

New Hope News

Children's Worship Bags

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The clipboards with the children's bulletin that our children enjoy during worship each week are being replaced!!! Coming in January, Children's Worship Bags, containing worship helps, a children's bulletin, coloring sheets, crayons and a small snack, will be available. The bags will be personalized with each child's name so that they may add a Bible, a stuffed animal or other treasure. In order to insure that each child has a bag with his or her name on it, we are asking parents to fill out a form (found on the welcome table). Worship bags are designed for children ages 3 through 5th grades. Parents may request a bag for younger or older children at their own discretion. If you have any questions, please contact Susan Phillips, Chair of the Worship and Music Committee or Barbi Smith, Director of Christian Education and Spiritual Formation.

Coming Soon ... a New Bible Study Opportunity

The Gospel of Matthew: GOD WITH US

This study takes us to the heart of the controversy in the Church of the first century. With all we have to unite us, we still find ways to create division. It is an age old question: do we focus on what sets us apart, or what holds us together? According to Matthew, the Church is an earthly manifestation of the kingdom of God, and it is comprised of Jesus' followers who have been called out to live righteously in the world and to serve in the manner of the Christ with deep humility and unfathomable forgiveness. In Jesus, there is a new community at work for the blessing of the world.

This study, which will be led by Barbi Smith, begins Thursday, January 15 at 7:30 p.m. and continue through April 23, 2009 in the Upper Conference Room. The cost is \$25 per resource book, and couples can share. You may register by calling the church office at 636 936-2200 or emailing Barbi Smith at bsmith@newhopepc.net.

IN ORDER TO HAVE ENOUGH RESOURCE BOOKS,
PLEASE REGISTER BY JANUARY 4!

Christmas Eve Services

Wednesday, December 24

5:00 PM *Christmas Worship*

Childcare Provided

11:00 PM *Candlelight Worship*

with Choir & Communion

Evangelism Tip of the Month:

Share the mes-
sage, love and
spirit of
Christmas
through word
and deed.

Children's Fellowship

January 11 marks the beginning of our new children's fellowship program, which will meet weekly on Sunday afternoons from 3 – 4:30 p.m. Lots of fun activities will be planned for boys and girls in Kindergarten through Fifth Grades. We will need adult advisors who love kids and are Safe Sanctuary certified (or willing to be!). If you are interested, please contact Barbi Smith, Director of Christian and Spiritual Formation (636 936-2200).

From Time to Time

When I noticed the unused tissue on top of the neatly folded towels in the bathroom, I drifted back in time to my childhood. The weather had turned sharply colder and Christmas was nearing. Feeling grown up, privileged to know that Santa was "in spirit" and didn't really come down chimneys, I decided the mature thing to do was to get a gift for my mom.

We were poor, but only in money, yet my mom managed to have gifts for my six siblings and me every year. It was one of my first realizations that my mom was struggling to raise us. I guess some would call it maturing. But, being only eight-years-old, I had never bought a gift before. I wasn't sure what to buy or where to get it. I emptied the change from my bank, earned from collecting empty soda bottles, and headed to the local drugstore. They had everything you could ever want there. When I entered the store, the air was warm and thick with odors. Even though Weber's Pharmacy sold medicine, they sold so many wonderful things, and if I close my eyes, I can still smell the store's scent to this day. Wandering up and down each black and white tiled aisle, I carefully considered each item on every shelf. I looked at medicines and powders and things for illnesses that I couldn't even pronounce. With each item, I pictured my mother's expression while she opened it on Christmas morning. It was a difficult task.

I saw stockings and perfumes and I looked at watches in a glass counter that had rotating shelves, pressing the button to rotate each one. I knew the change in my pocket wasn't enough to buy one, but I picked out the one she'd like best anyway. I began to feel discouraged, without hope of finding something. But, when I turned into the last aisle, I saw exactly what I was looking for. It was the perfect gift...a great big box of tissues!

Now, a box of tissues may not sound like much of a gift to you, but

they were one thing we never had in our house when I was growing up. With seven children and very little money, tissues were a true luxury item for us. My mother never bought them and for an obvious reason: they would be gone in a day or two. I laughed out loud thinking of how my mother always said my brothers wasted things like that. I remember considering how my mother could have the luxury of her very own box. Not for the bathroom or where everyone would take some, but rather, to put on her own dresser where she wouldn't have to share them at all.

I had a great big smile on my face as I took the box from the shelf and confidently walked to the cash register, satisfied in my gift selecting expertise. My mom was going to love this! Christmas morning came, and my mother, the most kind-hearted person in the world, loved the tissues. Aren't moms just the best? That satisfied feeling I had in the drug store returned again when I saw her happiness. The joy we felt couldn't have been any greater, even if it had been a necklace of gold. Sadly, I believe it was her only gift. That year, I learned how to give a gift to someone special by selecting it with painstaking consideration and thoughtfulness, and wrapping it with ribbons of love.

