

KNOW GROW GO

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
PORT CHARLOTTE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
VOLUME 42 - ISSUE 12

December 2011

Sunday Worship: 8:00am - 11:00am - 6:00pm www.pcumc.info 941-625-4356 ph / 941-625-0144 fax

Recharging Our Christmas Traditions

This past week, members of our church family gathered in the sanctuary to decorate for the coming Advent and Christmas season. I watched (didn't help much) as chrismsons, wreaths and other seasonal decorations were placed. I listened as carols played in the background. What a beautiful tradition! I am always in awe of how beautiful the sanctuary here at Port Charlotte United Methodist Church is. It struck me that we have patterns and places in our lives that are important to us. Holiday seasons are important reminders to us what is truly valuable in the ways that we pattern our lives.

Many of us find much of our celebration of Christmas wrapped up in a single word – TRADITION. We have traditions for how we decorate our homes, how and where we spend our family time, when we do our shopping, and when we attend services. We organize as many of the details as possible to keep intact our traditions: from trees, to nativity scenes, to church productions, meals, gifts, and even our methods of serving.

The truth is that sometimes our traditions can take on a life of their own. We can become so busy and so burdened with carrying out our traditions that we find ourselves struggling to find the meaning of Christmas in the midst of the madness.

Christmas is about celebrating God's good and gracious gift to the world through the birth of Jesus Christ. Our Christmas traditions should - in some way - accurately point to the promise of redemption to the world that God has fulfilled in Jesus' coming.

Through Jesus God gave fully and loved perfectly. He didn't reserve this gift to thankful and gracious people who deserved redemption. He gave it to all kinds of people. The gift was for people filled with gratitude but also people consumed by greed. The gift was for people overflowing with love but also for people consumed with hatred. Romans 5:8 says, "*But God demonstrated His own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*"

God gave His Son to sleep as a baby in a humble stable. God gave His Son to work as a young man in a carpenter's shop. God gave His Son to Scribes and Pharisees who lied about Him and impugned His character. God gave His Son to die a criminal's death to shoulder the sins of the world. God gave His Son to be separated, for a time from His Loving Father. God gave His Son to wear our pain, judgment, and death as His mantle so that we might be clothed with God's loving redemption.

All four of the gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John record the record of Jesus' three-year earthly ministry. We can read of His miracles, His death, His burial, His resurrection, and His ascension. In each of these accounts we see God reconciling the world to Himself through the coming of Jesus.

The truth of that message should be the recharging agent for all of our holiday traditions! All that we do should help us remember and appreciate God's redeeming gift – JESUS!

May the words of Josef Mohr echo in our hearts as well as in our ears during this Advent and Christmas season:

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, loves pure light;
Radiant beams from Thy holy face
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at Thy birth.

Grace, Pastor Brian

December 3

Pancake Breakfast
7-11am (with Santa!)



December 11

Children's Christmas
Program "The Gift" 6:30pm
5:15 dinner
6pm Church@6
6:30pm Performance

December 14

WNT Dinner 5:00pm
Christmas Cantata 7:00pm

December 17

Family Christmas Caroling
and Potluck 2pm

December 24 Christmas Eve

6pm / 8pm / 11pm Services

December 25 Christmas Day

Worship 9:30am

Community Christmas Dinner

11:30am—2:30pm
Fellowship Hall

December 28

Family Dinner & a Movie
"Elf" Rated PG 6-8pm

Note: The church offices will be closed at noon 12/23 and 12/30. We will be closed all day 12/26 & 1/02.

In Loving Memory

Joel Sonnabend 10-28-11

Letters

I am blessed and deeply touched by my PCUMC family. I treasure the many get well cards, encouraging phone calls, delicious food, daily contacts and loads of prayers. God is good.

Ruth Herzberger

Extravagant Generosity

Y-T-D Income \$706,020.98

Y-T-D Expenses \$714,067.71

Utility Assistance - 1

A Note About Charitable Contributions for 2011

Checks or cash for 2011 contributions must be delivered to the church by December 31st in order to claim a charitable contribution deduction for this year on your tax return.

Checks that are placed in the church offering during the first worship service in 2012 will not qualify for a 2011 deduction even if the check is dated in 2011 or was actually written in 2011. However, checks that are written, mailed, and postmarked in 2011 will be deductible in 2011 even though they may not be received by the church until 2012.

