



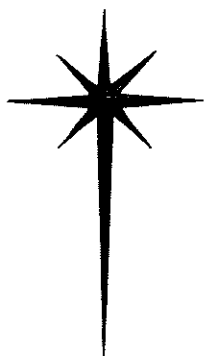
Shepherd of the Hill

Presbyterian Church (USA)

December 2011

In this Issue:

Advent 2011	2 & 3
Christmas Program	4
Food Bank	4
Birthdays	4
Advent Adult Ed. Class	5
Cookie Sale	5
Book Club	5
All-Kids' Christmas Party	6
Christmas Joy Offering	6
Sunday School	7
God's Gang	7
Youth Ministries	8



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As many of you have already heard, I've accepted a call to be the Pastor (Solo) of Scotchtown Presbyterian Church in Middletown, NY. The process of discernment for this position has been a long and fulfilling one, and I'm thrilled to be taking up my position there on Epiphany, January 6. The people of Scotchtown are charming and kind, and I have felt welcomed and accepted in my work with the congregation thus far. Also, the process of discernment has revealed the clarity of God's working in this search - Scotchtown and I are both alive to the sense of God's specific call for this time in their ministry and mine.

This transition, is, of course, bittersweet - it will be wrenching to leave you all at Shepherd behind. You, too, have been so very good to me, and I have been thoroughly impressed by your hospitality and graciousness from day one. From committees to worship to the weekly Young Adult Fellowship meeting, I have felt consistently blessed and valued by the ministries at Shepherd of the Hill.

I came in the door hoping to expand Shepherd's digital presence and found a firm foundation in Gina Sharp. I have done open trainings that cracked the doors of social media, and even sat down with Brett Shoemaker to drag him into the Facebook age.

My most important, fruitful, and fun work, however, has been with the young and emerging adults, shepherding a disparate group of young people into a living and active fellowship, teaching and learning, laughing and praying. That group has been a blessing to me, and when I first broached my possible departure, there was no question on the floor - they wished to continue to grow and fellowship in the presence of God together even without my guidance - I could ask for nothing more, and I look forward to hearing of the exploits of the YEAF from far to the East.

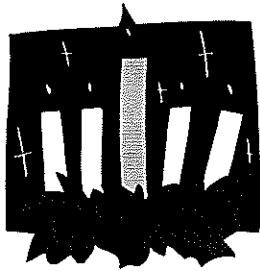
At the moment, my last Sunday with you all is slated to be December 18th. A lot is happening between now and then: the children's program, the ordination on the 11th of December, the cantata performance, and a lot of packing on my end. I am so glad to have this season of Advent to share with you, as I look forward to a new incarnation of my ministry, and you to the coming lights in your futures, and to the new paths on which God will lead you in the year to come.

Thank you all, so much. I am grateful for each and every one of you.

Blessings,

Matt Johnstone

Looking Ahead at Worship



Advent 2011

Travels to Bethlehem

Advent means “*coming*” or “*arrival*.” During the season of Advent, we celebrate Christ’s coming into the world and watch with expectant hope for his coming again. In its historical origins, the season of Advent was patterned after the season of Lent, a six-week period of penitence and preparation for Easter. Similarly, the four weeks of Advent present an opportunity for communal discernment and personal examination, as the church prepares to celebrate the Nativity of the Lord and looks with hope for Christ’s return.

For our reflection during **Advent**, we will look at the “*coming*” or “*arrival*” of the magi, shepherds and Jesus’ parents to the small village of Bethlehem. The magi were intent on finding the baby Jesus, or “king of the Jews” as determined and foretold by the star in the east. The shepherds were busy tending their flocks on the hillside outside Bethlehem and were surprised by an announcement from angels of a Savior, Christ the Lord. They leave their sheep and go into Bethlehem to find the sign: “a baby wrapped in strips of cloth lying in a manger.” Joseph and Mary are compelled to leave their home of Nazareth and report to Bethlehem to register for a Roman tax census ... at a time when they were preparing for the birth of their first child! Once they arrive at Bethlehem, they have their child Jesus in a place far from home and family.

All of us encounter Jesus. We may be like the magi - we earnestly seek Jesus for meaning in life and find Jesus after diligent searching. Others of us, like the shepherds, encounter Jesus unexpectedly and find our lives changed in unplanned and surprising ways. Still, others of us are like Jesus’ parents. We are planning on finding Jesus in certain ways and under certain conditions, but life takes us in a different direction ... and still, we find Jesus there.

May this **Advent** be a time to travel to the Bethlehem places of your life. May you, for the first time or not, find Jesus and be changed by the baby “born to you.”

