues to lead her and she responds with deep commitment.

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe: Join Pebble Hill at Syracuse Stage – Tuesday, December 27, 2 PM



London. The war is on and the bombs are falling. Four children – Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy – flee the perils of the Blitz to the safety of the countryside. In an old wardrobe they discover a portal to the land of Narnia, where a fearsome White Witch holds the inhabitants spellbound in a winter lasting 100 years. There the children enter a deadly struggle, joining with the great lion, Aslan, to battle the White Witch and her army. Commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company and rarely produced State-side, this thrilling musical adaptation of C.S. Lewis’ inspiring tale delivers excitement for the whole family. Recommended for ages 6 and up.

We have reserved a block of “A” tickets for the 2:00 matinee on Tuesday, December 27th. Discounted ticket prices will be \$25 for adults and seniors and \$15 for children 18 and under. Reservations and payment are requested by Tuesday, December 13th. Checks should be made payable to Syracuse Stage and given to Nancy Byrne.

For more information, contact Nancy Byrne at 682-7636, or nancyhippsbyrne@gmail.com.

Deacons Christmas Stocking Project – Stockings due by December 13



The annual Deacon Christmas Stocking Project is underway. This year the Deacons are providing stockings filled with necessities and toys for children in the pre-K program at Dr. Weeks School. Our need this year is for 36 stockings. Stockings can be sewn or purchased. There will be stocking patterns and a list of gift suggestions near the display board in the atrium.

Items needed include hats, mittens, socks, underpants/panties (to fit ages 3, 4, or 5); small stuffed animals (beanie-baby size); small toys; stickers (non seasonal); hair accessories; pencils, crayons, markers; little pads of paper; toothbrushes and toothpaste; small, easy-to-read books; wrapped candy. Please remember that it's

important for all items to be sized to fit into a stocking. Items may be left in the bin by the display board. The deacons will fill the stockings. Stockings and unwrapped fillers will be picked up on December 13, by the pre-K teacher. Thank you all for supporting this worthwhile project, and have a wonderful holiday season! **Questions?** Contact Deacon Jinny Caswell at 637-3967.

From the Newlyweds

To our Pebble Hill Family,

Your presence at our wedding on 9/3/11, as well as your care and support these past several years continue to bless us. We love you.

Newlyweds forever — *Jim and Pat*

Thanks, Kathy!

Our sincere thanks to Kathy Monaco who has been serving as editor for Crosscurrents and as our webmaster for the last several years. Kathy is needing to free up some time for some personal and family matters, and completes her service in these capacities with this issue. She has done a wonderful job in creating a very attractive on-line newsletter, as well as designing our Pebble Hill website. We have been blessed by her sharing her gifts with the Pebble Hill community. Thank you, Kathy, and God bless. —*Pastor Pete*

Editor's Note: To Pastor Pete and My Dear Pebble Hill Friends — Thank you so much for your kind words, Pete. It has been my joy and privilege to serve as Crosscurrents editor and webmaster these past years, and to be a part of Pebble Hill's communications efforts. This has been a labor of love for me, and I am most grateful for the confidence and trust you placed in me. I am passing the Crosscurrents baton back to the very capable hands of Carla Kinney. Thanks so much, Carla and Pat, for all your help and for keeping me in stitches with your hilarious emails!

Though I feel a twinge of sadness as I put the finishing touches on my last Crosscurrents issue, I am reminded of the following verse from Ecclesiastes 3:1: "*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven.*"

With much love and great thanks to all,
Kathy

Advent Festival

Join us on December 11th for an Advent Festival. During morning worship at 9:30, enjoy “Child of God,” a Christmas play by Laura and Robert Keeley, presented by the children and youth of the church.

This play takes place during a Christmas program as the director explains that this year’s performance is based on Matthew 1. One of the participants questions the wisdom of a program based on the begats. As the passage is read, the stories of Judah and Joseph, Josiah, and Jesus’ birth are told. Finally, the group reflects on how we, too, are children of God.

Continue the celebration at 10:45 with our traditional holiday crafting event followed by lunch. Can you help with this event?

Parents, please contact Rebecca Chaffee to include your children and teens in the play.

Directors, costumers, and assistants, please contact Rebecca Chaffee.

Crafters, cooks, and helpers, please contact Jean Soper. We need casseroles, salads, and desserts.

Rebecca Chaffee: kidsphpc@twcny.rr.com or 317-6140. Jean Soper: jsoper@twcny.rr.com or 446-7588.

