

Revelations

Community Presbyterian Church of Ben Avon ~ Pittsburgh, PA 15202

CPCBA to Host Community Thanksgiving Service Tuesday, November 20—7:00 p.m.

*Now thank we all our God,
With hearts and CANS and voices!*

The slight variation (above) in a beloved Thanksgiving hymn of the church is apt for the Community Thanksgiving Service set for **Tuesday, November 20, at 7:00 p.m.** in our sanctuary.

To express our thankfulness for the bounty we enjoy, the offering that evening will be non-perishable food items which will be donated to our local food pantry, North Hills Community Outreach, housed at Suburban General. Of course, you may also make a donation by check or cash which will also support the pantry and help them to provide holiday food for our neighbors.

The Thanksgiving service is a joint effort by CPCBA, Hiland, and Heritage Presbyterian Churches. There will be a mass choir formed from the three churches to offer vibrant music, and the worshipers will join in singing beloved Thanksgiving hymns. The Rev. Jean Henderson will preach.

Childcare will be provided during the service for those who require it. During the service, the children will share in the story "Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving" by Dav Pilkey. A time of fellowship with cookies and beverages will follow the service.

The Tuesday date was chosen to provide an opportunity to give thanks with less disruption to holiday gathering and meal preparations. Come offer your thanks for God's richness to us of heritage, hearth, and home, as we join with our nation in counting our blessings.

P.S. A special choir practice for all those who would like to participate will be held Monday, November 19, at 7:30 p.m. in our sanctuary. David Anderson will conduct.



Check Out the New Care Notes Display in the Rostrevor Entryway Booklets are Available for Adults and Children

Our Rostrevor entrance hall has been graced with care. Helpful new Care Notes are there which cover a variety of topics for adult and children, alike. These small booklets are yours to take and read, as they offer some good perspectives in difficult times.

Care Notes for Children have also been added. Parents and children may take these booklets, which talk in simple terms about issues important to children. They are a wonderful thing for parents and children to read together.

If you have any questions or requests regarding the care notes, please feel free to talk with Pastor Jean Henderson or Melanie Holcomb.



My View on Church Avenue

by Pastor Carol Divens Roth

Dear Friends,

It was sometime back in June when the church staff began to think about Advent and Christmas, long before the frenzy associated with the holiday season began—and at least a few weeks before the stores began to put up displays of trees and ornaments ☺

The theme we came up with is *Simple Gifts*.

Now, as catalogues clog our mailboxes and the advertising blitz begins, I hope this theme will be a gift to you, something to inspire and undergird your holiday preparations. When it seems like you are about to be overwhelmed by the seasonal tsunami of high emotions, shopping parties, wrapping, exhaustion, year-end work projects, decorating stress, to make it all perfect, think first about THE Simple Gift.

In the very first chapter, John's gospel skips the angel choirs and magi in recalling the Nativity of Jesus Christ, reminding us that the Word *became flesh* and lived among us. Accurately translated, it means that the One who planted the planets in the fields of the heavens, who fashioned the glory of purple mountains' majesty, and who breathed into being the slowly-unfolding center of the rose, *pitched a tent* in the midst of us.

For most of us a tent is a pretty simple dwelling, isn't it? It provides basic shelter and space for the necessities. Yet, as John writes, "from his fullness, we have all received grace upon grace." And he continues, "No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known."

In the man Jesus we saw God. We "beheld his glory" which came not with elaborate accoutrements but in healing the sick, food for the hungry, and a welcome for the marginalized.

He personified God's love, the simplest and most profound gift of all.

There is time to gather the important people in your life together and plan some simple gifts. Don't add more

to your overflowing schedule. Figure out what makes sense to delete. Here are a few suggestions:

- Family read-aloud time like *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* by Barbara Robinson
- Instead of buying unneeded gifts for each other, donate to a common cause like The Heifer Project, which provides farm animals around the world. (Children have fun deciding how many rabbits and chicks they can afford. If you started now, by next Christmas your family could save for a water buffalo.)
- Come to the Adult Class on November 4 and share your Christmas customs with each other. Be inspired to simplify and to discover meaningful moments in the season.
- Make an Advent wreath. Easiest of all is to put four votive candles around a cardboard circle. Each Sunday, take a few moments to light a candle and have everyone share their thoughts on the weekly theme: Hope, Peace, Love, and Joy.
- Start each day during Advent with some devotional time. We'll provide a calendar. Focus on one word or phrase from the Lord's Prayer for a day.
- Invite someone to worship with you. Offer to bring someone to the Christmas Festival on December 16. (See the article in this *Revelations*.)
- Visit someone who is homebound.
- Get together and count your blessings. Decide on what you have to offer to bless others through your talents, time, and financial giving.
- Make cards for patients in a local nursing home.

