



The Encouraging Word

Pleasant Hills Community Presbyterian Church

February
2011

FROM THE INTERIM PASTOR...

A few people have stopped me of late and asked, “and so after a couple of months at the church, how are things going?” My answer is, “I can’t speak for everyone and I’m not aware of everything going on, but I am very upbeat about 2011.” Let me list some of the reasons I say this.

We just renewed the contract with the Pittsburgh Vietnamese Presbyterian Fellowship, inviting them and their pastor, Rev. Van Dan, to use our chapel and Chapel Lounge for a fourth year. We would love to see this wonderful group truly take off as a new church development of our presbytery.

The session approving a balanced budget for 2011 of \$966,246.00 to me is a strong statement of support for the missions and ministries of PHCPC this year. We have been able to restore hours and funding to the staff that was cut in 2010.

Worship attendance has been strong in recent months. We had 1,247 attend the four Christmas Eve services and I have asked that attendance and giving figures be placed in the bulletin each week.

We are inviting a large number of leaders in the church to a Leader and Training Workshop on Saturday, February 5th. It will not be just an “officer training event” but we need to be about the task of training spiritual leaders for the church and each committee and team setting clear goals for 2011.

By the time you read this, the Annual Meeting of the church will have been held on January 30th and we will have elected new Elders/Trustees, Deacons and four persons to the Permanent Nominating Committee. Once the seven-person Permanent Nominating Committee is in place (Session elects two – one of whom serves as chairperson, and the Board of Deacons elect one), their first order of business will be to meet and start putting together a slate of people for the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). A representative from presbytery’s Committee On Ministry will be working with them. Once their slate of nominees is ready, the Session will call a special congregational meeting to elect the PNC and they will be off and running.

I’m also pleased to see people from PHCPC at work in the larger church. It’s wonderful that Sharon Stewart is now under the care of session, going to seminary and working at Pittsburgh Presbytery. Earle Wooding has accepted the assignment to co-chair the Arrangements Committee for the General Assembly when it meets in Pittsburgh in 2012. You just keep bumping into good and Godly people from PHCPC doing kingdom stuff in lots of places.

I feel very privileged to be among you.

In Christ,

David B. Antonson
Interim Pastor

Pleasant Hills Community Church Participates in Race Dialogue

On two Thursday evenings in February, February 10th and 17th, members of the church are invited to participate in a dialogue on issues related to race, racism and our changing neighborhoods.

The first session will take place at Bidwell Presbyterian Church on the North Side from 6:00-9:00 PM hosted by the pastor of the church, Rev. DeNeice Welch. The second session, one week later, will be held at PHCPC from 6:00-9:00 PM in the Courtyard Lounge. Both evenings will begin with a meal provided by the Amos 5:24 Ministry Team followed by discussion and conversation. The Amos 5:24 Ministry Team of the presbytery has been exploring the issue of race over the past year and two other dialogues have taken place.

We would like those signing up to attend both Thursday evenings. The person putting this dialogue together is Rev. Karen L. Battle, Director of Justice Ministries and Mission for Pittsburgh Presbytery. Dr. Antonson will be participating in both dialogue sessions.

To make a reservation, call Linda Stout at the church at 412-655-2000 ext. 124.

On Being a Stephen Minister

by Debbie Thomas

We want to be a people and a church that grows closer to Christ in everything we are called to do. We want to love and serve with passion and compassion! What better way to witness this love of Jesus than through Stephen Ministry! I have witnessed and experienced firsthand His love expressed through this caring ministry. Reaching out with distinctively Christian care, we are called to serve those who are injured by life's circumstances. Stephen Ministers provide care to men and women who are hurting, both in our congregation and to non-members alike.



We are a quiet, confidential caring ministry, named after Stephen, the first layperson the Apostles asked to care for the needs of that early congregation in Acts Chapter 6. The Stephen Ministry logo symbolizes that we all are broken people, and that it is only through the cross of Jesus that we are made whole. Christ is the *cure giver*; we are the *care giver*. All glory is to God!

Our Stephen Ministers are initially trained in 50 hours of instruction under our experienced Stephen Leaders and Pastors, and our Stephen Leaders receive an additional 50 hours of training at Stephen Ministry training conferences. There is continuous supervision and continuing education. In addition to one-to-one care giving, Stephen Ministers do weekly hospital visits and are available after each Sunday service to pray with you and for you. We are here for you!