Today, as I looked at that tissue on top of the folded towels, I remembered what I had learned. I realized just how far I've come in life and how blessed I am. From a time when a simple tissue was a luxury, to a time when one can be left unused and discarded, we should never go so far that we forget the little things that held big lessons and molded who we are. As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us." I picked up the tissue and wiped tears of love and appreciation from my eyes.

--Jeanette Broderick

Giving Tree

New Hope has been given three families in need from the Crisis Nursery this year for our giving tree. The giving tree will be located in the Narthex after worship. Please consider taking an ornament from the tree and helping a family in need this holiday season. Below are the profiles of the three families we are helping this year:

I've been using the Crisis Nursery to help get back on my feet. The Nursery watched my son so that I could get a job and a place for my family to live. My biggest wish is to find a place for my family to live and keep us together. I'm also trying to get my education so that I can do even better for my family. I work really hard and love my kids so much. I have a daughter and a son. They are great kids, and just want to have a home and be loved and safe. I am so grateful for your help with giving my kids a great Christmas!

I have a chronic illness that causes me to go into the hospital for 7-10 days every few weeks. My health problems also make it impossible for me to go to work and support my family. The Crisis Nursery has been there for my family when I needed help caring for my kids while I was in the hospital. They also helped out with the basic necessities: clothing, diapers, school supplies, formula, and support for me. Right now I am concerned about how I will pay for some basic repairs that my house needs. I wish that my kids could just be kids without having to worry that my illness will kill me. My kids dream about big things like going to Six Flags, Disney World, and even small things like sports. They really want to play sports, but I just can't afford it. My kids are so great. They try hard to take care of me and the baby. God will bless you and we truly thank you for giving my children a Christmas. May God bless you all.

I am a single mother of three wonderful children. This year was hard because we lost our home to a fire. We all made it out okay but we lost everything. Since it was a rental property there is no insurance although the Red Cross helped us initially. Since that time we have been living with family and I have struggled with depression on and off. I had to take the kids and put them in a new school and find a new job. I'm also trying to go to school. We have been lucky to find a new place to live and will be moving soon. The move will take most of the money I have saved and it would be difficult to provide gifts for my children. Any help you could offer would mean so much to my children and I. Thank you so much and God Bless!

Youth Happenings

Mid-High Youth Group Activity Reminder

Friday, December 19th Christmas Party and Movie Night from 7:00 pm until 9:30 pm – What to bring: Favorite Holiday Move, Favorite Holiday Snack and a \$5.00 gift for our Christmas Gift exchange. If you have any ideas of any Christmas games that you would like to play, please let Amy know as soon as possible.

Sunday, January 4th Meeting at church from 12:00 pm until 2:00 pm – Please bring a snack to share.

Saturday, January 10th Working at the Oasis Food Pantry. We will be meeting there at 9:45 am. We will be working from 9:45 am until 11:45 am. If you are able to work at the food pantry, please let Amy know as soon as possible.

Sunday, January 18th MARK YOUR CALENDARS – TRIVIA NIGHT!

If you have any questions, please contact Amy Kitsmiller at 314-795-9759 (cell) or

E-Mail at alkitsmiller@newhopepc.net

Dear Pastor Chris,

I can't begin to express my thanks for your visit while I was in the hospital. Your calming presence and kind words helped speed my recovery and certainly made my stay more pleasant. God bless you and the entire New Hope congregation for your caring ways.

Sincerely & with Thanks,

Mary Cramer

Christmas Concert

On Sunday December 21st at 5:30pm come hear the joyous songs of Christmas. You will hear many familiar and traditional songs. The adult choir will present a song composed by one of its members. Our adult and children's choirs as well as other groups will be entertaining us while we enjoy a meal. It will be a wonderful way to celebrate the Christmas season.

If you can make cookies for dessert, call Tina Johnson at 939-0855. Please complete the insert in the bulletin so we can make sure we have enough food.

Shopping on Main

It's time for Christmas shopping and Main Street has some special evening shopping dates set up for the holidays. We will be meeting at 4:30 PM on Saturday, December 20 at Lewis & Clark Restaurant (corner of Main Street & First Capitol in St. Charles) for dinner before we shop. If you want to join us later, locate us by calling Deb Morris on her cell phone at 636-734-5618. We will do some shopping and then end our evening back at Lewis & Clark for coffee & dessert. The shops are open until 9. For more information or questions, please contact Deb Morris.

**The nursery is in
need of volunteers
for the
5:00 Christmas Eve
service.
If you are available,
please contact
Christie Tutschulte.**

Joy Offering

Presbyterians have long celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ by giving generously to an Advent offering. The Christmas Joy Offering dates back to the 1930's when the former Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) began an offering to supplement inadequate retirement income and provide supplemental medical insurance for former ministers, missionaries, church workers, and their families. It was first officially called the Joy Gift in 1949.

