



St. Peter's United Church of Christ
 905 S. Russell Street
 Champaign, IL 61821
 217-356-3635
 E-mail: stpeters_ucc@msn.com
www.stpetersucc.com

CONNECTIONS

December 2007



A Note from the Pastor

We've been celebrating "50 Years in the Neighborhood" for a month now and a special anniversary worship service was held on November 11 in which we enjoyed the participation of two "sons of the congregation," Rev. Wallace Reifsteck and Rev. Matthew Noffke, in addition to our Eastern Association Minister, Rev. Thomas Norwalk. During that service we rededicated our church building and ourselves to meaningful ministry in our community.

Now, it's time to look ahead to the beginning of Advent on December 2, which leads to the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, on December 24/25, and Epiphany on January 6. One of the traditions of this season is the Lighting of the Advent Candles which will be done by different "families" in the church each week. Watch for varied configurations of "family!"

Another tradition for this season at St. Peter's is the "March to the Manger" which will take place on December 23. Marguerite Zahnd has graciously agreed to organize "the March" and may be calling YOU. Note the suggested recipients of the gifts of "the March" elsewhere in this issue of *Connections*.

A personal tradition for me is to give a gift to the church in lieu of sending Christmas cards. This year's gift will be a set of white candles to replace the purple and pink Advent candles on Christmas through Epiphany.

It is my prayer that this holy season may bless you in unexpected and untold ways and that you may step aside from the hustle and bustle of your personal preparations and experience anew the wonder of the Christ Child.

In Christian love,

Pastor Betty Hornback



How to reach Pastor Betty:

Home phone ~ 309/346-5577


Cell phone ~ 309/472-4697

Address ~ 11 Windsor Court, Pekin, IL 61554

Pastor Betty is in Champaign Saturday evening through Wednesday (every other week until Thursday noon). She can be reached at the church office Monday through Wednesday, 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. or at the parsonage (352-3883).

Advent Activities

December 2 First Sunday in Advent
 10:00 a.m. Worship with Communion, Campus Ministry Choir and lighting of the Advent candles.

December 9 Second Sunday in Advent
 10:00 a.m. Praise Worship with Sunday School Program and lighting of the Advent candles. 

December 16 Third Sunday in Advent
 10:00 a.m. Worship with St. Peter's Choir Cantata and lighting of the Advent candles.

December 23 Fourth Sunday in Advent
 10:00 a.m. Worship with March to the Manger and lighting of the Advent candles.

December 24 Christmas Eve Worship
 7:00 p.m. Candlelight Worship with Communion.

December 30 Christmastide
 10:00 a.m. Worship with Carol Singing.

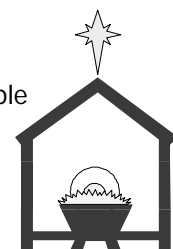
January 6 Epiphany Sunday
 10:00 a.m. Worship with Communion and Installation of Officers. 

Advent – What does it mean?

Advent is a time of hope. Little people excitedly hope for Christmas toys. Big people hope for employment or health. Underneath it all, we put our hopes in the loving hands of our gracious God. Whatever happens, God will be with us.

The Son of God came to take our burdens and sin on his shoulders. This is the message of Advent all year round.

The season of Advent begins the Church Year. Advent has been called a season of waiting or anticipation. In these four weeks we recall the longing of God's people for Emmanuel – "God with us." We anticipate the coming of Christmas again this year. And we pray that our Lord will soon come again.



Holiday Office Hours

The Church Office will be closed December 25, 2007 through January 1, 2008. For emergencies, Pastor Betty may be contacted at home or on her cell phone.

Consistory Highlights – November

Editor's Note: The following notes from the November meeting are for your information only. Minutes and actions of this meeting will not be approved until the December meeting.



The Consistory of St. Peter's United Church of Christ met on November 19, 2007 with the following actions.

A clarification was added to the minutes stating the door that was not working correctly was the outside front door to the sanctuary.

All computers in the church offices will be replaced. A written presentation on the progress will be given at the next meeting. The church's web site is being upgraded.

The building use forms are being revised.

Matthew Noffke was able to attend the anniversary service and participated in it.

Campus Ministry will use the Fellowship Hall and kitchen in April for a "just desserts" fundraiser.

The sausage supper was discussed. A chairperson for this event needs to be found. Dates that were suggested were March 1 or 8, 2008.

The church received a notice from the *News-Gazette* promoting its December Faith and Worship guide.

The interior of the parsonage will be painted the week after Christmas. A church member has donated money for the purchase of outdoor Christmas decorations such as a Nativity Scene.

Instead of giving presents this year at WINN, a donation will be made to Camp New Hope.

The Search Committee is considering three candidates. Interviews have been held.

This year's deficit is being monitored. It is expected to be lower than anticipated.

The Pastor's Report for November was received.

The meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.



Poinsettia Time!

