

December 2013

Good News

Verse of the Month: “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity.” ~ 1 Timothy 4:12



The Presbyterian Church at Absecon

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Christmas Schedule

As always, there are several changes in our calendar because of Christmas. There will be caroling every Friday night before Christmas at 6:00pm and caroling on December 23, two nights before Christmas. Sign up on the sheets in the vestibule area. We will also begin putting up decorations on Monday, Dec. 2.

Also, please note the following activities:

1. Dec. 4 – Evergreens Christmas Lunch at Smithville. Lisa Whitaker will speak.
2. Dec. 8 – One service at 10:00. We will have our Christmas program followed by our birthday party for Jesus. This is our only Sunday lunch in December, so come one, come all. Bring a gift of warm hats, mittens, and/or scarves for Sister Jean's guests.
3. Dec. 9 – Second Monday Monthly Lunch. Vic will sing some favorite Christmas songs.
4. Dec. 11 – Lunch Bunch to Library III on Ocean Heights Ave.
5. Dec. 21 – Holland Family Concert at 7:00pm in our sanctuary.
6. Christmas Eve – 5:00pm Family Worship; 7:00pm Traditional Worship of Carols



Sunday School and Related News for December

Our first Trunk or Treat went great! We had 15 cars and over 30 kids participate. Special Thank You's to Bob and Linda Gillis for all their help. Also, a big thank you to members of A2J for their leadership and help with the younger kids.

Our first Mission Sunday of the year was on November 23rd focusing on Thankfulness and giving. Our Sunday School made Apple sauce and cards for residents of Absecon Manor. Thank you to Mission Director Lee Wolf for planning and preparing these special projects.

We were able to send off 9 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. I was assured that every little bit helps. Thanks to all who participated.

Highlights and Up Coming Events

- ◆ On December 8th Sunday School will be performing traditional Christmas Carols to the congregation. This will be followed by our annual **Birthday Party for Jesus Luncheon**. Sign ups for a pot luck luncheon will be in Madden Hall between services; kids will be served Chicken nuggets and fries
- ◆ On December 15th the Sunday School will go caroling to the residents of Absecon Manor. Times and details will announced shortly.

- ◆ Please remember to **bring hats, mittens, scarves, and gloves** to our Birthday Party for Jesus. These gifts will be given to Sr. Jean's people.
- ◆ Lions and Lambs will lead us again during the luncheon with a **Cupcake Fundraiser for Sister Jean's Kitchen**. For the cost of \$1, kids and adults can purchase and decorate their own cupcakes.
- ◆ This year's **Advent Quarter Books** will benefit The Atlantic City Rescue Mission. The books have already gone out and should be returned on or before Christmas Eve.
- ◆ Our **Christmas Eve Christmas Pageant** will take place on Christmas Eve at the 5 pm Family Service. All participants should arrive by 4:15 pm to get ready. Rehearsals will begin once The Christmas presentation is over. In fact, sign ups will take place during the Birthday Party for Jesus luncheon. A schedule will be announced at that point. We are looking for two volunteers to direct this production. Many parents lend helping hands to make this a memorable event.
- ◆ Do you like popcorn? We will be watching a movie **December 29th**. We have yet to work out the details, but we should have one for the elementary ages and another for the older kids.

May you and your family be blessed and filled with God's love this Christmas season.

In His Service,
Tina



Lions And Lambs

"We Gathered Together" to sing the Lord's Praises in November, acknowledging the God likes to hear us sing His praises (Psalm 100:2), and we also prayed for those that do not believe or honor this Truth. (Anybody notice that MR.SABO's been singing with the men's choir lately!?!)

Thank you for everyone's contributions to our "Helping Hands" turkey feather fund-raiser for Sister Jean's kitchen. Please take the time to stop and admire the Turkey which serves as a reminder that the Pilgrims came to America to seek the Freedom of Worship, that America needs our prayers, and that we serve God by helping the needy. (Thanks for assembling the Turkey, A2J.)

On another note . . . Lions and Lambs Families have the tentative intention of serving the Lord joyfully by joining the "CARolling" crew on the first 3 Friday evenings in December, prior to the Christmas Holiday. Tentative plans include gathering at Madden Hall for a quick meal by 6 PM, and CARolling in 1 of 3 areas until about 8:30 PM, when we'll gather once again for some cookies and hot chocolate. Let me emphasize, **THIS IS NOT** an exclusive Lions and Lambs event; **ALL** are welcome to participate. I anticipate that we'll need some volunteers to make some Ramen Noodles for us for supper before we go out, and have some hot chocolate and cookies prepared for our return. Sign up sheets will be posted on the Bulletin board after the Thanksgiving Holiday. Happy Thanksgiving Everyone.

