

The Spirit

Byron Presbyterian Church Nov– Dec. 2008

HANGING OF THE GREENS SUNDAY, NOV 30

On the first Sunday of Advent, November 30th, following Worship, join us for "Hanging of the Greens". We have two trees to decorate, upstairs and downstairs, and lots of other Advent and Christmas decorations, too.

A light meal will be served. As a special treat there will be presentation of an "ancient" video of a Children's Christmas

Pageant from 1988. Hey, isn't that YOU in the back row with the wings and crooked halo?

Christmas Eve will be celebrated on Wednesday, December 24th, 7:30 PM, with Christmas Carols and candles. The whole community is invited to share in this beautiful, joyful service.

Community Thanksgiving Service

The churches of Byron and Stafford will be holding a Community Service of Thanksgiving on Sunday, November 23rd, 2:00 PM, at the Stafford United Methodist Church on Rt. 5 (near the intersection with Route 237).

The churches include the First Presbyterian Church of Byron, the South Byron United Methodist Church, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Morganville United Church of Christ, and the Stafford United Methodist Church. There will be a choir rehearsal for the service on Thursday, November 13th at 7:00 PM, and Thursday, November 20th at 6:30 pm, at the Byron Presbyterian Church.

Participants are invited to bring food items to share with a local emergency food shelf, and an offering will be received for the same purpose. *"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!"*

Harvest Banquet—Sunday, November 9th

Our Stewardship Committee invites you to participate in our Annual harvest Banquet following worship on Sunday, November 9th. Please bring a dish to pass, and your own table settings. Invitations have been sent out with "*2009 Estimate of Giving*" cards enclosed. We would appreciate it if members and friends of the church could return these cards by Sunday, November 9th, either in the offering plate or through the mail.

Preaching Themes for November & December

Prepare for Sunday worship by reading the Bible story for the day!

NOV 2	I Thess. 2:9-13 "Constant Thanks"	DEC 7	II Pt. 3:18-15a "The Day"
NOV 9	Matt. 22:32-40 "The Two Rules"	DEC 14	John 1:1-9 "The Word"
NOV 16	Guest Preacher: Rev. W. Wenhold	DEC 21	Luke 1:26-38 "The Power"
NOV 23	Ephesians 1:15-23 "Reward Time"	DEC 28	Guest Preacher

We Have Heard

"Angels, We Have Heard on High" ... this is a season when we are especially attentive to messengers that God sends our way ... everything from angels singing in the heavens, to friends who are praying next door. Or maybe those angels are our friends and neighbors, and we haven't realized it yet?. Prayer is a way to find the angels that watch over you and to be an angel for someone else. Our Prayer Chain team is ready to help you! Please contact Laura or Jean and we'll find you some angels.

From the Pastor "Dancing Into Christmas"

Dear Friends,

In 7th grade my junior high class decided to have a party just before Christmas. We planned it for weeks, the food, the music, the games. We also wanted it to be a dance, something we had never done before. Someone brought in a record player, someone else brought some great records, and we pushed the desks and chairs off to the side of the classroom.

So the music began to play ... but no one got up to dance! Everyone wanted a dance, but no one was willing to be the first to get out on the dance floor. Everyone waited for someone else to take the initiative, but it never happened! Everyone held back!

In reading the stories about the birth of Jesus we learn how much God gave to us, but we also learn about how much we have to give of ourselves to bring all of the promises to life. We can't hold back!

The severely weakened economy and wars in the Middle East are sometimes so overwhelming that we are tempted to hang back and wait for someone else to take the initiative to fix things.

In Advent we learn that we cannot hold back, because God is not holding back. So this season is not just a time of waiting, we have to prepare the way of Christ by doing the deeds now that reflect what he will accomplish.

Always in the Hope and Peace of Christ,

Jim Renfrew

Deacons in Action

The Deacons meet every month on the first Sunday following worship.

We are working on our winter projects which include Thanksgiving baskets and Christmas gifts.

Watch for a sign-up list at the back of the sanctuary. Please contact Pam Lynch if you have something to donate but are not able to get to church.

Donations for the food pantry continue to be collected. It is going to be a hard winter for many people, and donations are really needed and appreciated.

The library is always available and many great books are available to be signed out.

We continue to collect food items for the emergency food program through the Salvation Army. Any and all nonperishable food items are welcome, especially peanut butter, saltine crackers, cereal, rice, pork and beans, and canned vegetables.

Session Notes

The Turkey Dinner raised about \$1600, and involved many, many people in making it happen. A Pancake Breakfast for the church will take place on Sunday, February 8th.

A report was received from the Board of Directors of the Byron Nursery School that the program will cease operations after May. The Board president, Laura Platt, explained that in spite of extraordinary efforts by the Board over the last three years registration numbers have been remained too low for the program to continue. The Nursery School has been operating for at least thirty years.

The 2008 Annual Meeting of the Congregation will take place following worship on Sunday, January 25th. Those submitting reports to the church office are asked to please do so by January 13th.

