

Crosscurrents

December 2010



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

From All of Us...



Your Pebble Hill Church Staff
thanks you for your kindness and support over the past year,
and wishes you all the best in this Blessed Holiday Season.

We all join in prayer for the blessings of peace
in our hearts and in our world
in the coming year.

Peter Shidemantle, Pastor

Rebecca Chaffee, Program Director for Educational and Family Ministries

Bette Kahler, Organist/Choirmaster

LarScenia Thomas, Bible Study Leader, Candidate for Ministry

Pat Carroll and Carla Kinney, Office Administrators

Cindy Wakeman, Bookkeeper

Bob Wolff, Sexton

Nancy Byrne, Coordinator of New Member Ministries

Maralyn Coughlin, Treasurer

Kathy Monaco, Website and Crosscurrents Editor

The Church at Worship December 2010

Worship begins Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. All who are interested are invited to gather in the Conference Room at 9:20 a.m. to pray for our church and pastor as we worship together.

A Time of Promise

Through the Sundays of Advent we will mark the promises of God with the lighting of each candle of the Advent wreath, culminating with the lighting of the Christ Candle on Christmas Eve, marking the gift of Emmanuel, God with us.

December 5

2nd Sunday of Advent

“God’s Promise to Abraham”

Matthew 3:1-12

Bearing Fruits of Promise

Sacrament of Communion

December 12

3rd Sunday of Advent

“God’s Promise to Israel”

“*Promises, Promises*” presented by Pebble Hill children and youth, followed by holiday crafting & lunch

Wednesday, December 15, 7 p.m.

Blue Christmas Worship

For many people, the holiday season does not bring with it the joy and happiness that is advertised on TV or in greeting cards. This service provides a sacred space to focus not just on the light, but on the darkness into which light shines.

December 19

4th Sunday of Advent

“God’s Promises Fulfilled”

Matthew 1:18-25

“It Happened This Way”

The Pebble Hill Choir will perform John Rutter’s “What Sweeter Music.” Christmas Joy Offering

December 24, Christmas Eve

5:30 Christmas Eve Family Service

Candlelight Living Nativity Service

All children invited to take part.

11:00—Candlelight Service of Lessons

& Carols; Choir performs

“*O Magnum Mysterium*” by Lauridsen

December 26

1st Sunday after Christmas

Special Guests Dan Duggan and

Peggy Lynne will share gifts of

Christmas music and stories.

Sunday, January 2, 5:00 p.m.

Epiphany Jazz Vespers

November Session Notes

Celebrated the results of our 2010 Commitment Sunday program, “Giving to Grow, Growing to Give.” Based on the commitments made on Sunday, November 14, and other anticipated pledges and church income, we will realize a 7.44% increase in total giving next year.

Received 11 new members into the life and ministry of the church at a special meeting before worship on November 21, with the public reception in worship that day.

Receipts from the 2010 Peacemaking Offering were \$1,790. Of that amount, 25% remains with Pebble Hill for our own peacemaking programs and activities, with 75%

going for peacemaking ministries at the Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly levels.

Marilyn Cornell shared meeting notes from the Haiti mission project of which Pebble Hill is a part. Marilyn will be going to Haiti in 2011 with a group from our presbytery to help with the mission at St. Joseph’s School in rural northern Haiti.

December Forums

December 5

“I walked today where Jesus walked...”

“A New Journey Through the Holy Land”

Our “tour” guide, Mimi Pavetto, was born in Nazareth! She will guide us through the Holy Land using her personal slides. The audience will be co-narrators, as we read from the Scriptures. Bibles will be provided, but bring your own if you’d like. Come and invite a friend to travel with you. (Walking shoes are not required for this tour!)

December 12

“Train a child in the way he should go..”

“Say Yes to Education”

Rachael Gazdick is the Executive Director of the Syracuse arm of this program, which has chapters in Cambridge, Hartford, New York and Philadelphia. Ms Gazdick will bring us up to date on the initiative in our community and let us know how we are ALL affected by it. Come with your questions and comments. Get answers direct from the source and be sure to spread the word to your family, friends and neighbors, so they will be “in-the-know” as well.

Family Movie Night



Join us for movie night on Wednesday night, December 29th, at 6:00. Enjoy appetizers and dessert with your church family while we watch a family movie. RSVP to Rebecca Chaffee with your choice of movie: Up; How to Train Your Dragon; Toy Story 3; or name your favorite.

Advent Children and Youth Worship

We're mixing it up this year in our education program. For Advent through January 2nd, all children and youth will leave the sanctuary to continue their worship together. Our Promise Keeper curriculum highlights promises God keeps and shows Christmas as the fulfillment of God's promises through the Bible. We've carved out a special worship space. The youth group is preparing to tell the story using balloon animals and marionettes, the children are decorating symbols of promises to adorn our Promise Tree and looking up Bible verses to go with them, and throughout the season we'll have ornaments to make at centers around the commons.

Join us during coffee to craft an ornament for our tree or yours, or just to spend a few minutes sharing with our children and youth.