In His Service,
JoAnn Sabo



Women's Circles

In December we will finish our year-long study of the General Epistles (the 2 letters of Peter, 3 letters of John and the short letter of Jude.) The early Christians had been scattered throughout the Roman Empire. These letters were not written to Christians in specific locations like Paul's letters, but were meant to be read in congregations and then passed on. The purpose of all these letters was to warn them about false teachers among them and to encourage them to grow in their faith and knowledge of Christ. This month we will focus on Jude's letter and see that it has much in common with 2nd Peter.

The **Ruth Circle** will meet at 1:00 p.m. Friday, December 6th, at the home of Betsy Cunius. The **Sarah Circle** will meet at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 11th, in Cobb Lounge. The **Martha Circle** will meet at the home of Carol Thomas at 10:00 a.m. Thursday, December 12th. **Please remember to bring gloves, hats, scarves and socks that will be delivered to the Sovereign Ave. School in Atlantic City on Wednesday, December 18th.**

All women of the church are encouraged to join us for study and fellowship at the circle that best meets your time schedule. You will be warmly welcomed.



Exciting things are happening with worship! We have been blessed by the talents of our congregation through music and drama. Please contact me if you are interested in

participating in drama. Scott Sabo and I have shared the responsibility of Jr. Sermons and will continue to do so.

Many thanks to Mrs. Ellen Plum who has offered to give free guitar lessons to our students! We have had some interest. Guitars are needed. If anyone would like to loan, donate or help rent guitars that would be wonderful. We are looking forward to hearing our students share with us.

The drama team performed "The Tithing Zone" skit to reinforce stewardship in November. Thank you,

Jan Cobb, Janna Beth Cobb, Jason Imlay and Al Ciccone. Thank you to Roger Wolcott and Libby Little for sharing "Jinny Moore's Letter" which coincided with the Angel Tree Minute for Missions by Carol Kleiner.

This month Libby continues with Angel Tree ministry, and Tina Harvey will conduct our children's program on December 8. Libby Little will play "Carol of the Bells" on her xylophone Dec 15. Harold Hawkes and I are coordinating special music by Richard Garrick, Vic Werner, Choir, the Bell Choir and our students who play instruments. Christmas Eve children's service is at 5:00 and the adult service is at 7:00.

Anna Mae Werner
Worship and Program Director

ATTENTION ALL PARENTS OF CHILDREN 12TH GRADE & YOUNGER, we need your input. We now have Anna Mae Werner as Program & Worship Director. She will, among other things, be organizing the "call to worship". Between her musical, computer & directing abilities and our equipment i.e. the pull down screen & computer, our "call to worship" can be almost anything. This is where we need your help. We need to know what your child is good at, what they like to do. Does your child draw, paint, take pictures, write poems...Please let me or Anna Mae know of their talents.

The “call to worship” is so much more than readying everyone for worship, it’s the congregation seeing the future of the church, and it’s also a wonderful way for your child to get practice addressing an audience. Thank you

Have a Blessed month,
Karen Muldoon

From The Choir Loft

Two special dates to remember featuring our Chancel Choir and Special Music:

December 22 (9:30 and 11:00)

Richard Garrick will be playing 2 pieces for Trumpet and organ at both services, along with the 3 Christmas Hymns and the choir anthem.

December 24 Christmas Eve (7:00 p.m.)

The Bell Choir will be performing and also the choir will be singing two anthems during the Lessons and Carols service. Vic Werner will be singing "O Holy Night" during the offertory. The Lessons and Carols include 9 carols sung by the Choir and Congregation along with 9 Scripture Readings. Also, we will have the traditional Candlelighting and the singing of "Silent Night" at 5:00 & 7:00.

Christmas Poinsettias And Mission Bouquets

We will once again be beautifying our sanctuary this Christmas season with poinsettias, or if you prefer you can give a Mission Bouquet gift for the work of our Mission Committee. To give either, please use the form in your bulletin (or visit [our website](#) to download these forms) and return them to the church office by the deadlines printed on the forms with your payment. Cost of poinsettias are \$6 each, Mission Bouquets are a donation. Make checks payable to the Absecon Presbyterian Church and write “poinsettia” or “mission bouquet” on the memo line. We ask that you would leave your poinsettia in the church through the Christmas Eve services.



