



Volume 7, Issue 10

December 2007 newsletter of First United Church of Christ, Easton
27 North 3rd St.

(Mailing address: 229 Church St., Easton, PA 18042)
e-mail: firstucc2@verizon.net • www.firstucceaston.org

Emmanuel

Wonderful Counselor

**Jesus Christ
is born**

Savior

Prince of Peace

MESSIAH

“For to us this day, in the city of David,
a Savior is born. It is Christ the Lord”

Merry Christmas!

(Read Luke Chapter 2)

The Birth of Jesus

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire...All returned to their own towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea. David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, his fiance, who was obviously pregnant by this time.

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the village inn.

That night some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terribly frightened, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news of great joy for everyone! The Savior—yes the Messiah, the Lord—has been born tonight in Bethlehem, the city of David! And this is how you will recognize him. You will find a baby lying in a manger, wrapped snugly in strips of cloth!"

Suddenly the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God:

“Glory to God in the highest heaven
and peace on earth to all whom God
favors.”

When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Come on, let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this wonderful thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

They ran to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. Then the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary quietly treasured these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their fields and flocks, glorifying and praising God for what the angels had told them, and because they had seen the child, just as the angel had said.

May your heart embrace the True meaning of Christmas !

Weekly Worship Schedule

Join us Sunday
mornings for...

Adult
Sunday School at
9:15 a.m.

Worship & Kids
Sunday School at
10:30 a.m. in our
Sanctuary

Sunday School begins
at 10:30 a.m. with the
children joining us for
the beginning of the
worship service &
proceeding to their
classes after the
announcements.

Please join us
for our
Children's
Christmas
program on
Sun., Dec. 9th
at 10:30 a.m.
& for our
Candlelight
Christmas Eve
service at 7:30
p.m. on Mon.,
Dec. 24th!

Everyone is invited to
all our worship
services!
(And bring a friend!)

Upcoming December Events...

Sun., Nov. 2nd - **THE FIRST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT ~ HOPE**
ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL at
9:15 a.m.



SUNDAY SCHOOL with children &
youth meeting in the Sanctuary for
the beginning of worship at **10:30 a.m.**

We will welcome **NEW MEMBERS**,
celebrate the Sacrament of **HOLY
COMMUNION** & light the first
candle in the Advent Wreath. It is
also **FOOD BANK SUNDAY**.

**HANGING OF THE GREENS
PARTY & POT-LUCK** 3 p.m.

Sun., Dec. 9th - **SECOND SUNDAY OF
ADVENT ~ PEACE**

We will hold our **SUNDAY SCHOOL
CHRISTMAS PROGRAM** at 10:30
a.m. in the Sanctuary.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL at 9:15

DEADLINE for Poinsettia orders

PRAISE CHOIR meets after worship

Mon., Dec. 10th - **CONSISTORY** meets
at 7:30 p.m.

Sun., Dec. 16th - **THIRD SUNDAY OF
ADVENT ~ LOVE**

SUNDAY SCHOOL with children &
youth meeting in the Sanctuary for
the beginning of worship at **10:30 a.m.**

**CONGREGATIONAL BUDGET
MEETING** after morning worship.

We will meet to approve our proposed
2008 budget.

ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND!

(Events continue on pg. 4)

Upcoming November Events (continued)...

Sun., Dec. 16th (continued)

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL at 9:15 a.m.

PRAISE CHOIR meets after worship

DEADLINE to donate for Christmas Food Baskets

CHRISTMAS CAROLING at 3 p.m. with Party to follow

Sun., Dec. 23rd - FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~ JOY

Join us for worship at 10:30 a.m. There is NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

PRAISE CHOIR after worship

Mon., Dec. 24th - CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE at 7:30 p.m.

Tues., Dec. 25th - JESUS' BIRTHDAY ~ Merry Christmas!

Sun., Dec. 30th - MORNING WORSHIP in the Sanctuary at 10:30 a.m.

SUNDAY SCHOOL with children & youth meeting in the Sanctuary for the beginning of worship at 10:30 a.m.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL at 9:15 a.m.

