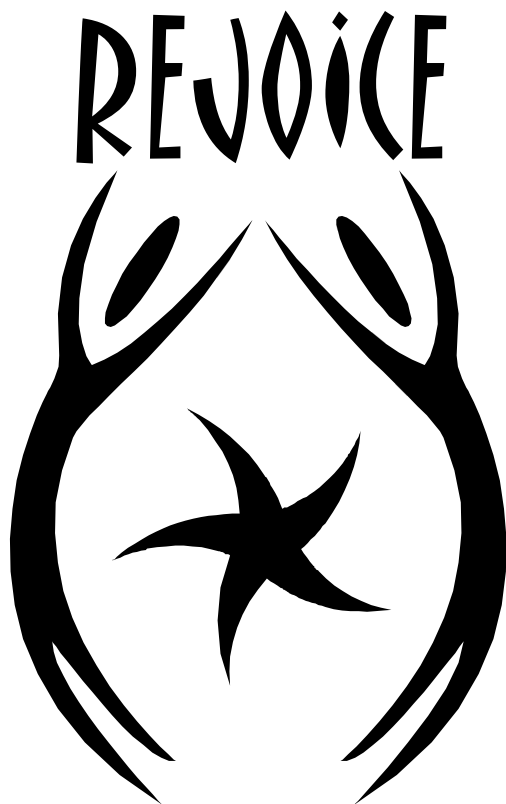




Volume 8, Issue 10

December 2008 newsletter of First United Church of Christ, Easton
27 North 3rd St.

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

An Intimate Moment with Mary & Joseph

[Excerpted from "Intimate Moments With The Savior"]

Scripture

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

— *Luke 2:1-7*

Meditation

For the census, the royal family has to travel eighty-five miles. Joseph walks, while Mary, nine months pregnant, rides sidesaddle on a donkey, feeling every jolt, every rut, every rock in the road.

By the time they arrive, the small hamlet of Bethlehem is swollen from an influx of travelers. The inn is packed, people feeling lucky if they were able to negotiate even a small space on the floor. Now it is late, everyone is asleep, and there is no room.

But fortunately, the innkeeper is not all shekels and mites. True, his stable is crowded with his guests' animals, but if they could squeeze out a little privacy there, they were welcome to it.

Joseph looks over at Mary, whose attention is concentrated on fighting a contraction. "We'll take it," he tells the innkeeper without hesitation.

The night is still when Joseph creaks open the stable door. As he does, a chorus of barn animals makes discordant note of the intrusion. The stench is pungent and humid, as there have not been enough hours in the day to tend the guests, let alone the livestock. A small oil lamp, lent them by the innkeeper, flickers to dance shadows on the walls. A disquieting place for a woman in the throes of childbirth. Far from home. Far from family. Far from what she had expected for her firstborn.

But Mary makes no complaint. It is a relief just to finally get off the donkey. She leans back against the wall, her feet swollen, back aching, contractions growing stronger and closer together.

Joseph's eyes dart around the stable. Not a minute to lose. Quickly. A feeding trough would have to make do for a crib. Hay would serve as a mattress. Blankets? Blankets? Ah, his robe. That would do. And those rags hung out to dry would help. A gripping contraction doubles Mary over and sends him racing for a bucket of water.

The birth would not be easy, either for the mother or the child. For every royal privilege for this son ended at conception.

A scream from Mary knifes through the calm of that silent night. Joseph returns, breathless, water sloshing from the wooden bucket. The top of the baby's head has already pushed its way into the world. Sweat pours from Mary's contorted face as Joseph, the most unlikely midwife in all Judea, rushes to her side.

The involuntary contractions are not enough, and Mary has to push with all her strength, almost as if God were refusing to come into the world without her help.

Joseph places a garment beneath her, and with a final push and a long sigh her labor is over.

The Messiah has arrived.

