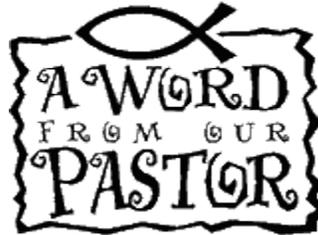


Richardson Park United Methodist Church  
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*In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.*

*- Luke 2:8-19 (New Revised Standard Version)*

It's amazing to me how cute babies really are. With the simplest action, most casual move, and tiniest little "coo," they can melt your heart. It's as if merely being in their presence can make you feel happy. They are truly one of nature's wonderful smile producers, and I think that's one reason why we love this time of year so much. The feast of Christmas brings with it a vision of Baby Jesus "wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." This cute, bundle of joy that is the Son of God, who we believe is God incarnate in human form, has all those attributes of infants that we adore. He is innocent, loving, quiet, and so helpless. We tend to picture the perfect baby in perfect terms: born to perfect parents, in a perfect "natural" setting, and in a perfect time.

There's only one slight problem . . . babies don't stay babies forever. As we progress from Luke Chapter 2 into Luke Chapter 4, something happens. Jesus grows up into the preacher, teacher, and leader that we follow through the rest of the Gospel narrative. This can be a very disturbing process for some people. (Like Ricky Bobby from the movie Talladega Nights who literally prays to the 8 pounds, 6 ounce Baby Jesus.)

This is not because it's not natural, but because they've lost control of the baby they've known and cradled in their own minds; the baby that brings hope simply by his birth. They want to keep Jesus in the manger, and not let him go to Egypt or back to Nazareth or into the hills and fields of Galilee or to Gethsemane or to Golgotha. I think what it boils down to is that Jesus, the innocent and loving infant, lies squarely within their sphere of influence. They can put limits on how much intellectual rigor and theological reflection they are willing to invest in the "sweet, little Jesus boy." They build walls around the area of their lives that they are willing to invest in him. They control the Baby Jesus' access to their hearts and their minds and their souls and their strength. Babies, including Jesus, need help from the adults in the crowd, and not the other way around.

While I expect all of us to linger near the manger at this time of year to soak in the sights and sounds again (especially with the movie, *The Nativity Story*, which we will be watching during worship this Advent season), the problem occurs when some of us turn into parents that just don't want to let go. We become a people trapped in the past and unable to accept the future. But we all have to. Ultimately, the nativity doesn't make any sense without the beauty of the "Sermon on the Mount," the horror of the cross on a hill, and the wonder of the empty tomb. Without these very "adult" aspects of Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection, Christianity becomes a sugary, fairy tale that pacifies us instead of transforming us.

It takes a whole Jesus to be our whole salvation.

This Christmas season, let Jesus be more than just a baby in a manger, let him be your guide, your friend, and what he was born to be . . . your savior.

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

*Pastor Tom*



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



**Sunday, December 6**

**Family Advent Party**  
**2:30 PM – 5:00 PM**

Join us for a movie and a visit from Santa Claus! All are welcome. For more information, contact Sarah Pasmore at 652-6168.

**Sunday, December 13**

**Christmas Caroling**  
**Meet at the church at 4:30 PM**

**Thursday, 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
Don McFarland	12/7
Josiah Straughn	12/7
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, Sr.	12/12
Justin Farren	12/14
Melanie Mitten	12/14
Megan Edwards	12/15
George Smallwood	12/15
Holly Bentley	12/16
David Brown	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

Ruth Circle will not meet in December.  
Rebekah Circle will meet after the Covered Dish Luncheon on December 13.

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12 - 9 AM**  
**Annual Cookie Walk**

We would love to have a batch of your favorite cookies to sell that day! Cookies will be sold for \$5.00 a can. Please do not donate soft cookies.

**CHRISTMAS COVERED-DISH LUNCHEON**  
**Sunday, December 13 11:30 AM**

Come and join us for our luncheon immediately following worship. Yes – men are welcome, also! A collection will be taken for CAP and a \$5.00 donation will buy a blanket for Church World Service!

## UPPER ROOM COST INCREASE

UPPER ROOM has needed to increase their cost to us and consequently as of January 1, 2010 the Upper Room booklets available in the Matthes Avenue hall and the Extension will be \$1.00 per copy.

Also, when you finish with your Upper Room or Daily Bread copy, please return it to the church office so it may be passed on to the Prison Ministry which distributes the expired copies.

Many thanks to Austin & Pruitt for inspecting our fire extinguishers and Ansul system annually. Your contributions to RPUMC are greatly appreciated.



## WESLEY TOWER BANKS

November 2009 \$103.91

Thanks for remembering to bring in your filled banks the first Sunday of each month. Our total to date for 2009 is \$1,085.64. Remember to pick up an empty bank as you leave the altar area on 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.



## **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*

*Phyllis Bowman*  
*Clyde & Carolyn Nafzinger*  
*Jay & Pat Cummings*  
*Ruth Gibney*  
*Paulette Cleaver*  
*Kathy Russell*  
*Dorothy Scarborough*  
*Joan Stadelman*  
*Marvin & Betty Swain*  
*Koinonia Class*

## Offering Envelopes for 2010

In an effort to decrease the cost of offering envelopes, we have ordered 150 boxes for 2010 vs. the 175 purchased in 2009. Anyone currently assigned an envelope number between 1 and 150 should continue using that number. Those who have a number greater than 150 will be given a new envelope number for 2010. Please contact Janet Dickerson or Sandy Swain if you have any questions regarding this change. Note: If you do not currently use envelopes and would like to have a number assigned for 2010, please call Sandy on 994-9539. Thanks!