Parents Night Out

Parents, get your Christmas shopping done while your kids enjoy snacks, games, crafts, and play practice at church. Friday night, December 9th, from 6:00 to 9:00. Nursery care is available, as well as activities for kids who are not involved in play practice. RSVP to Rebecca at kidsphpc@twcny.rr.com to reserve place for your children. Donations for this service will go towards replenishing our costume closet!

Tree Trimming

Join us on Saturday, December 3rd, from 1:00 to 3:00 for tree trimming. We’ll have snacks and crafts, and those involved in the Advent play will have a chance to rehearse.

Helpers Needed

Can you help with one of the special Advent and Christmas events? RSVP to Rebecca Chaffee at kidsphpc@twcny.rr.com. Here’s a list of projects you might sign up for:

- Coordinate Tree Trimming on Saturday, Dec 3 from 1:00-3:00
- Tree untrimming during the week of January 2-5
- Plan and create new costumes and accessories for the Advent play and Christmas Eve pageant
- Supervise kids for Parents Night Out on Friday, Dec. 9 from 6:00-9:00
- Direct Luminaria preparation on Wednesday, Dec. 21 from 6:00-7:30
- Set out and light Luminaria on Christmas Eve from 4:30-5:00, or from 10:00-10:30
- Coordinate Christmas Eve Family Party at 6:45 on the 24th
- Provide digital photographs or video recording for the Advent Festival or Christmas Eve Family service
- Coordinate Christmas Caroling at the Forum and in the neighborhood Sunday, December 18th
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Nursery Schedule

Please contact Rebecca Chaffee to make a change to the Nursery worker schedule.

Date	Caregivers (2)	Bible Story
12/4/11	Margaret Jacob Alison Bristol	Jesus is Born!: The Story of Christmas Song: Away in a Manger
12/11/11	Margaret Jacob Ed Bogucz	Good News!: The Story of the Shepherds Song: Away in a Manger
12/18/11	Margaret Jacob Emily Frazee	An Amazing Star!: The Story of the Wise Men; Song: Away in a Manger
12/25/11	No Nursery	No Nursery: Fisher Price Nativity and story books in Lounge
1/1/12	No Nursery	No Nursery: Fisher Price Nativity and story books in Lounge
1/8/12	Dixie Blackley Emily Frazee	The Greatest Gift: The Story of Jesus and the Woman at the Well
1/15/12	Margaret Jacob Shirley Weimar	Follow Me!: The Story of Jesus and His Twelve Helpers
1/22/12	Margaret Jacob Ed Bogucz	A Father's Wish: The Story of Jesus and a Little Boy; Song: Jesus, You Help
1/29/12	Margaret Jacob Alison Bristol	Get Up and Walk!: The Story of Jesus and a Man Who Couldn't Walk
2/5/12	Emily Steele Ed Bogucz	A Scary Storm: The Story of Jesus and a Stormy Sea
2/12/12	Margaret Jacob Emily Frazee	A Little Lunch: The Story of Jesus and a Hungry Crowd
2/19/12	Margaret Jacob Paige Miller	Thank You, Jesus!: The Story of Jesus and One Thankful Man
2/26/12	Margaret Jacob Shirley Weimar	A Wonderful Sight!: The Story of Jesus and a Man Who Couldn't See

Children and Youth Music

We have plans for a youth orchestra, hand chimes choir, choir, and praise band, as well as opportunities for young people to work on sacred solos and ensembles for worship. I'm looking for musicians interested in working with groups of kids and teens, as well as a time when families are free to schedule music rehearsals. Times available include Wednesday evening from 6:30-7:30, Friday night, or Sunday afternoon. If you are interested in growing our youth music program, please call or email me. Rebecca Chaffee kidsphpc@twcny.rr.com, cell: 317-6140.

Christmas Eve Family Service Rehearsal Schedule

12/18 11:00-12:00 Christmas Eve service practice
12/21 6:00-7:30 Christmas Eve service Final Run through in costume
Luminaria Preparation
12/24 5:30-6:30 Christmas Eve Family Service

Five Young People Receive Bibles

Congratulations to the young people who received Bibles on Reformation Sunday:

Sarah Dingel (2nd), Brennan Gruppe (2nd), Paul Kosciwicz(3rd), Lear Wang (5th), Danford Brownell (7th)

Christmas Eve Family Party

Join us in the Forum on Christmas Eve following the Family Service for a supper of appetizers and desserts! Last year we had a mixed group of families, couples, and singles who joined together for a time of fellowship and food at 6:45. RSVP to Rebecca Chaffee if you plan to attend, how many of your friends and family you'll bring, and what food or drink you'll bring. I also need a volunteer to coordinate this event.