Elongated head from the constricting journey through the birth canal. Light skin, as the pigment would take days or even weeks to surface. Mucus in his ears and nostrils. Wet and slippery from the amniotic fluid. The Son of the Most High God umbilically tied to a lowly Jewish girl.

The baby chokes and coughs. Joseph instinctively turns him over and clears his throat.

Then he cried. Mary bares her breast and reaches for the shivering baby. She lays him on her chest, and his helpless cries subside. His tiny head bobs around on the unfamiliar terrain. This will be the first thing the infant-king learns. Mary can feel his racing heartbeat as he gropes to nurse.

Deity nursing from a young maiden's breast. Could anything be more puzzling — or more profound!

Joseph sits exhausted, silent, full of wonder.

The baby finishes and sighs, the divine Word reduced to a few unintelligible sounds. Then, for the first time, his eyes fix on his mother's. Deity straining to focus. The Light of the World, squinting.

Tears pool in her eyes. She touches his tiny hand. And hands that once sculpted mountain ranges cling to her finger.

She looks up at Joseph, and through a watery veil, their souls touch. He crowds closer, cheek to cheek with his betrothed. Together they stare in awe at the baby Jesus, whose heavy eyelids begin to close. It has been a long journey. The King is tired.

And so, with barely a ripple of notice, God stepped into the warm lake of humanity. Without protocol and without pretension.

Where you would have expected angels, there were only flies. Where you would have expected heads of state, there were only donkeys, a few haltered cows, and a nervous ball of sheep, a tethered camel, and a furtive scurry of curious barn mice.

Except for Joseph, there was no one to share Mary's pain. Or her joy. Yes, there were angels announcing the Savior's arrival — but only to a band of blue-collar shepherds. And yes, a magnificent star shone in the sky to mark his birthplace — but only three foreigners bothered to look up and follow it.

Thus, in the little town of Bethlehem...that one silent night...the royal birth of God's Son tiptoed quietly by...as the world slept.

May the awesome wonder of the Messiah's birth grab your heart & your life this 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, 14th
at 10:30 a.m.
& for our
Candlelight
Christmas Eve
service at 7:30
p.m. on Wed.,
Dec. 24th !

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

Upcoming December Events...

Sun., Nov. 30th - **THE FIRST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT ~ HOPE & HOLY
COMMUNION** at 10:30 a.m.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL at
9:15 a.m.



SUNDAY SCHOOL at 10:30 a.m.

Sat., Dec. 6th - **EAGLE SCOUT COURT
OF HONOR** for Carl Wandersee 10:00

Sun., Dec. 7th - **SECOND SUNDAY OF
ADVENT ~ PEACE & FOOD
BANK SUNDAY**

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL at 9:15

**CONGREGATIONAL BUDGET
MEETING** after morning worship.

We will meet to approve our proposed
2009 budget.

ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO ATTEND!

**HANGING OF THE GREENS
PARTY!** Following the Budget



Meeting we will feast on
sandwiches, pot-luck side
dishes & desserts & then
decorate our beautiful church
for Christmas while the kids
make some crafts.

Everyone is invited!

DEADLINE for Poinsettia orders

PRAISE CHOIR meets after worship

Mon., Dec. 8th - **CONSISTORY** meets
at 7:30 p.m.

Sat., Dec. 13th - **HOLIDAY BUS TRIP**
to New York City

(Events continue on pg. 4)

Upcoming December Events (continued)...

Sun., Dec. 14th ~ THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~ LOVE

We will hold our **SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM** at 10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary. We will also hear selections from our Christmas Orchestra

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL at 9:15

PRAISE CHOIR meets after worship

ANGEL TREE GIFTS DUE & DEADLINE to donate for Christmas Food Baskets

Sun., Dec. 21st ~ FORTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~ JOY

NO SUN SCHOOL

PRAISE CHOIR meets after worship

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

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

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

Sun., Dec. 28th - MORNING WORSHIP on "FRIENDSHIP SUNDAY" in the Sanctuary at 10:30 a.m. with a time of refreshment & fellowship following the service

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.**

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

Thurs., Jan. 1st - HAPPY NEW YEAR ~ 2009!