Poinsettias are a flower of Christmas. We will begin taking orders for poinsettias to grace the chancel area on December 2. An insert will be in the bulletin for information concerning donors and those they wish to remember or honor with a plant. Deadline for ordering poinsettias is December 9. Orders may also be placed by calling the Church Office. Poinsettias may be taken home after worship December 23 or December 24. Poinsettias left after January 6 will be taken to shut-ins.

Advent Devotions

Advent devotional booklets for individuals and families will be available on the counter in the south hallway beginning December 2. Please feel free to help yourself and add a spiritual dimension to your holiday preparations.

It's a Christmas Party!

Don't miss the All-Church Tuesday Circle Christmas Party on December 11 at the home of JoAnn and George Malloch.

The soup will be "on" anytime between 12 noon and 5:00 p.m., so plan to arrive when it's convenient for you. "Gift giving" will be for a mission offering.



Christmas Fund

The Christmas Fund Offering (formerly the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross), one of four Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ, is an important way of sharing our joy at God's renewing and life-giving grace. The Offering, which is administered by the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance of the Pension Boards on behalf of the UCC, is an expression of joy and gratitude to, and for, those who serve the church.

Gifts to the Christmas Fund help provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retirees, emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay employees and Christmas Gift Checks to hundreds of annuitants. In 2006 the Christmas Fund received \$1,438,000 and nearly 1,500 families were assisted. The goal is to be able to provide at least \$1,500,000 in assistance from the 2007 appeal.

This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care.

The Christmas Fund Offering will be received December 2.

Ring in the Season

Join us for bell ringing and joyful singing on Saturday, December 22. Please come anytime between 9:50 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to ring bells for the Salvation Army at the County Market on the corner of Duncan and Kirby. Please dress for the weather. The County Market has a small area to sit in, take a break and have refreshments.



March to the Manger

Once again this year we will be "marching to the manger" with gifts for the Christ Child which will be used to help others through mission. Marguerite Zahnd is organizing the March this year and she invites you to join the "cast" for their "unveiling" in the Lounge after worship.

As in other years, the Congregation is invited to decorate their gifts in keeping with the season.

Suggested missions to receive the gifts include: **Campus Ministry**, **WINN**, and the **Crisis Nursery**.

"Tis the season to be generous!"



In Memoriam

The prayers and sympathy of the St. Peter's Congregation are with the families of three members.

Wilma J. Bennett – born October 23, 1921, passed from this life to life eternal on Thursday, October 25,

2007. Services were held at Owens Funeral Home on Monday, October 29, 2007. Left to mourn her passing are sons Hobert and Jack Roberts, daughters Linda Burgess, Carol Meeker, Ruth Boley, and their families; sister Doris Hill; stepsons Pat and Mike Bennett; stepdaughters Janet Largent and Julie Davis and families. Wilma was a member of St. Peter's U.C.C.

Edna Prah! Ninmer – born May 11, 1913, passed from this life to life eternal on Wednesday, November 7, 2007. Funeral Services were held at St. Peter's United Church of Christ. Mourning Edna's passing are children Marilyn Rayburn, Madonna (Harlan) Boitnott, Marcella Nance and Marshall (Kathy) Ninmer in addition to a sister, Erma Koehn; a sister-in-law, Mary Prah!, and brother-in-law David King; nine grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren. Edna was a member of St. Peter's U.C.C.

Barbara P. Schultz – born May 3, 1930, passed from this life to life eternal on Tuesday, November 8, 2007. A service celebrating her life was held at the First United Methodist Church of Urbana on November 16, 2007. Left to mourn her passing are her brother, H. William Peters Jr., as well as one son, Richard E. Schultz Jr. and two daughters, Margaret A. Clelland and Karen S. Przybyla, and five grandchildren.

Help WINN Share the Joy with Camp New Hope

This Christmas the WINN group is sharing the joy and love Jesus brought to our world through a service project for Camp New Hope. Located on Lake Mattoon, Camp New Hope is a camp for people with developmental disabilities. The summer camping program has been operating since 1974 and according to Jason Jewett, a St. Peter's teen who attends the camp, the lifejackets are about that old, too!

Jason and the other campers love riding the pontoon boat around Lake Mattoon, but it would be safer and more fun wearing a modern life jacket. WINN is hoping to raise \$300 to purchase 15 lifejackets in various adult sizes for the camp (the children's sizes have already been replaced). Please help us reach our goal! Checks may be made out to St. Peter's—be sure to put "Camp New Hope" on the memo line.

If you have any questions please talk with Barb or Jeff Jewett after worship or call them at 586-6778.

Jason and the other WINNers thank you for the support of this project!



Prayer Shawl Ministry

The Women's Fellowship is pleased that our Prayer Shawl Ministry is touching the lives of many of our members and loved ones. We hope the shawls have given some small measure of comfort and strength to these individuals in their difficult moments.

