

December 2014

Good News



Verse of the Month: *“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” ~ Isaiah 9:6*



The Presbyterian Church at Absecon

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Christmas Schedule

The Advent wreath will be lit every Sunday during Advent starting Nov. 30. Special Advent activities are listed below:

Dec. 3	Noon	Evergreens Luncheon at Smithville Inn
Dec. 6	7:30 p.m.	Congregation event – Philadelphia Handbell Choir
Dec. 7	10:00 a.m. 11:15 a.m.	Kids’ Christmas program during worship Lunch and birthday party for Jesus
Dec. 8	11:30 a.m.	2 nd Monday Monthly Lunch (be sure to sign up)
Dec. 10	11:30 a.m. 7-8:30 p.m.	Van leaves for Lunch Bunch at Windjammer Service of Remembrance & refreshments at Parsels
Dec. 19	6:00 p.m.	Christmas Caroling
Dec. 21	6:00 p.m.	Christmas Caroling
Dec. 22	6:00 p.m.	Christmas Caroling
Dec. 24	5:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	Family Worship & Pageant Traditional Worship

Christmas Decorations To Be Put Up Week Of Dec. 1

We will be decorating the church the first week of December. We need help with Christmas trees, wreaths, window candles, nativities, etc. The weekend of Dec 6-7 is our bell choir concert, our Christmas program, and our birthday party for Jesus. We would like to be decorated for these events.

Church Christmas Caroling To Take Place On Fri., Dec. 19, Sun., Dec 21 & Mon., Dec. 22

Want to spread Christmas cheer in a big way that won’t cost you a lot of money? Every year at Christmas our church goes Christmas caroling around the community to church members who have had a difficult year, been bereaved, are convalescing, etc. We leave at 6:00 p.m. and go until about 8:30. Join us on one of the nights listed above. It may well be the high point of your holiday experience!

Mailboxes to be in place by Dec. 6

Once again this year we will be putting up the mailbox system in the hallway in front of the restroom. We will have your offering envelopes for 2015 in them by Dec. 7. We will also have a Christmas letter from the pastor, etc. There will not be a new address directory as the church picture directory is only a few months old.

Feel free to use these mailboxes to exchange Christmas greetings, etc. They will be available until mid-January.



Sunday School and Related News for December

Our second Annual Trunk or Treat went great! We had 12 cars and approx. 20 kids participate. Special Thank you's to Bob, Linda & Sarah Gillis for the a great meal. Barbara Hughes for her campfire expertise and all those who jumped in for all their help.

On November 16th the Youth team sponsored a craft & gift event for the kids to come together and make gifts for their families or Christmas. The kids made soup & cookies kits in mason jars, t-shirts, ornaments & much more. We had great fun, huge thanks to Lee Wolf, Priscilla & Dawn Duran for sharing their crafting magic.

Our 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.

Highlights and Up Coming Events

- ◆ On December 7th 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 14th** 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.
- ◆ The Youth team 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 on **December 28th**. Kids are welcome to come in their PJ's for a comfy movie during Sunday School.

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

In His Service,
Tina

Reminder: there is a mandatory practice for our Sunday School Christmas presentation on Saturday, December 6th from 9 to 11am. All members of Sunday School (including teachers and their assistants) should plan to attend. Parents, we need your help setting up the Birthday Party for Jesus in Madden Hall at the same time. Donuts and coffee for all helpers. See you there!



Women's Circles

Our Bible study last month was about the Ten Commandments. After delivering this set of rules to the Israelites about how to live in harmony with God and each other, Moses stayed on Mount Sinai another 40 days. During that time Moses received detailed instructions for building a dwelling place for God called the tabernacle. The tabernacle represented God's continuing presence among the people in the wilderness.

