
Wabash AveNews

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Vol. LXII No. 12
December 2009

Advent & Christmas Blessings

From the Pastor's Desk: Dear Wabash Avenue Friends, With Advent and Christmas upon us, Sam and I would like to wish all of you a joyous, blessed season this year. May the God who comes to us as light, hope, and peace abide with you. I look forward to seeing you in worship and celebrating with you the One who is our hope and life: Jesus Christ. From our family to yours: Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! With prayers and blessings, John and Sam

Special December Activities, Opportunities, and Worship

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|----------------|------------|---|
| Sunday 12/6 | 10:40 a.m. | <i>Hanging of the Greens Communion Service</i> |
| | 12:00 p.m. | <i>Christmas Decorating Pizza Party</i> |
| | 7:00 p.m. | <i>Sabbath @ Seven</i> – music begins at 6:30 p.m. |
| Sunday 12/13 | 10:40 a.m. | <i>Christmas Music Sunday</i> – lots of singing! |
| Sunday 12/20 | 4:00 p.m. | <i>Caroling Party</i> departs from church parking lot.
<i>Supper</i> will follow.
<i>Sabbath @ Seven</i> – music begins at 6:30 p.m. |
| Thursday 12/24 | | <i>Christmas Eve</i> |
| | 6:30 p.m. | <i>Prelude</i> |
| | 7:00 p.m. | <i>Christmas Eve Service of Lessons & Carols</i> |

Please bring your holiday company and invite an unchurched friend!

4th and Goal to Go!

The Stewardship Committee is happy to report that we as a church family have made wonderful progress in our 2010 stewardship campaign. Many thanks to all who have responded. If you have yet to fill out your pledge card and return it, we need you to put us over the goal line. Here is where we stand as of November 10:

Pledges increased	44
Pledges decreased	5
Pledges same as 2009	14
New Pledges	<u>3</u>
Pledges received	66
Total giving units	117
Giving units yet to respond	51
Total amount pledged	\$143,377
Pledges needed to make the 2010 budget	\$192,000

If you have not yet made your pledge, we hope to hear from you – and need to hear from you! Your gifts to God will be a blessing to our church – and to you!

If you need a pledge card, please contact the church office (362-5812, wapc@att.net) and one will be sent to you. Additional pledge cards are in the Thomson Room. Thank you for your generous giving.

Wanted: Men and women who want to give glory to God and joy to others by singing in the Chancel Choir. Experienced voices AND beginning folks are welcome! Childcare is available during rehearsal which begin at 9:00 a.m. each Sunday. For more information, please contact Barb Wilson (364-8926, barbw@link2000.net).

Deck the Halls December 6 The 2009 Christmas decorating party will take place in the sanctuary immediately following worship on December 6. Pizza lunch included! Join us!

Anna Harter Walter Association



AHWA Board meets December 29 at noon.

AHWA Book Club meets December 10 at 7:00 p.m.

AHWA Circles meet Tuesday, December 8 at the times listed below.

AHWA Craft Group meets December 23 at 7:15 p.m.

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- ▶ Noon Circle: 11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in the Board Room.
 - ▶ Afternoon Circle: 1:30 p.m. in the Board Room.
 - ▶ Evening Circle: 7:30 p.m. in the Church Parlor.
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The AHWA Luncheon will be held on December 1, at 12:00 p.m. in the dining room. The installation of the 2010 officers will be held, and a brief remembrance of "Down Through the Years with the women's Work in the Presbyterian Church: 1969-2009" will be presented. All women are invited.

Bazaar Success!

Thanks to everyone who contributed and helped the Bazaar, which funds Preschool scholarships for educationally disadvantaged children. Thanks to you \$9391.99 was raised. These monies fund those preschool scholarships in the coming year. Photos of this year's Bazaar are posted in the Christian education wing display case. Thank you for sharing the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Got Coffee? Gourmet coffee and hot cocoa from the Presbyterian Coffee Project will be available for purchase the 3rd Sunday of every month in the Thomson Room. Your purchases enable small farmers feed their families. Thanks for blessing those in need.

