

Richardson Park United Methodist Church
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*The people who walk in darkness will see a great light;
a light that will shine on all who live in the land where death casts its shadow.
For a child is born to us, a son is given to us.
And the government will rest on his shoulders.
These will be his royal titles: Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- Isaiah 9:2,6 (New Living Translation)*

*And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.
- Luke 9:43 (New International Version)*

Have you ever thought about how much God loves you?

It's something that's been on my mind a lot lately. Whenever Advent and Christmas roll around on the calendar, I become aware of my own trends toward sentimentality. I become lost in visions brought to me by the Ghost of Christmas past. I think about Christmas' of days gone by. I remember the drive to my Grammy's house the day after school let out for Christmas break. I remember the traditional feast that we had on Christmas Eve followed by the 7 p.m. candlelight service at the little country church in St. Germain. (I think I remember it so well because it was the only service that we attended with any regularity. We were true Christmas and Easter Christians. It's one of the things I regret most from my childhood.) Then we would come home and play a couple of board games and head to bed. And as we were being tucked in, Grammy would read us 'Twas the Night before Christmas by Clement Moore.

Then came the biggest challenge of the holidays; we would attempt to sleep until Christmas morning. We never did a very good job of it, and were often up at ridiculous times of the night. The rule was we couldn't open anything until 6 a.m., but that never prevented us from sitting out in Grampy and Grammy's living room for an hour or two, in the still of the night, ogling our Christmas booty. Like many things in life, the anticipation was always as good as or better than the feast of present opening that was coming.

Christmas morning always found us in our pajamas, knee deep in paper, and ready to help any adult that might need assistance opening their own gifts. As Jean Shepherd once said in his book, *In God We Trust: All Others Pay Cash*, “It was here! Lovely, beautiful, glorious Christmas, around which the entire year revolved.” No matter what else went wrong in the year, Christmas always went right.

As lovely, glorious, and beautiful as Christmas was, I always felt like something was missing. In those wee hours of Christmas night, staring at our piece of Santa’s latest haul, I would think about God. Having just been to church, the memories of prayers, carols, sermon, and lights were still in my head. So, I would fancy myself like Mary in Luke 2:19, “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.” My mind would wander and I would think about school and my teachers and church and God and eternity and Jesus and who Jesus was and what Jesus did and the disciples and the cross and my own mortality and then the lovely, glorious, beautiful resurrection. But the one thought that was too big for my juvenile brain was the thought of God’s love for me, little old me. I couldn’t believe that God would trust Mary and Joseph with the care and feeding of this most precious of all Christmas presents, our Savior.

In the past couple of weeks, I have again had time to reflect on God’s love for me. As a member of the human race, I am a child of God. That’s a promise that is made to you at birth no matter who you are, where you were born, what your family looked like, or how much stuff they had. You are a child of God, too, and God loves you with a love that can’t be described or comprehended or explained reasonably. It can only be felt and experienced. It is *the* most amazing thing that I have ever known.

As Christmas comes again this year and you prepare to celebrate Christ’s birth, spend just a few minutes, if possible, with a child that you love. Ponder this love; treasure it in your heart. Then think about how much more God loves you. And finally share this love with everyone you can.

Blessing and Peace to you all and a very Merry Christmas,

Pastor Tom



RICHARDSON PARK U.M.C.
CELEBRATES ADVENT and
CHRISTMAS!



Sunday, December 7

Family Advent Day

Cornerstone Dedication

Join us for this special morning of worship and cornerstone dedication, followed by a covered-dish luncheon.

Sunday, December 14

Christmas Caroling

Meet at the church at 3:30 PM

Sunday, December 21

Christmas Open House

at the Parsonage 2-4 PM

Everyone Welcome!

Wednesday, December 24

Christmas Eve

6:30 p.m. - Family Candlelight Service

10:30 p.m. - Traditional Candlelight Service



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

William Edwards	12/2
Patrick Elliott	12/2
Bruce Workman	12/2
Anthony Burgos	12/3
Bryan Cummings	12/3
Andrea Burgos	12/5
Marjorie Newton	12/5
Dorothy Scarborough	12/5
William Boyce	12/9
Zachary Casalvera	12/9
Andy Hughes	12/9
Billee Boyd	12/10
Carolyn Stafford	12/11
Mary Lou Boyce	12/12
Rose Davis	12/12
Steven Ott	12/12
Justin Farren	12/14
Melanie Mitten	12/14
Megan Edwards	12/15
George Smallwood	12/15
Holly Bentley	12/16
Shirly Ritter	12/19
Sandi Tomlinson	12/20
Michael Toy	12/22
Charles Heite	12/23
Adeline Le Breton	12/23
Tom Atkinson	12/25
Cheryl Lynn Krebs	12/25
Barbara Przywara	12/26
Betty Swain	12/26
Bill Aurelio	12/27
Neal Davis	12/27
Katie Estevez	12/29
Amanda Graham	12/31

Note: If your name is not listed on our birthday calendar, please call the office at 654-0961. Thank you.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



In December, Rebekah Circle will take care of the flowers in the church. Both Circles will help with the poinsettias.