The **Ruth Circle** will meet at the home of Betsy Cunius at 1:00 p.m. Friday, December 5th. The **Sarah Circle** will meet at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 10th, in Cobb Lounge. The **Martha Circle** will meet at the home of Carol Thomas at 10:00 a.m. Thursday, December 11th. Don't forget to bring new hats, gloves, scarves and socks to give to children in grades K to 4. Please bring them by Sunday, December 14th. This year we will deliver these items to the New York Avenue School in Atlantic City. This school is across from Stanley Homes Village, so these children are especially in need of things to keep them warm.

On October 27th goodie boxes were mailed out to 27 college students. Thank you ladies for all your generous contributions to fill the boxes.



We have sooooo much happening in our immediate future. December is going to be a bit sad with Pastor Cobb leaving, but January is right around the corner and the excitement will begin.

December lay assistants:

- 7th Linda Gillis @ 10 am. We will have the play and then the birthday party for Jesus
- 14th Russ @ 9:30 and Dawn @ 11
- 21st Russ @ 9:30 and Linda @ 11
- 28th Lee @ 9:30 and Priscilla @ 11

January's Pulpit schedule:

- 4th Rev. Deborah Brincivalli @ 10 am followed by a "town meeting" where she will help to answer your questions about our new adventure in finding the right Pastor
- 11th the Holand family will be here for both services
- 18th Rev. Patricia Epprecht
- 25th Rev. Timothy Hines

This is a great time for us to hear different preaching styles. These Pastors are "fill in" only. We cannot ask one of them to be our interim or next Pastor. There is a process that we will learn more about on the 4th. From my

understanding, it will take at least 2 months to find an interim Pastor. That Pastor is trained/educated to help us in our process to let Dave go and welcome our new Pastor. Very exciting!

Have a blessed month,
Karen



Mission/Evangelism News

As my time of committee chairman is coming to an end I feel privileged to have served with so many members over the years. I will stay on the committee when the new chair takes over.

The donations given to the church in memory of my mom are designated to go to the Mission Garden started by Lee Wolff.

Nov. 19th the Bakely House had a termite treatment. The CROP Walk raised \$1,624, almost twice as much as last year! We gave \$500 to our missionary, Karen Moritz, for travel and other expenses. A thank you letter was received from Timothy Holland for a \$500 contribution to his mission work.

The committee approved a donation of \$500 to Lauren Holland to assist with her ministry at the Black Forest Academy in Germany.

This year's Christmas Eve offering is for Samaritan's Purse. It will be designated to help in the treatment of the Ebola virus.

The Angel Tree is up, tags are available. Gifts will be delivered to the Salvation Army in Atlantic City.

Come January as you're putting away your Christmas decorations think about recycling the Christmas greeting cards you received from family and friends for a great cause. St. Jude's recycled card program accepts all types of greeting cards (year round now). Donated cards are cropped, put on blank card stock and recycled into new cards, which are then sold to customers. This program is operated by Kids, Corp., a program for the children at St. Jude's to learn entrepreneurship skills. All types of greeting cards, including Christmas are used. Please send the front of the card only and exclude all Hallmark, Disney and American Greeting cards. 5" x 7" size or smaller is requested, and if there is any writing on the back of the card front, we request you do not send as we are unable to use. Give your card donations to Russ, Kris or leave them in the office.

The 2015 budget for mission was approved by session November 4. It is the same amount as 2014. We do have a new line item for Family Promise. We are also planning on meeting with David Rauer from Presbyterian Disaster relief so we can organize an away mission team.

As Kirk says, "All oars in the water." - I'll say, "All aboard!"

Thanks for letting me do this.
God Bless
Russ Adkisson Jr.



Angel Tree

On November 30 The Christmas Angel Tree will be up in the vestibule. On it you will find tags for gifts for children selected by the Salvation Army.

Please take a tag and buy a gift for that child. Two or three people can go together to purchase one gift if it is a very expensive wish. Gifts don't have to be wrapped, but the tag must be securely affixed to the gift.

Gifts must be back to the church by December 14. Please be sure your gift is in by that date. We will take them to the Salvation Army on Tue.