You get the idea. And you probably could generate so many more.

In the beginning is the simplest lesson plan of all straight from the gospel. The best gift is yourself.

Shalom,
Carol

Sanctuary Flower Responsibility Reminder...

November co-chairs: Lyn Robertson & Leslie Miller

November 4: Judy Hay

November 11: Lyn Robertson

November 18: Jane France

November 25: Claire Wilwohl & Jan Davis

Contribution Reminder...

As we near the end of the year, please make every effort to bring your 2007 pledge up to date.

If you are planning to make a stock donation, keep in mind that it may take several weeks to complete—so start the process *sooner* rather than *later*!

**You Only Die Once! –
an Adult Education Series**

*Looking at End-of-Life Issues...
While We're Still Half Sane!*

- by Rev. Jean Henderson

Sunday mornings, Nov 18 and 25, Dec 2 and 9
9:30 in Fellowship Hall

Leaders – Jean Henderson and selected cohorts

Let's face it! We all DIE – once! And we all SURVIVE other peoples' dying – many times!

But as Christians, how can we prepare for all this with grace and gusto and gratitude?

Let's get together as people of faith to face some tough yet tender issues:

- planning ahead to help ourselves and others
- preparing wills: legal, medical, and spiritual
- dealing with bad news about our health
- helping others to die or accept our dying
- grieving and knowing what's healthy or not
- getting on with living
- issues you wish to discuss

Each participant will receive a personal planning workbook to keep. Do come join us!

**Growing in Discipleship...
2008 Stewardship Campaign Underway!**



GROWING IN DISCIPLESHIP

The cases are out and the letters have been mailed to those not on routes! Now we wait and pray that God has touched the hearts and minds of our members to grow as disciples and tithe.

As much as we try to disassociate pledging from Community church's budgeting process, they are in fact intertwined. This is because we rarely pledge an adequate amount to support our activities. How much we can accomplish as a congregation is dependent on your discipleship as individuals. How much **more** could we accomplish if we grew into stewardship disciples? Please remember this as you pledge.

Watch our discipleship tree in the Narthex bloom as cases and pledges are returned. Come join us for the celebration of our stewardship efforts Sunday, November 18 after the 10:30 service.

Your fellow disciples,
Mary Witul, Leslie Miller,
Kim Cuneo, and Carol Divens-Roth

**Other Sunday Morning
Adult Education Opportunities:**

The Fine "Heart" of Giving: On November 4th, join Pastor Carol for a look at family Christmas tradition. Come share your family's traditions and learn from others. The final week of this class will wrap up on November 11th. All are welcome, meet in the Fellowship Hall at 9:15 a.m.

Newspaper Fellowship will continue to meet at 9:15 a.m. on Sundays, in the upstairs chapel. Meet over coffee and the morning paper to discuss and pray over the news of the world.

**Avonworth Meals on Wheels Is
In Need of Volunteers**

The Avonworth Meals on Wheels, serving our local community from St. James Lutheran Church nearby, is in need of drivers and runners (those who take the food to the door). You can sign up for a regular shift or as a substitute. Please call Barbara at 412-766-7763. Delivery occurs around 10:00 or 10:30 a.m. Mondays through Fridays. It takes about an hour of your time. Thank you!

**New Member Exploration Seminar Class
Saturday, November 17—9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.**

What's this church all about, Alfie? It takes some time to answer that question, but we will at least make a start on **Saturday, November 17, from 9-11:30 a.m.** for anyone interested in knowing more about Community Presbyterian Church of Ben Avon, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the meaning of membership.

If you have been attending and are considering uniting with the church, or, if you're merely curious, then this Exploration Seminar is for you. The Fellowship & Evangelism committee will contact those who have expressed interest or have been attending worship. If you know of any-one who might want to know more about this church, please contact Gail Buchanan at 412-734-2050 or Pastor Carol.

Seminar participants who then decide they would like to become members will join on Sunday, December 2, the first Sunday in Advent.