Circle Meetings

There will be no Circle meetings in December.

CHRISTMAS COVERED-DISH LUNCHEON

Sunday, December 21 11:30 AM

All women are invited.

Please join us.



WESLEY TOWER BANKS

November 2008 \$138.25

Thanks for remembering to bring in your filled banks the first Sunday of each month. Our year-to-date total is \$1,116.61. Empty banks can be picked up as you leave the altar area each Communion Sunday. AGAIN, THANKS FOR SAVING YOUR CHANGE .



MISSION TREE



On Sundays in December, we will be hanging **Bells** on our Mission Tree. Hang a "bell" on the tree in honor or memory of someone special to you. Minimum donation is \$1.00. Our tree is located in the Extension.



I would like to thank everyone for your phone calls, flowers and cards during this difficult time. I would greatly appreciate your continued prayers and support.

Ruth Berry



CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS THIS ADVENT SEASON

The beautiful decorations adorning our church have been graciously provided by the following members and friends of RPUMC:

Advent Wreath

Altar Trees

Altar Wreath

Altar Wreath

Balcony Wreath

Door Wreath

Door Wreath

Door Wreath

Door Wreath

Nativity Scenes

Phyllis Bowman

Clyde & Carolyn Nafzinger

Jay & Pat Cummings

Ruth Gibney

Paulette Cleaver

Kathy Russell

Dorothy Scarborough

Joan Stadelman

Marvin & Betty Swain

Koinonia Class

*Do you
break
your
hectic
world?*



need a

from

A time of quiet?

*An opportunity to sense God's
presence?*

Join us in the Sanctuary - Wednesdays

7:00 – 8:00 PM

Come when you like.

Leave when you're ready.

Say a prayer.

Light a candle.

Experience Peace.



KIDS' KORNER & GOD'S LITTLE ANGELS

Kristi J. Doughty



It's the most wonderful time of the year - - Christmas! Come to Sunday school and bring a friend where we'll learn about God's most special gift to us.

Here are the topics for December:

Pre-Kindergarten/K - will be following the Christmas story: Solomon tells of Jesus' coming; an angel appears to Joseph; Jesus is born; Jesus - God's gift to us.

Grades 1-3 - will be studying the Christmas story which begins in the Old Testament and unfolds in the gospel of Matthew. The children will meet Old Testament prophets, worry with Joseph, travel with the wise men and understand that the birth of Jesus is more than a good story. Jesus' birth brings the promise of new life.

Grades 4-6 - will be focusing on 1 John 2:17 to learn about serving others (What Difference Can I Make?); pursuing peace (Why Can't Countries Get Along?); sharing with others (Why Isn't There Enough to Go Around?); and responsibility for creation (Is Our Environment Really Falling Apart?).

Grades 7-12 - will be very busy making an Advent Angel Banner, studying Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" as a wonderful story of redemption and hope, and watching some Christmas Classics ("Christmas Is"; "The City That Forgot About Christmas" and "The Stableboy's Christmas").

GOD'S LITTLE ANGELS

ATTENTION CONGREGATION! This is a wonderful opportunity to make a difference in the life of a CAP family with 3 small children...

God's Little Angels' next project is sponsoring a Community Action Program family for Christmas. You as the congregation can help in several ways: 1) buy a Christmas tree decoration on December 7, 2008 in honor or memory of a loved one, put your message inside, and it will be hung on our Kids' bulletin board until after the Christmas services. After the service you attend, reclaim your ornament and hang it on your tree at home... 2) donate funds that GLA will use to purchase items on the list below for the family... or 3) purchase items from the list below and bring to the church office by December 7 or let Kristi Doughty know if you need a little more time and will bring the wrapped item to church on December 14, 2008. After the service on December 14, 2008 at

2:00 p.m., God's Little Angels will have a luncheon for the CAP family and present their gifts. At that time the kids and youth will have a funny gift exchange (look for details from Miss Beth), then at 4:00 we'll join everyone who will be going Christmas caroling! It should be a wonderful time to experience the gift of giving and sharing God's love. Here are the items:

Children's clothing - girl's size 4T and boys' sizes 7 and 9
Men's slacks size 32" X 32"
Woman's winter coat size Large
Gift certificate for clothing

Toys for a girl - age 3, and boys ages 5 and 7

Merry Christmas to all and a big thanks to all who can find it in the hearts and budgets to help in any way!