Thank you,
The Mission Committee



News From The Deacons December 2014

Can you believe its 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!

Thank you, to everyone who has donated food the Food Bank. The Food Bank of South Jersey is overjoyed by your generosity and truly appreciates Absecon Presbyterian Church, as we have collected over 500 pounds of food!! A thank you is also in order to all the youth who and families who donated during Trunk or Treat as they brought in over 100 pounds of canned goods ...job well done! Thank you, Tina Harvey, for arranging this great activity.

Once again, Deacons thank you for your continued support and wish everyone a Happy, Healthy, Holy and Peaceful holiday season!

Next Deacons Meeting will be early in February (look in January's News from the Deacons for the date) at 10 am in Cobb Lounge.

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

Who Can Fathom the Amazing Ways of God?

In November, I had the privilege of speaking in the Foundations of Spiritual Formation class at Eastern University. I took my oldest niece, Taylor, with me and we made it an aunt/niece event! Allow me share with you how the idea for this day came about and what took place. It was an amazing example to me of God's mysterious ways and His ability to weave lives together in such a way that builds His kingdom now and in the future!

Last June in my Master's course we had as a professor, Dr. Chris Hall, who previously was the Chancellor of

Eastern University (and now is back in the classroom full time). He is a very warm, personal scholar. It is a rare combination to find someone with his academic expertise who also is a real people person and so naturally fits into new surroundings. He and his wife came to Switzerland for a week to be with our Master's class and we all connected deeply. We had such a special time with them that Chris told us as he left that he believed that week in Switzerland was one of the most significant weeks of his life.

During the week some of us were sitting around telling him our stories of being in missions for 20+ years. In the course of the conversation the idea came up for me to come to his class this fall and share some of my stories. He contacted me later in the summer and we made a plan for me to come in November and share stories about prayer.

So, Taylor and I took a road trip to St. David's PA and stepped onto the beautiful campus of Eastern University. Chris' class is about 75 students. He has such a great rapport with the students, and they were ready and open to all I had to share. As I prepared my time with his class, I found myself praying that God would scatter seeds in the hearts of the students, some of which may take root right away and others that might spring forth in the future. I told some stories from my life both before I was in missions and then a story of when I was in China many years ago and how God led us step by step as we prayed and asked Him for guidance.

Immediately following class two young women came up to me. The first young woman, Rachel, was bursting with excitement. She expressed that she has always wanted to be a missionary, was majoring in missions at Eastern but wanted more information about being in missions full time. Taylor and I had an opportunity to pray with her about future decisions and how God might lead her. The other young woman, Sarah, is an American/Chinese student who had been praying for the region of China that I shared about in my story. She was full of questions of how she could get involved and before I was home she had written me a follow-up email with even more questions.

On the ride home, Taylor and I were talking about the day and how exciting it was to see God speaking specifically to these young women. My very astute 15 year old niece said to me, "You know Aunt Lisa, we have no idea how many people will be affected because you shared those stories today. Just think of how you were affected by someone sharing when you were in college and look at all the lives you have touched. Now, these girls may go out and touch even more lives." Wow - she really highlighted an amazing principle in God's kingdom. We truly cannot fathom the amazing ways of God. I told Taylor that in my opinion God's favorite type of math is multiplication! What an amazing honor it is to be ready to share and then watch as God weaves lives together and moves to multiply His kingdom. What a breathtakingly beautiful work of His hand! Who can fathom the ways of God?





Stewardship Committee Report

We have had a good grassroots stewardship campaign. We extend our thanks to Priscilla and Louise for designing and producing such a beautiful brochure. Thank you to Lee and Dawn for adding their testimonials. Finally, thank you to everyone who “Stepped Up” to the challenge. Here is where we stand so far:

Total Pledges for 2015 to date: **\$94,070**

Total Pledges for 2014: \$131,234

Total Pledge cards for 2015 to date: **56**

Total Pledge cards for 2014: 75

As of Nov. 23 we are at **72%** (Pledges 2015 vs. 2014) and **75%** Pledge cards 2015 vs. 2014

As of Nov. 23 we have **35** completed Talent Bank Questionnaires.