Mission/Evangelism

At our last committee meeting we put together the 2014 budget allowing for more expense in Evangelism to promote church growth. Also, more for the Bakely House as we need to make some repairs when our current guest, Jennifer, will be moving on in the beginning of the year. The budget was approved by session at the November 12th meeting.

Thanks to Greg Hamaty for his efforts with the CROP Walk. Our church along with three others participated. Congratulations to all of our Walkers and especially our Sunday School and A2J youth who raised a total of \$325 of our total of \$1,014! Well done!

Money from our Disaster Relief fund for this year is going to the Community Food Bank and a program called “Operation Heal Our Patriots”. Run by Samaritans Purse, this program gives wounded veterans and their

spouses the opportunity for spiritual refreshment, physical renewal, and marriage enrichment. Let's keep our veterans in our thoughts and prayers.

This year's Christmas Eve offering will be for relief of Philippines typhoon victims that were devastated by Typhoon Haiyan leaving more than 5,000 dead or missing as of November 20.

Thanks for your generous support.

God bless,
Russ Adkisson, Jr

Angel Tree



Our Angel Tree is up and the tags are on. Gifts are to be returned to the church by **December 18** for distribution to underprivileged children by the Salvation Army.

Let's make a child happy on Christmas morning.
The Mission Team

News from the Deacons

Can you believe it's December already? This year has been filled with so many blessings, and the Deacons want to thank everyone who has helped make our church a welcome place for all. We are so very grateful for YOU, your time, talent and generous donations this past year!

Our annual Harvest Home Collection for the Food Bank of New Jersey was so appreciated. Thank you also, to everyone who donated jackets and coats. The Food Bank will let us know the total (in pounds) collected (thank you Carol for being there when the truck arrived!). Your generosity during the Holiday times is truly appreciated. A thank you is in order to all the youth who helped bring the donated items down to the nursery every Sunday and then to the back room for pick up during the Brunch (thank you Haroon, Maryiam, Mousa, and Chris for your muscle power!)

Deacons will be working with our youth, this month, and will provide about 50 holiday goody bags to them as they go Christmas Caroling to various members of our church and residential care facilities (a big thank you to everyone involved with this!).

The Deacons wish everyone a happy, healthy and holy holiday season!

Next Deacons Meeting will be Saturday, February 15, 10 am in Cobb Lounge.

In Christian service and love,
Naida Burgess, Moderator
Kris Jenoriki, Vice Moderator

Missionary Update – Karen Moritz

One of the challenges of living abroad is getting used to the different ebb and flow of seasons and holidays. Here in the Czech Republic we celebrate the biggies; Christmas, New Years, and Easter. However, many of the other holidays differ. Instead of celebrating Thanksgiving Day we celebrate "Freedom and Democracy Day." On Nov. 17th the Czech's commemorate the beginning of the Velvet Revolution which occurred in 1989 and

brought about the end of the Communist regime which had ruled this part of the world for over 40 years. In many ways it is a time of thanksgiving minus the turkey and fixings.

As I write my article in the middle of November, here in the Czech Republic, as in the US, one already hears and sees ads for Christmas. One interesting Christmas custom is the belief that the Baby Jesus “Ježíšek“ brings the gifts. I think this is the only time when I hear average Czechs talk about Jesus. Children write their wish lists to the Baby Jesus and not Santa Claus. In some ways the Czech’s seem to understand better who is at the heart of the season.

The other Christmas holiday custom in Europe that I really enjoy is the Christmas Market. The Czech Republic and Germany are filled with wonderful markets selling all kinds of treasures. This year I will have the joy of not only going to several markets here in Prague but I will be going to the Christmas Markets in Dresden and Nuremberg Germany. One custom the Germans have that the Czechs don’t is the custom of having coffee mugs with information about the specific market. One can fill the mug with coffee, hot chocolate, or tea or hot mulled wine. It is a tasty way to remember and celebrate each market.

Whatever customs mark your holidays, may you be surrounded by family and friends as you await the coming of the Baby Jesus. I give thanks for all of you and for your support as I enter the holidays with my Czech friends and colleagues. May we each eagerly welcome the Baby Jesus into our lives, our families, our churches and our world.

