



# The Lifeline

First Presbyterian Church of Blissfield  
304 Franklin St. Blissfield, MI 49228  
www.blissfieldpresbyterian.com



December  
2008



*From the Pastor*  
"It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year." December and Christmas are often the most joy filled and exciting month and holiday. Certainly in the life of the church, the celebration of the Birth of Christ is a reminder of the "Greatest Gift Ever Given." Decorations, family, the fresh beauty of snow - so many things to be thankful for and to celebrate.

But the times we are experiencing, not just in this country, but world-wide, have taken some of the joy out of life for many folks. Retirement money is disappearing, as the stock market dives, and interest rates continue to fall. Unemployment is rising, and fears of job loss are everywhere. People are losing their pensions, their health insurance, their peace of mind, and their hope. People are afraid to buy much for the holidays, not knowing what the future will bring, trying to cut corners where they can. Is this going to ruin Christmas? I would hope not. It may actually give us a chance to refocus on what Christmas is all about, and to celebrate even more, but in different ways.

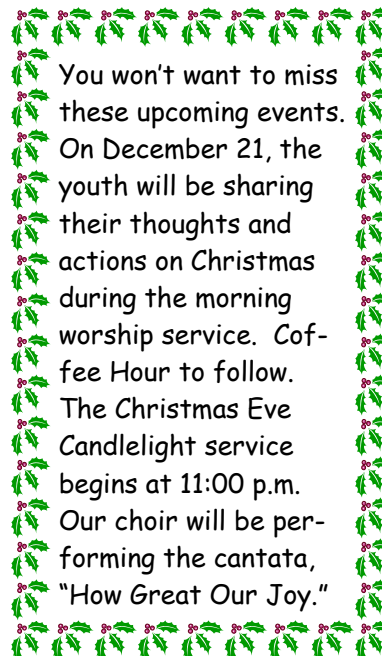
Would it be such a disas-

ter if we couldn't buy every- one a ton of things they don't really need? Is it that bad if we get to the 12 days of Christmas, and don't find ourselves stressed over the amount of debt we have run up? Can't we find ways to celebrate more modestly, but just as joyfully? Isn't Christmas really about appreciating what we have been given in Jesus Christ? Maybe we need to go back to stringing popcorn to hang on the tree, and making Christmas cookies together, and not try to see how many megawatts of electricity we can use up by lighting up our yard with 3 billion lights and blow up figures. Maybe getting the family together and volunteering to help out at a shelter, or food kitchen or reach out to those in need would be a nice way to say thank you to God for reaching out to us. Maybe gifts to charities in the name of those we want to gift would be a good way to honor them and make a difference in our world. Maybe, just maybe, the joy of family, a simple meal, and gathering to worship on Christmas Eve with others would be a modest way to help us focus more on the story of Christ and his birth, of the love of God, who sent his Son to be with us, and eventually die

for us. Maybe if we take some of the glitz and excess away from our celebration we will actually find that we have more, and appreciate the grace of God without getting lost in material things.

Things are tough right now, but it is not a time to panic - it is a time to come together. It is a time to remember that God provides those things we really need and is with us in all times, all situations. It's not the time to dismiss Christmas, but rather the time to celebrate with old time simplicity and with new hope and enthusiasm. As is always the case with God, the best is yet to come.

Bob



You won't want to miss these upcoming events. On December 21, the youth will be sharing their thoughts and actions on Christmas during the morning worship service. Coffee Hour to follow. The Christmas Eve Candlelight service begins at 11:00 p.m. Our choir will be performing the cantata, "How Great Our Joy."

