



# The Encouraging Word

Pleasant Hills Community Presbyterian Church

January  
2011

## From The Interim...

First, I want to thank and congratulate our Board of Deacons, who along with others, led us in a wonderful Illumination Night on December 11<sup>th</sup>. All over the church events were going on. Faces were being painted, children were decorating cookies, there were carriage rides outside and the sun was shining. A trolley-bus took many on rides. There was a bonfire and at 8:00 PM a worship event in the sanctuary. Many were praying for this event that it might truly be a “gift to the community” and visitors and people in the area would enter the doors of PHCPC for the first time to hear about the Good News of Jesus Christ. I pray that may be so and that many will return. It was a real high!

But I also want to talk about the work and ministry of Brenda Dunkovich, our church business administrator, who was killed on December 10<sup>th</sup>. Brenda was a beloved member of the church staff, and we all came to know her and love her even though she had been with us just short of four months. She had a vivacious spirit, strong work ethic, was approachable, and believed in serving others. She had been on mission trips, but not with PHCPC. One of her favorite charities was Heifer International. As I write this we do not know when her service will be held.

For me this opens up the subject of violence and abuse which is never acceptable, whatever form it takes. Violence and abuse comes in many forms – there is verbal abuse, physical abuse and other ways that we put down others and demean them and their God-given gifts. Sometimes it takes the form of bullying. This is a tough subject, but we who care for people and love them as a faith community, it is subject we need to address from time to time and look for signs of it around us.

I have been with you now just six weeks, and I want you to know that I feel it is a high privilege to be serving as your interim pastor. There is much to do. I shared on one Sunday morning that interim pastors are called to a) help a church come to terms with its history, b) renew linkages with presbytery, synod and General Assembly, c) help develop a renewed vision for PHCPC, d) help the church prepare for the search and coming of a new pastor, e) invite people into new leadership positions and f) “facilitating the process of defining the organizational structure, responsibilities and interrelationships of senior pastor, session and staff.” A tall order.

I always welcome your feedback. My door is always open. I read everything you send me, My church email is:

[DAVID@PLEASANTHILLSCHURCH.COM](mailto:DAVID@PLEASANTHILLSCHURCH.COM).

Blessings in Christ,

David B. Antonson  
Interim Pastor

### **The Death of Brenda Dunkovich, Church Business Manager**

It is with deep sadness that we share the news with you, that on Friday December 10<sup>th</sup>, Brenda Dunkovich, the business manager at Pleasant Hills Community Church was killed. She was at home on Papp Road in Cecil Township when this happened. As this article is being written, the State Police from the Barracks in Washington County are conducting an investigation.

Brenda joined the staff of PHCPC in September of 2010 as a part-time employee. So many have said that “she really enjoyed working at Pleasant Hills Church, she was so happy here.” She had a very strong work ethic and often anticipated work to be done before anyone even asked her.

The staff of the church met with two therapists on December 14<sup>th</sup> to talk about how her death has impacted the staff, especially with those who worked very closely with her.

The ministers of the church are available to talk with anyone who wants to discuss her sudden death, and Stephen Ministers are available to talk and pray at the conclusion of each worship service in the front of the church.

It still is not clear when a service for her will be held, but that will be announced.

## Border Transitions Ministry

### John and Diane Davis

Feliz Navidad de la frontera! Merry Christmas from the border! It is the end of a difficult year for us: John was hospitalized twice; Nuevo Laredo has experienced troubles never seen before because of the drug cartels battling it out, and the two Laredos experienced flooding that damaged or destroyed many homes on both sides. However, God is still on His throne and the Trinity did not have to call emergency meetings because they were surprised by the goings on. The Lord just moved our ministry almost exclusively to Laredo, TX where the need is just as great; abject poverty, an insufficient educational system, an overloaded medical system, and an alarming need for Jesus.



We have been busy with our tutoring sessions working with children having troubles in school and our feeding program for families. Border Transitions Ministry just received sort of a Christmas gift. After a chance meeting with the director of a local children's rehabilitation center BTM will be working with the siblings of the children who are clients of the center. It has been a challenging year, but one where we learned a great deal. We are looking forward to 2011 and what the Lord has planned for us and our ministry.