Trustees are working on a flashing problem along the roof line at the front of the church, and have secured a contractor to re-point mortar in the area of the front steps. Elevator repairs were also necessary this fall.

At the October meeting Elders reviewed some of the changes in worship and Christian Education that were initiated this fall. Most comments have been very positive.

Natural Church Development

The recent NCD Survey at Byron Presbyterian Church showed "*Passionate Spirituality*" as our "minimum factor" in ministry. We're working on raising this minimum factor!

During the fall we have introduced some opportunities for spirituality to be expressed and shared with passion. This has included a service featuring favorite hymns chosen by five church participants, with their personal stories about the meaning of those hymns. Many thanks to Sharon, Bridgette, Sydney, Anita, and Helen for their stories.

We have also presented the Lord's Supper in a new way, so that is no longer an "add-on" to the regular service, but a communion service from start to finish. On World Communion Sunday in October we invited everyone to come forward to stand around the table as we shared the bread and cup. Children especially enjoyed celebrating communion this way.

Resource Saturdays

Saturday November 15, 9:30-11:30 am

Registration Deadline: Thursday November 11

Are We Ready for the Big One? Presbyterian Disaster Assistance & Preparedness Leaders: Bill and Barbara Smith, Synod of the Northeast Volunteer Consultants for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

We are certainly familiar with hurricanes and the disaster they cause. Fires, severe storms, tornadoes, flooding are increasingly in the news. Just because we live in New York, are we immune?

Presbyterians are beginning to develop a new culture of disaster preparedness. Congregations are uniquely poised to provide a communication and safety net in a time of crisis. Join us as we hear examples of disaster response along the Gulf Coast plus information we need to know to prepare for a disaster in our presbytery or local church.

On-Line Teacher Training: Opening Doors to Discipleship Linda Badger Becker, Presbyter for Program.

An important part of recruiting church school teachers is providing them with the skills they need to succeed. Still, who has time for teacher training?

Opening Doors to Discipleship is a series of three on-line courses in the Presbyterian/Reformed tradition to help teachers and leaders faithfully equip themselves. If you have never used an on-line course, come and experience it. Bring your wireless laptop, if you have one. This workshop is for pastors, Christian educators and committees, church school leaders and teachers.

Come early, stay late! Coffee & goodies provided. All courses are free! Pre-registration requested, contact sorr@pbygenval.org, or 242-0099..

Choir News

As the holiday season approaches, the choir will be singing on a regular basis. We hope all members will join in and if you've been on "hiatus" for awhile - consider coming back for the Thanksgiving/Christmas season. If you've never been a member but would like to give it a try- "come on down"! If you can't make a practice you can still join in on Sunday morning, we rehearse at 9AM on the Sundays we sing - we would love to have sing along.

Practice Schedule / Sunday Schedule:

Wed., Nov. 3rd @ 7PM; No Choir Sun. Nov. 9th; Thurs. Nov. 13th @ 7PM; Sun Nov 16 @ 9:00 AM

Thurs. Nov. 20th @ 6:30PM; Sun Nov 23 @ 9 AM

Tues. Nov. 25th @ 7PM; Sun Nov 30 at 9:00 AM

Thurs. Dec. 4th @ 7PM; Sun Dec 7 @ 9:00 AM

Thurs. Dec. 11th @ 7PM; Sun Dec 14 @ 9:00 AM

Thurs. Dec 18th @ 6:30PM; Sun Dec 21 @ 9 AM

Tues. Dec 23rd @ 7PM; Wed. Dec 24th - Christmas Eve Service @ 6:30.

On Sunday, Nov. 23rd there is also an ecumenical service for the area churches at Stafford Methodist Church. There will be a community choir for this event. It is always fun to sing with extra voices. If there is enough interest we will go out to lunch and then meet at Stafford around 12:45 to rehearse for the service at 1:30PM. After December 24th we take a long winter's nap!! If you have any questions please feel free to give Kim a call.

Church Financial Picture

So where do we stand as we head into the 4th Quarter of 2008? The September Financial Statement includes the following information about the status of the 2008 Budget:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Pledges	\$65,790	41,893
Youth Offerings	300	171
Per Capita	1,000	1,449
Loose Offering	1,600	1,603
Fundraising	5,000	3,347*
Investment Interest	10,000	4,268
Manse Sale Interest	5,400	2,700

* = includes October Turkey Dinner \$1,600

Pledges and estimates of giving are falling behind as we enter the 4th quarter. The overall budget is

approximately \$15,000 behind in receipts when compared to expenses. Please do your best to keep up to date before we finish the year. Thank You! [*Stewardship Committee*]

Salvation Army Bell Ringing

Please consider "ringing the bell" for Salvation Army. The date and place have not yet been scheduled, so watch for that information to be announced soon. We are usually scheduled to ring the bell from 9:00 AM until 9:00 PM. Two hour shifts are available, but if you can only do an hour, consider splitting your shift with someone. A sign up sheet will be available on the table in the back of the sanctuary or you can call Pam. All funds received through the red kettle campaign stay in our area.