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## Special Dates

- \*12/7 2nd Sunday of Advent & Lights of Love
- \*12/14 3rd Sunday of Advent
- \*12/21 4th Sunday of Advent & Youth Christmas Program
- \*12/24 Christmas Eve Service 11:00
- \*12/25 Christmas
- \*12/31 New Year's

**COFFEE FOR COSTA RICA**

Our Costa Rica 2009 Mission Team is selling gourmet Costa Rican coffee and gourmet Breakfast Blend Decaffeinated Coffee to raise funds for the trip. This year our team's individual expenses are much greater than for Guatemala. The following facts make this true:

1. We did not receive a \$5,000 grant from Synod as we did for our Guatemala trip.
2. The expense for a Costa Rica Mission Project Coordinator is greater because the Presbyterian Church no longer supports missionaries in Costa Rica (as well as in Guatemala, by the way).
3. While airfare costs remain approximately the same, insurance costs have increased. As Peggy and Jana can attest, insurance is crucial for mission trips.

**Team members have pledged to absorb a greater percentage of the \$1,885 per person cost of the mission. However, we are trying to raise funds to help us cover the nearly \$20,000 total cost.**

We offer both whole bean and ground gourmet Costa Rican and Decaffeinated Breakfast Blend coffees in one pound bags. We offer for sale something that most everyone could use. With the help of the Adrian Meijer store, we are able to earn almost 50% of the cost of the \$10 per bag of coffee. Coffee will be available at the church or talk to any team member to purchase.

Costa Rica 2009 Mission Team



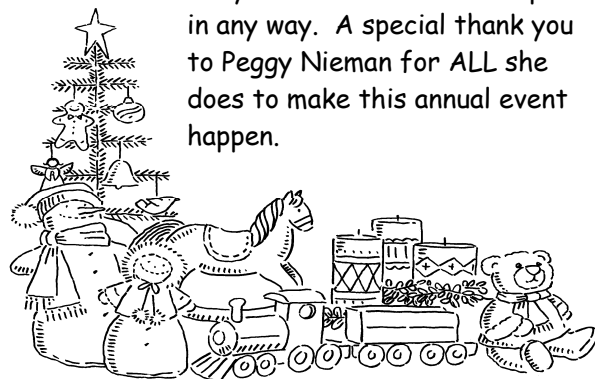
**TALENTS FOR TABLES**

In the recent Stewardship letter, it was mentioned how important it is for us to not only make a commitment for regular giving to the church, but also contribute for various much-needed things. It was said that the fellowship hall tables are not only in bad condition, but are very heavy for some of us old-timers. In that regard, it was suggested we begin a "Talents for Tables" campaign. At that time, heavy-duty, yet medium-weight, commercial grade plastic tables cost approximately \$90 each. Since that letter came out, Peggy discovered tables for a price of only \$77.00. She purchased 12 tables.

So now, instead of the \$90 per table, we are offering an opportunity to buy an "Entire Table" for \$77.00 or you could buy a "Half-a-Table" for \$38.50. A sign-up sheet will be placed in the narthex and will remain available for the rest of this year. Let's "filler-up" and get those new tables paid for.

Stewardship Chair,  
Doug Case

The Yuletide Craft and Bake Sales were a huge success. Sales from the Bake Sale were \$360.10. The Craft Show and luncheon made a profit of \$2647.75. Way to go everybody! Thanks to all who helped in any way. A special thank you to Peggy Nieman for ALL she does to make this annual event happen.



The Knights of Columbus are once again collecting non-perishables food items and money for their Christmas baskets. If you care to support this cause, please leave your items at either entrance of the Catholic Church. Some things they are in need of are; soup, sugar, toilet paper, vegetables, flour, tissues, fruits, noodles, bar soap, tuna, cereal, shampoo, juice, etc.

**For Your Information**

The manse's garage door was in need of repair. The large spring that helps open the door snapped in half. Looking through the telephone book, Jerry Saxton found a door service out of Petersburg. He called them and wants to let you know, "They are good!" They came over one day, found out what they needed and were back the next day and fixed the door. The price was very good. So, if you need to have your garage door repaired, call Ron's Overhead Doors, 16393 Railroad St., Petersburg, MI 734-279-1898, 1-866-699-6988.