Parents' Night Out



Make plans now to enjoy Parents Night Out on Friday, December 10th, from 5 to 9 p.m.. We'll feed and entertain your children, and even sneak in a final Christmas play practice. You can go out to dinner or do Christmas shopping without the kids! We'll have games and crafts, and close with a family holiday movie after 7:30.

Tree Trimming

Come out and help us trim the tree on Saturday, December 4th, from 10 am to 1 p.m. Crafts, lunch, and snacks are provided. Christmas play practice for those involved.



Congratulations to This Year's Bible Recipients:

Claire Macero, Conrad Chaffee, Ethan Miller, Caitlyn Bradshaw, and Mathew Bradshaw



Advent Festival

Join us on December 12th for an Advent Festival. During morning worship at 9:30, enjoy “Promises, Promises,” a Christmas play by Laura and Robert Keeley, presented by the children and youth of the church.

In this play, two children wonder about the promises of God. Are they still true today? How did people in the Bible respond to God’s promises? As they look back at four stories about God’s promises, the children conclude that Christmas is about the promises God fulfills.

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 mac & cheese and similar casseroles, salads, and desserts.

Rebecca Chaffee: kidsphpc@twcny.rr.com or 317-6140

Jean Soper: jsoper@twcny.rr.com or 446-7588



Christmas Eve Family Service

Christmas Eve is a special time for families. Our 5:30 service features readings and a living nativity that builds as the story is told. Our children and youth prepare the readings and songs, and visiting children are invited to wear a costume and take part as angels, shepherds, or wise men. From the luminaria that line the drive to the twinkling candlelight as we sing Silent Night, this service sparkles!

Would you like to participate? Rehearsals for the service are held on Sunday, December 19th, and Thursday, December 23rd. Contact Rebecca Chaffee.



Welcome to Our New Members!

The following people were received into membership on November 21, 2010

Gwen and William Bradshaw, are joining by Re-Affirmation of Faith.

Their children, Caitlyn and Mathew, attend our Church School. Gwen and Bill's first friends are Rebecca and Scott Chaffee.

Deidre Elleman is joining by Letter of Transfer from the First Presbyterian Church in Corning, NY.

Kathy Herron is DeeDee's first friend.

John and Zetta Fayos are joining by Re-Affirmation of Faith. Jean and Bud Soper are their first friends.

Elizabeth Metz is joining by Letter of Transfer from the First Presbyterian Church United, Syracuse.

Elizabeth's first friend is Peg McMillan.

Ruth Parker joins our congregation by Letter of Transfer from the Whitelaw Presbyterian Church. Ruth's first friend is Nancy Byrne.

Harold Phillips is joining by Re-Affirmation of Faith. Bill Byrne is Hal's first friend.

Samantha and Cliff Snellgrove join our congregation by Letter of Transfer from the Hillcrest Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla. They have a one-year-old son, Dylan. Anne DeCampo is Samantha's first friend and Cliff's is Nick Abu-Absi.

Paul (Bud) Soper is joining by Re-Affirmation of Faith. Bud's first friend is Steve Chow.



Gwen & William Bradshaw



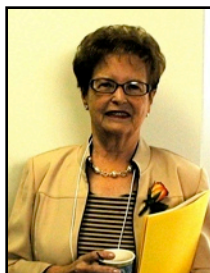
Deidre Elleman



John & Zetta Fayos



Elizabeth Metz



Ruth Parker



Harold Phillips



*Samantha & Cliff Snellgrove
and Dylan*



Paul (Bud) Soper

CENTRAL NEW YORK HIV CARE NETWORK

WORLD AIDS DAY 2010 SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE & SUPPORT WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2010

**University United Methodist Church
1085 East Genesee Street, Syracuse**

**Candlelight Vigil: 5:00 p.m. on the front steps
Service of Remembrance & Support: 5:30 – 6:30
Bread & Soup Supper: 6:30 – 7:30**

**Please join us for this demonstration
of community compassion and support
for those infected and affected
and commitment to our continuing work
to prevent the spread of HIV**

~~ Use the Peale Entrance on University Avenue ~~

**For more information
or to volunteer to help with the event
contact the Network at (315) 472-8099**



Ruth J. Colvin shares how one Thanksgiving, the best thing about the holiday had nothing to do with turkey

Published: Friday, November 26, 2010, 6:00 AM Updated: Friday, November 26, 2010, 8:52 AM



The Post-Standard



Jim Commentucci/The Post-Standard

Ruth and Bob Colvin at their home in Syracuse

By Ruth J. Colvin, Guest columnist

It was the week before Thanksgiving some years ago, and my husband, Bob, and I were feeling sorry for ourselves. Our son and his family were on the East Coast; our daughter and her family on the West Coast. We were in between and feeling lonely. It simply was not possible for us to visit them or for them to visit us.

I wanted to think friends would have included us in their own festivities. But, apparently, none knew we'd be alone. The phone remained silent. I recalled the many times that we'd invited others to join our family for dinner. But I was in no mood to prepare a big dinner.

Most of us consider Thanksgiving a family day. But what about others who were without family on Thanksgiving?

I recalled when our mothers had been in nursing homes. How they looked forward to our visits! Especially on holidays. But I do remember noticing other residents sitting by themselves, apparently envying our reunions.