Sunshine Ministry

Blessed are the merciful for they will obtain mercy.
Matthew 5:7

When good things happen to those showing mercy and kindness - this is not luck, it is a blessing from God.

Know the joy of feeling blessed after you visit a lonely shut-in. Sunshine Ministers know the joy of special blessings.

Come meet with us in the conference room - 2nd Wednesday of the month 9-10am. We welcome you and you just might find that special joy of being merciful.

For more information call Doris Culver 743-5092



Breakfast with Santa!
Saturday, Dec. 3
7am - 11am

Join us in Fellowship Hall for
Pancakes, Sausage links, Sausage &
Gravy, Eggs, Applesauce and
Orange Juice

Sponsored by the United Methodist Men



Sunday, December 11
Children's Christmas Program
"The Gift"

5:15 Dinner, 6pm Church@6
6:30 Program in Sanctuary



Wednesday, December 14
"Christmas Canticles"
Performed by the Chancel Choir

5-6pm WNT Dinner | 7pm Cantata Performance

2011 PCUMC 26th Annual Community Christmas Dinner

The tradition of the Annual Christmas Dinner will continue for 2011! A dinner of turkey, dressing, gravy, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, green beans, cranberry sauce and pie will be served for everyone from 11:30 AM to 2:30 PM. Bob and Chris Burr have again volunteered as the dinner coordinators. Jim Hepler and Phil Western return as our chefs.

Home delivery will be available for shut-ins. Transportation can be provided for those in need of a ride. Call one of these numbers: 627-8543 or 743-0697 for home delivery and transportation needs. You may also call 743-5092 (evenings only).

Christmas Day is a Sunday this year. There will be one service at 9:30 AM. We will begin preparing the trays for delivery to the shut-ins immediately after the service ends. We will begin serving the congregation and community guests by 11:30 AM.

Again this year we will prepare all turkeys on church premises in accordance with state and county health codes.

Please return this form to the church office or place in offering plate.

YES, I WOULD LIKE TO HELP WITH THE 2011 CHRISTMAS DINNER.
I AM CHECKING INTERESTED AREAS BELOW:



Donations:

- _____ Please accept my donation to help purchase a turkey. (suggested amount \$15-20)
(Please write "turkey" on the memo line of your check)
- _____ Please accept my donation to cover other costs. (Indicate "Christmas dinner" on check.)
- _____ Donate an 8-9" pie (**PLEASE, No oversized pies or pies needing refrigeration.**)

Shut-In dinners and transportation:

- _____ Help get Shut-in dinners ready for delivery (immediately after church service)
- _____ Help deliver dinners to shut-ins on Christmas Day (11:00 AM).
- _____ Provide transportation for those unable to drive.

Set-up/Decorations on Thursday, December 22nd – 9:00 AM

- _____ Set up Dec. 22 at 9:00 AM. _____ Help with decorations on December 22 – 10:00 AM

Turkey preparation (carving) – We will need several volunteers on a daily basis to carve turkeys in the afternoon. We will call with exact time needed.

- _____ Wednesday, Dec. 21st _____ Thursday, Dec. 22nd _____ Friday, Dec. 23rd

Kitchen Help

*We need two or three people to work with Jim and Phil to prepare the food on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Choose your day! Or Both!! Call Chris (764-1866) for more info.

- _____ Assistant cooks* - (December 24th)
- _____ Assistant cooks* - (December 25th)
- _____ Kitchen clean-up – December 24th
- _____ Kitchen clean-up – December 25th (we will call to arrange times)
- _____ Dishwashing – December 25th



Dining Room Volunteers

_____ December 25th (circle time preference)

10:45 AM – 12:15 PM (you will also assist with Shut-in tray prep.)

12:15 PM – 1:30 PM

1:30 PM -3:30 PM (you will also assist with dining room clean-up)

2:30 to ?? (General dining room and kitchen clean-up)

NAME _____

Phone _____

Email (print) _____

Last year we served nearly 800 meals between those delivered and those eaten at church. We anticipate serving many more this year based on current community needs. Our Christmas dinner is an important community outreach program for our church. Please volunteer!

Questions: call Chris or Bob Burr 764-1866 or email: chrisbob2116@comcast.net

Please place completed form in offering plate or return to church office.