Přeju Vám, aby pokoj i veselí o vánočních svátcích,
I wish you peace and joy in this Christmas Season,
Karen



OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER 2014

Stewardship Committee Report

Our annual Stewardship Commitment Campaign is underway with the theme this year: **Our Journey Together 2014**. It is important for purposes of planning, that you consider pledging and returning the faith card you all received. You are asked to consider taking a Forward Step or a Step of Faith by increasing your pledge for 2014. If you misplaced your card, additional cards are available in the church office.

It is significant to note that our average weekly giving, starting in June, has been less this year when compared to the same month last year. (See the figures below) This is a worrisome trend that if continued, will begin putting a financial strain on our operation particularly since the budget for 2013 was \$5,000 higher than in 2012 and the budget for 2014 is \$6,000 higher than the one for 2013. If you have fallen behind in your contributions, make every attempt to catch up by the end of the year.

Besides your monetary contribution, the church is greatly in need of your time. Please review the many opportunities to contribute your time by volunteering for one or more of the activities listed in the Talent Bank Questionnaire located in the Narthex.

Statistical Report for October

Budget for 2013	\$225,721.00
Budgetary needs through October 27, 2013	\$186,653.97
Our giving through 10/17/13	\$146,116.96
Investment Income	\$ 20,963.60
Rental Income (net without the \$18,000 expense)	\$ 17,769.16
Amount <u>under</u> budget (without considering \$18,000 expense)	\$ - 1,804.25
Amount under budget (with \$18,000 expense included)	\$ -19,804.25

Average weekly giving by month

	<i>2013</i>	<i>2012</i>		<i>2013</i>	<i>2012</i>
January	\$4080.67	\$3257.33	July	\$2934.00	\$3085.94
February	\$3531.38	\$3384.29	August	\$2620.09	\$2851.41
March	\$3056.94	\$3326.92	September	\$2920.75	\$3384.49
April	\$2757.42	\$3527.09	October	\$2725.53	\$3507.46
May	\$3299.46	\$3271.90			
June	\$2686.87	\$3403.33			

Gerald W. Hoenes
Stewardship Committee Chairperson

November “Thank You”...Always Many

- Roger Wolcott for the music stands for our bell choir
- The Men’s Fellowship for a great benefit for Sister Jean. We raised \$550.00. Thanks to the youth who helped serve and Leo, Melvin, and Dave Stebbins for cooking.
- Fred Poley for redoing the cornucopia centerpiece.
- Lions and Lambs for a great fundraiser.
- Deacons and Naida for remembering folks in hardship this Thanksgiving season.
- Libby Little and Roger Wolcott for the Call to Worship on Nov. 24.
- Members of our Sunday night congregation, especially Danny Nichols, for repairing and painting our steeple on Nov. 19.
- Karen, Loretta, Leo, and helpers for a great first 2nd Sunday Monthly Lunch on Nov. 11. (Next one is Dec. 9)

- Gerry Reedell for the Christmas Myths and Traditions program for Evergreens on Nov. 20, and for giving us the snowmen decorations.
- Shirley Smith and those who helped with Sister Jean's in November.
- Those who helped with the many mission projects in November – Harvest Home, Cents-Ability, the Shoebox project, college boxes, the turkey feathers for Sister Jean (find the turkey now), and service around the church.
- Gerry Reedell and those who covered for the pastor during his vacation the beginning of the month. He had fun.



Christmas Decorations To Be Set Up The Week Of December 1

We will be lighting the first candle on the Advent wreath on December 1, the first Sunday in Advent. That is usually our cue to get ready for Christmas, so we will be setting up decorations that week. We hope to have them in place by Dec. 8, the day of our Christmas program and Birthday Party for Jesus. Some of the things to be done include setting up three Christmas trees, nativity set in the historical case, outside lights and nativity box by the church sign, candles in the windows, and many incidental set ups.

We are always very proud of the way our church looks in December. Come and be a part of it!

Church Mailboxes To Be Available By December 8

Once again this year we will set up mailboxes in the hallway between the restrooms. Use them to exchange notes, cards, etc. You will also get your offering envelopes, updated address directory, church calendar (compliments of Parsels), etc.