December 4, 2011

★ 2nd Sunday in Advent ★

8:00/10:30 a.m.

Communion Sunday

“Travels to Bethlehem: The Shepherds”

Rev. Gary E. Mathiesen

Luke 2:8-20

“When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.”

December 11, 2011

★ 3rd Sunday in Advent ★
"Travels to Bethlehem: The Parents"
Luke 2:1-7

8:00/10:30 a.m.
Rev. Gary E. Mathiesen

"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 [for the Roman census] 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."

December 18, 2011

★ 4th Sunday in Advent ★
"The Songs and Prayers of Christmas"
A Choral Cantata for Christmas
presented by the Shepherd of the Hill Choir

8:00/10:30 a.m.

The Christmas season is a time to reflect upon the gift of God in Jesus Christ. The people of God - over the centuries - have gone to songs and prayers as a way of giving thanks to God for the generous love we have in the birth of Jesus Christ. We invite you to join the choir as we celebrate the love of God in Christ through the various prayers of God's people taken from many cultures and traditions over the last several centuries as well as your favorite songs from Advent and Christmas. Gather around the advent candles of worship and let the love of God flow over you in the songs and prayers of Christmas.

December 24, 2011

★ Christmas Eve ★

Family Service with A Story for Christmas

7:00 p.m.

The family service will be designed for those young at heart (as well as for those young in age!) who enjoy lots of advent carols and a good story for the season. Gary Mathiesen will be reading a story called "Christmas 1944" by Steven E Burt. The conclusion of the service will include the lighting of our candles. Make this service your family tradition!

A Communion Service of Lessons and Carols

11:00 p.m.

This will be a service of meditation using various advent lessons from scripture and select carols. There will be special music and many of our college students (home for the holidays) and young adults will be the readers of our advent lessons. The service will conclude moments before Christmas Day with the celebration of God's love in communion with candle light. Join us!

December 25, 2011

★ Christmas Day ★

10:30 a.m.

Come join us on Christmas Day for a time of worship in celebration of the birth of Christ!! This will be a day of worship in song, prayer and testimony. Bring the gift of worship to your God on this day of celebration.

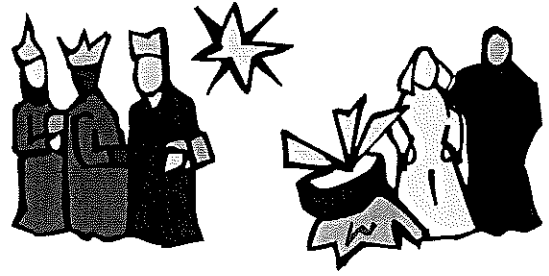
January 1, 2001

New Year's Day

10:30 a.m.

There will be no Sunday School or Adult Education Classes held on December 25th or January 1st.

Christmas Program & Dessert Potluck



Please join the children of the church
for an evening presentation of the musical,
“‘Twas the Year Before Christmas!”

The show will be **Saturday, December 10th** at 6:30 pm,
with a dessert potluck following the performance.

Puyallup Food Bank Emphasis for December:

Baby Food ~ Baby Cereals ~ Diapers ~ Formula

The donation box is located in the narthex.

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

BIRTHDAYS

3rd - Jean Buchanan
3rd - Helen Carpenter
3rd - Lisa Martin
5th - Rebecca Waller
5th - Scott Maxa
9th - Jane VonHeeder
9th - Emily Warr
10th - Sheri Martin
13th - Michelle Brown
14th - Jim Heath
14th - Ally Jankelson
14th - Jane Ann Severin
15th - Steve Yoest

16th - Scott Pantaleo
18th - Carly Bennett
18th - Bert Hollis
18th - Abbey Woodruff
21st - T.J. Chynoweth
21st - Chris Macke
25th - David Telling
27th - Lucy Engle
27th - Gayle Pinkard
28th - Gina Sharp
29th - Paige Maxa
31st - Meri Garst-Morrow
31st - Jessica Quinn-Whitney
31st - Mary Stevens

ANNIVERSARIES

6th - Bob & Betsy Stubbs
8th - Bill & Barbara Schneider
21st - Phil & Carlista Bartels



In the Life of the Church . . .

Women's Christmas Potluck Luncheon Saturday, December 3rd – 1:00 p.m.

Sister of Shepherd (SOS) is sponsoring a Women's Christmas Luncheon! Come to SOTH and join your fellow sisters in a time of fellowship to celebrate the start of this Christmas Season. Please bring a potluck item to share (salads, desserts, casseroles, etc.) Contact Gina Sharp at 253-840-4007 or gina.gns@gmail.com for more information.