Sun., Jan. 4th - 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. 25th - "SOUPER" BOWL SUNDAY Luncheon following our 10:30 a.m service. More details in this newsletter



Mark Sunday Dec. 7th & Don't Miss Out!

Wow! Sunday, December 7 will be a day not to be missed at First Church! Following morning worship, we will be having our **Annual Budget Meeting** in the Sanctuary, and everyone is strongly urged to remain for important information about your church to discuss & vote on our proposed 2009 budget. All members should have received a copy of the proposed budget in the mail for review. If you didn't receive yours, please call the church office. All our members are encouraged to attend!

Then, we will meet in the Parlor for a covered dish luncheon, under the guidance of our Church Life chair, Barbara Dailey, followed by **"Hanging of the Greens"**, which includes tree decorating, and crafts for the kids. There will be a sign up sheet in Memorial Hall for both the crafts and food, so plan on having a day of good fun, good food, and good fellowship for all ages. Don't want to hang greens? Feel free to sit and talk or watch the festivities. All are welcome!



2009 Offering Envelopes are Here!

The 2009 Offering Envelopes are available in Memorial Hall. They are in numerical order but there is an alphabetical list to help you find yours!



Christmas Poinsettias & Donations for the Needy



Don't forget to **order your Christmas Poinsettia before the Dec. 7th deadline. No late orders can be accepted.** The poinsettias will be delivered in time to beautify the Sanctuary for our Dec. 21st service & will remain for Christmas Eve & the following Sun., (Dec. 28th). You may take yours home whenever you need it though.

Also, our fund to assist those in need within our congregations is accepting donations until Sun., Dec. 14th.

Advent Begins on Sunday, November 30th

Advent begins on
Sunday, Nov. 30th 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...

Nov. 30th - *The Candle of Hope*
The Hilsenbeck Family

Dec. 7th - *The Candle of Peace*
The Skillinge Family

Dec. 14th - *The Candle of Love*
Lucy & Eric Bedoya

Dec. 21st - *The Candle of Joy*
The Rothermel Family

Dec. 24th *Christmas Eve -
The Christ Candle*
The Ashton Family



Holiday N.Y. City Bus Trip Sat., Dec. 13th

The Men's Club have finalized
plans for a Holiday New York
City Bus trip for Sat., Dec. 13th,
2008. Tickets are \$65/person and
are available after church in the
Narthex, or you can
contact the church
office for reserva-
tions. Space is limited
so don't delay!



Details are...

- Bus leaves Northampton Crossings at 11:00 a.m.
- Arrive Little Italy NYC at 1:00 p.m.
- Lunch at world Famous LE MELA RISTORANTE ~ menu
Neopolitano Bread & Olive Oil & Butter, Italian Mixed Salad, Chicken Parmigiana with Rigatoni Pasta, Dessert - Homemade Tiramisu
- Visit the Italian Bakeries for your favorite Pastries
- Leave Little Italy at 3:30 p.m. for Rockefeller Center Area
We'll see the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree, the Skating Rink, the 5th Ave. holiday windows, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Radio City Music Hall and more...
- Bus leaves NYC to Easton at 8:00 p.m.

Sunday School Christmas Program Sunday, Dec. 14th at 10:30 a.m.



Sun., Dec. 14th marks the day our youth will perform their Annual Christmas play during the worship service at 10:30 a.m. Please come & enjoy this annual treat. It surely will bring a smile to your face!



Angel Tree Gifts

Angel tags will again be available this year....and I'm sure you're aware of the great need....So if you're able, take a tag or two to help fulfill someone's Christmas wish. **Tags will be available starting the First week in Advent....look around the Narthex...Please try to return your wrapped present by the 14th, the 21st at the latest.**



Spread Some First UCC Christmas Cheer!