Thinking as Stewards

Mark 12:35-44. *For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.*

From what do you give God, from your abundance or from your all? While it is easier to give from one's abundance, after the bills are paid, after the groceries are bought, after the Christmas gifts have been purchased, and after the vacation is planned, it is often tempting to treat such giving as a tip, a little something extra for the server. Giving from one's all means giving first. It is an act of faith, and as such it is not about "fair share" or tax write-offs or support for a favorite program at the church. Giving from one's all is about understanding that everything we have, everything we use to make our livelihood – our minds, our strength, the materials, even the time we have to work – is a gift from God.

John Wesley said, "Make as much as you can, save as much as you can, and give as much as you can." Giving from one's all keeps things in perspective. It saves us from the deceiving promise of idols which cannot and will not save us at all.

Do you give to God from your abundance or do you give to God from your all?

From *Forward Day by Day*

Christian Education Corner

Wired

Every Sunday after the children's sermon kids who are too old for children's church may join Mandy Beck-King for Wired, a time specially designed for them. When the little ones are dismissed to children's church, the older ones may depart with Mandy for their time of discussion and study.

Akaloo!

Our new curriculum Akaloo comes from the Greek word *akolouthein* meaning "to follow." Akaloo includes web access to activities for kids and faith material for adults. To access these, go to: <http://home.akaloo.org/wapc>. All members and children are welcome to register on this safe and interactive site. For more info, contact Mandy Beck King (362-5812, mbkce@att.net). Guest login data to explore the Akaloo site is: Username: **wapcguest** Password: **faith4all**

December 16 – WIRED Retreat & Kid’s Club from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. We will start with dinner, then a lesson, and more fun! We will be making plates full of treats for our homebound friends.

The Presbyterian Youth Triennium, a nation-wide gathering of 5,000 Presbyterian youth, is held every 3 years at Purdue. The next Triennium is July 20-24, 2010. CE sets aside scholarship funds so that WAPC youth can attend. Watch for more details to come or go now to: www.presbyterianyouthtriennium.org

Teresa Ramey Updates: <http://prayingfort.blogspot.com/>

1 of every 6 Americans is hungry – reports CNN on November 15. December’s FISH Pantry Sunday will be December 6. Thanks for your food or dollar donation. The FISH food pantry is now open 5 days a week. FISH reports that requests for help are frequent, substantial, and growing.

Join the tithing fellowship.

Donate, Read and Help: Used paperback book sales at Milligan’s Floral Shop go to Clothe-a-Child. Book donations are needed. Shoppers are welcome! For info, see Susan Rosen.

A Win-Win Situation Have you considered a gift of stock or securities? Appreciated securities are perhaps the most cost-effective assets to use in making a gift. When you donate stocks, bonds, or other securities to God through the church, you receive a charitable deduction for their full market value - and you incur no capital gains tax (subject, of course, to IRS deduction limits). Giving this way is a win-win situation: it costs you less to give God more. For more information, speak with your financial advisor. *From First Presbyterian Church, Wheaton, Illinois*

To send a Christmas card or package to WAPC member Nick Renick who is in Iraq, his address is:

SPC. RENICK, NICHOLAS
C/1-377 BN 17th FIRES BRIGADE
APO AE 09374

Our Stewardship through November 15:

Gifts to God received Sunday 11/15 (pledges, unpledged, and plate offering):	\$1,276.41
Amount needed from congregation per week to cover the 2009 budget:	\$3,757.44
Amount over (under) the 52 week budget as of week 46:	(\$10,378.19)

Thanks for your generous giving to God through Wabash Avenue. With 6 weeks left in the fiscal year, here is where we stand: Thanks to frugal stewardship by our elders, deacons, and staff, the 2009 budget as of 10/31/09 is on track to finish the year at or under budget. However, that will only happen as all of us continue to give God our best in the next 6 weeks.