Advent Adult Sunday School Class

Please join the Adult Sunday School as we study "Christmas: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly." This is a study of the people in the story of Christ's birth. We will explore those associated the joy of the Christ coming into the world including the Wise Men, the Shepherds, and Joseph. We will also explore King Herod, the villain of the story. Adult Sunday School will take place in the Calvin room at 9:15 AM on **December 4th, 11th, and 18th** and will be led by Don Johnson.

PHD's Luncheon

The next PHD's Luncheon will be held on **Friday, December 9th at 12:00 p.m.** in the church Fellowship Hall. Please contact Grace Thomas for more information at 253-535-4663.

S.O.S. Cookie Sale

Sunday, December 11th

The Sisters of Shepherd Board is hosting a Cookie Sale on Sunday, December 11th, following both services. We will have an array of cookies available, for you to mix & match by the dozen. There will be no set cost, just pay what you can. The proceeds of this sale will provide funds to host future showers. If you would like provide some cookies for this sale, please contact Gina Sharp at 253-840-4007 or gina.gns@gmail.com. What a great way to get a variety of treats to take to all of your holiday gatherings!

Movie Nights

The movie night previously scheduled for December 16th has been canceled. Watch for upcoming movie nights in the new year!

Women's Book Club

The Women's Book Club meets every third Tuesday of the month in member's homes at 7:00 p.m. Members pre-read the book, and then discuss their thoughts at the meeting.

All women are invited to attend!

December 20th: *Heaven is for Real*, by Todd Burpo, at Anne Bennett's (848-8804)

January 17th: *Fragile Beasts*, by Tawni O'Dell; at Dorothy Shaughnessy's (845-6034)

February 21st: *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*, by Junot Diaz

Newsletter Deadline

The deadline to submit items to the January Newsletter is **Monday, December 19th at 10am.** All items must be in written form (hard copy or email) and submitted to the church office.

"Dinners for Eight" ~ January 14th

FELLOWSHIP, FUN, AND FOOD !!!



The Fellowship Committee will be continuing the SOTH tradition for fellowship around the dinner table. It's a great way to meet and get to know better your fellow SOTH members. The next dinners will be held on **Saturday, January 14th.** You can start signing up now to be a host or a guest. Volunteer hosts are still needed. Please look for the sign up information on the Activities Board in the Fellowship Hall.



All-Kids' Christmas Party

God's Gang is hosting a Christmas Party for kids of all ages! On **Monday, December 19th from 6:30-8:00pm**, we'll all get together for some fellowship and holiday cheer! Some of the possibilities for the evening: a Christmas ornament craft, snack, games, a Christmas movie or Christmas carols. Parents of preschoolers—please plan on staying for the party with your child. For more information, contact Susan Boyles at 253-262-1844 or susan.boyles@gmail.com.

Relay for Life

I want to begin by congratulating Sue Brennen; she is the first person in the Puyallup Relay to raise over \$5000 by herself! Great job, Sue! Even though Relay is not until June, time has a way of passing quickly & it will be here before you know it. (I don't know how it can be December already.) SOTH has fielded a team ever since the Puyallup Relay started approximately 20 years ago and we're hoping this year will be no exception. If you are interested in participating, please contact Cindy Sexton, 253-312-2294, cssexton3@comcast.net. We will be having our first meeting sometime in January--date not determined at this time.

Blessings, Cindy Sexton

Christmas Joy Offering

Sunday, December 18th

The Christmas Joy Offering of the Presbyterian Church (USA) is a long-standing tradition that embodies our commitment to our faith and compassion for others. It enables the Presbyterian community to join together during the season of Advent and Christmas to deeply reflect not only upon our great blessings, but on others' great needs. The Session encourages your support of this tradition and all of those Presbyterians whose lives are touched by it.

The Christmas Joy Offering is distributed equally to support the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. The portion given to the Assistance Program helps to assist pastors and other church workers, both active and retired, who find themselves in a position of financial need. The assistance is provided through a range of programs, including shared and emergency grants that help current and retired workers with urgent, unexpected financial needs; income supplements that allow retirees to maintain independent living; and housing supplements that help retirees meet their housing needs.

We are all grateful for our pastors and other church workers who commit their lives to the service of others, and who must often make personal sacrifices for the ministry of the Church. Each year, contributions to the Christmas Joy Offering from people like you express that gratitude and help make a profound and positive impact in the lives of many of these selfless servants of the Church, often when they need it most.

The Session is thankful that members of our congregation have supported the offering over the years. We ask that you continue your generous support of the Christmas Joy Offering on **Sunday, December 18th**.