Mary Case, Connie Graf and Paula Saxton will be collecting money for Christmas gifts for our employees; Pastor Bob, Diana Maloney, and Wetonia Jackson. If you would like to give, please see Mary, Connie or Paula, or send your money to Mary Case at 205 Quick St., Blissfield, MI 49228.



Gifts for the Staff

**Cell phone vs. Bible**

Ever wonder what would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phone?

What if we carried it around in our purses or pockets?

What if we flipped through it several time a day?

What if we turned back to go get it if we forgot it?

What if we used it to receive messages from the text?

What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?

What if we gave it to kids as gifts?

What if we used it when we traveled?

What if we used it in case of emergency?

This is something to make you go....hmm...where is my Bible?

Oh, and one more thing.

Unlike our cell phone, we don't have to worry about our Bible being disconnected because Jesus already paid the bill.

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★ "Let me tell you about my kids" is the title of a new ★ feature in the Lifelines. This month we are recognizing ★ *Noah and Logan Nieman*, the children of Matt and ★ Kori Nieman.

★ **Noah** is 10 years old and a 4th grader at Blissfield Ele- ★ mentary School. He is in the choir at school and loves ★ to sing. We hope to hear a solo soon. Noah is a 3 ★ sport athlete. He plays indoor soccer, wrestles, and ★ plays baseball. His favorite sport is baseball. When ★ he isn't singing, doing school work, or participating in ★ an athletic contest, Noah is a Weeblo in Cub Scouts.

★ **Logan** is 7 years old and a 2nd grader at Blissfield Ele- ★ mentary School. He loves playing sports. His biggest ★ disappoint this year was when he had to play flag foot- ★ ball and didn't get a helmet or the opportunity to ★ tackle. He also enjoys wrestling. Logan is a Wolf in ★ Cub Scouts.

★ Both Noah and Logan are active in Sunday School and ★ the Praise Team. They also assist with ushering and ★ lighting the candles. They are truly a blessing.

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"Let's Go Out to Eat After Church." It is a no reservations required event, and everyone is welcome and invited. Plan on joining

Palmyra Presbyterian serves a delicious homemade dinner from 5:00 - 6:30 every third Monday. The cost of dinner is very reasonable. Support our friends in Palmyra. Mark your calendars now.



Our church will be delivering **Meals on Wheels** the first week of December. Most slots are filled, but substitutes are always needed in case of emergencies. Call Doug Hickman for more information.



"Let Me Tell You About My Kids" is a new feature to the LIFELINE. We view our children as a vital and important part of our church family and we want to know what is happening in their lives. We want to know about their accomplishments, their interests, their school activities, etc. Please submit to this editor "just the facts." I will take that info and put it into article form. If you'd like to submit a picture, that would be a great addition. Stories about grandchildren would also be welcome. Information can be submitted to me personally or via email at [elelibrarylady@hotmail.com](mailto:elelibrarylady@hotmail.com). Who would like to feature their child/children in the next LIFELINE? **Connie Graf**

**Ushers for December**

- Dec. 7
- Dec. 14
- Dec. 21
- Dec. 24
- Dec. 28

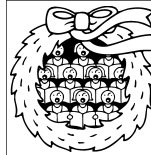
**Greeters for December**

- Dec. 7
- Dec. 14
- Dec. 21
- Dec. 24
- Dec. 28

**Flowers for December**

- Dec. 7
- Dec. 14
- Dec. 21
- Dec. 24
- Dec. 28

**Communion Servers**



*Christmas Cantata Rehearsal*

Christmas Cantata Rehearsal is each Wednesday

at 6:30 p.m. and Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. There is still time to join the choir and prepare and practice for the Christmas Eve Cantata, "How Great Our Joy!"



Lights of Love will be in Blissfield, Sunday, Dec. 7 at 6:00 p.m. Pastor Bob will be doing the invocation, sharing words of hope and the benediction. Denny Thompson will provide special music. Al Smith and his two daughters will light the tree in memory of Judy Smith.