Paz y feliz ano nuevo! Peace and happy New Year!

Editor's note: On December 18th, 2010, a jailbreak occurred in New Laredo, Mexico, which is just across the boarder from where John and Diane Davis are located. 140 prisoners escaped; some may have crossed over into Laredo. Please pray for the safety of everyone in the area.

#### Annual Meeting Announcement

The Annual Meeting of Pleasant Hills Community Presbyterian Church will take place Sunday, January 30, 2011, following the joint worship service at 10:00 AM in the Great Room. The meeting will include the report of the permanent Nominating Committee (Linda Stout, chair and Steve Ament co-chair) and their slate of nominees for Elder and Deacon, a review of the 2011 balanced budget as approved by session and dismissal of the Associate Pastor Nominating Committee. The quorum needed to hold the meeting is a minimum of 150 active members on the roll of the church.

#### An Invitation to Write to Dr. And Mrs. Michael Wenning

Dr. Michael and Frieda Wenning served Pleasant Hills Community Church for nine years when he was senior pastor, some years ago, and are still interested in hearing from members of the church. Dr. Wenning has had some health issues and they love hearing from old friends. They are back in California and their address is:

Dr. And Mrs. Michael Wenning  
28832 Alanya  
Mission Viejo, CA 92692

#### Jean Green's New Address

Many people have called the church office for Jean Green's new address. With her permission, we are including it below:

Jean Green  
212 China Circle  
West Grove, PA 19390

#### Notes from the Session

The session of Pleasant Hills Church met on Tuesday, December 14<sup>th</sup> and here are some highlights from that meeting:

- Approved a balanced budget for 2011 of \$966,246.00 plus miscellaneous income of \$75,760.00.
- It was announced that there will be a Leader Planning and Training Workshop on Saturday, February 5<sup>th</sup> with Dr. Sheldon Sorge, keynote speaker.
- Reviewed the agenda for the Annual Congregational Meeting to be held Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup> after the 10:00 AM service in the Great Room.
- With great sadness, Session discussed the death of business manager Brenda Dunkovich. An invitation is being made to a person in the church to step into that position on a temporary basis.
- The Nominating Committee, co-chaired by Linda Stoudt and Steve Shidel, gave an update on their work of finding their slate of nominees for the Annual Meeting.
- Much appreciation and thanks was offered to the Board of Deacons and others for Illumination Night on December 11<sup>th</sup> – it was a wonderful event.

## Sunday Worship at PHCPC in January

### Sunday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> Second Sunday in Christmastide

We will be featuring musician and recording artist Scott Callender at both the 9:30 and 11:00 AM services. Dr. Antonson will be speaking and to read ahead the scripture readings are Jeremiah 31:7-14, Psalm 147:12-20, Ephesians 1:3-14 and Matthew 2:10-12. The title of the sermon will be "They Went Home By Another Road." There is pre-worship prayer at 9:00 AM in the Boardroom.

### Sunday, January 9<sup>th</sup> Holy Communion

We will be gathering the Lord's Table at both 9:30 and 11:00 AM Rev. Darlene Hann will be giving the message of the morning. The scripture readings are (four lectionary readings?) Please join us for group prayer at 9:00 AM in the Boardroom.

### Sunday, January 16<sup>th</sup> Mission Emphasis

Guest preacher, Rev. Johnny Whitehair from Mount Calvary Church in Morgantown WV will be preaching. He is the missionary for The Storehouse of God in Morgantown where our church has been doing one-day mission trips since 1999. Remember the 9:00 AM prayer time in the Boardroom.

### Sunday, January 23<sup>rd</sup>

Dr. Antonson will be speaking and to read ahead, the scripture readings will be Isaiah 9:1-4, Psalm 27:1, 4-9, I Corinthians 1:10-18 and Matthew 4:12-23. Remember the 9:00 AM prayer time in the Boardroom.

