

January, 2012

The Son Light

The Monthly Newsletter of the
*First Presbyterian Church of
Castle Shannon*



Well this is it! It is the final year for the earth. The final destruction is imminent! What? You don't believe that? You put no stock in the fact that the ancient Mayan calendar ends in 2012? Why not? Are you a skeptic? Did you know that you are not alone in that opinion? I don't buy it either.

Scripture tells us this: *Now, brothers, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. (1 Thessalonians 5:1-2) and You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. (Luke 12:40) and No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. (Mark 13:32-33).*

The truth is that we will enter into this new year in much the same fashion we have in many years gone by. We will await the return of the Lord and work to hasten His return. Let's face it. Scripture tells us that there is no way to know when to expect Him. Even the Father has not revealed it to the Son. No one knows. What? No one knows? Hmmm.

If Scripture says that no one knows that day or hour of His return, not even the Son Himself, how can we put stock in anyone who tells us otherwise? Here is how I look at it. If someone tells

CHRISTMAS DINNER THANK-YOUS

Dear Volunteers,

"Thank you all for all your time and effort to have a beautiful Christmas dinner for the poor and unfortunate. May the Lord richly bless your Christmas season."

Gratefully,
David, Robert and Billy

"Thank you for your good dinner. I appreciate it so much! Have a wonderful Christmas."

Roberta Conn

"Thank you all so much for the beautiful meal. Merry Christmas."

Joe Schneider

you what day the Lord is going to return or when the world is going to end, it is a pretty safe bet that it won't be that day.

So what of this new year then? It seems to me that when we look back over the year 2011, we can see that God has been actively nurturing and shaping us as a congregation. I think that this year is an opportunity to share the Gospel in even more ways than last year. The Lord will not return until the full number has been brought into the fold. It is our responsibility to see to it that the number hears the message of Christ come to save us.

There may be much talk this year of the world's end, but for us, as Christians, we will have nothing to fear. We will hold fast to the Gospel and to the hope of our Savior's return. Let us then work as if he will return this year though we do not know the day or the hour.

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor Scott

OUR CHRISTMAS MIRACLE

After a month-long stay in the hospital with severe pneumonia, resulting in respiratory distress which put him in ICU on a ventilator for 9 days, Paul was released on Christmas Eve and able to enjoy Christmas Day at home with his family. We would like to thank our church family for the many kindnesses shown us during his hospital stay and since he's been home. We've appreciated your cards, calls, visits, soup and cookies, but most of all, we have appreciated your prayers. Just when things were looking gloomy and we thought we would be spending Christmas Day at the hospital, God answered all of our prayers and turned things around in a way that amazed even the doctors and nurses. Although he is not yet able to eat anything but pureed food, Paul was able to return home without a feeding tube, is gaining his strength back and is showing improvement every day. We thank an awesome God for what He has done, and we thank you, our church family, for your persistent prayers which helped bring him home.

The Schmidt Family

CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER

Thank you to all who helped to make our Christmas Day Dinner a success. Under the leadership of Bob Stokes and George Libby, and with the help of all of you who donated your time, talents and treasures, we were able to provide approximately 350 meals to shut-ins and those who came to the church for fellowship on Christmas Day.

January Sermon Topics



January 1, 2012 (Communion Sunday)

Scripture: Ephesians 4:11-13

Sermon: Evangelism

Synopsis: The Spirit called Apostles, and they were given direct revelation of the Gospel. He called prophets, and they were given the ability to speak the Gospel to the specific needs of the community. Some He called to be pastors and teachers so that the body of Christ might grow in discipleship. There is one more gift in this list that is somewhat more elusive when seeking to understand it. What is this gift that Paul calls that of the evangelist? They have a very unique role in the life of the church.

January 8, 2012

Scripture: Acts 14:8-10; Acts 28:1-9

Synopsis: We have read the stories of Jesus healing the sick. We have even read about the Apostles healing the sick and lame. Most of us have our own ideas about what healing should look like. We have seen the faith healers and been told that all we have to do is believe and all is well. But what is this gift of healing? What does it mean when it doesn't go the way we asked?

January 15, 2012

Scripture: Acts 16:16-18; Acts 20:7-12

Sermon: Miracles

Synopsis: Miracles come in all shapes and sizes. Sometimes we make the mistake of looking for them in great signs and wonders underestimating the little things. Sometimes we don't believe that the great signs and wonders of the early church can still happen. What does the person with the gift of miracles really have?