Mon., Dec. 31st - NEW YEAR'S EVE

Tues., Jan. 1st - HAPPY NEW YEAR ~ 2008!

Sun., Jan. 6th - EPIPHANY ~ MORNING WORSHIP with the Sacrament of HOLY COMMUNION in the Sanctuary at 10:30 a.m.

SUNDAY SCHOOL with children & youth meeting in the Sanctuary for the beginning of worship at 10:30 a.m.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL at 9:15 a.m.

Sun., Jan. 27th - "SOUPER" BOWL SUNDAY

Pastoral Care

If you or someone you know is in need of Pastoral Care, please call Rev. William Wightman .

“Hanging of the Greens”

Sun., Dec. 2nd, 3 p.m.

Mark your calendars now. Hanging of the Greens will be on **Sunday, December 2nd, at 3 p.m.**



The church will be dressed in its gorgeous Christmas attire, and helpers will be needed to hang wreaths and garland, and set up the trees in the church and Sunday School. The children will be entertained with crafts, beginning in the Arts and Crafts Room at 3 p.m., and helpers will be needed there also to help little hands. **A covered dish will begin around 5-5:30**, so bring a generous vegetable, salad or dessert to share. Meat and beverages will be provided by Consistory. Come and join in the holiday fun!

Our “Angel Tree” will be set up too, so don’t forget to take a tag to help brighten someone’s Christmas!



Sunday School Christmas Program Sunday, Dec. 9th at 10:30 a.m.

Sun., Dec. 9th marks the day our youth will perform their Annual Christmas play, and the theme is Christmas around the World, which will be performed during the worship service at 10:30 a.m. Please come out and support our youth...they are our future.

Sunday School “Subs” Needed!

Hallelujah! Having Sunday School begin with the children joining us in worship at 10:30 seems to be a hit with our students and their families!

We are looking for volunteers “Subs” to help out with teaching Sunday School so our dedicated teachers can attend church services one in a while. The lessons can be planned for you and are very easy to follow. Anyone interested can check out the calendar in the hallway by the Arts & Crafts Room to sign up for a day. All age groups are available. Thanks for your support!

Thank You for the Bibles for Nairobi

Mark & Bette Walker would like to thank the First UCC family & friends for their generous donation of Bibles which Mark picked up on Sun., Nov. 18th. He very much enjoyed worshipping with the congregation and meeting some of the people. God bless you!

He recently finished the promotion for the American Bible Society and they agreed to augment what he has collected to bring the total to 600 Bibles! Hallelujah!

Advent Begins on Sunday, December 2nd

Advent begins on Sunday, Dec. 2nd and we will celebrate the Sacrament of Holy Communion at our 10:30 a.m. service.

We will begin lighting the candles in our Advent Wreath. The following families will read our Advent verses and light our Advent Wreath...

2nd - *The Candle of Hope*
The Hilsenbeck Family

9th - *The Candle of Peace*
The Corr Family

16th - *The Candle of Love*
The Dailey Family

23rd - *The Candle of Joy*
Steven & Samantha
Protyniak and Family

**24th *Christmas Eve -
The Christ Candle***
The Dowd Family



ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS!

Congregational Budget Meeting, Sun., Dec. 16th

We will meet after morning worship to present, discuss & vote on our proposed 2008 budget. Copies of the proposed budget for review are available in the Narthex. If you need one mailed to you, please call the church office. All our members are encouraged to attend!



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Our Christmas Eve Candlelight service will be held on Mon., Dec. 24th at 7:30 p.m. Please join us & bring along your family & friends, for this beautiful service with special music from our choirs, candle lighting & carols as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Savior.

There will be a time for fellowship & wishing your church friends Merry Christmas following the service. **Cookie bakers are needed** to supply baked goods for the reception. Please contact Barbara Dailey.



Join us for Caroling! Sun., Dec. 16th at 3 p.m.

We will go out caroling to our shut-in members on Sun., Dec. 16th. Please meet us here at the church at 3 p.m. We will make our rounds then meet at a place yet to be determined to enjoy the warmth of friendship & food.



Rummage Sale Update!

Our Annual Fall Rummage Sale was another great success! Thank you all for your help with set-up, donations, baking, take down & everything in between. We were able to donate \$3000 to the church from our sale! Thanks again for your help!