Please keep the pledge cards and talent bank forms coming. We need “All Oars in the Water” for 2015.

Average Weekly Giving by Month

	2014	2013
June	\$2,958.14	\$2,686.87
July	\$2,934.56	\$2,934.00
August	\$2,858.82	\$2,620.09
September	\$3,372.03	\$2,920.75
October	\$3,407.19	\$2,704.77

Kirk Conover
Stewardship Chair

SAVE THE DATE

We are so excited for this year’s golf/auction fundraiser. It will be May 17, 2015 at Greate Bay Country Club in Somers Point.

Mark your calendars!!!!



Presbytery Approves Dissolution Of Pastoral Relationship

On Nov. 18 the Presbytery of West Jersey approved the action of our congregational meeting on Nov. 2 to dissolve the pastoral relationship between our church and Pastor Cobb effective Dec. 31, 2014.

Transition Update

The Session approved a Job Description for the Interim Pastor, and you may be wondering what will happen next. The transitional process from Pastor Cobb to our eventual new pastor will be a long one, but will hopefully result in our congregation calling the Pastor who will guide our congregation for years to come. You will see changes in the coming months, beginning with Worship services in January being led not by Pastor Cobb as they have been for so many years, but by guest speakers or other Pastors from the Presbytery. While we will certainly miss Dave's voice, this is an opportunity to experience some different perspectives on Worship and to hear some new and potentially different voices. At the same time, we will be interviewing potential candidates for the Interim Pastor position. This may take some time, up to a few months. While we all want to proceed quickly, it is important that we prayerfully and deliberately consider the selection of the Interim Pastor, as this individual will not just be here as a placeholder, but will serve an important leadership role in the process of identifying where our congregation is heading in the future and calling the Pastor who will lead us there. Once an Interim Pastor is in place, we will begin this long transitional process together. This will be a time of change for our congregation, but by working together and prayerfully supporting one another, we will successfully chart our course for the future.



Nominating Committee

On Sunday, Nov 23rd, we had a special meeting of the congregation for the sole purpose of electing a new board of officers. The following names were placed in nomination and are newly elected:

- The office of Deacon for the term of three years - Betsy Eberhard, Jackie Bhatti, and Bob Hudak Jr.
- For the office of Deacon for an unexpired term of one year is Russell Adkisson.
- For the office of Elder for three years - Dennis Scardilli, Leo Ransone, and David Burgess.
- For the office of Trustee for three years - Dan Hughes and Tina Brown.

Congratulations to you all and thank you for your continued dedication to our church!

In His Service,
Dawn Duran, Chairperson

A Note From The Treasurer

All year-end financial business (items to be deposited, reimbursement requests, receipts, etc.) must be submitted to Marge Chapman, treasurer by December 31, 2014.





Fellowship Committee

We will not be having brunch in the months of Dec and Jan. Brunch will resume in Feb. Please join us instead for the birthday party for Jesus on Dec 7th following the 10 o'clock service. This is a covered dish so please bring a dish to share. On Jan 18th we'll be having our Pastor's retirement party in honor of Pastor Cobb. Please see the article entitled Pastor Cobb Retirement Party Committee.

The Philadelphia Handbell Choir will be here to honor Jan Cobb on Saturday Dec 6th. The concert will be at 7:30PM. See Joanie Hoenes for tickets or more information. Hope to see you all there!

Our next 2nd Monday Monthly Lunch will be held on Monday Dec 8th. The cost is still only \$7; please see Karen Muldoon to sign-up for coming. As always, we could use more help, thank you!

We will be having our first soup sale of 2015 on Sunday Jan 11th, and the second one will be on Sunday Feb 8th. There will be a sign-up sheet in the hall to donate some yummy soup. The sales will take place prior to the first service and in between services.