Children's Worship

There will be no separate Children's Worship on Dec 11 for the Advent play, and on Dec 25, Jan 1, and Jan 8. On Dec 25 and Jan 1 there will be coloring pages, picture books, and our Fisher Price nativity in the Lounge that families of young children may take advantage of. Children remain in worship on January 8th for the special Epiphany Communion worship including the drama "Return of the Magi."

Education for All Ages

Instead of our usual Sunday morning 11:00 – 12:00 classes, children and youth are combined during Advent to work on the Advent play and Christmas Eve family service. There are craft activities for all ages available. Regular 11:00 classes resume for all ages on Sunday, January 8th.

Halloween Party a Hit!



Halloween Party a Hit!



Holiday Brass & Bells at United Church of Fayetteville

To benefit St. Joseph's School in Haiti & Food Pantry

At 3:00 on Sunday afternoon, December 11, 2011, the Syracuse University Brass Ensemble, under the direction of Dr. James Spencer and the UCF Handbell Choir, conducted by Director of Music Ministries, Hugh Jones, will play a variety of seasonal, classical and popular selections. Included will be Leroy Anderson's *Sleigh Ride*, Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*, Kern's *Christmas Variations*, Rossini's *Barber of Seville* and Stephenson's *Bells Heard Round the World*, among other pieces. A carol sing-along with organ and brass will end the concert. A reception will follow. Click here for event flyer: <http://www.theucf.org/pdf/brassbells2011.pdf>

The award-winning SU Brass Ensemble is composed of thirty-five members of the Syracuse University and the S.U.N.Y. Upstate Medical University faculty, staff and accomplished musicians from surrounding communities. The ensemble is a year round organization founded in 1987 as part of the SU College of Arts and Sciences and has its home at Hendricks Chapel. It presents approximately twenty performances yearly including recitals on the SU Campus and in surrounding communities. The repertoire includes music from all major musical periods and the ensemble often contributes its time to support various mission endeavors. (www.subrass.com)

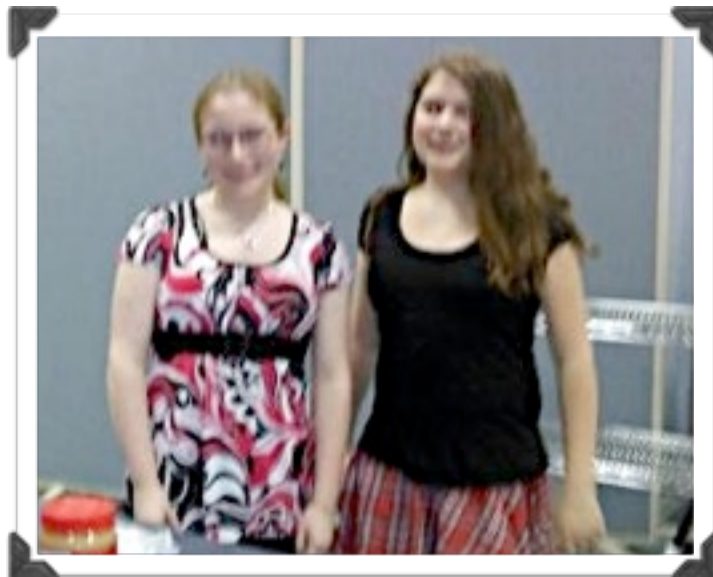
Concert guests are encouraged to bring non-perishable food items for the F-M Community Outreach and a free-will offering will be collected at the concert to help St. Joseph's School in Dubré, Haiti. Funds will be donated to update a water system and construct equipment for a playground area cleared in 2010. St. Joseph's is an elementary school supported by members of the Central New York Alliance for Haiti. This group is made up of individuals, diverse faith communities, and other organizations united in partnership with Haitians to help in the areas of adult and youth education, teacher training, water purification, economic development and agriculture. See Facebook for more info and photos under *CNY Alliance for Haiti* or news about the April 2011 trip at: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/59571778/haitimissionwww.scribd.com>

The Brass and Bells Concert will be held in the sanctuary of the United Church of Fayetteville, 310 East Genesee Street, Fayetteville, NY. The building is fully accessible. The UCF parking lot is located behind the church building. On street parking is also readily available. Contact 637-3186 or www.theucf.org for directions.
– *Submitted by Marilyn Cornell*



Thanksgiving Celebration with Congregation Beth Shalom

Five young people participated in the joint Children's Choir, led the flag ceremony, and shared in the mission project: Eagle Scout *Eric Sognefest*, *Allison Tuxford*, *Christine Kosciwicz*, Bear Scouts *Paul Kosciwicz* and *Conrad Chaffee*.