Musical Notes

Bells & Choir Practice Thurs. Evenings

Thursday is our busy music day here at First UCC! We all practice...

6:30 p.m. - Children's Handbells

6:45 p.m. - Youth Handbells

7:00 p.m. - Adult Handbells

7:30 p.m. - Senior Choir



Praise Choir



Praise Choir (Gospel & Contemporary music with guitars) is practicing on Sundays after morning worship. Our approximate 20 minute practices will be held immediately following morning worship at 11:30 a.m.

This is a great, informal group, especially for our Youth members so please consider coming out for Praise Choir. It's great fun!

Christmas Choir

The holidays are fast approaching, and the choir could use some new members, if only for the Christmas season. If you love to sing, how about joining us in the Arts and Crafts room, Sundays at 10 am? We know there are some good singers out there. After all, we heard you on the Canal Boat trip, so come join us this Sunday, and you will have a great time, and help make joyful music for your church family. Teens out there are welcome too...bring Mom and Dad!!!

*Everyone is invited to join any of our choirs,
no experience is necessary. Please see Sheila Cooke for more info.*



First UCC Christmas Orchestra

Get your instruments out! The First UCC Christmas Orchestra is organizing & will be practicing to play carols for the Sunday School Christmas program on Dec. 9th at 10:30 a.m. Our practices are scheduled for Sun., Nov. 25th, Dec. 2nd & Dec. 9th at 9 a.m. in the Arts & Crafts room.

THE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

(received via e-mail)

My husband and I had been happily married (most of the time) for five years but hadn't been blessed with a baby. I decided to do some serious praying and promised God that if he would give us a child, I would be a perfect mother, love it with all my heart and raise it with His word as my guide.

God answered my prayers and blessed us with a son.

The next year God blessed us with another son. The following year, He blessed us with yet another son. The year after that we were blessed with a daughter.

My husband thought we'd been blessed right into poverty. We now had four children, and the oldest was only four years old. I learned never to ask God for anything unless I meant it. As a minister once told me, 'If you pray for rain, make sure you carry an umbrella.'

I began reading a few verses of the Bible to the children each day as they lay in their cribs. I was off to a good start. God had entrusted me with four children and I didn't want to disappoint Him.

I tried to be patient the day the children smashed two dozen eggs on the kitchen floor searching for baby chicks. I tried to be understanding... when they started a hotel for homeless frogs in the spare bedroom, although it took me nearly two hours to catch all twenty-three frogs.

When my daughter poured ketchup all over herself and rolled up in a blanket to see how it felt to be a hot dog, I tried to see the humor rather than the mess.

In spite of changing over twenty-five thousand diapers, never eating a hot meal and never sleeping for more than thirty minutes at a time, I still thank God daily for my children.

While I couldn't keep my promise to be a perfect mother - I didn't even come close...I did keep my promise to raise them in the Word of God.

I knew I was missing the mark just a little when I told my daughter we were going to church to worship God, and she wanted to bring a bar of soap along to 'wash up' Jesus, too. Something was lost in the translation when

I explained that God gave us everlasting life, and my son thought it was generous of God to give us his 'last wife.'

(Continued on pg. 14)

First Ladies are “Going Nuts”

The First Ladies will continue selling their now “world famous” no-peanut nuts, throughout the holiday season and beyond if there is a demand. They sell for \$7.50 a bag, and make wonderful hostess and holiday gifts and stocking stuffers, so stock up now while they are available.



First Ladies “Bah- Humbug to Winter Party”

Ladies, do you suffer from winter doldrums? Do you just hate to see the holidays go? Do you wanna have some fun with your First UCC lady friends...ya know, girl talk and chocolate? Well, mark those calendars now, January 18th, for our Second Annual “Bah-Humbug to Winter Party”. Watch the bulletin board in memorial hall for the details, but mark the date in red so you won’t forget. **ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS AT FIRST UCC ARE FIRST LADIES**, so join us!

Book Club Date Change!