SAVE THE DATE! January 28, 2012

South West District Local Church Leadership Training Event

An opportunity for all local church laity... especially newly elected leaders and committee members for 2012. Training sessions will target specific church leadership roles.

Participants will have the opportunity to attend two sessions from various topics and leaders. A complete roster of topics will be available soon.

The cost of the event is \$5 payable at the door.
Lunch will be provided.

For more information contact Sandy Voight: flumc-sw@flumc.org

Florida Hospitality Team: Volunteers Needed

The Florida conference will be hosting General Conference 2012 at the Tampa Convention Center April 24th -May 4th. This conference brings together delegates from around the world who determine current and future policies of the United Methodist Church.



This is a great opportunity to get involved. More information is available from the conference website at www.flumc.org or by calling 1-800-282-8011, ext. 197.

History is His Story: *The Down-to-Earth Bishop*

Jonathan Carlsen

We remember the late Bennett Cerf (1898-1971) for a lot of things. He was co-founder of the publishing company, Random House. He was an accomplished toastmaster, storyteller, and joke collector. He was a regular panelist on the game show *What's My Line?* both on CBS and in syndication from 1951 until his death. But we don't think of him as an historian or as a church historian, but this son of New York City Jews managed to preserve for us a fascinating bit of United Methodist history. In his joke collection, he recounts this story:

"Eighty years ago a bishop in the Middle West preached a sermon castigating visionaries who dared predict that one day men would fly through the air like birds. 'Flight is reserved to the angels,' thundered the bishop, 'and to say men will fly is downright blas-phemy.'

"The name of the bishop, incidentally, was Milton Wright. He had two sons, one named Orville, the other Wilbur."

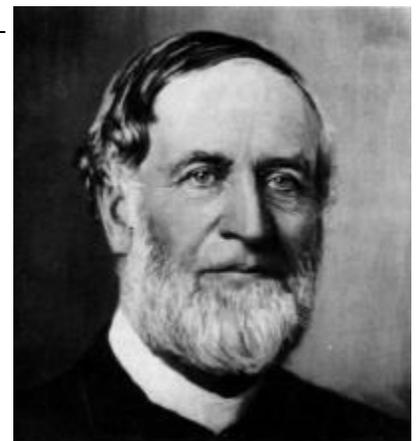
I retold this story in the *United Methodist Reporter* (April 21, 1978), but in 1996 I came across a different version by Nebraska businessman, amateur historian, and museum-builder Harold Warp:

"In 1877 Bishop Milton Wright listened to a sermon by a young preacher who predicted that one day man would be able to fly. Bishop Wright, much disturbed after Brother Horner's sermon, took occasion to correct the young man's thinking. 'You spoke,' he said, 'of expect-ing to see men flying overhead in machines yet to be invented. That, Brother Horner, is a sacrilegious error, for only angels fly. Men will never fly; God has so ordained it.' The Bishop who made that statement was the father of Orville and Wilbur Wright, who invented the airplane."*

Which version is correct? Quite possibly both. It may be that the United Brethren's Bishop Milton Wright first heard and scolded the young preacher for his aeronautical speculations and later preached his own sermon on the subject. I've done that myself as a lay speaker on a different issue of faith.

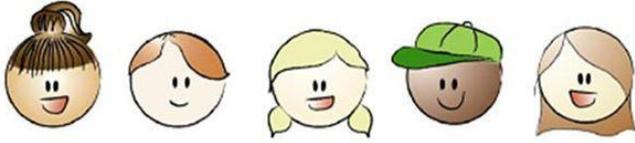
I heard another story that, at some time after 1903, Bishop Wright coaxed his sons into taking him on a flight and was utterly thrilled by the experience. But I can't verify that one. There's a photo posted on the Internet claiming to show Bishop Wright on that flight, but all it shows is a biplane silhouetted against the sky. It could even be a model. *Oh, well!*

* Quoted from *500 Fascinating Facts: A true Record of Discoveries, Inventions, Developments in These United States, and Person Responsible*, comp. Harold Warp (Minden, NE: Harold Warp Pioneer Village Foundation, 1992), p. 48. Reprinted by permission.



Children's Weekday Ministry

Ericka Brown



PCUMC Children's Weekday Ministry

God has truly blessed this ministry with some wonderful volunteers. Thank you!