Update from Richardson Park Community Action Program November 2008

“COME TO THE TABLE” ...

To raise extra funds during the busy holiday period, CAP, with the help of many wonderful supporters, has created a fantastic cookbook – “Come to the Table”.

The cost of the cookbook is \$10, and all proceeds from the sale of the book will go directly into funding the CAP Community Outreach Programs.

Please purchase a copy of our cookbook. It is full of a fantastic array of recipes - some old favorites, some new and unique and some from foreign lands.

To order your copy of “Come to the Table, contact CAP on (302) 428-1247 and ask for Louise or email us at rpcap107@verizon.net.

"The Trustees' Times"



Kathy Russell, Chair

Over the past two years during my term as Trustees chair at Richardson Park UMC, I have learned a lot about the inner workings of the church and personally grown with the experience. I was challenged to lead the Trustees through the church's centennial year and during this year's change in Pastoral leadership. My God-given gifts were put to good use in many ways: organizing meetings, leading positive discussions, coordinating work with contractors and volunteers, motivating and energizing Trustees and church members, communicating with church leaders as well as the congregation and championing various projects myself.

There are many projects in progress or were completed this year. Some of these activities included repainting the metal parsonage roof, preparing the parsonage for the Pasmore's, installing a new fence around the parsonage side yard, replacing the church guttering and downspouts, starting an environmental stewardship fundraiser and several energy conservation projects. There are many routine facilities management operations that are faithfully attended to by the BMG (Building Maintenance Group). And there are a host of others who see what is needed around the church and grounds and selflessly take action for everyone's benefit. God's hand is at work in all we do at RPUMC.

God has worked with me on a personal level as well. I have learned to relax my tendency to control even the little things and let my faith in God allow Him to guide and direct *most* of my efforts. I've learned to expand my sunny disposition by focusing on the good and divine purpose in every situation. I've even cultivated an outlet for stress by creatively adding a variety of seasonal flower arrangements and displays around the church that hopefully uplift the spirits of all who view them.

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve God and the church on the Board of Trustees. I could not have accomplished anything without the teamwork, support and love of the people of this church. And I look forward to continuing my service in the future playing handbells, singing, helping, learning, worshiping and loving God and His people.

*Originally published in December 2007
by Kathy Russell*

*Twas the night before Christmas and all through the church,
there were people a-stirrin' and Trustees on a search.*

*Decorations still hung from the balcony above,
while Poinsettias are packaged in cellophane gloves.*

*As the clock nears midnight and people disperse,
activity continues and appears quite rehearsed.*

*Thermostats are set back and lights are turned out;
energy conservation is what that's all about!*

*Now outside the office there arose quite a clatter,
so the pastor came out to see what was the matter.*

*Then what to his tiring eyes should he see,
was the closing of doors and the rattling of keys.*

*The candlelight service was finished in style,
but lights-off and lock-up continued awhile.*

*Everyone's gone now all snug in their homes,
while Trustees finish up in church halls they still roam.*

*Now everything's done; locked, closed and off;
not a sound can be heard, not even a cough.*

*If we had any church mice, you might hear them say,
Merry Christmas to All; Have a Blessed Christmas Day!*



RICHARDSON PARK
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11 NORTH MARYLAND AVENUE
WILMINGTON, DE 19804-1305

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Tom Pasmore, Pastor



LAY READERS

December 7	Maria Ott
December 14	Karlee Boyd
December 21	Lillian Simmons
December 28	Ed Ide

ALTAR FLOWERS

December 7	Mary White
December 14	Mary Jane Simmons
At the Cross	Dorothy Burris
December 21	Poinsettias
December 28	Anna Mae Shewbrooks

ALTAR FLOWERS

For the month of December, Rebekah Circle is responsible for the flowers.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING FOOD FOR
CAP THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH.

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Please submit your articles for the
January Messenger to the church office by
Wednesday, December 10. Thank you.

*The purpose of Richardson Park United Methodist Church is to help people
experience the amazing love of God and develop a vital relationship with Jesus Christ.*