We are beginning a new spiritual book club. The first book is an easy one, (don’t want to scare anybody off right off the bat!). The first book we read will be by Jan Karon, and is called, “Shepherds Abiding”. It is a story about a Mississippi pastor, Father Tim, who discovers the best gift anyone can give at Christmas, the gift of one’s heart. **If you ordered or need a copy of the book please see Nancy Amore or Kris Skillinge**, the books have arrived. The book may also be purchased at Hackman’s, Walden Books, and Barnes and Noble for \$13.95. **Please watch the bulletin for the new date & location of our first meeting.**

Christmas Poinsettias & Donations for the Needy

Don’t forget to order your Christmas Poinsettia before the Dec. 9th deadline. Donations for the needy will be accepted until Sun., Dec. 16th. Please use the order form included in this newsletter or pick one up at church.

December Bulletins

2nd- Irene Stotz in loving memory of her husband, Thomas B. Stotz, and her daughter, Jenny Lynn.

9th - Brian, Jackie & Melissa Lunger in memory of loved ones.

16th - Jackie Wogotz in celebration of life.

23rd - Ferne & Bill Turner in memory of loved ones.

24th *Christmas Eve* - Carl & Sheila Cooke in memory of Mary Cooke, C. Stanton Cooke, and other loved ones.

30th - James & Linda Wright, wishing all Church members a Happy New Year 2008!

If you would like to sponsor the bulletins for one of our services, please contact the church office at 610-258-3361.

If you sponsored bulletins this year & have not paid for them, please drop your payment in the collection plate or mail it in, note that it is for bulletins.

December Flowers

2nd- Gary & Mae Rapp in celebration of the life of Gary's father, Robert G. Rapp, and Mae's father, Alvin Shafer.

Single arrangement

Helena Rapp in loving remembrance of her husband Bob on his birthday today.

9th - Mr. & Mrs. David Arnold, Sr. in loving memory of Grandparents, Thomas & Lillie Mae Arnold and parents, L.J. & Bertha Arnold.

16th - Christmas Poinsettias

23rd - Christmas Poinsettias

24th - *Christmas Eve*
Christmas Poinsettias

30th - Christmas Poinsettias



If you would like to sponsor altar flowers, please contact the church office at 610-258-3361.

Angel Food Ministries at St. John's on Morgan Hill

The **Dec. menu** is available in our narthex, in the office or on-line at: www.stjohnsmorganhill.org.

There are several unique specials for the holiday so please look it over.

If you have been financially blessed & don't have to watch your pennies, perhaps you know of a family that could use a food box? With additional heating costs now, AFM can be a special blessing. Buy a box & give it away!

December order dates are:

Wed., Nov. 28th - 4-6 p.m.

Sat., Dec. 1st - 9 a.m. til noon

**Sun., Dec. 2nd - 10:30 a.m. til
12:30 p.m.**

**Dec. distribution date is Fri.,
December 14th -
6:30-8 p.m.**

**Cash, Money Orders or
Food Stamps are accepted.**

(Food Stamp orders must be placed in person at St. John's.)

**Cash orders can be taken by
Margaret in the church office
anytime before Sun., Decem-
ber 2nd, or call her with any
questions.**

December Birthdays

25 - Emmanuel



PLEASE NOTE:

If we have omitted a birth-
day, anniversary or other
special day from our news-
letter, please call the
church office & let us
know. We may not
have your special
date in our records!



Eagle Scout Library Project

CARL WANDERSEE is doing his Eagle Scout project. He is collecting funds & nearly new books for the Phillipsburg Free Public Library.

The ultimate goal of his project is to purchase or collect 200 books on their "Wish List", including books from early learning age up to youth. Monetary donations are especially helpful to purchase hard to find titles. Books can be left in the box in the Narthex. A partial list of needed authors/books is available. Please see Carl Wandersee for more info.

My proudest moment came during the children's Christmas pageant. My daughter was playing Mary, two of my sons were shepherds and my youngest son was a wise man.

This was their moment to shine. My five-year-old shepherd had practiced his line, 'We found the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes.'

But he was nervous and said, 'The baby was wrapped in wrinkled clothes.' My four-year-old 'Mary' said, 'That's not 'wrinkled clothes,' silly. That's dirty, rotten clothes.' A wrestling match broke out between Mary and the shepherd and was stopped by an angel, who bent her halo and lost her left wing.