At our Nov 18th meeting we voted to buy new round tables, chairs, and some pots, pans, and cooking utensils. We will have the old round tables and some of the old chairs up for sale once the new ones arrive. The new tables will be considerably lighter than the old ones and the chairs will hopefully hold up better because there is no padding to get torn. Also our chairs have dwindled down over the years so this will replace some of the lost chairs. *(Chairs were purchased from an Atlantic City church and will arrive soon. Tables were purchased new and will be shipped mid-December. All were purchased with committee funds. Many thanks to all who came to Strawberry Festivals, Apple Fests, and other fundraisers that raised the money for these purchases.)*

Our next meeting will be in Feb sometime. The date is to be announced. I hope to see you all at our ongoing events!

In Christian Love and Fellowship,
Dawn Duran, Chairperson



Men's Fellowship To Meet At 8:30 A.M. On December 6

The Doug Jablonski Men's Fellowship will have their last breakfast and meeting of the year on December 6. Breakfast will be pancakes.

Come and remember the night we went to Mill Street Pub in the rain and wind.



2nd Monday of the Month Lunch

First I have to thank everyone that helped out last month. THANK YOU!!!!!!

Our next lunch will be Dec. 8th. You must sign up by Monday Dec. 1st.

Have a blessed month,
Karen



Evergreens Christmas Luncheon Wed., December 3, 12:00

Evergreens will be having our luncheon on Wednesday, December 3rd - 12 Noon at Smithville Inn. Lisa Whittaker will be our speaker.

Our next meeting will be the regular scheduled time in January.

Merry Christmas to all.



The Philadelphia English Handbell Ensemble Concert is coming Saturday, December 6, at 7:30 p.m.

Please call Joanie immediately (641-1839) if you must cancel.
(We hope to seat all who wish to attend.)

Everyone is excited to honor our Jan Cobb and experience this incredible sound of world renowned handbells. Their beauty is truly un-matched.

Thank you for being sure that all seats have been reserved and paid for in advance, as requested. The support for our 24 year old concert series has been extra-ordinary and helps to assure it will continue. We hope to provide 2 events a year – even while our pastoral search is taking place. The congregation's continued support is vitally important! Your very hard-working Fellowship Committee always welcomes additional help. ~ Dawn Duran, Fellowship Chair.

Lunch Bunch To Travel To Windjammer Dec. 10

Lunch Bunch will meet at 11:30 on Wednesday, Dec. 10, to travel to the Windjammer in Somers Point. This place is always a favorite.

Pastor Cobb's Retirement Party Committee

OPEN INVITATION!!! We will be having Pastor Cobb's Retirement Party on Sunday, January 18th, at 12 Noon at the Renault Winery (located at 72 North Bremen Ave., Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215). There will be one service at 10 AM that day pending session's approval. This will be a sit-down lunch and the choices for entrees are: Egg Battered Chicken Breast, Sautéed Beef Tips, or Marinated Salmon Filet. The cost is \$20 for adults and \$15 for children **ages 10 and under** (this is the restaurant's age limit). Please make checks payable to the Absecon Presbyterian Church, and send your reservation indicating your meal choice and number of people attending to Dawn Duran (609)287-2411, 335 Buffalo Ave., Egg Harbor City, NJ 08215. We are also taking sign-ups for anyone interested in speaking at the event. I hope to see you all there to honor Pastor Cobb and his many years of dedication to our church.

In Christian Love and Fellowship,
Dawn Duran, Chairperson

Church Directory Update:

Alice Smith
130 Dover Court
Galloway, New Jersey 08205
609/277-7783



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 3"x4" or 4"x5" – no larger. Please contact Dee and Jack Heil at 264-1179.