Advent Devotional Booklets

There are two selections for you to choose from this season. The booklets are available on the counter in the narthex – pick one up today!

Bags of Grace

It's time to be prepared to help out someone in need by giving them a "Bag of Grace". These bags have a pair of socks, a hat, some snacks and water, some personal hygiene items, and a list of local resources. Keep one handy to give away as a "gift of grace". Pick yours up from the tub on the information booth in the Narthex.

Church Office Closed for the Holidays

The church office will be closed from December 23-January 2. If you have an emergency or concern during that time, please contact your deacon or a session elder. **All information for the December 25th and January 1st orders of worship and announcements will need to be received in the office by Tuesday, December 20th.**

End of Year Contributions

As a reminder, according to IRS regulations, all contributions for the year 2011 must be received or mailed and postmarked no later than December 31, 2011. All prepaid 2012 pledges received on or before December 31, 2011 will be credited to the individual's 2011 giving records. If you have any questions, please contact Paul Cascio, Financial Secretary, at 253-862-7132.

Sunday School

There will be no Sunday School held on December 25th or January 1st.

God's Gang

We're talking about you and your friends: having confidence in yourself, being a good friend, and where God is in your relationships with others. Come out to God's Gang for a fun night of games, snacks, music and discussions!

December 12: 4th Annual Gingerbread House Smash!

December 19: All-Kids Christmas Party!

January God's Gang:

January 2: NO God's Gang

January 9: "F" Night: Friends having fun forever!

January 16: "G" Night: Giggles, guffaws and goofy games!

January 23: "H" Night: helpful hints for a happy heart!

January 30: "I" Night: Interesting ideas instantly included.

God's Gang is a weekly youth group for 3rd-6th grade students that meets Monday nights from 6:30-8:00pm at Shepherd of the Hill. Bring yourself and bring a friend!

Youth Ministries

Youth Group Now on Facebook!

We'll be posting events and updates more regularly as everyone friends up. Check it out! (This group is by invitation/acceptance only, and cannot be viewed by the general public. Only people directly affiliated with SOTH and the youth program can join). Official registrations can still be found at www.sothyouthgroup.blogspot.com.

A Look Back

- A drummer spinning 90 degrees while playing with the Newsboys at the Tacoma Dome
- Thirteen students crowded around a lighthouse on San Juan Island trying to stay warm
- A few kids lying in the middle of the road?
- Some great new experiences that are building God's Kingdom

Chicago 2012 Youth Mission Trip!

Save the Dates: July 7-14, 2012

For current 8th through 12th Graders and adult volunteers

Look for an Information Meeting Early in January to Get on the Team!

After many conversations and much prayer, God has called us to Chicago as the SOTH Youth Group representing and experiencing Christ in the world.

MORE INFO COMING SOON!

Chilly Chili Bowl Alumni/Youth Group Ultimate Frisbee Game!

Sunday, December 18, 2011

2:30 p.m. Ultimate Game at Heritage (or Zeiger, whatever is available)

4:00 p.m. Chili at the Shoemakers

Bring a holiday treat to put with the Chili if possible!

All youth groupers, friends, and alumni invited for any and all of the fun.

Bus will take anyone needing a ride between game and Shoemaker's house

Youth Group Christmas Party (Jr and Sr High Groups)

Thursday, December 15, stay tuned for details!! Start planning your wrapped white elephant gift now ('cause it's hard to wrap large African animals)!

Ski/snowboard Day at White Pass

Monday, December 19, 2011

6:00 a.m. Departure from the church

7:00 p.m. Return to the church

Cost: \$10 for gas for the bus plus money for food, rentals, and lift tickets

(Basically, you're on your own, but we'll get you there with your youth group friends for \$10)

Come play games in the lodge and play in the snow outside even if you do not want to ski/snowboard!

Senior High Youth Group

Wednesday, December 7

Wednesday, December 14 - *No Youth Group (See Christmas Party Below!)*

Wednesday, December 21/28 - *No Youth Group*

Wednesday, January 4 - Leaders Only Meeting

Wednesday, January 11 - First Group of the New Year!

Junior High Christmas Caroling and Frisco Freeze:

Sunday, December 4, 4:15 - 7:30 p.m.

Christmas Caroling and Vespers with older friends at the Harborview Manor Assisted Living Facility in Tacoma (where we went last year)

Sunday, December 11 - *No Youth Group*

Sunday, December 18 - *No Youth Group (See Christmas Party Below!)*

Sunday, January 8, 2012 - Happy New Year Youth Group!!