**December**

- 2 Kirk Bettis
- 3 Kori ~ Matt Nieman
- 5 Greg Jackson
- 10 Tom Nieman
- 16 Suzanne Saxton
- 18 Alex Martin
- 20 Yvonne ~ Jim Robertson
- 21 Kelly Griner
- 23 Cathie ~ Doug Case
- 24 Steve Seeburger
- June ~ Andy Somes
- 25 Jesus
- 29 Amy Martin
- 30 Doris DeNudt
- Ellen Hicks ~ Glenn Griner

**January**

- 4 Jerry Saxton
- 7 Matthew Porter
- 10 Elizabeth Jackson
- 16 Cathie Case
- 18 Glen Griner
- Stephen Porter
- 21 Vicki ~ Brian Papenhagen
- 23 Miles DeNudt
- 29 Wetonia ~ Greg Jackson
- 31 Jeff Thompson

**December 21, 2008**

- \*Connie & Ken Graf
- Sally & Lee Feldkamp
- Helen Peshke
- Linda & Denny Thompson

**January 18, 2009**

- \*Tracy & Bill Strouse
- Debbie Royal & Jae Guetschow
- Trish & Dick Werth

\*Chairperson

If scheduling conflicts occur on your designated Sunday, please feel free to trade or contact Jana Martin at 486-5914 or Linda Thompson at 486-3113.



**Just a Reminder** - Keep collecting used ink cartridges, cell phones, laptop computers, iPods, and digital cameras. There is a container in the narthex in which to place these used items. Proceeds will go to the Costa Rica mission trip in June. Call Cathie Case (486-4178) if you have items you would like to donate but need to have them picked up.

# Joys and Concerns

**Pray for . . .** Families and friends who will be traveling over the holidays; people in California who were affected by recent fires; MaKea Hennigan; Jerry Hayes, Jr. who is on a mission trip to Israel and Palestine; Maxine Feldkamp, mother of Lee Feldkamp; Karen Ashman; Doug Hickman; healing for Dick Werth; Alice Petee; Ben Hoagland; Debbie Royal's father, Art; Ryan and Gretchen Rought; Pastor Bob; Glendora Klump; Barb Jackson; Karen Tuckerman Jasmund; Jerry Lippens and his family; our church; our Session; the state of Michigan; the USA; military personnel serving all over the world; our president and elected officials; world leaders; peace, tolerance, understanding and compassion for our world.

## Sympathy for . . .

- Karen Ashman whose husband, Don, passed away Nov. 8.
- The family of Clifford Jackson. Clifford passed away Nov. 21. Cliff was an active member of our church serving as an Elder and Head Usher.

## Remember . . .

Those who can't worship with us on a regular basis. Send them a Christmas greeting. June and Andy Somes, 458 Redmond Dr., Blissfield; Sally Hagenbuch, Blissfield Place, 301 N. Quick St. Blissfield; Esther Billington, Whispering Pines, 1050 Laberde Rd., Adrian, 49221; Mary Saxton, Tecumseh Place, 1311

Southwestern Dr., Tecumseh, 49286; Marjorie Wotring who is recovering from a stroke at Bruce's Place in Hillsdale and Marian Snyder (103 years old) who is recovering from a broken hip at Lenawee Medical Care Facility, room 230, 200 Sand Creek Hwy, Adrian, 49221.

## Joys . . .

- Dick and Carolyn Saxton are happy to announce the marriage of their daughter Rebecca to Peter Erdman. The wedding took place on the Potomac River and many family members and friends were in attendance.
- The youth and adults who walked in the CROP Walk on October 26. They raised over \$400.
- Tom and Peggy Nieman were surprised with a 40th anniversary party given by their children on November 1.
- Our Praise Team and Diana Maloney who inspire us with their music.
- Denny Thompson was recently honored for his 35 years of service as a teacher in the Blissfield Community Schools. Congratulations!
- Jae Guetschow and Peggy Nieman won in the recent elections. Jae as mayor and Peggy as treasurer.
- The Yuletide Craft Show and Bake Sale was a huge success.
- Our church family.