Join us for Caroling! Sun., Dec. 21st at 3 p.m.

Hopefully, this year, the weather will cooperate, and there will be no ice storm as there was last year, and our world famous, First UCC Christmas Carolers will be able to warble all over the area.

We meet at 3 pm in the Arts and Crafts Room, consolidate cars, and travel to our shutin friends, and those in nursing homes. If you have never gone with us, let me tell you, it is hard at times to see these wonderful people lying in their beds, or in wheelchairs, but I think those of us who have gone for years will tell you, that to see them smile, tap their feet to the song, laugh at our funny hats and stuffed toys, or even cry a tear or two, that this is a real Christian way to give back, and show them that we still do care and remember them.

Who could forget Mildred Firth trying to make out our faces, and holding our hands, and telling of a remembrance she had of us as kids! Truly amazing! We encourage young families to join us with their kids, and live the Golden Rule for one night. Of course, a party will follow at a home to be announced, so watch the bulletin board, and please, sign up and join us. It will do your heart good, and warm the hearts of others too.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Our Christmas Eve Candlelight service will be held on Wed., 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.

After our Joyous Christmas Eve service, we will be fellowshipping again!! So please bring your favorite cookies along to share! Please contact Barbara Dailey with any questions.



Musical Notes

Choirs Begin to Prepare for the Holidays!

First U.C.C. has several choirs which are open to anyone to join. Under the direction of our talented & patient Music Director, Sheila Cooke, we have our Senior Choir, Praise Choir, Adult Handbell & Youth Handbell Choirs & for Christmas, we have our Christmas Orchestra.. We are getting revved up for the upcoming holidays so if you would like to lend your voice, instrumental talents or your hands (for bell ringing), please see Sheila. Everyone is welcome!

Sunday Morning Practices -

Sunday School Children's Chorus at 10:15 a.m.

Praise Choir at 11:30 a.m.

Thursday Evening Practices -

Adult Bells at 7 p.m.

Senior Choir at 7:30 p.m.



Praise Choir

Praise Choir (Gospel & Contemporary music with guitars) currently practices on Sundays after morning worship. Our approximate 20 minute practices are held immediately following morning worship at 11:30 a.m. in the Arts & Crafts room.

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



Youth Hand Bell Choir

Hand bell Choir rehearsals for our Youth Bell Choir (age 8+) are underway at the most convenient time for our ringers. If you are a member of this group, you are aware of the schedule.

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. 14th at 10:30 a.m. Please see Sheila Cooke or Bill Arnold with any questions.

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

First Ladies Celebrate the Holiday Season Friday, Dec. 5th

On Friday night, December 5, the First Ladies will again be holding our annual Christmas Party at the Amore home in Bethlehem Twsp. ALL First UCC women are automatically First Ladies, and we would love all of



you joining us for an evening of food and fun. We start at 6 pm, but latecomers will have time to catch up, so come when you can, and bring a wrapped \$5.00 gift to exchange, and an appetizer or dessert....the richer, the better, and no choco-

late is turned down! We always have such a good time when we are together, so plan on celebrating the season with us.



First Ladies are “Going Nuts”

The nuts and chocolate covered cranberries are finally here! The cost for each is only \$7.50. The dark chocolate coated cranberries were sold out in two weeks last year, and we have three cases to start us off, but they will go fast, so don't wait on those. The First Ladies really appreciate your support by buying these products.



What Would I Do Without All of You?

I got the call on Saturday afternoon, October 25, that the First Ladies were asked to prepare Jim Wright's memorial service luncheon on the following Tuesday. I must admit, my first reaction was panic, as I had a weekend of entertaining of my own to prepare for, but I soon settled down, knowing when I put out the “HELP!” call, that you would all answer, and as always, I was not disappointed. I know this is incredibly dangerous to do, but I feel I must thank all of you by name, so bear with me if I forget anyone, and know I do appreciate all that you have done. Please remind me if you have been omitted.