Advent Reflections

I grew up in a big old Tudor style manse in Westfield, N.Y. I don't remember paying much attention to the seasons of the church year, but we had our traditions.

One year my father fashioned a star out of tin and tape and parchment. It was lighted by a single bulb and attached by several extension cords to a distant outlet.

Thereafter, every year when December rolled around, out came the star at the top of the attic window, and we and the whole neighborhood knew that the journey from Advent to Epiphany had begun. – *Martha Ely*

Growing up, there was always a controversy at my house over whether the Christmas tree topper would be a star or an angel. The church my dad preached at always had an Advent dinner, followed by a craft project.

One year, we made angels out of thread cones from the factory one of the gentlemen worked at, and the body of the cone was absolutely perfect for fitting on that tall, top branch of a tree. After that year, the angel always won the controversy, until the one my dad made finally fell apart many years later. I loved that angel, as did both of my sisters, and to this day none of us ever have anything but an angel at the top of our Christmas trees. – *Carolyn Layburn*

The Greatest Gift

At Christmas, we celebrate the greatest gift we have ever been given, the gift of God's son, Jesus. Although this story did not happen during Advent or the Christmas season, it is nonetheless about the greatest gift (after the gift of Christ, of course!) that I have ever given been given.

In my church in New Jersey there was a member of the congregation who was in a state-run nursing home. Her only family was a nephew who never visited her, so the church was the only family she had. I used to visit her, and take her communion. She was unable to respond although we knew she was aware, especially when we gave her communion, by the vigorous way she would gratefully chew the communion bread.

At one visit, I remember thinking how sad it was that all her clothes were donations, thread-bare from use. She had nothing of her own except a few pictures of her wedding day. I found myself wondering when had been the last time anyone had given her a present, something just for her. She had beautiful blue eyes, so I went to the craft store, bought the softest yarn as close to the color of her eyes as I could find, and crocheted madly for a week to make her a capelet for her shoulders, to keep the chill off.

I brought it with me when I visited the next week, and told her I had a gift for her. This woman who never moved, never smiled, never responded – she sat up and reached out for it with the most joyous expression on her face that anyone in the room had ever seen. That smile, that reach, that joy is the greatest gift I have ever been given. It has been many years, but the memory still brings a lump to my throat and tears to my eyes. Beulah Edgars will never be forgotten as long as I am alive, and I thank God every day for having put her in my life. – *Carolyn Layburn*

In December, whenever I see wreaths displayed outside at the markets and garden shops, I reflect on our Christmas in Sweden, fifty years ago. Our neighbors, the Nilssons, an older retired couple and their daughter, Ingela, a young career minded daughter, lived across the hall from us in our condo complex. They had been very helpful to us, and our month old son. Except for Ingela, they spoke even less English than our attempted Swedish. In gratitude, we decided to buy them a nice Christmas wreath to hang on their door. There was one type of wreath for sale that caught our eye. Amid the usual varieties of green balsams was this beautiful wreath with the colors of darker green and purple bluish hues enhanced by lovely dark blue berries. Even the bows of this variety of wreaths looked elegant – dark rose.

We bought one and presented it to the couple the same afternoon. They were all smiles and "tak taks" (thank you). Later when Ingela came home from her office, she knocked on our door and had the wreath in her hands to give back to us. She explained that this beautiful wreath was only placed on graves. – *Linda Kaiser*

Scenes From the Kitchen... Cooking for Samaritan Center





Laughing Matters

Kids and Church

A little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Bible class. As she ran she prayed, “Dear Lord, please don’t let me be late! Dear Lord, please don’t let me be late!”

While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again. As she ran she once again began to pray, “Dear Lord, please don’t let me be late...But please don’t shove me either!”

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A Sunday school teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year olds. After explaining the commandment to *Honor thy father and thy mother*, she asked, “Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?”

Without missing a beat, one little boy answered, “Thou shall not kill.”

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