So, on impulse, I phoned a local nursing home, identified myself and asked if there were any patients who had had no visitors. I expected to hear of three or four. Or even half a dozen.

What a shock when the director paged through her records, then told me, "I have the names of 24 residents who've had no visitors all year."

Our feelings of self-pity evaporated.

Our consciences wouldn't let us pick just a few names out of two dozen lonely souls. But what to do to visit that many on Thanksgiving morning?

Of course – make cupcakes! One for each. Decorated and in a separate package with a single rose for each.

(Continued from page 8)

And, somehow, we must decide how to make each one feel he or she was the special one being visited.

In the process of getting ready for our Thanksgiving Day visits, we forgot all about being lonely and sorry for ourselves. Instead, we were up early, packing the cupcakes I'd made the night before. The nurse had assured me the people we'd visit could eat such sweets at any time.

As we bundled up, we were surprised how excited we were about the trip. We discussed what I might say to each. Bob had chosen to stay outside each door to hold the other treats and help make sure I had the proper name for the resident of each particular room. Conversation was to begin with my introducing myself and saying "Happy Thanksgiving," then waiting to see if more talk was appropriate.

The first name was that of Marjory Marshall.* When I entered her tidy room and greeted her with my prearranged speech, she looked up at me as she sat in an overstuffed chair, dressed in her bright pink robe. "Do I know you?" she asked.

I admitted she probably didn't, but that I was lonely and hoped to meet new friends. She thanked me for the cupcake and responded eagerly to questions.

That's how I learned she had been a teacher in a rural school and active in her church. She'd remained single all her 94 years. All her relatives had died. "I'm tired and would like to join them. Sometimes my pastor comes. I asked him, 'Why do I continue to live so long?' He told me, 'I guess God has something planned for you to do.'"

Then she asked me, "What do you think God wants me to do? I can't figure it out."

It was a logical question indeed, and I had no easy answer. "Well, the Bible says we should 'encourage one another and build one another up' (1 Thessalonians 5:11). You seem to be blessed with a good mind and a positive attitude. I'd guess he might have you here to help some of the others to be happy."

Her smile and firm nod assured me this was the correct answer. It confirmed her wish that she was needed there in the nursing home.

Then there was Mr. Barber. He and his wheelchair were in a corner, where he sat staring at the walls. His response to my greeting and the offered cupcake was, "Can I eat it now?" His only interest was in the cupcake. So, even though he didn't so much as look my way, I knew he was pleased with this little gift.

Mrs. Metcalf, a blue robe over her white hospital gown, was slumped over in her wheelchair, having been tied in, so she wouldn't tumble out. Her white hair was frazzled as she lay with her head on her arms, fast asleep. I hesitated, thinking of leaving quietly, so as not to disturb her. I put the cupcake and red rose on her bedside table.

"No, no, do go ahead and wake her," the aide instructed. "She wouldn't want to miss a visitor – the only one she's had."

I wondered how to do this without frightening her. So I knelt down at her side, gently touching her arm and whispering, "Mrs. Metcalf?" *(Continued on next page)*

She raised her head, eyes still sleepy and hazy. “I’m Rose Metcalf.”

“I’m Ruth Colvin. I’ve come to wish you a Happy Thanksgiving.”

“How nice. It’s mighty nice of you to come. Thank you. Thank you.” And her eyes glazed over again. But she’d responded to me, even though it was for only those few seconds.

Each of the 24 residents’ reactions was different. Yet every individual touched our hearts. We realized that all were “somebodies” in their day.

As we left the nursing home to return to our own home, Bob and I discovered we had grateful tears welling in thankfulness for our own health, for our family members, for our friends. We realized, too, that someday we might be in a similar position of yearning for a visit from someone. Anyone.

It also made us more aware of caring staff members who work day in and day out – often at menial jobs – to take care of our nation’s elderly and those who need special attention.

When I told a friend about the Thanksgiving Day that had cured our own feelings of depression and loneliness, how it turned out to be the most meaningful one we’d had in many years, she determined to do something similar.

She and her young son chose Christmas Day to visit a nursing home in her own community. Their gifts weren’t cupcakes and a silk rose, but a new pair of sweat pants for each person visited. It made their day brighter too.

Go ahead – if you’re feeling sorry for yourself, give a lonely friend or a local nursing home a call. It’ll do even more good to you than to those you plan on helping.

*** The residents' real names are not used.**

***Ruth Colvin**, of Syracuse, is a founder of ProLiteracy, an organization that promotes reading and literacy around the world. Colvin is a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom.*



Laughing Matters

Getting the Pieces Right

A father wanted to read a magazine, but was being pestered by his daughter. To keep her busy, he tore a sheet out of the magazine that had a picture of the world printed on it. He tore the picture into small pieces and said, “Here, now go into the other room and see if you can put this picture of the world back together again.”

A few minutes goes by and he daughter appears in the room and hands him the picture all correctly fitted together.

The father was surprised and asked her how she was able to fit all those little pieces of the world back together again so quickly.

“Oh,” she said, “on the other side of the paper was a picture of Jesus and once I got Jesus in the right place, then the world came out alright.”

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