(continued on pg. 11)

(continued from pg. 10)

First of all, for making huge casseroles of macaroni and cheese and green bean casseroles, thank you to my daughter Kristen. For other macaroni and cheese dishes, Bev Lambert, Jackie Wogotz and Sue Beling, who both also baked cakes, and Kim Kmetz, who although she had to leave town early that rainy morning on business, brought her casserole to church before she left. Other cake bakers included Doreen Arnold, Sheila and Carl Cooke, Kathleen Dowd, Irene Stotz (the trifle was scrumptious!), Nomie Protyniak, and Mae Rapp. Supplies were donated by Jill West, Jeannette Orso, Barbara Dailey, Carol Stem, Jean Rothermel (the homemade applesauce was really wonderful!), Janet Caka, Marge Harron, Jerry Strohl, Barbara Dailey, and Wendy Wandersee. Helena Rapp made the two jello salads, which were not only pretty, but really tasted great.



Now, we have four honorary First Ladies, who must be thanked for all their help. First Carl Cooke, who not only helped with setup and baked a tasty chocolate cake, besides provided moral support to me, my adorable hubby, Ken, who put up with me cooking sweet potatoes and baked ziti ALL afternoon and evening Sunday, and helped with transporting the food, George Beling, who rolled up his sleeves and scrubbed pans and dishes after the luncheon, and did a super job, and Jerry Strohl, my dear friend, who responded to my panicked call for salad greens, by bringing me three shopping bags full of them. Of course, there was also the offer of help from Margaret, who is always there when I need her. My kitchen helpers were, and I know I will forget someone, but please forgive me, my right hands, Bev Lambert, Nomie Protyniak, Wendy Wandersee, Mae Rapp, Jill West, and Carol Stem, Barbara Dailey, Sue Beling, Wendy Wandersee, Kathleen Dowd, Marge Harron, Jeannette Orso, and Jean Rothermel.

We served 110 lunches to some very cold and damp mourners, who all seemed to enjoy spending time together, and sharing a good hot meal, and 130 cups of coffee. Our thoughts and prayers continue to go out to Linda and her family at this sad time, but I hope she sees just how many of her church family care a lot about her, love her, and helped to make a sad day a bit brighter for all of her family and friends.

The words “Thank You” just aren’t enough for all of you First UCC family members who were such an incredible help on this gloomy day. I do love you all.

Nancy Amore, President, First Ladies

Joseph's song

by Michael Card

*“How could it be?
This baby in my arms,
Sleeping now so peacefully,
‘The Son of God,’ the angel said.
How could it be?”*

*“Lord, I know He’s not my own,
Not of my flesh, not of my bone.
Still Father let this baby be
The son of my love.”*

*“Father, show me where I fit into
This plan of yours.
How can a man be father to the Son of God?
Lord, for all my life I’ve been a simple carpenter.
How can I raise a king?
How can I raise a king?”*

*He looks so small,
His face and hands so fair.
And when He cries the sun just seems to disappear,
But when He laughs
It shines again.
How could it be?*

*“Father, show me where I fit into
This plan of yours.
How can a man be father to the
Son of God?
Lord, for all my life I’ve been a simple carpenter.
How can I raise a king?
How can I raise a king?”*

*“How could it be?
This baby in my arms,
Sleeping now so peacefully,
‘The Son of God,’ the angel said.
How could it be?”*

From Michael Card's Immanuel; Reflections on the Life of Christ (pp. 41-42)

Santa's Christmas Eve Prayer

The sleigh was all packed, the reindeer
were fed,
But Santa still knelt by the side of the
bed.

”Dear Father, he prayed “Be with me
tonight. There’s much work to do and
my schedule is tight.