We began this ministry with approximately 20 shawls – Jill Acheson provided the majority of these first shawls. We currently have seven knitters/crocheters who have contributed or who are working on shawls for this ministry. Please contact me if you are interested in participating.

The prayer shawls are located in the Church Office, but PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE be sure to sign out a prayer shawl before taking one from the church – a form for this purpose is located with the prayer shawls. We need to know whom the prayer shawls go to so that we don't duplicate the effort. This will also enable us to better evaluate the program.

Ann Swearingen
Women's Fellowship

A Great Big Thank You

. . . to Jeff Jewett, Nick Voss, Al Shoudel, Jim Acheson, Mark Williams, Mark Muller, Bill Malone, Kurt and Fern Eheart for preparing the grounds for winter. Trees were trimmed, gutters cleaned and the parsonage fencerow cleaned. The group started after church on Sunday, November 4 and worked until 4:00 p.m. Thanks to each of you!



Adult Studies

The Adult Bible Study, "Reluctant Prophets and Clueless Disciples" continues to meet from 6:30-7:30 on Sunday evenings. However, we will NOT meet December 23 and 30.

The "Attitudes" Study continues to meet Monday afternoons from 2:00-3:00 p.m. in the Pastor's Study. However, we will NOT meet December 24 and 31.

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the January 2008 issue of *Connections* is Monday, December 17. Please submit your articles to the Church Office or leave them in the Office Manager's mailbox. Please include your name and phone number. Thank you!



December Ushers

Lee Eichhorst
Sandy Eichhorst

Gary Hollen
Jeff Jewett

George Malloch
Larry Zahnd



December Anniversaries

- 3 Jim and Jill Acheson (1955)
23 Howard and Felice Rhodes (1951)

December Birthdays

- 2 Violet McDuffee
Sean Taylor
10 Irene Van Rheeden
11 Jim Hershberger
15 Ben Pelg
16 Ernie Drake
Vicky Welser
17 Allison Wrobel
20 William O'Neill
Maura Healy
21 Kaitlyn Edwards
23 Meta Greeson
Holly Pelg
25 Jesus Christ
Sharon Jeter
Carole Vilchis
29 Lindsey Hallett
Jeff Taylor



Editor's Note: We apologize for omissions or errors. Information for the newsletter mailing list, birthday list and anniversary list is taken from Church records.

Please report changes in writing to the Church Office. You may mail changes, place notes in the Office Manager's mailbox or send an email to stpeters_ucc@msn.com. Thanks for your help!

Make it a Date – with The Chorale!



No plans for New Year's Eve? Spend the evening with The Chorale at the 17th annual "C-U at the Virginia". This year's celebration, "Just Folk", features some familiar and some not-so-familiar folk songs; the musical

talents of Scottish folk singer, Jean Redpath with pianist Jacqueline Schwab and cellist Reinmar Seidler and a special guest appearance by former Young Artist Scholarship Winner, Elizabeth Treat. And of course, Dan Perrino will lead the sing-along accompanied by Warren York on the Mighty Wurlitzer. You won't want to miss a fun evening filled with great music – New Year's Eve, 7:00 p.m. at the Virginia Theatre. (Tickets available at the theatre box office.) Take a good look at the members of The Chorale and you might spot a familiar face or two!



Church Mailbag

Please accept our sincere gratitude for your love and support at the time of Cal's death. Once again, the unconditional love of our St. Peter's family has provided us strength and hope. God bless each of you!

Mary Casey and family

Thank you for all the cards and notes of encouragement during my recent medical ordeals.

Karlene Ornelas

The 12 Days of Christmas

The twelve days of Christmas are the twelve days between Christmas and Epiphany (January 6), which is when the three wise men are said to have arrived on the scene. It is not the twelve days before Christmas as many may think.

Most people know of The Twelve Days of Christmas from the song of that name. *The Twelve Days of Christmas* was written in England as one of the "catechism songs" to help young Catholics learn the basics of their faith. In short, it was a memory aid. Since the song sounded like rhyming nonsense, young Catholics could sing the song without fear of imprisonment. The authorities would not know that it was a religious song. In actuality, it seems that the words originated around 1780 in England and the music much earlier from France. The song was merely a child's game with no religious significance.



The 12 Symbols' Meanings

- 1 Partridge in a pear tree – God
- 2 Turtle Doves – The Old and New Testaments
- 3 French Hens – Faith, Hope and Charity
- 4 Calling Birds – The four Gospels and/or the Four Evangelists
- 5 Golden Rings – The first Five Books of the Old Testament
- 6 Geese A-laying – the six days of creation
- 7 Swans A-swimming – the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit
- 8 Maids A-milking – the eight beatitudes
- 9 Ladies Dancing – the nine Fruits of the Spirit
- 10 Lords A-leaping – the Ten Commandments
- 11 Pipers Piping – the eleven faithful apostles
- 12 Drummers Drumming – the twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed



*Have a safe and blessed
Merry Christmas!*

from St. Peter's Staff