Pastor Nominating Committee Report: Results of the Church Assessment Tool Survey

The Pastor Nominating Committee is excited to report that we have received the results of the Church Assessment Tool survey that the active members of this congregation were invited to take in September. On September 29, the results of our Mission Study, of which this survey was a part, were presented to the PNC, the Session, and CPCBA Staff. The PNC chose to conduct this Mission Study because we felt that it was vital, during this time of transition, to take stock of ourselves as a congregation, our facilities, programs, and resources. We believe that it is critical that we look at the community in which God has placed our church and ask the question, "What has God called us to do as a congregation?"

We are happy to report that 177 congregants took the survey. The results have already been well used by the PNC in completing the Church Information Form which will soon be posted on a national Presbyterian Church-USA website for review by pastoral candidates. The survey results will also be used by our Session in discussion and planning for future direction and mission and will be helpful to our incoming pastor in getting to know us as a congregation.

STRENGTHS: The PNC was pleased to find that the results of this survey confirmed many of the things that we felt sure were true about Community Church.

- We remain a strong and vibrant congregation, showing resiliency in the face of the challenges of the past year.
- We believe that our worship services are exceptional in both quality and spiritual content.
- CPCBA members are welcoming, inviting and supportive, showing genuine concern in times of personal need. Our congregation can be described as friendly and engaging, with high morale and satisfaction.
- Our members understand that they have a spiritual responsibility for life-long learning and see CPCBA as providing high quality Christian education that is appropriate to every stage of life.
- We view our music program as outstanding in quality and appropriate in style to our congregation.
- Our members believe that CPCBA does a good job at helping members to discern their gifts and at providing opportunities for engagement in active ministry within the church and to the world.
- We view our church officers as open to the needs and concerns of our congregants.
- We do not see an unusual amount of conflict in our congregation and any problems that may arise are usually resolved through mutual effort.

CHALLENGES:

- In spite of attempts to become a more program-centered church over the past 5-7 years, CPCBA continues to remain quite pastor-focused. We look to our pastor for our vision and our leadership in all areas.
- In looking at all the indices of this survey, our members scored the lowest, in comparison to other churches of the same size, in the area of spiritual vitality. This index measures the degree to which members believe that their faith is central to their lives rather than peripheral or episodic. Interestingly enough, this measure correlates strongly with stewardship.
- While we are blessed as a congregation with significant financial resources, we are below the national denominational average in our giving.

TOP THREE PRIORITIES: Our members chose the following three priorities as areas that we would like to see additional energy placed to expand or improve our ministries:

- Develop ministries that work toward healing those broken by life circumstances.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy to reach new people.
- Develop the spiritual generosity of the people to financially support the ministry of our church.

OPEN MEETING WITH THE PNC ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4 AT 7:00 P.M., FELLOWSHIP HALL

If you participated in the Church Assessment Tool survey, you have taken part in the call process in a very meaningful way. However, the Pastor Nominating Committee remains committed to communicating with the congregation as frequently and thoroughly as we can. We will host a time to come and "chat" with the PNC on **Sunday, November 4, from 7-9PM in the fellowship hall**. If you have questions or would just like an opportunity to speak to members of the PNC, please come and join us. PNC members will be present to listen or discuss any questions that you may have. Refreshments will be served.

Community Christmas Festival Emphasizes Advent Theme of *Simple Gifts* Sunday, December 16—6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

In the Pastor's View column on page 2, there's a reference to the Christmas Festival. It will be held from 6:00-8:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 16, with the theme *Simple Gifts*.

Volunteers are needed to supervise craft activities in the Fellowship Hall. The main criterion for craft making is *KISS: Keep It Simple, Sweetheart*. You can supply an idea and oversee a table, or there are some ready-made ideas which need helpers for oversight. The crafts, which can be given as holiday gifts, should use inexpensive supplies and be able to be completed onsite.

There will be more information soon, but for now, if you have an idea, or would like to volunteer, please see any member of the church staff.



November Sunday Highlights

FALL BACK SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Daylight Savings Time ENDS on Sunday, November 4. Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour. That way you'll be right on time for the 10:30 a.m. All Saints Day observance during worship as we remember and toll the bell for the members of our church who have died in the past year. During that service we will have a remembrance of Pastor Brent Dugan.



ONE WORSHIP SERVICE, NOVEMBER 11 —MISSION SUNDAY

The Annual Meeting of the Congregation will take place after worship on Sunday, November 11 to elect officers as Deacons and Elders and to elect auditors. In order to allow for as much participation as possible, there will be ONLY ONE WORSHIP SERVICE that day—at 10:30. We will also observe Mission Sunday that day with guest speaker...