In the former United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (UPCUSA), a Christmas offering was first taken in 1960.. Called the White Gift, its funds were used for general mission and world relief. In 1964, the name was changed to the Christmas Offering, and receipts provided support for health and welfare concerns related to children. The emphasis on global work with children continued until 1973, when the offering was used to assist former servants of the church who were living on inadequate pensions. In 1974 racial ethnic education was added, and in 1979 nursing home care assistance was also included. Funds were distributed evenly between the Board of Pensions and racial ethnic education.

In 1988 the PCUS and the UPCUSA offerings were joined into one offering, the Christmas Offering Joy Gift. It was agreed that neither the Board of Pensions nor the racial ethnic schools would suffer in the merger of the Joy Gift and the Christmas Offering. In 1989 the offering was renamed the Christmas Joy Offering, and in 1991 the 203rd General Assembly changed the distribution of funds to 50% to the Board of Pensions and 50% to the Presbyterian racial ethnic schools and colleges.

Now that you know where your money goes, please give generously!

“THANKS — GIVING”

For three people from New Hope, Thanksgiving week took on an entirely different perspective. You will hear Patty & Roger Nekula, who have organized and participated in several adult mission trips to Pearlinton, MS, speak today of their experiences this year. Below you will read of Larry Holder's observations as a first time volunteer.

Since this was the first mission trip I had ever been on, I didn't know what to expect. Spending the week at the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (P.D.A.) camp at Pearlinton, MS, was not the Thanksgiving week to which I am accustomed. Six of us from St. Charles Presbyterian/New Hope shared the camp with a group from Michigan and another group from Ohio. The crew I was with spent 3 days helping a man whose home was still being rebuilt. We helped him with his yard which had not been cut for a few years as he did not have a lawn mower and we removed several trees. In addition, we organized the building materials that were being stored both in and under the home. During our orientation at the camp, we were told that while the work we do is important, it is just as important to be good listeners for the homeowners. They all have stories that they need to tell describing what they have been through. I could see that with this homeowner. When he wasn't thanking us for helping him out, he was telling us about his experiences, including surviving the storm surge (in this area, it was 25 feet) by climbing a tree and how he has been working with the different agencies to get his home rebuilt. But he didn't just talk; he worked side by side with us at all times.

On Thanksgiving Day, I worked with Roger and Patty's crew gutting a home. I'm better at gutting a home than putting it back together! I removed the walls from a shower and made quite a mess. As we headed back to camp, more than a little exhausted, we also knew that 2 people who had come in from Michigan, were preparing a Thanksgiving meal that was exceptional under the circumstances! With them, they brought a semi-trailer filled with all types of furniture; beds, couches, tv's etc. They didn't advertise. They just showed up with these gently used items. The most amazing thing is that every last item was distributed within two hours!

For me, the highlight of the week was Wednesday evening when the homeowners that were being helped that week were invited to have dinner with us. After dinner, the homeowners were introduced to the camp. To hear the words of gratitude from these people gave a different meaning to Thanksgiving than the one I had before this week. I am extremely grateful to New Hope for their prayers; to the Mission Committee, and especially, Jerry Brown, for their support; to Patty & Roger for their guidance; and especially to an old waitress along the way who called me "sweetheart." Now that's southern hospitality!

Calendar of Events

Sunday, Dec 14

8:45 Worship & Communion
9:45 Education Hour
11:00 Worship

Monday, Dec 15

6:00 Sr. High Bible Study

Tuesday, Dec 16

6:30 N.A. Mtg.
7:00 A.A. Mtg.

Wednesday, Dec 17

6:00 Girl Scouts
6:30 Female Connection
7:30 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, Dec 18

6:00 Healthy Beginnings

Friday, Dec 19

7:00 Mid-High Movie Night

Saturday, Dec 20

8:30 Men's Breakfast
4:30 Female Connection
Shopping on Main

Sunday, Dec 21

8:45 Worship & Communion
9:45 Education Hour
(No BLAST)
11:00 Worship
5:30 Choir Christmas
Concert & Dinner

Tuesday, Dec 23

6:30 N.A. Mtg.
7:00 A.A. Mtg.

Wednesday, Dec 24

1:00 Office Closes
5:00 Worship—Childcare
provided
11:00 Candlelight Service
With Communion

Thursday, Dec 25

Office Closed

Usher Schedule

Sunday, Dec 21st

Rick Cassetta
Rick Etling
Tyler Etling
Ken Pinkley
Kevin Harms
Joe Seidler

Sunday, Dec 28th

Carol Botkin
Gary Freeman
Tyler Salter
Bill Reilley
Ruth Reilley
Jim Pettit
Joyce McDonald

Substitute List

Al Beamer
Kathy Beamer
Bunny Hites
Don Moore
Allen Sebaugh
Ann Sebaugh
Sue Stiegemeier
Gil Stuenkel
Sue White
Jim White
Kathy Freeman
Gary Freeman