I must jump in my sleigh and streak
through the sky, Knowing full well that
a reindeer can’t fly.

I will visit each household before the
first light, I’ll cover the world and all in
one night.

With sleighbells a-ringing, I’ll land on
each roof, Amid the soft clatter of
each little hoof.

To get in the house is the difficult part,
So I’ll slide down the chimney of each
child’s heart.

My sack will hold toys to grant all their
wishes. The supply will be endless like
the loaves and the fishes.

I will fill all the stockings and not leave
a track. I’ll eat every cookie that is left
for my snack.

I can do all these things Lord, only
through You,

I just need your blessing, then it’s easy
to do.

All this is to honor the birth of the One,
That was sent to redeem us, Your most
Holy Son

So to all of my friends, least Your glory
I rob,

Please Lord, remind them who gave
me this job.”

Is Your E-mail Address On File?

If you are interested in
receiving future e-mails from
the First UCC church office
regarding our church, its
events and reminders, please
contact the church office or
send an e-mail to
firstucc2@verizon.net to be
included. This is a free and
easy service for us all!

A Special Thank You

Dear First Church,

The Wright Family would like to thank Our Church Family for all the prayers, cards, gifts, visits, food and kind deeds that you performed for us during the last 10 months. James is honored by your love. God bless you.

Thank you, *Linda*



This Christmas

Mend a quarrel. Seek out a forgotten friend.
Dismiss suspicion, and replace it with trust.
Write a love letter. Share some treasure.
Give a soft answer.
Encourage youth.

Manifest our loyalty in word and deed. Keep a promise.
Find the time. Forgo a grudge. Forgive an enemy.
Listen.
Apologize if you were wrong. Try to understand.
Flout envy.

Examine your demands on others. Think first of someone else.
Appreciate. Be kind; be gentle.
Laugh a little. Laugh a little more. Deserve confidence.
Take up arms against malice.
Decry complacency.

Express your gratitude.
Go to church.
Welcome a stranger.
Gladden the heart of a child.
Take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of the earth.

Speak your love, Speak it again. Speak it still once again.

From PNEC newsletter

December Bulletins

7th- Brian Jackie & Melissa
Lunger in memory of
loved ones.

14th - Jackie Wogotz in
celebration of life.

21st - Ferne & Bill Turner in
memory of loved ones.

24th *Christmas Eve* -
Carl & Sheila Cooke in
memory of their parents,
Mary & C. Stanton
Cooke, and Florence &
Walter Bender.

28th - Dolores & Robert
Thomas in memory of
loved ones.

If you would like to sponsor the
bulletins for one of our services,
please call 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.



rather than a
piece of your
mind!

December Flowers

7th- 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 hus-
band Bob.

14th - Mr. & Mrs. David
Arnold, Sr. in loving memory
of parents, L.J. & Bertha
Arnold & his Grandparents,
Thomas E. & Lillie Mae
Arnold.

21st - Christmas Poinsettias

24th - *Christmas Eve*
Christmas Poinsettias

28th - Christmas Poinsettias

Single arrangement

Brian, Jackie & Melissa
Lunger in memory of Ethel
Lunger



If you would like
to sponsor altar flowers, please
call 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., Dec. 3rd - 4-6 p.m.

Sat., Dec. 6th - 9 a.m. til noon

**Sun., Dec. 7th - 10:30 a.m. til
12:30 p.m.**

**Dec. distribution date is Fri.,
December 12th -
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.)

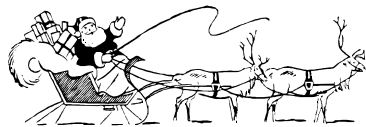
**Cash orders can be taken by
Margaret in the church office
anytime before Fri., Decem-
ber 5th, or call her with any
questions.**

Santa "Fact"

Santa has 31 hours of Christmas to work with, thanks to the different time zones and the rotation of the earth, assuming he travels east to west (which seems logical). This works out to 822.6 visits per second.

