

*February 2017*

# *Good News*

**Verse of the Month:** *“And now these three remain; faith, hope and love, But the greatest of these is love.” Corinthians 13:13*



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## From the IP's Study Window

### **Burning the Hut**

Dear Friends,

I once heard a story about a man who had been beset by bandits in medieval Japan. He was rescued by some monks who took him to their monastery to heal and recover. They did not wish to force him to become a monk, so they housed him in a small hut on an island on a lake on the grounds of their monastery.

The man was happy there and participated in much of the work and prayers of the monks. He ate with them as well. He became accustomed to the place and the people. Yet, he had a life outside the monastery, which he was neglecting. He became stagnant as well as comfortable.

One day after the man had been to prayers with the monks, he discovered that his hut had burned to the ground. He ran to the abbot to tell him of the tragedy. The abbot replied that it was indeed the abbot himself who had burned down the hut.

You see, he told the soon to be former guest, often we can become too comfortable and have to burn down our huts in order to grow and take risks in life.

I was thinking of that story as my wife, Rebecca and I were discarding a lot of things that used to be important to us such as papers and clothing no longer necessary to take with us when we eventually move permanently to what is presently our vacation home in Florida.

Lives change and what used to be essential now only weighs us down. This is true for churches as well as individuals. You are about to see a change over the next few months. In order to grow in that change and take risks for the sake of the Gospel, you might have to figuratively "burn the hut" of presuppositions and routine behavior.

Growth in the Holy Spirit often requires that we move into uncomfortable territory with Jesus as our only guide. It will be an adventure and you will be building new huts, new traditions and new joy in Christ in a new year.

In the meantime, there is still much to do. Pray for your new leadership installed on the twenty-second of January and for your Pastor Nominating Committee. And, I will see you in church.

Grace and peace,  
Tom Purchase, the IP





## Winter Storm Warnings

We do not advertise on radio or TV, but you may get a message advising you of cancellations in the event of bad weather. In any case, call the office if you are uncertain. We will try to keep the church answering machine up to date.

If you feel uncertain about coming in the snow, you have our permission to stay home.

*(If you have not yet signed up for auto-notifications and would like to receive messages please call the office!)*



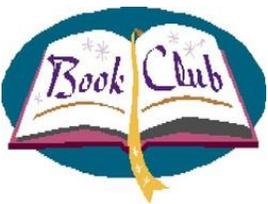
## Women's Circles

This month we will begin a new year-long Bible study called "Who Is Jesus?" Our Bible gives not just one answer - but many answers according to the different author and what was going on at the time it was written. Of course we will look at how our four Gospel writers portray Jesus. We will also see how Paul describes Jesus to the early churches he established. The anonymous writer of the Book of Hebrews presents Jesus in yet a different way. We will even look at some of the early Christian writings that are not part of our New Testament.

In our first lesson we will study the Gospel according to Mark because that was the first written Gospel. According to Mark, Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, yet Jesus did not fit the preconceptions that the Jews expected of the Messiah.

The Ruth Circle will meet at 1:00 p.m. Friday, February 3rd at the home of Betsy Cunius. The Martha Circle will meet at the home of Carol Thomas at 10:00 a.m. Thursday, February 9th. All women of the church are encouraged to join us at the time and place that is best for you. If you have never been to a circle meeting this would be a good time to start as we begin this new study for the year. We will be happy to see you and will welcome you warmly.

## Christian Readers Book Club



ATTENTION !!!!

The January meeting of the book club was cancelled, and we will meet on February 15 at 6:30 to discuss the book The Mistletoe Promise. We will also be choosing the books we will read during the coming year. Do you have a book you would like us to read? Come join us and tell us about it.

Our next book is 'The Boston Girl' by Anita Diamont. We will meet on March 15 to discuss this book.



**Family Promise**  
of Atlantic County

On January eighth Family Promise of Atlantic County kicked off its hosting program at Absecon Presbyterian Church. Our church hosted a family of four, two twenty-something parents, Mike and Lisa, an eight year old, Julianna, and a three year old, Mikey. Many Absecon Presbyterians demonstrated their hearts for this mission project during the course of one week by spending time with the family while they were here. I know that our volunteers receive their blessing from a far higher source than me, but please allow me to express my thanks to you all anyway. We saw a young family trying to learn how to grow together and get on their feet economically as we provided a roof over their heads and also their meals, so that they could save their money in order to eventually provide for themselves. Mike has a pending job offer, and FPAC was able to assist him in obtaining the updated driver's license from his home state that he needs to pursue it. At the end of our hosting week, Somers Point Methodist received the family and cared for them in the same fashion. As the family moves through FPAC's network, I will be happy to keep you all abreast of their progress.

Everyone at FPAC is new at this, including your host church coordinators. We are learning to tweak our operations as we go forward. Priscilla and I experienced some minor "bumps in the road" and learned to improve what we feel is an already successful effort, and we shared our feedback with the executive director.

As you may already know, two offerings were collected at our church as donations to FPAC over the recent Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. I have received the check for that and will hand deliver it this week.