If you have any questions regarding this caring ministry, ask any of us! We would like to tell you more about what Stephen Ministry can offer you. Long after the cards and meals stop, your Stephen Minister will still be there! Yes, we are blessed to be a Stephen Ministry Church!

Celebrate Tet on Sunday, February 6th

Tết Nguyên Đán, the Vietnamese New Year celebration, is the biggest holiday in the Vietnamese culture. The Vietnamese congregation, wishing to celebrate this holiday with their brothers and sisters in Christ, invite us to their Tet lunch after the 11:00 AM service on February 6th in Fellowship Hall. Because of the preparation needed, there will not be a coffee hour in Fellowship Hall that Sunday. If you wish to bring something, please bring a vegetable side or desert to feed four. *Chúc mừng năm mới! (Happy New Year!)*

3:16

Max Lucado's book, **3:16**, will be the focus of study during Lent this year. **3:16** focuses upon a central verse of the Bible from the book of John: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Two Sunday Bible studies will cover 3:16. One will be lead by Ron and Sue Minkus at 9:30 AM, the other by Karen Bentley at 11:00 AM. Two versions of the book will be available after services. The smaller version is a weekly study for Lent and can be purchased for \$1. The larger version serves as a daily devotion during Lent and can be purchased for \$14. For those of you with a Kindle or a Nook, the larger version is available from Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble for \$5.75.

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.

The Chapel

by Tim Comer

Many of you are familiar with the term "It's one of the best kept secrets". Sometimes we use that phrase when referring to a restaurant or something like that. There's something that is happening here at PHCPC that I feel that way about; however, I don't want it to be a secret anymore. What I'm referring to are the monthly Chapel worship and praise experiences.

Once a month, we (youth, adults, children) gather in the chapel for a time of worship and praise music led by Kevin Vinay and Jason Wavle, a couple stories and faith testimonies, time to share what God is doing in our life and some prayer. But most of the time we spend worshipping God through worship and praise music.

We would love to share this experience with others so if you feel led to do so, please accept this as a personal invitation to come out and be with us for this very moving time of worship.

The Chapel 2011 dates and times are as follows:

Sunday, January 30 th	7:30 PM – 8:15 PM
Sunday, February 27 th	7:30 PM – 8:15 PM
Sunday, March 20 th	7:30 PM – 8:15 PM
Sunday, April 17 th	7:30 PM – 8:15 PM
Sunday, May 15 th	7:30 PM – 8:15 PM

Sunday Worship at PHCPC in February

Sunday, February 6th: Holy Communion/Tet Meal

We gather around the Lord's Table at 9:30 AM and 11:00 AM. Dr. Antonson will be giving the meditation using the readings Isaiah 58:1-9a, Psalm 112:1-10, I Corinthians 2:1-12 and Matthew 5:13-20. At noon, the entire congregation is invited to a New Year's Tet meal in Fellowship Hall provided by the Pittsburgh Vietnamese Presbyterian Fellowship that meets in our chapel. There is pre-worship prayer at 9:00 AM in the Board Room.

Sunday, February 13th: Ordination/Installation Sunday

We will be ordaining and installing our Elders and Deacons this Lord's Day. The preacher of the morning will be Tim Comer and the readings for the day are Deuteronomy 30:15-20, Psalm 119:1-8, I Corinthians 3:1-9 and Matthew 5:21-37. Please join others for prayer at 9:00 AM in the Board Room.

Sunday, February 20th: African Watoto Choir

We are hosting at both services the 21-member African Watoto Children's Choir. These children, ages 7-10, will lead us in spirited worship. Dr. Antonson will be speaking and the passages for the day are Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18, Psalm 119:33-40, I Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23 and Matthew 5:38-48. Again, join us for prayer in the Board Room at 9:00 AM.

Sunday, February 27th: Bethel Bible Series Sunday

On this day we will be recognizing the graduates of a two-year study in the Bethel Bible Series. Rev. Darlene Hann will be preaching and the assigned readings for the day are Isaiah 49:1-16a, Psalm 131, I Corinthians 4:1-5 and Matthew 6:24-34. A new member class will also be starting. Join us for prayer in the Board Room at 9:00 AM.