They will be available through mid January.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is pleased to report the following individuals have agreed to serve as leaders for the next three years. The Deacons will be Kris Jenoriki, Anita Brown and Mae Sterling. Elders are Dawn Duran and Priscilla Schultheis with Lee Wolff agreeing to serve as Elder/Trustee (chairman of the board of Trustees). One seat on the Trustees is still open. Hopefully we will have that filled by the time you receive this newsletter.

There will be a special meeting of the congregation on Dec 1st between services, and if we do NOT have a full slate of officers it will be opened up to the floor and the meeting will continue until we do have a full slate of officers (a total of 3 elders, 2 trustees, and 3 deacons). Please prayerfully consider serving if you are asked.

In Christian Love and Service,
Dawn Duran, Chairperson

Thanks For A Great Work Day!

After two postponements, our Fall workday went off without a hitch and many tasks were accomplished. All of this could not have happened without the dedication and volunteerism of the following people: Greg Hamaty, Tina Brown, Elaine Risley, Cheryl and Harold Hawkes, Bob Hudak, Russ and Linda Adkisson, Jan Jorgenson, Marie Cronauer and Carmen, Dan and Barb Hughes, Dave Cobb, Jean Delesantro, Gerry Hoenes, Melvin Washington, and Karen Muldoon. A huge THANK YOU goes out to these wonderful people and we hope to see some more people in the Spring.

In His Service,
Kris Jenoriki
Property Committee

Wheelchair Area Now Available In Sanctuary

The Worship Committee has removed a full length pew and added a shorter one to make provisions for those in wheelchairs. Please keep this area open for this purpose only.

Steeple Lighting Given In Memory Of Robert Cronauer

On November 11 (Veterans Day), our church steeple was given a new look with the addition of an LED floodlight that takes only 78 watts, yet can illuminate the entire steeple up to the Celtic cross on the top. This replaces the 500 watt quartz/halogen light that was in the tree, an inefficient light that was not up to code.

Many thanks to Marie Cronauer who gave this light in loving memory of her husband, Robert, who died in an auto accident two years ago. Robert was a man who brought a lot of light into people's lives, and we appreciate this very needed and appropriate memorial gift.

Memorial Tree

We will be doing a Memorial Tree for Christmas in the hallway outside the sanctuary.

Pictures of your loved ones will be placed on an ornament to be hung on the tree. Pictures should be 3x4" or 4x5" no larger. Please contact Dee and Jack Heil at 264-1179.

Monitor Set Up In Sanctuary In Memory Of Betty Dorris

Betty Dorris was our pastor's younger sister who died of cancer in April of this year. Memorials received in her memory were used in October to secure a monitor in the front of the sanctuary that faces the pastor and choir. This way those leading the service can see what is up on the PowerPoint screen.

Special thanks are due to Danny Nichols and members of our Sunday night group for installing this system for us. They know what to do.

From The Secretary:

We are currently updating our church database in order to print the annual Church Family Directory. If your contact information changed over the past year, or if the information printed in the current directory was incorrect please fill in a Church Directory Update form found in your bulletin or on the front page of [our website](#).

New directories will be in your church mailboxes before Christmas!

A Note From The Treasurer:

We are closing the accounting books on December 31st. Please have all bills, receipts, and reimbursement forms submitted by Sunday, December 29th.

Paperwork turned in after that date will be charged to 2014, and payment will be delayed for several weeks.

Thank you,
Marge Chapman, Treasurer



Fellowship Committee

There will be NO brunch on Dec 15th. Instead the Sunday School will be having their annual Birthday Party for Jesus the week before on Dec 8th. The Birthday Party for Jesus will be a covered dish so please bring a dish to share on the 8th if you are planning on attending. Brunch will resume on Jan 19th. Thank you to all who helped with the brunch that was held on Nov 17th; everything was delicious.

The next 2nd Monday Monthly Luncheon will be held on Dec 9th. The cost for this is \$7, and there is a sign-up sheet, so please sign up or see Karen Muldoon to let her know that you are coming. As always, your help would be greatly appreciated, so see Karen if you are interested in helping.

Please join us for a concert here on Dec 21st when the Holland Family will be performing their wonderful music. This beautiful family has graced us with their presence a few times before, and they are always a pleasure to welcome back. This concert is free but there will be a love offering collected that evening and there are no assigned seats. Please contact Joanie Hoenes if you have any questions or concerns.