This time last year (11/15/08), our giving to God (pledged, unpledged, and plate offering) was \$25,356.95 under budget. Thanks to God and to you, our giving is better this year. However, whether Wabash Avenue ends 2009 in the red or in the black depends on what we all do between now and 12/31/09. Most of all, it depends on you.

With Christmas shopping still ahead for most of us, we have the opportunity to balance what we choose to spend on ourselves with what we want to give to God. As you are blessed, thanks for completing your pledge. If you have not made a pledge for 2009, thank you for your generosity to bless God's church. If you have not been able yet to give to God this year, thanks for your generous year-end gifts, through which the church – and you – will be blessed. Thank you for your generous giving.

Please bring in your mug. Help us keep down our costs. Thanks!

The 2009 flower calendar is posted on the bulletin board in the hallway just outside the Thomson Room. Home arrangements are welcome! Thanks.

One simple thing you can do to be a good steward for God of the earth as this Christmas shopping approaches is to choose gifts that support reuse. Visit local antiques shops where you can find some real treasures – that are bargains, too!

Arrange furniture to take advantage of natural light from windows. Place desks and reading chairs next to windows to cut down on the need and use of supplemental, artificial light during the day.

Small steps add up to big changes – and savings. Reduce, reuse, recycle, and rethink. God made the earth and proclaimed it good. Take steps to act with God to preserve and further bless that goodness.

Suggestion from West Central Solid Waste District of Indiana

Senior Help from Uncle Sam

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 has been extended through 2009 as part of the Federal Emergency Stabilization Act. This provides an opportunity for church members age 70 and ½ and older who own an IRA to direct gifts of up to \$100,000 to God through the church from their IRA without reporting the transfer as income. The contribution must be transferred directly from the IRA to the church. Historically, any withdrawals from an IRA would be taxed *prior* to making a gift. Now a contribution can be made directly from the IRA *without* being taxed. This is just one more way, along with gifts of stock, that members can consider as a significant way to support their community of faith, particularly as the end of the year approaches. As always, consult your tax advisor.

From First Presbyterian Church, Wheaton, Illinois

Information, Questions, Participation: *Wanna know* what's going on with Session? Or any of the committees? If so, please email jcvchurch@att.net to receive an electronic copy of this month's Session packet. *Got a question* about anything? Please check with Clerk of Session Alex Thomas, the committee chairs, or Rev. Van Nuys, and they will be happy to fill you in. *Got an idea?* Or is there something you would like to see happen? Great! The Session welcomes your ideas and participation. Again, talk to Pat, the chairs, or Rev. Van Nuys. They would welcome hearing from YOU.

Brighten the Mitten Tree with your Love

Now standing or arriving soon in the Thompson Room is a bare Christmas tree awaits your gifts of warmth and love for Montgomery County children. Please bring in a pair of children's mittens and / or stocking cap between now and Christmas. The donated items will be shared with Wabash Avenue's Preschool children who demonstrate need and also with needy kids in the wider Montgomery County community. Thank you for sharing the love of God in Jesus Christ.

De-Stressing Christmas

If Christmas has become more about finance than fun, take heed. Most households will up their already-worrisome credit card debt this month, causing season-ruining stress. So cut back on the shopping, wrapping, gift-giving, calorie-consuming extravaganza - especially if you're in charge of it. Instead, consider some Spirit-filled, earth-friendly alternatives, says the Center for a New American Dream. The Tokoma Park, Md.-based advocacy group offers a free "Simplify the Holidays" booklet, available on its Web site, newdream.org. Here are some of its tips:

Give time, not things. Take nieces and nephews on an outing to a museum or skating rink, with an ice-cream or cocoa stop. Offer to cook, run errands, dog-walk or handle other chores for family members.