In Our Father's House

Rev. Joe DeLaurentis – Nov. 8

Joe & Carol DeLaurentis have been affiliated with our church since the days of Dave Hodgson. He preached here occasionally back then, but served as an interim at Margate Community and at Glassboro. Joe had a long career with Met Life Insurance and an even longer one as a UCC pastor. He loved our church, Sunday breakfast, our pastor and our activities. His services were in our church on Nov. 15. He was buried in the Methodist cemetery. Carol and their son, Jeff, were in worship on Nov. 23. They thank everyone for their prayers and cards.

Marian Werner (Vic Werner's mother) – Nov. 14

Marian was 95, and a dear saint who served with the Atlantic City Rescue Mission and the Gideon's Auxiliary. She loved Pilgrim Academy, and her memorials may be directed there. Just three days after her funeral at Wimberg's in Egg Harbor Vic and Anna Mae led the music worship at our church while Harold was home with the flu. You two are incredible! Vic also spoke and sang at his mother's service.

Ted Felsberg – Nov. 23

Ted Felsberg went home to be with the Lord on Sunday night, Nov. 23. Mildred had been at his side every day he was in the hospital and Absecon Manor. Ted was a regular in our church. Worship was important to him. He had taught Sunday School, served as an officer and even coached basketball. He and Mildred joined in 1951. Services in our church were held Saturday, Nov. 29.



Thanks, Church Family

To The Deacons ~

Thank you for the fruit basket and all that you have done for us. The luncheon that was set up in Madden Hall for my mom's services on October 24th could not have been better. I was so pleased with the services and the entire affair.

Russ, Lynn and family



Being unable to write well, I'm sending you my wishes in the Good News:

Thinking of you with Warm Wishes

for a

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

May you have wonderful memories throughout the season!

In the Spirit of Christmas,

Betsy Cunius



*“Every Who down in Who-ville, the tall and the small,
was singing! Without any presents at all!*

He HADN'T stopped Christmas from coming!

IT CAME!

Somehow or other, it came just the same!”

(Dr. Seuss, How the Grinch Stole Christmas!)

Thinking warmly of each of you (the tall and the small) and wishing your family an extra measure of comfort, joy and hope this Christmas. We pray that God's great love would fill your home at Christmas.

Warmest wishes at Christmas and always,
Gay & John Channell





Wreaths Across America Ceremony December 13

Wreaths Across America will be coming to cemeteries around the country on December 13. Wreaths are placed on a veteran's grave in thanks for their service. In Absecon there will be brief ceremony at 10:00 AM at the Methodist cemetery followed by a ceremony at the Presbyterian cemetery where a wreath will be placed on one representative veteran's grave. The Ladies Auxiliary of VFW Post 9462 in Absecon is expanding the program this year to place a wreath on every veteran's grave at the Methodist cemetery; next year the plan is to honor every veteran at the Presbyterian cemetery. You are welcome to join us as we remember our servicemen and women.

Ocean City Tabernacle Christmas Concert

The Ocean City Tabernacle will present its annual Christmas Concert Saturday, Dec. 13, at 4pm featuring "our own" John Taylor (who is being flown north from Destin, FL where he and Belinda now reside!!)

The event includes a 60 voice choir, 4 violinists, piano and organ – John, however, is the "Feature"! (We encourage you not to miss this inspiring event.)

Love offering – easy, free parking. Perhaps our van will run!





A Bitter Sweet Christmas

“And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in bands of cloth, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn... - and a sword will pierce your own soul, also.” ~ Luke 2:7, 35

What is it about Christmas that makes it so emotional? As I have gotten closer and closer to the end of my ministry I have been aware that I was going through the final cycle of church activities – the final picnics, the final CROP Walk, the final brunch, the final Halloween events, and on Nov. 26 the final ecumenical service with my colleagues in our sister churches. It was hugs, best wishes, and “Hope to see you around.” I appreciated their support. I was okay with it. I didn’t cry.