- It was good to have Ben Hoagland back in church after his recent surgery and recovery. Looking good, Ben.
- Congratulations to our student athletes; Alex Martin (soccer) - 3 year player and all-academic team; Elizabeth Jackson (volleyball) - all-academic team; Alex Mitchell (football) - captain, all-academic team, first team all-league.
- Several of our students made the Honor Roll; Alex Mitchell, David Porter, Elizabeth Jackson, Matthew Porter, Alex Martin, Brad Heineman, Miles Denudt, Thomas Jackson, Grayson Strouse, Hunter Martin, Grant Mitchell, and Andrew Porter.
- Joy Wonderly will be traveling to Las Vegas in January to witness, first hand, the Miss America Pageant.
- Justin Wotring's condo in California was spared destruction by fire. Many people's homes were destroyed in his neighborhood.

Christmas occurred when God invaded Earth in a strange and marvelous way. A special child was born to improbable parents in an unlikely place at an inconvenient time and in an unwelcoming world. Yet heaven's light pierced the darkness and shone through the life of that unique baby. That light was and is an eternal light. God's light in Christ is a saving light that can keep the world from total destruction, from the ultimate darkness. The message is always true: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5, NRSV). And it never will.



### Presbytery News

Mary Case and Doug Hickman joined Pastor Bob at the Maumee Valley Presbytery meeting at Collingwood Presbyterian Church in Toledo on November 18.

- This year's nominations for Presbytery offices were presented and voted in. The Moderator is Elder Ron Boyd and Vice Moderator is Rev. Tawee Layraman.
- The Committee on Preparation for Ministry presented two candidates. Jorge Betancurt for examination for ordination and Hilary Shuford as an Inquirer to be a Candidate for Minister of Word and Sacrament.
- The Focus of the Day was "Evangelism" by Eric Hoey, Director of Evangelism and Church Growth at the General Assembly. Eric reminded us all of the need to invite more people to share our churches with us.
- After the adjournment, a number of people stayed to hear a presentation from Elder James Wilson, Moderator of the Advisory Committee to the Constitution for the General Assembly. He presented a special forum to clarify issues from the last General Assembly (the 218th). The discussion centered around interest in changing the Book of Order's requirements/qualifications for ordination to Church service (Book of Order G-6.0106b) and amend the interpretation of policies referring to the examination of Candidates for Ministry (Book of Order G-6.108b). The policy specifically relates to Gay and Lesbian people's participation in the Church. The current policy was modified in 1979 with the intention of excluding homosexuals from Church service. This issue was discussed in 2007 at Presbytery and debated at the last General Assembly. There will be a vote by each of the Presbyteries, nation-wide. If a majority of Presbyteries agree that changes should be made, the issue will be brought up for a vote at the next General Assembly meeting. This issue has led to churches leaving Presbyteries in a number of parts of the country. The issue will be voted on at the Maumee Presbytery at the February meeting in Bowling Green, Ohio. If you would like to know more, there are copies of the Presbyterian Book of Order available, and our own Pastor Bob, who attended General Assembly, can answer questions as well. Be sure to share your feelings about this and any other issues with Session members.

Submitted by:  
Doug Hickman

The First Presbyterian Church had three of its members participate in the Blissfield Middle School Football Program. The team record ended up to be 2—4. The three members of the church that participated were Thomas Jackson, Hunter Martin, and Grayson Strouse. Hunter was a wide receiver and defensive back, while Thomas and Grayson were both STUD offensive and defensive linemen.



This was the fourth year these three have played on the same football team together. They are all looking forward to moving to the high school program next year, in hopes of playing on Ford Field someday.

Submitted by:  
Greg Jackson

(A photograph was submitted, but this editor was unable to scan it. Sorry.)



The Cliff Jackson family would like to thank everyone who helped in any way with the funeral dinner, especially Carolyn Bettis and her committee. The

meal was great! All of the cards, visits and expressions of sympathy have lifted our spirits. At times like this the true caring/friendship of church family is very comforting. Thanks again.