STEWARDSHIP DEDICATION, NOVEMBER 18

During the 10:30 worship service on November 18, we will dedicate to God all of the pledges that have been received during the financial stewardship emphasis. We will also baptize Domenic John Lucchino, son of Jennifer and James.

Community Presbyterian Church of Ben Avon Directory

- Interim Pastor Carol Divens Roth
- Pastor of Visitation Jean H. Henderson
- Christian Education Director Melanie Hughes-Holcomb
- Director of Youth & Young Adult Ministries Todd Tracy
- Director of Music/Choir Director David Anderson
- Associate Music Director/Organist Barbara McKelway
- Administrative Assistant Mary Susan Anderson
- Hostess Claire Wilwohl
- Maintenance Manager Don Evanochko
- Clerk of Session Peter Herchenroether
- Treasurer Barbara Barcoucky
- Trustees, President Doug Simmons
- Deacons, Chair Kerry Crilley
- Junior Church, Coordinator Jan Davis
- Wooden Ladder Preschool Larry Skerlong
- Financial Secretaries: John Ferguson
- Royce Rice
- Deb Sadowski
- Dick Schneider
- Web Masters Susan and Marty Houser

Committee Chairs:

- Christian Education Clair Cranville
- Fellowship & Evangelism Nancy Hamilton
- Nominating Committee Jennifer Knuth
- Outreach Judy Hay, Kate Colville
- Property Andy Kolenda
- Stewardship & Finance Ross Dillon
- Worship June Weletz

Deacon Comfort and Joy Contacts

(for meal assistance, transportation, grief support, etc.)
Patti Timpani (412-766-1645) or Mary Witul (412-734-2772)

Deacons Visitation Ministry

Frank Somerville at 412-931-6584

(Please help the Deacons share the concern of our community by letting us know whether you, or a friend or family member, would welcome a visit. Requests can be made to any Deacon.)

Church Office Hours are Monday-Friday—9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

† Phone: 412-761-1233; 412-766-1800 † Fax: (412) 766-1801 † E-mail: cpcba@verizon.net † Web site: www.cpcba.com
Chapel is open daily from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm for prayer and meditation.

**Community Presbyterian
Church of Ben Avon
Mission Statement:**

Community Presbyterian Church of Ben Avon aspires to a greater service of God through a ministry mindful of the needs of our congregants, neighbors and, through the Presbyterian Church (USA), the world community.

We actively bind together this community of Jesus Christ through warm fellowship, inspiring worship, nurture, learning and a long, rich tradition.

We are led by the Holy Spirit to use our abundant blessings and diverse talents progressively for evangelism, discipleship, stewardship and mission.

Revelations

Community Presbyterian Church of Ben Avon
7501 Church Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15202

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"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Revelation 22:21



Is There a Hymn Writer Hidden Inside You?

If so, we invite you to let your talents blossom!

The theme for this holiday season is *Simple Gifts*. And what a "simple gift" it would be for you to write a new hymn for Advent, Christmas, New Year's or Epiphany. Just put your new words to an old familiar hymn tune. And we have the resources to help you!



On the desk in the Narthex is a list of familiar hymns in our hymn book, along with the number of syllables for each line. For example, "Amazing Grace" is 8686 - 8 syllables in the first line, 6 in the second, and so on. We're giving you 35 different tunes to choose from...lots of options!

We'll use your new hymn words during the holidays and at the Christmas Festival in December. So, pick up a resource sheet and turn in those new hymns to Music Director, David Anderson, by **November 18**.

This is not a contest! If Isaac Watts could write over 600 hymns, surely you can write one!

Give it a try - it's fun!

**CPCBA Participants in Annual Crop Walk
Raise \$1,300 for Hunger**

Many thanks to all who either made contributions toward, or walked in the Oct 7th North Boro's Crop Walk. CPCBA was represented by seven walkers who raised a total of \$1,300 for World Hunger. Next year we hope to double both our number of walkers and amount raised! We also greatly appreciated the ice cold water and smiles supplied by Todd Tracy and the Kurtz family along our way.

Pictured below are CropWalkers (l-r): Mary Witul, Deb Sadowski, Ed Stauffer, Sandy Stauffer, Rob Colville (kneeling), Kate Colville and Leslie Allen.