Sunday Worship at PHCPC in March

Sunday, March 6th: Transfiguration Sunday

We will give consideration to Jesus' transfiguration on the mountain. The readings for the day are Exodus 24:12-18, Psalm 2, II Peter 1:16-21 and Matthew 17:1-9. A second new member class takes place this day. Join us for prayer in the Board Room at 9:00 AM.

Sunday, March 13th: Confirmation Sunday/First Sunday in Lent

We are recognizing our confirmation students who are completing a special time of preparation and study. The assigned readings for the day are Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-7, Psalm 32, Romans 5:12-19 and Matthew 4:1-11. The sermon will tie into the book *The 3:16 Promise* (chapter one) by Max Lucado. A third new member class takes place this day. Join us for prayer in the Board Room at 9:00 AM.

Sunday, March 20th: Second Sunday in Lent

The assigned readings for the day are Genesis 12:1-4a, Psalm 121, Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 and John 3:1-17. The preacher of the morning will be following Max Lucado's book *The 3:16 Promise*. The fourth and final new member class takes place today. Join us in the Board Room for prayer at 9:00 AM.

Sunday, March 27th: Third Sunday in Lent/Welcoming of New Members

The assigned readings for the day are Exodus 17:1-7, Psalm 95, Romans 5:1-11 and John 4:5-42. Preaching will again follow Max Lucado's book and we will be receiving a class of new members.

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

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

Leader Planning and Training Workshop on February 5th

On Saturday morning, February 5th, starting at 8:30 AM there will be a Leader Planning and Training Workshop in the Youth Room. Invited to this workshop will be all Elders/Trustees, Deacons, staff, at-large members of teams, Stephen Leaders, representatives of the Vietnamese Presbyterian Fellowship and others. A light lunch will be served at the end. Refreshments start at 8:00 AM.

The overall purpose of this workshop will be to reflect on what it means to be spiritual leaders in the church, and have each leadership group in the church set their clear goals for 2011 and to review those goals with the entire assembled group. The keynote speaker will be Rev. Dr. Sheldon Sorge, Pastor to Pittsburgh Presbytery. The title of his presentation is "Jesus' School of Leadership Development." Dr. Sorge began his work with the presbytery in December, 2009.

There will be goal setting – breakout sessions for Stewardship, Mission Ministry, Children's Ministry, Trustees, Worship and Music, Evangelism, Adult Discipleship and Deacons.

It is the hope of the Planning Team, chaired by Jean Crane, that after this workshop every group in the church will have a clear sense of their mission mandate for 2011.

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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

Watoto Children's Choir in Worship: Sunday, February 20, 2010: 9:30 AM and 11:00 AM

The Mission of Watoto is to care for every child so that each one will become a responsible Christian and productive citizen of Uganda. Their goal is to care for 10,000 children.

Watoto means "The Children" and this choir will be visiting us again on February 20, 2011. The children are aged 7-10. We are in need of 9 host families for this wonderful ministry. Who is able to take 3 or 4 of these guests and provide a sleeping space? (Notice we did not say a bed – a sleeping bag would be fine!) This is a wonderful opportunity for families who have children of the same age to make an international connection and see life from a very different perspective. These children are very well behaved and will be accompanied by an adult for each home. Please contact Jeanne quickly to make sure you have the opportunity to be a host family!

World Day Of Prayer-March 4th: 12-2 PM and 5-7 PM in the Sanctuary

Come and experience the *synthesis of music and prayer*! On Friday, March 4th, 2011, Director of Worship and Music Robert Morehead will perform a suite based on Jesus' Sermon on the Mountain between 12-2 PM and 5-7 PM. During the performance, listeners are encouraged to pray for the world, family, friends, and whatever else may be on their mind. The scripture from "The Sermon on the Mount" will be up on a screen for meditation.. Robert encourages you to come for a 15-minute block and spend some time with God while being inspired by music.

Coming for Lent

March 9th begins the season of Lent with a special Ash Wednesday service at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary. Special Lenten music will be provided throughout the Lenten season, including a concert on March 20th at 4:00 pm in the Sanctuary featuring music by composers Ronald Perera and Joe Utterback