### **FOOD FOR CAP**



Don't forget to bring food for CAP the first Sunday of each month. They are in need of:

canned meats and stews,  
peanut butter and jelly,  
hot & cold cereals,  
tuna, baked beans,  
canned fruit.

### ZINGO TAPES



Don't forget to bring your Zingo tapes to worship on Sundays. Just place them in the offering plates or in the wicker basket in the vestibule. Your support is appreciated.

CHRISTMAS



SHOPPE

*Every Thursday through December 17  
9 AM - 1 PM*

*Located next to the Parsonage  
Adjacent to the garage*

### BRIGHTER DAY MINISTRY

The Brighter Day Ministry supports the homeless and others in need in our community. They are sponsoring a clothing drive now through December 14. They are in need of the following new or slightly used items:

Winter Hats, Gloves, Scarves and Coats  
Please donate only the items mentioned  
above.

Financial contributions also will be accepted.

A decorated box is located in the back of the Sanctuary where you can place your donations. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Shannon at 543-5612.

### HEAVENLY PERKS CAFÉ

**Atonement Church  
3519 Philadelphia Pike**

The Café is a place for young adults and the young at heart to enjoy a Saturday night listening to excellent Christian music. The Café is open the third Saturday of each month. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the band begins at 7:00 p.m. There is no cover charge, coffee is free, and food is available to purchase. For more information, contact Pastor John Hornberger at 302-798-8472.

## KIDS' KORNER



What a wonderful time of year to celebrate the joy of Jesus' birth with your family at RPUMC! We've got lots of fun in store so bring a friend and join us for Sunday School.

PreK-K – December is such an exciting month to teach Sunday School. The kids are excited for Jesus' birthday (presents), and we get excited to tell them all about the events leading to the manger. Our preschoolers will learn why we celebrate with gifts. We will focus on remembering what God did through Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the Wise Men, the angels, and Jesus.

Grades 1 thru 3 will be very busy in December. Joining with the other Sunday school classes, there will be shepherds, Wise Men, Mary, Joseph and many others as we learn about the birth of Jesus. On December 13, there will be a very special program during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Please plan to join us.

Grades 4 thru 8 will begin a Grapple Unit on Friendships, focusing on John 15:13 – Why do some people have more friends? (what makes a real friend); Am I supposed to be friends only with Christians? (influencing non-Christians); Do I have to like everyone? (God's command to love everyone); and Why are my friends so mean sometimes? (forgiving friends for hurting us).

Grades 9 thru 12 - we'll be watching some Christmas classics and studying the messages of hope, joy, love and peace that Advent brings us.



## Richardson Park Community Action Program Newsletter

November 13, 2009

Everyone is invited to CAP to see the upgrades to the interior, accomplished through the amazing support of Pat and Frank Pugh, the furniture donations of Fox Roach/Trident Group of Pike Creek, and the unflagging energy of our volunteers Maria and Edgar. We have redone the second floor offices, rearranged the sorting room, and given the sorting room a much-needed coat of fresh paint. We are now ready to complete renovations to the upstairs kitchen.

While you are visiting, check out the festive Christmas decorations, all of which are for sale.

Quick facts about CAP's programs for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009:

- Distributed \$36,071 in emergency funds (\$12,096 for rent, serving 34 families; \$17,594 for utilities, serving 69 families; and \$585 for transportation, etc., serving 72 families).
- Distributed 53,900 pounds of food, received from many sources, including church, school, and community donations; Food Bank of Delaware grants; Stroehmann's bakery fresh bread (brought to us by Howard Vaneiken and Clyde Nafzinger); and Food Bank of Delaware weekly fresh produce deliveries. Further, CAP spent \$5,796 of its own funds to purchase food from the Food Bank and grocery stores.
- Served 806 families with purchased food, and 1,680 families with fresh produce and other donated food.
- Served 323 families with what we call "Shared Abundance," including free clothing for adults, children and babies; free household items; and holiday baskets coordinated through our supporting churches and the Wilmington Christian School.

CAP is blessed with faithful volunteers, who log over 6,000 hours of work each year. If paid for their hard and dedicated work at a modest \$10 per hour, this represents donated time worth over \$60,000.

What a year! Thank you all.

Donald Mulrine, Jr.  
Executive Director

RICHARDSON PARK  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
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WILMINGTON, DE 19804-1305

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# “THE MESSENGER” DECEMBER 2009

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Parsonage Phone: (302) 652-6168 E-Mail: [rpumc@rpumchurch.org](mailto:rpumc@rpumchurch.org)  
Tom Pasmore, Pastor



## LAY READERS

December 6	Lillian Simmons
December 13	Ed Ide
December 20	Joe Tucker
December 27	Chris Doughty

## ALTAR FLOWERS

December 6	Mary White
December 13	Mary Jane Simmons
At the Cross	Dorothy Burris
December 20	Poinsettias
December 27	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.

\* \* \* \* \*

Please submit your articles for the  
January Messenger to the church office by  
Wednesday, December 9. 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.*