### Sunday, January 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting Sunday

Gathering in the Great Room for **one service at 10:00 AM**, Tim Comer will be bringing the message of the morning. The Annual Meeting will take place at 11:00 AM also in the Great Room (please read the announcement for the meeting). There is prayer ahead of time at 9:30 AM in the Boardroom.

## Two TWOgether Classes

PHCPC is offering two Thursday Pittsburgh TWOgether classes beginning January 27<sup>th</sup>: *Marriage Preparation* and *Marriage Enrichment*. The classes will be from 6:30 PM-8:30 PM, preceded by dinner from 5:30 PM-6:30 PM. Childcare and materials will be provided with registration. For more information or to register, please call Darlene at 412-655-2000 x123 or email her at [DARLENE@PLEASANTHILLSCHURCH.COM](mailto:DARLENE@PLEASANTHILLSCHURCH.COM). For more information on Pittsburgh TWOgether, go to [HTTP://WWW.TWOGETHERPGH.ORG/](http://www.twogetherpg.org/)

## Confirmation, 2011

Joining the church is an important step. At PHCPC, we provide programs like the New Connections class for adults and the Confirmation Class for our youth. The goals of these classes is to make sure people joining the church understand what it means to become a Christian, the significance of becoming a church member and help them become meaningfully involved in the life of the church.

The next Confirmation Class will begin January 16th, 2011. Parents and students are required to attend the first class. This is an opportunity for the Youth Ministry staff to explain the confirmation process and answer questions.

If you have not received a Confirmation packet in the mail, please call Debbie at 412-655-2000 x 131 or email her at [DEBBIE@PLEASANTHILLSCHURCH.COM](mailto:DEBBIE@PLEASANTHILLSCHURCH.COM).

### **Please Sign Up for the Church Email List**

The Communications Team is experimenting with a way to get important information to you quickly while saving the church money. If you go to the church website:

[WWW.PLEASANTHILLSCHURCH.COM](http://WWW.PLEASANTHILLSCHURCH.COM)

you can sign up for this new service. The more people who sign up, the better this will work!

### **Winter Weather Closing Information**

PHCPC will follow the West Jefferson Hills School District closings due to snow. If the school district closes due to cold weather, there will not be any preschool or Mother's Day Out but the church will be open and other events will still be held. Closing announcements will be available on KDKA, WTAE and WPXI and their websites. If you sign up for the church email service, you will be notified via your email if the church closes.

### **Precepts Winter Bible Study**

**6 weeks: Jan. 19, 26, Feb. 9, 16, 23 & March 9**

**9:15 AM in Fellowship Hall**

**Living Victoriously in Difficult Times—40 Minute Bible Study**

**"WHY?"** When painful, frustrating circumstances invade your life, it's easy to wonder why life so often seems unfair. Why doesn't our all-powerful God stop the pain and suffering—not just for you but for all His children?

***"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."***

—Romans 8:28

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**Reaching** out to share God's love  
**Growing** followers in their faith  
**Sending** believers into the world to do God's work every day

## **Worship and Music**

### **Scott Callender visits January 2<sup>nd</sup>!**

Guest worship leader and artist Scott Callender will come and join us for worship on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 at both services. He will be singing songs such as "You're Worthy" that he composed. Additionally, at the 11 AM service, Scott will lead all of the music. Don't miss it!

### **Hosts Needed for Watoto Choir-Feb 19-20, 2011**

Please consider hosting for the Watoto Children's Choir coming this February! The choir needs 9 host homes which will house 1 adult and either 2 or 3 children. Sleeping bags for the children is fine. The children and adults will also need a bag lunch for Sunday after they sing at our 9:30 and 11 AM worship services!! Please contact Jeanne at 412-655-200 ext. 128 if you can help!

### **Special music at the Traditional Service!**

Special organ music featured during January will be "Epiphany" themed. Buxtehude's variations on "How Brightly Shines The Morning Star" and Franck's "Prelude, Fugue and Variation" will be played.

### **Special Music at the Contemporary Service!**

We will kick off the new year singing a declaration of praise and commitment with the New song: "Now Is The Time For Singing Aloud." Also, do not miss the Crossover Youth Band on January 30<sup>th</sup>.