I slouched a little lower in my seat when Mary dropped the doll representing Baby Jesus, and it bounced down the aisle crying, 'Mama-mama.' Mary grabbed the doll, wrapped it back up and held it tightly as the wise men arrived.

My other son stepped forward wearing a bathrobe and a paper crown, knelt at the manger and announced, 'We are the three wise men, and we are bringing gifts of gold, common sense, and fur.'

The congregation dissolved into laughter, and the pageant got a standing ovation.

'I've never enjoyed a Christmas program as much as this one,' laughed the pastor, wiping tears from his eyes.

'For the rest of my life, I'll never hear the Christmas story without thinking of gold, common sense and fur.'

My children are my pride and my joy and my greatest blessing,' I said as I dug through my purse for an aspirin.

**Jesus had no servants, yet they called Him Master.
Had no degree, yet they called Him Teacher .
Had no medicines, yet they called Him Healer.
Had no army, yet kings feared Him.
He won no military battles, yet He conquered the world.
He committed no crime, yet they crucified Him.
He was buried in a tomb, yet He lives today.**

I Feel honored to serve such a Leader who loves us .
GOD BLESS YOU ALL!!! MERRY CHRISTMAS!

December Greeters, Readers & Ushers

December 2nd -

Greeters - Elaine Hrymack & Jill West

Ushers - Elaine Hrymack, Jill West, Carl Cooke & Lester Litzenberger

Reader - Sue Beling

Acolyte - Kelsie Hilsenbeck

December 9th - Sunday School Christmas Program

December 16th -

Greeters - Bill & Linda Arnold

Ushers - Bill & Linda Arnold and Bob & Doreen Arnold

Reader - Doreen Arnold

Acolyte - Megan McGinley

December 23rd -

Greeters - David & Wendy Wandersee

Ushers - Carl & David Wandersee and Brian & Melissa Lunger

Reader - Sharon Ashton

Acolyte - Matt Ashton

December 24th -

Greeters - Steve & Samantha Protyniak

Ushers - Steve Protyniak, Tim McGinley, Beverly Lambert &
Janet Caka

Reader - Mark Cooke

Acolyte - Christian Kmetz



December 30th -

Greeters - Mark & Tara Cooke

Ushers - Mark & Tara Cooke and David & Kim Kmetz

Reader - Denise Cardinalli

Acolyte - Brynn Hilsenbeck

ATTENTION PARENTS! We are planning to revive our **Acolyte** program starting on Nov. 4th. If you have children interested in serving as Acolytes, please contact the church office at 610-258-3361.

Supplies for our Soldiers

We need individually wrapped hard candy or lollipops for the men to hand out to the Iraqi children also puzzle books, snacks and letters & notes.

Each box costs \$8.95 to ship, no matter the weight, so if you would like to donate towards shipping costs, please talk to Nancy Amore.

Josh Dailey was just re-deployed to Iraq on Nov. 25th. Please keep all our soldiers in your prayers & pray for peace.



Prayers for Comfort...

Go out to the family & friends of Barbara Rutt who passed away on Thanksgiving Day. Barbara was the daughter of Clarence Rutt. Please keep Clarence, his son Ken & their family in your prayers.



Unsung Angels at First UCC

Hopefully, you will all remember last month's "Angels" at our church, Brian Lunger & Mark Cooke. Well, we have several "Unsung Angels" this month also, in several different categories.



First of all, we salute Doris Fowler and her sister, Agnes Carhart for their help every month, assembling the Steeple News for mailing to all our members. After that tedious work is done, they sort it for bulk mailing and get it to the Post Office so all of you can stay informed.

Two more "Unsung Angels" are our Rummage Sale elves, who show up every day to sort and fold all that rummage that you dig out of your closets in the Fall and Spring. They are Wendy Wandersee and Carol Stem, who seem to have unfailing energy and patience accomplishing this daunting task which netted the church \$3,000 this Fall. Of course, they have lots of helpers, but if we had to pay these two for the hours they log that week, we would be broke, so special thanks to these two special ladies.

God bless you all!