Our first soup sale will take place on Jan 12th. Please see me ahead of time if you are willing to make soup for our soup sale. I will have containers for you to put your soup in to sell. There are pint and quart size containers available. The second soup sale will take place on Feb 9th, so if you are not around for the first one, you can still help out with the second one.

In Christian Love and Fellowship,
Dawn Duran, Chairperson

COME AND CELEBRATE CHRIST'S BIRTH WITH
THE HOLLAND FAMILY
7 00PM SATURDAY DECEMBER 21 2013



(Mom, Dad, Mark, Carolyn, Lauren, Peter, Timothy and Jonathan -- not shown)

Sorry, no dinner
this time - doors
OPEN 6:15p

Reserved
seats for
HANDICAPPED
Call
JOANIE
641-1839

NO
TICKETS
NEEDED

LOVE
OFFERING

2nd Monday Of The Month

2nd Monday of the Month lunch is back! We have a sign up sheet for December in Madden Hall. Thanks to so many people who helped with November's FABULOUS lunch!! Special thanks to Nicole Gillis for helping on her day off from school.

Our next lunch will be 12/9. Please let us know by 12/1 if you will be joining us. The menu is posted next to the sign up sheet.

Thank you
Karen Muldoon

Lunch Bunch To Travel To Library III December 11

Lunch Bunch will travel to the new Library III located at McCulloughs Emerald Links, 3016 Ocean Heights Ave., Egg Harbor Twp. We will meet at the church at 11:30 or at the restaurant at noon.

This Library III does serve lunch.

Doug Jablonski Men's Fellowship Breakfast Meeting

Our Men's Fellowship will be meeting Saturday, December 7, at 8:30am. Breakfast will be eggs – just \$3. All men of the church are welcome!



The family of Wes Leopold and Priscilla Schultheis wish to thank the congregation for their kind expression of sympathy and support over the passing of Anne Leopold. We were overwhelmed by your love and support in the form of cards and attendance at her service.

The deacons did a phenomenal job taking care of the food and Madden Hall. Harold Hawkes did a wonderful job leading music. The Men's Club and Chancel Choir outdid themselves singing "Swing Low Sweet Chariot" and "It is Well With My Soul" respectively. Gay prepared the bulletins and took care of lots of other details. Dave kept the service flowing smoothly and held it all together.

We thank you all for your love and support in the celebration of Anne's life.

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Dear Church,

Thank you so much for installing the shorter pew near the rear side entrance of the sanctuary. We were able to get dad in to worship almost effortlessly and without interrupting the flow of the service or the Holy Spirit.

We appreciate your efforts immensely. May our Heavenly Father continually bless your ministry.

With gratitude,

The Scardilli Family

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Thank You,

Thank you for the beautiful cake and gift card in honor of Pastor Appreciation Month in October. It was really a surprise. It especially meant a lot to me because this October marked 14 years since I moved to the area and began attending this church. I feel very blessed to have found this congregation where I can worship and continue to serve.

Gerry

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Thank you for your kindness, your warm and special thoughts!

Joe & I enjoyed the soup the other night. It was very good! Kudos to whomever made it. Thanks also to Dave for delivering it & the nice visit we had.

We feel privileged to be a part of the church.

Rev. Joe & Carol DeLaurentis

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Thank you all very much for your thoughts and prayers after I fractured my arm, and thanks also to the Prayer Shawl ministry for the lovely prayer shawl. It brought me much comfort.

Thankfully no surgery is required. The Lord is Good!

Frances Weir



**Absecon Senior Citizen Holiday Luncheon 2013**

There will be a Holiday Luncheon given for the Senior Citizens on December 9<sup>th</sup> at the Marsh School gym from 10:30 till 12:00. Their School choir and instrumental group will perform for us. The Student Council serves us our lunch.

It is always a beautiful time for all our seniors. Please mark this date on your calendar.



### “Sealed For Christmas”

*“In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s own people, to the praise of his glory.” ~ Ephesians 1:13-14*

I may be dating myself, but one of the joys of Christmas as a child was putting on the “Christmas Seals”. Remember them? The March of Dimes would highlight their fundraising effort with Christmas Seals – those special stamps with a child, an angel, or something appropriate to the holiday as well as the mission of “March of Dimes”. These days not only don’t people use them as much, we don’t even send as many Christmas cards as we used to. We struggle to find the ways to highlight the holiday in ways that seal its message and not distort it. So often our “seals” are materialistic, superficial, and short lived. What every happened to the message of Christmas?