Skip gifts for adults. "Most folks can afford to buy themselves the \$30 item you were going to get them anyway," says Monique Tilford, the center's deputy director. The extended family can pool their money and take a day trip or meet to decide which charity to give it to. Or gather and "shop" at alternativegifts.org, which lets you give targeted charitable presents - like a Heifer Project International goat or bicycle for a poor African-village family - to friends and relatives.

Make a game of giving. Instead of everyone buying multiple gifts for several relatives, draw names. That way, each relative buys just one present; it's cheaper and allows you more time to fuss over getting the right gift. You can go a step further and make it a minimalist contest by setting a \$5 or \$10 limit and seeing how creative everyone can be for less.

Pick and choose. Analyze holiday activities to decide which ones are really important. Eliminate burdensome activities by baking with friends, making the holiday dinner a potluck, making worship a priority, and just skipping other things altogether. Remember the reason for the season.

The Annual Men's Christmas Fellowship Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, December 2nd. All ladies will be our special guests. John Blair and company will provide the Christmas Program. Please call the church office at 362-5812 so that we will have an idea of how many will be attending.

The Christmas Joy Offering will be received throughout the month of December. This special offering is divided between two areas supported by the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Part of the offering is distributed to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs that provide support to retired church workers and their spouses to ensure that these faithful servants have enough to live on in their retirement years.

The other part of the offering supports the 8 Presbyterian-related racial / ethnic schools and colleges to help these institutions in their mission of training and education for Native American, African-American, and Hispanic students. These schools include: Sheldon Jackson College, Alaska; Mary Holmes College, Mississippi; Barber-Scotia College, North Carolina; Cook College and Theological School, Arizona; Knoxville College, Tennessee; Menaul School, New Mexico, Presbyterian Pan American School, Texas, and Stillman College, Alabama.

Your gift to the Christmas Joy Offering helps retired church workers have enough to live on and helps the next generation reach for their dreams through the gift of education. Thank you for generously witnessing to and sharing the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Special Details regarding Christmas Week

In accordance with policy approved by Session in 2007, Personnel Committee wants to inform you that Church Office will be closed from Friday December 25 through Friday January 1.

10:40 a.m. worship will be held, of course, on Sunday December 27; however, no Sunday school will meet on that Sunday. 9:30 a.m. Sunday school will resume on Sunday January 3.

While the church office will be closed from 12/25 through 1/1, the outer doors of the Christian Education wing will be unlocked daily (Monday 12/28 through Thursday 12/31) at 8:30 a.m. and relocked daily at 4:30 p.m. to accommodate recovery group meetings. During this week, messages for Kristy and / or Mandy may be left at 362-5812. John will be on call and available, reachable either at 362-5812 or 364-9424.

Celebrating a Simpler Christmas Christmas does not have to include fighting crowds and traffic. There are resources for making your celebrations simpler and more in line with the true “reason for the season”: *Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?* a booklet produced by Alternatives (www.SimpleLiving.org), begun in 1973 as a protest against the commercialization of Christmas, and supported by the Presbyterian Hunger Program, has dozens of ideas. An inexpensive copy can be obtained by going to SimpleLiving.org

Please pray for: Our Stewardship; Brenda Allen; Phyllis Arthur; Mona Beasley; Donald Blair; Robert Brock; Danny Carpenter; Susan Cronkhite; Carrie Evans; John Galloway; Norma Garard; Kay Gefford; Kenneth Heinzman; Judy Hildebrand; the family of Parmer Moore; Ann O’Dell; Barry & Stephanie Pool; Tom & Kathy Prince; Rob & Teresa Ramey; Nick & Bridget Renick; Charles Schwab; John Stewart; Peter & Kathy Thomas; Beverly Wyatt; nursing home / homebound friends; church officers & staff; all who grieve; the recovery groups; and the FISH Clothing Pantry.

If you have a prayer request to add to the prayer list published above, please contact the church office: 362-5812.

If severe weather threatens: To learn of possible winter-related church closings, please call the church 362-5812. Word will be left on the church answering machine message regarding any cancellations.

If your email address changes,
please let us know
by emailing wapc@att.net
THANKS!