Bishop Dulce Update

This is a letter that Bishop Rose Pia Dulce, our ecumenical visitor last fall from the Philippines, wrote to the Saunders' in Albion. She refers to a computer that was purchased with funds donated by the five churches that hosted her visit here. :

Dear Gary and Mary Jane,

A pleasant and warm greetings to you! It's been a long time again to make an email. As usual, I am always on the road. At last, I got a new laptop now. I bought it last week. This unit have WIFI. Whenever there's an establishment that have WIFI I can access an internet. Again and again a million thanks to you.

I attach a snap shot of the laptop that I bought. I'm really thankful for having this now because I can make poems, sermons/ reflections and reports while traveling and making use of the time.

It's September. I can still recall my visit there in the Presbytery. Meeting nice church people welcoming me to their churches and homes. Picking apples, riding and rushing down the road in order to catch up speaking engagements. Visiting and riding down to nice places and most of all the generosity and educational experiences that I have in participating the mission program of the Presbytery. But, I feel I must learned for more to widen and broaden my understanding of the diversity of culture of different countries. How are you? It's my prayers that you are all fine and doing good. My warm regards to you and others whom I met during the time of my visit.

Happy Fall season with so much farm products like apples, berries and many more.

With love and prayers from your friend,

Dulce

Mission: Backpack Program

The Mission Committee has endorsed a Backpack Program at our local school district and decided to dedicate our 25% of the Peacemaking Offering from October to establishing the program. The program was presented to the Byron-Bergen School Board at the end of September and they overwhelmingly approved it. With current economic conditions as they stand, it will be a welcome addition to helping those in need in the community.

Basically, the program will involve providing a limited number of backpacks filled each week with nutritious food items to children identified by the school district. A list of food items will be developed and distributed for those interested in contributing items. The children will be able to take the backpack home, share the food with their families, and return it at the end of the weekend to the school so we can refill it.

We are hoping to have the support of other churches, civic groups, and businesses within the area. Also, we will need volunteers on a rotating basis to help pack bags and deliver them to the school. If interested, please contact Pam. We are hoping to launch this program very soon! Any questions or suggestions, feel free to share them with Pam or others on the Mission Committee.

Mission: Adopt-a-Family

The Youth Group will once again this year adopt a local family from the Byron-Bergen area to provide a nice assortment of Christmas gifts to. Last year, we spent a morning shopping for a family of four--with one on the way. The Youth had a lot of fun shopping for the family and learning about budgeting their money. We hope to take schedule this in the week of Thanksgiving. If you are interested in being involved again this year, please let Pam or Tamara know!

Peacemaking Offering Results

We received \$551.75 in support of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Offering on World Communion Sunday. One quarter of the amount will remain with our church to support the Backpack Mission Project.

Christian Education

The Christian Education Committee continues to work on shaping and building our "*Growing in Faith*" program. We have received a variety of comments regarding the new program: some are enthusiastic about the opportunity to share ideas and thoughts with each other in a way we haven't done before, and others have offered suggestions to improve upon what we're doing. PLEASE keep the comments coming! We want to develop a format that provides an enriching experience for as many people as possible, and that's easily accessible to as many people as possible. Let us know what you think so we can make the program better by sending your comments to the chair of Christian Education, Tamara.

Children are trick-or-treating for UNICEF again this year. If you have any extra change or pennies around your home, please consider giving them to our students for their UNICEF boxes. We will be collecting these boxes Sunday, November 2nd and 9th.

Our next "*Growing in Faith*" program is Sunday, November 9th. The Bible message for the day comes from Genesis: the story of Adam and Eve and the Forbidden Fruit. This is also the day of our annual Harvest Dinner, and while plans are still in the works, adults and children will be interacting together for some planned activities. Pam is hard at work planning November's program.

On December 14th, our *Growing in Faith* program will move away from the Old Testament to explore the birth of Jesus Christ. Our older youth will be working with younger students on a musical skit. It has been several years since we've attempted a traditional Christmas Pageant, so we hope you'll join us for a re-telling of the Christmas story. Details are still under negotiation, so if your child is interested in participating, be on the look-out for announcements with information about rehearsal dates and times.

We're looking for volunteers interested in helping lead our "*Growing in Faith*" activities January 11th, February 8th, and March 8th. This is your chance to help us shape this program into something great! If you're interested, please contact Tamara.

Youth News

The Youth Group met last month, and developed a LONG list of ideas for this year, which includes plans for another lock-in, a sledding/ice skating party, fundraisers, and a variety of mission activities.

In November, plans are underway to go Christmas shopping the weekend after Thanksgiving for a family in need.

In December, the Youth are hoping to: go Christmas caroling for members of our church family, decorate the doors and rooms of residents in local nursing homes, and help out at the Ronald McDonald House. Be on the lookout for announcements with dates and times for these activities.

We have a lot of *BIG* ideas, but we need your help! If anyone is willing to work with the youth, and help them get these events off the ground, please contact Tamara.