I inadvertently selected May twenty-first as our next date to receive families in need. Since that is the date of our golf tournament fundraiser, that date has been changed to May seventh. More on that to follow.

Leo Ransone  
Host Church Coordinator

### **Music of HOPE**

Lisa Whitaker

Thank you for your generous support in prayers, encouragement and finances. I am so grateful for your continual support as I minister around the world.

As you read this I will be gathering in Thailand with over 100 missionaries from around the world who do much the same thing I do within the context of the Discipleship Training Schools. I am part of the coordinating team that gathers this amazing group of people and we will be looking toward the next several years in regards to curriculum for the schools, staff training and opportunities to begin new schools in places where they have not had this type of school available. We will also host Skye Jethani, an editor for Leadership Journal and author of the books WITH and Futureville as our guest speaker for a portion of the meetings.

I will then travel to Switzerland in mid-February to continue in my role as staff for the Master's program in Spiritual Formation and Discipleship. This module of the program focusses on Education and the educational process in our lives, how it affects our spiritual journey and how our spiritual life influences the way we learn and the way we teach.

I will return Stateside in March and immediately head over to Ocean City to speak in a Women's Retreat put on by a supporting church from Hammonton.

Below is an article I included in my most recent newsletter - it will give you a bit of glimpse of how things have been for me and the HOPE that encourages me daily!

Blessings and much appreciation,  
Lisa



“In a staff gathering this fall we were asked to come up with a word describing this last season of our life. Immediately the word **IMPLOSION** came to my mind. As I considered the frailty of those I love (a dear uncle was in his last days and has since passed away), dreams I had for the future dashed to pieces and so much uncertainty in the world, I definitely felt like my world was imploding in on me. **YET**, I also felt a surge of **HOPE** as I went to China and Russia and saw first-hand all that God is doing in these far corners of the world. These thoughts brought to mind a visual of the cellist of Sarajevo - a man, in a tuxedo, with his cello, making music in the midst of war. During the Bosnian war, this man donned his tux, grabbed his cello and set up right in the middle of ruins, rubble and destruction. What did he do while his world was crumbling around him? He played music. He became an icon of **HOPE** - but not cheap, artificial **HOPE**. He represented the real thing, feeling the pain of his world falling all around him yet using his gifts to bring beautiful music to the place of death. I am challenged to an even greater depth to call on **JOY**, **HOPE**, **GRACE** and many other life-giving resources in this season of implosions. I have asked the Lord to help me put on my tux, grab my cello, play music and be me. Help me Lord to use my gifts even while the uncertainty of what is happening around me continues. Help me to resist allowing the pain and disappointments of life to dictate how I live, but rather help me live and play the music of **HOPE**.”



**Evergreens**

Evergreens will have their monthly sandwich luncheon at noon on February 22nd. Dessert and coffee will be provided. Watch for further announcements

**Lunch Bunch to Fred & Ethel's**

Lunch Bunch will meet at Fred and Ethel's in Smithville on Wednesday, February 8th, at noon. The van will leave from the church at 11:30 for those who might need a ride.



I would like to express my appreciation for all the cards and prayers I received while in the hospital. God is good Praise Him!

Carol Kleiner

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Thank you to the congregation for prayers, cards and well wishes during my knee surgery and recovery.

Anna Mae Werner

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Thank you for the gift card. Nice of you to think of me, I appreciate it!

Lynn

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Many thanks to all of you for the generous Christmas gift.

Also, thank you for the many cards and gifts. All are greatly appreciated!

Wishing everyone a blessed New Year!

Gay



## Serving in February

### Lay Assistants

05 David Burgess  
12 Priscilla Schultheis  
19 David Burgess  
26 Donna Hughes

### Head Ushers

05 Vic & Rita Abelson  
12 Elaine Risley, Naida Burgess  
19 Mary Bew, Betty Lloyd  
26 Bob & Barbara Hudak

### Offering

05 Joan Nale, Franklin Nale  
12 Jack & Dee Heil  
19 Roy Birkbeck, Greg Hamaty  
26 Tina Brown, Betty Price

### Acolyte

05 Franklin Nale  
12 Kassie Little  
19 Jackson Harvey  
26 Jacob Sabo

### Nursery

05 Gloria Achamizo  
12 Jennifer Platt  
19 Gloria Achamizo  
26 Jennifer Platt

### Deacon of the Month

Laurie McManus

### Van Drivers

05 John Channell  
12 Barbara Hughes  
19 Tina Brown  
26 Vic Abelson

### Refreshment Hosts

05  
12  
19  
26

### Breakfast Club Kitchen Crew

05 Set-up:  
Cook: Melvin Washington  
Clean-up: Ginny Davenport  
12 Set-up: Kris Jenoriki  
Cook: John Channell  
Clean-up: Vic & Rita Abelson  
19 Set-up: Donna Hughes  
Cook: Bill Hoesten  
Clean-up: Dirk Williamson  
26 Set-up:  
Cook: Leo Ransone  
Clean-up: Olga Davies, Jean Delesantro

### Counter Schedule

05 Debbie & Don Wong  
12 Barb & Dan Hughes  
19 Leo Ransone, Nancy Conover  
26