But Christmas is different. Maybe there are too many big memories like the year we used live sheep and they got away. (We chased them until we caught them on Christmas morning.) Maybe it was big Christmas cantatas with Dave Vigue and Tom Sooy, both in the church triumphant today. Maybe it was Myrtle Leek talking about the Chrismon Tree, or Marie Gilchrist interrupting the service with a big grin as she came down the aisle to give me my Christmas present. Maybe it was all those Baby Jesuses who have grown up, and in recent years my own grandchildren brought in to play the part. Maybe it was the faith, hope and joy we all felt when we stood holding candles at the end of the service. The world was always different at that moment. Somehow everything was suddenly better, all the efforts of ministry were so promising, and I knew that my being called by God to be your pastor was the best thing that ever happened to me.

Or maybe it is something even more significant. Few of the faces I greeted in Christmas of 1981 are with us now. And the ones that are look a lot different than they did then. I was a young pastor with a mustache brown hair, and plastic-rimmed glasses. Laura Kay was in first grade and she was the only child we had. We had no relatives in the whole state of New Jersey, but that first Christmas we realized we had a very big family and we cared about each other a great deal. Every Christmas has just reinforced that feeling ever since.

My life will never be the same because of all those Christmases with you. Thanks for the memories.

I’m not looking forward to next Christmas, but I know that God is not finished with Jan and me, so we enjoy the love, the joy, the laughter, the hope, and even the tears of this Christmas in the knowledge that God has something for us in the future as well.

But for now Jan and I just want to say “Thanks for the memories”, and a very hearty “Merry Christmas” to all of you. The Presbytery can make me stay away, but they can’t make me forget you. We never will.

May God bless us on our separate journeys into a new year.

Your Friends Always,

Lay Assistants

- 7 10:00 Linda Gillis
- 14 9:30 Russ Adkisson
11:00 Dawn Duran
- 21 9:30 Russ Adkisson
11:00 Linda Gillis
- 28 9:30 Lee Wolff
11:00 Priscilla Schultheis

Head Ushers

- 7 10:00 Vic & Rita Abelson
- 14 9:30 Don & Debora Wong
11:00 Nancy Swank, Joanna Howell
- 21 9:30 Elaine Risley, Carol Thomas
11:00 Mary Bew, Betty Lloyd
- 24 5:00 David & Naida Burgess
7:00 Jack & Dee Heil
- 28 9:30 Barbara & Dan Hughes
11:00 Jean Delesantro, Tina Brown

Collection (9:30)

- 7 10:00 Joan Nale, Franklin Nale
- 14 Jack & Dee Heil
- 21 Betty Price, Roy Birkbeck
- 24 5:00 Sam & Bud Burgess
7:00 Kirk & Nancy Conover
- 28 Justin & Nick Hughes

Deacon for the Month (9:30)

1st Svc Naida Burgess

Acolyte

- 7
- 14
- 21
- 28

Nursery (11:00 Terri Villegas, Mike McManus)

- 7 Alice Malfi
- 14 Fran Tanner
- 21 Jennifer Platt
- 28 Gloria Achamizo

Van Drivers

- 7 Tina Brown
- 14 Barb Hughes
- 21 Tina Brown
- 28 Vic Abelson

Refreshment Hosts

- 7 Join us for lunch & birthday party for Jesus
- 14 Russell & Linda Adkisson,
David & Judy Stebbins
- 21
- 28 Lori McManus

Breakfast Club Kitchen Crew

- 7 Continental Breakfast
- 14 Set-up – Kris Jenoriki
Cook – Bryan Hawkes
Clean-up – Vic & Rita Abelson
- 21 Set-up – Libby Little
Cook – Ed Little
Clean-up – Ginny & Bill Davenport
- 28 Set-up – Jordan & Christian Hawkes
Cook – Bryan Hawkes
Clean-up – Olga Davies, Jean Delesantro

Counter Schedule

- 7 Debbie & Don Wong
- 14 Steve & Ginny Schwab
- 21 Judy & David Stebbins
- 28 Leo Ransone, Nancy Conover