Kim Davis teaches one of our 4-year-old classes again this year. She came to us last year from a preschool in Venice; we are so glad she took that leap of faith. Kim and her husband Jeff live in North Port with their two children, Jacob 15 and Becky 11.



Carrie Weller wears two hats on our staff this school year. She is teaching in a three's classroom and she works with the after-school children too. Carrie and her husband Bill have two girls that I'm sure you have seen on Sunday mornings or on Wednesday nights.

Praising God, Ericka

Love ♥ Play ♥ Learn



CWM's Christmas "Wish List"

- ◆ Clorox Anywhere spray
- ◆ Clorox wipes
- ◆ Paper Towels
- ◆ 5 oz. Cups
- ◆ Baby wipes
- ◆ Hand soap
- ◆ Zip lock baggies (quart & gallon)

Thank you!

Children's Ministry

Barbara Hald

Blessings to all over the Christmas holidays. I want to thank everyone who helped with "Eats and Treats." What an awesome event it turned out to be!

Our monthly **"Family Dinner and a Movie"** is turning out to be a great way to open our doors for fellowship and outreach to our neighbors. With 68 attending the first movie and 90 at the last it has grown. Many thanks to Joe and Leslie for all their hard work. We could use some more volunteers. It's easy and fun so please come and join us on December 28 which is a Wednesday night at 6pm for the movie "ELF" rated PG.

Our children's musical is on Sunday, December 11th during Church@6. You can also (quietly) sit in on the dress rehearsal on Wednesday, December 7th at 6pm.

Join us for Caroling!

We are planning to go Caroling at three assisted living centers on December 17th followed by a pot luck. We will leave from the church promptly at 2pm. *Come join us!*



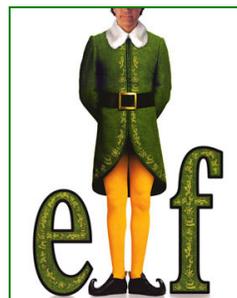
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

In His Love,
Barbara Hald

Family Dinner & a Movie

Wednesday, Dec. 28 6-8pm

FREE!



Youth Ministry

Paul Kisner

December 10

Youth Trip to Busch Garden's

Cost: \$65

See Paul for more details

December 14

No Youth Group

December 21

Annual Youth Christmas Party; Cost \$5



Thank you to all who participated in Operation Christmas Child this year. We filled 152 boxes!!



December Birthdays

01 Kern, Stacey	18 Lynch, Gertrude
02 Bertling, Norma	18 Mallard, Richard
02 Fisher, Carol	21 Hockett, Rita
04 Mason, Gary	22 Fisher, Samantha
06 Young, Chantel	22 McConocha, Virginia
07 Wilcek, Jessica	22 Mikus, Marsha
10 Donham, Laura	23 Johnson, Celeste
10 McNamara, Carson	24 Brown, Janice
11 Bailey, Seanna Marie	25 Bonsky, Sophia
11 McDonald, Merle	26 Kemp, Gay
11 Scott, Julie	27 Clark, Irwin
11 West, Fern	27 DeSilva, Dorothy
13 Leavitt, Lucy	27 Gue, Margaret
14 Western, Judy	29 Bonsky, Nicholas
15 Force, Sam	29 Gooden, Joyce
15 Warden, Wade	29 McNamara, Mark
16 Bryan, Elfreda	29 Slater, Kordell
16 Wilkins, Angelo	30 Bolitho, Maxine
17 Brown, Judy	30 Cates, Bob
17 Campbell, Paul	30 Miller, Arthur
17 Heinig, Bud	31 Nordstrom, Jean

December Anniversaries

12/01 Warren and Alice Heidenis
12/02 Don and Rose Yienger
12/06 Jerry and Gail Swanson
12/10 J.C. and Margaret Spann
12/12 Kristian and Jessica Dunda
12/16 Lloyd and Viris Brown
12/18 Ron and Patty Royer
12/19 G.Walford and Marlene Young
12/23 Steve and Phyllis Cox
12/26 Paul and Norma Campbell
12/26 Don and Esther Keirnan
12/27 Dick and Peg Thompson
12/27 Lisa and Gary Friend
12/27 John and Josephine Keating
12/28 Cecil and Charlene Ball