This is to say that for each Christian household with good children, Santa has 1/1000th of a second to park, hop out of the sleigh, jump down the chimney, fill the stockings, distribute the remaining presents under the tree, eat whatever snacks have been left, get back up the chimney, get back into the sleigh and move on to the next house.

How does he do it?



Consistory News!



FROM THE
NOVEMBER MEETING ...

Your Consistory met on Monday, November 10, with President George Beling leading the group. Many items were discussed and decided in our 2 hour meeting. Here are some of the highlights.

- Heritage Day, 2009 was introduced to us by Rich Hope from Easton's Heritage Day committee. The downtown area will be divided into "villages", with First UCC representing our German heritage, possibly with food, crafts and tours.
- The last few months, George has been giving the group assignments to complete before the next meeting. Our October assignment was to enter the church through the front door on Sunday, and note our impressions, both pro and con, and report back to him this month. Some of the negatives noted were, in the Narthex, poor lighting, bland colors, echoing floors, people selling things, loud conversations, and groups of people ignoring new visitors. In the Sanctuary, worshippers don't enter until the last minute, members sit way too far towards the back, giving the impression of emptiness, we never see the children as they go right to their classrooms. Teachers never hear the announcements. The greeters are often missing or come in too late. The entrance area was seen as dirty and unattractive, and the members who did their assignment after Bob and Ken got started working on the front doors and area, thought it looked clean and welcoming. Some thought the greeters were warm and friendly. As you can see, the Consistory has its work cut out for them next month, when George wants us to note how to fix the negatives, and make our church more "visitor friendly". Stay tuned for next month's report!
- Work will begin in January on the furnace in the office, and the boilers which heat the Parish House and Sanctuary.
- Our Treasurer, Warren Corr, will present the 2009 budget at the Annual Meeting on December 7th. Your Consistory has already passed the budget, so join us on the 7th, to see if you approve also. Our investments, as yours also, continue to decline.

(Continued on pg. 16)

December Greeters, Readers & Ushers

December 7th -

Greeters - Ferne & Bill Turner

Ushers - Ferne & Bill Turner and
Tom & Barbara Dailey

Reader - Denise Cardinalli

Acolyte - Henry Rothermel

December 14th - **Sunday School Christmas Program**

December 21st -

Greeters - David & Kim Kmetz

Ushers - David & Kim Kmetz
and Barrie & Carol Fournier

Reader - David Kmetz

Acolyte - Leslie Kmetz

December 24th -

Greeters - David & Wendy
Wandersee

Ushers - David & Carl
Wandersee and Ray & Dan
Roseberry

Reader - Carl Wandersee

Acolyte - Carl Wandersee

December 28th -

Greeters - Doris Fowler &
Agnes Carhart

Ushers - Agnes Carhart, Janice
Hilsenbeck, Molly Parry &
Irene Stotz

Reader - Stewart Wolbach

Acolyte - Brynn Hilsenbeck

(Consistory Notes, continued)

- Look for some exciting Church Life and Program social events in 2009, under the leadership of Barbara Dailey, to be announced in the bulletin, and Steeple News, so keep watching.

- Carl Cooke purchased 40 new chairs for the Parlor, as some of the older ones have been breaking. Thanks Carl for shopping, and buying these much-needed seats.

- The front of the church will be sporting a new sign for Advent, announcing that our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will be at 7:30, so watch for that.

We meet next month, December 8, at 7:30, and all members are welcome to sit in on this meeting. If you decide to come, bring cookies! Hot chocolate would be a welcome treat also!

Nancy Amore, Consistory Secretary



Inclement Weather ?

If we experience bad weather on a Sunday morning, we will make every effort to put an announcement about services on the church answering machine (610-258-3361). This can be done remotely & does not require someone to physically be at the office.



One Extra Christmas Card...