This past week all I heard about was “sealing”, but in this case it was the church steeple. This 100 foot high decoration (it has no practical use) has pointed the way to heaven for nearly 150 years. It has been through a dozen hurricanes and a derecho, and has held the cross high above Absecon as a beacon of hope and guidance point for aircraft finding their approach to the Pomona airport. Over the years we have painted, repaired, and replaced the top spire with fiberglass, but this time all I heard about was “sealing”. The steeple has been leaking for several years (Sandy and the derecho made it worse), and damage to the narthex ceiling and sanctuary plaster was evident. We couldn’t repair the inside until the outside was “sealed”. “We may not get it painted, but we will get it sealed.” I heard over and over. Two cases of caulk tube, some flashing, and a can of Great Stuff foam latex later we think we have it sealed. That’s what will protect the inside and structural soundness. That’s what makes the job reassuring and a success. Hopefully the steeple will be there another 150 years, an infinity of time compared to the time we admire Christmas decorations, Christmas Seals, and all the superficial stuff that doesn’t last.

This Christmas, lets seal the Christmas message with things that last – meaningful relationships, praise in worship, service that carries the message of the Christ Child, and joy that sustains those in need. We have already done some effective “sealing” such as the massive Harvest Home collection and our fundraisers for Sister Jean. We will seal it more in December with Angel Tree, our Christmas offering for typhoon relief, and a lot of Christmas caroling (join us on Fridays at 6:00pm).

We sealed the steeple to protect and preserve what is on the inside for generations to come. Our Christmas activities should seal our hearts with the promises that are ours because of the Christ Child. That’s the good news, and its worth “sealing” on our hearts every year on December 25.

*- Dave*

### Lay Assistants

- 1 9:30 Russ Adkisson, Jr  
11:00  
8 10:00 Russ Adkisson, Jr  
15 9:30  
11:00  
22 9:30  
11:00 Dawn Duran  
24 5:00  
7:00  
29 9:30  
11:00

### Head Ushers

- 1 9:30 Vic & Rita Abelson  
11:00 Jean Delesantro, Tina Brown  
8 10:00 Elaine Risley, Carol Thomas  
15 9:30 Irene Hunter, Ilsa Smith  
11:00 Mary Bew, Betty Lloyd  
22 9:30 Steve & Ginny Schwab  
11:00 Joanna Howell, Cheryl Hawkes  
24 5:00 David & Naida Burgess  
7:00 Dee & Jack Heil  
29 9:30 Barbara & Dan Hughes  
11:00 Jean Delesantro, Tina Brown

### Collection (9:30)

- 1 Jan & Carol Jorgensen  
8 Bob Wilkenloh, Barbara Miller  
15 Edith Budd, Roy Birkbeck  
22 Dee & Jack Heil  
24 5:00 Sam & Bud Burgess  
11:00 Betty Price, Ginny Davenport  
29 Justin & Nick Hughes

### Acolyte

- 1 Bud Burgess  
8 Nick Hughes  
15 Elisa Wong  
22 Terri Villegas  
24 5:00  
11:00  
29 Sam Burgess



### Deacons for the Month

- 1<sup>st</sup> Svc Ilsa Smith  
2<sup>nd</sup> Svc Mary Bew

### Nursery

- 1 Gloria Achamizo  
8 Alice Malfi  
15 Fran Tanner  
22 Jennifer Platt  
29 Gloria Achamizo

### Van Drivers

- 1 Barb Hughes  
8 Barb Hughes  
15 Tina Brown  
22 Vic Abelson  
29 Ed Little

### Refreshment Hosts

- 1 Tina Brown  
8 Join us for our Birthday Party for Jesus  
15  
22  
29

### Breakfast Club Kitchen Crew

- 1 Set-up – Libby Little  
Cook – Ed Little  
Clean-up – Richard & Doris Wood  
8 Set-up – Kris Jenoriki  
Cook –  
Clean-up – Ginny & Bill Davenport  
15 Set-up –  
Cook –  
Clean-up –  
22 Set-up – Jordan & Christian Hawkes  
Cook – Bryan Hawkes  
Clean-up – Olga Davies, Jean Delesantro  
29 Set-up – Linda Adkisson  
Cook – Russ Adkisson, Jr  
Clean-up – Gayle Ackerman