When doing your Christmas cards this year, take one card and send it to this address. If we pass this on and everyone sends one card, think of how many cards these wonderful special people who have sacrificed so much would get.

A Recovering American Soldier
c/o Walter Reed Army Medical Center
6900 Georgia Avenue, NW
Washington , D.C. 20307-5001



Unsung Angels at First UCC

If you haven't entered the church through the front doors lately, you'd better give it a shot, and you will be pleasantly surprised. Thanks to some tough work by Bob Arnold and Ken Amore, our whole front door area has been pressure washed, primed, caulked and painted, and YES, that door is red, which symbolizes the blood of Christ, and really livens up the Third St. area. Again, thanks to these two men for donating their time and talents to our church. There are many other projects which need attention at the church, so see Mark Cooke if you'd like to volunteer. Cleaners, painters, and gardeners are always in demand....no experience necessary!



Prayers for Comfort...

Go out to the family & friends of **Brian Parry** who passed away on Nov. 13th. Brian leaves behind his former wife Molly & his 2 children, Tom & Audrey.

Our prayers also go out to the family of **Elizabeth “Libby” Goth**, who passed away on Nov. 11th. She & her husband Robert, were married for 52 years. Please keep Robert & their son Michael & his family in your prayers.

Long time member **Elsie (Rapp) Odheimer** passed away peacefully in Ct. at the age of 97 on Nov. 22nd. Elsie was the sister of the late Robert Rapp. Please remember the Rapp family in your prayers.



Pastoral Care

If you or someone you know is in need of Pastoral Care, please call Rev. William Wightman at 610-252-8316.



“Souper” Bowl Sunday ~ Jan. 25th

Fellowship Sunday is on the 25th !! Which is our “Soup-er” bowl. **PLEASE** look for a sign up sheet if you’d like to make some soup or bring bread/dessert. **THERE IS NO SIGN UP TO ATTEND !!** (only to let us know what you are bringing). All of your family and friends are Welcome !!

Also we’re asking that this year you’d bring along a can of soup or a microwaveable single. If you could drop them off in the kitchen by the 18th that would be great ..but on the 25th is fine too !!

So gear up your appetite and lets eat some soup!!

On the day of the Super Bowl...**Feb 1st**...the youth of our Congregation will again be participating by standing at the back doors of the Sanctuary with those large pots !! (hoping to fill them with some monetary donations.)

Please remember that ALL monies raised through these two Sunday’s goes directly to our local soup kitchen @ Trinity Episcopal !

January Steeple News

Articles & info for the Jan. 2009 Steeple News are due at the church office by **Mon., Dec. 15th**. Please include any info about upcoming events for Jan. or early Feb. or other info of interest to our First Church family.



You can send it via e-mail (firstucc2@verizon.net), regular mail, call it in, leave a note in the collection plate or leave it on the secretary's desk (if you can find it!).



Rummage Sale Update!



“We did it! The Fall Rummage Sale was a huge success, and it would not have happened if it were not for YOU! We had tons of rummage, people who moved the racks and bags of stuff during the Sunday pre-set-up, people who set up during the week (both day and night), people who worked during the days of the Sale, and people who came to help take it all down and clean up! Regardless of whether you were there for all of these events or could only come for one, you all were awesome!

The Sale itself went very well: We had lots of compliments on the new racks (thanks, Mark!), pretty much sold out of kitchen and bake sale items, and sold a huge amount of clothes, jewelry, glassware, kid stuff, kitchen items, games, electronics and “domestics”.

A special THANKS to Nancy Amore for cooking all that food, for doing a spectacular job in the kitchen both days and for pricing hundreds of household items for us! She and everyone involved worked to exhaustion to make this another success. Thank you all so much!!!!!!

Wendy

Final Totals...	Bake Sale	\$ 300.75
	Kitchen	244.63
	“New” Table	374.00
	Rummage	<u>2127.61</u>
	Grand Total	\$3046.99