January 22, 2012

Scripture: Ephesians 6:12-17

Sermon: Distinguishing Spirits

Synopsis: We have spent much time talking about walking in the Spirit and using our gifts in the Spirit. Can we tell when we are rubbing elbows with the Holy Spirit and when it is with other spirits? This is one of those gifts that come to us as we are in need of it, but some are given the ability to discern the difference all the time.

January 29, 2012

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 14 1-33

Sermon: Tongues

Synopsis: This gift may very well be the most widely recognized, most woefully misunderstood, and most disturbingly abused. Paul chastised the Corinthians because of their misuse and abuse of this gift. I suspect that it is not as widely spread or as necessary a gift as it once was, though it still has its place in the life of the church.

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OF YOU

Dear, Dear Friends,

How can I begin to thank you for the wonderful joy you brought into my life? You all feel like family and I will miss seeing you on a regular basis. Thank you for the kind words, wonderful luncheon, and generous monetary gift. I wasn't expecting anything like that, and I can't begin to tell you how touched I was. Life has been hectic – far more work than hours in a day, but this too shall pass. Again, I thank you. You all hold a special place in my heart.

Peace, Joy and Love,

Carolyn Cranston

Self-discipline and Christian Faith

A new year offers us the opportunity to make dramatic changes in the practice of our faith as Christians. Making ourselves more disciplined, for example, especially in our spiritual life.

Self-disciplined Christians see to it that they pray regularly and often. They will want to learn as much as they can about the Bible, the “owner’s manual” which helps us understand what God requires of us. Self-disciplined Christians will take advantage of learning opportunities at their church. Lessons in theology, church history, Christian family living, etc. can bring enlightenment and guidance to us. Remember that Sunday school is for all ages and offers fellowship as well as learning.

In *The Life You’ve Always Wanted*, Pastor John Ortberg writes, “Disciplined people can do the right thing at the right time in the right way for the right reason.”

The letter to the Hebrews is very realistic when it points out that “No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful.” It goes on to say, “Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.” (Read Hebrews 12:7-11). It is that wonderful reward we should seek by deepening our spiritual life.



A Message from World Vision

Dear Sponsors,

Writing you in this opportunity is very special because a very meaningful date for humanity is coming and we remember the birth of child Jesus. However, it is also special because this will be one of the last Christmases that the Cesar Vallejo program will keep a fraternal relationship of devotion between the sponsors and the sponsored children and teenagers from this southern area of Lima.

Through this letter I want to reaffirm to you the sincere and profound thankfulness from all the children, teenagers, families, the World Vision International staff members, and from me because throughout these 14+ years your support has been constant. Today, we can celebrate together that all the families have potable water and a sewage system, that the children and teenagers have improved their abilities for economic enterprise, that many of them are studying in universities or technical careers, and that the parents treat their children better, acknowledging them as having rights, and stimulating their right to participate.

God loves children in a special way; I am sure we will be together, supporting them through the sponsorship system in other places on earth, and bringing more special Christmases to each one of them.

We thank God for you and your family. Our prayer is that the Lord will fulfill your wishes.

With appreciation and gratitude,

Elia Paquiyauri Flores

Cesar Vallejo ADP Coordinator

*“He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD,
and He will reward him for what he has done.”
Proverbs 19:17*

IT'S FUNNY YOU SAY THAT

This man went to his rabbi and said, “I’m very troubled by my son. He went away, and he came back a Christian.”

The rabbi said, “You know, it’s funny you say that. My son, too, left home and came back a Christian.”

They decided to pray about it, and God said, “You know, it’s funny you say that...”

IN NEED OF A TUNE-UP

Several million members of the church are to be recalled because they are not performing properly. Symptoms include frequent missing, lack of power, and poor adaptation to rough roads. While it is suspected that several essential parts were left out at confirmation, regular maintenance should have corrected most of the difficulties. Sadly, many only come for maintenance when a major breakdown has occurred and, therefore it is difficult for service personnel to attempt to correct the basic problems at these times.

So the recall is under way. Church leaders say that Service Managers are being trained to deal with the problems.

One member who came in for a trial recall a year or so ago was pleased with the results. “It’s amazing,” she said, “I’m getting much better mileage now. I don’t notice the rough spots so much, and I find I have enough power to give others a helping push now and then.”

Spokespersons said retraining is possible. Service personnel are available around the clock and shops are open seven days a week.

MAKING YOUR MONTHLY DONATION AUTOMATED (OR HOW TO PUT OUR USHERS OUT OF BUSINESS)

One of the new conveniences of this electronic age is using your bank's automatic bill paying feature from your home computer. Nearly every bank now offers this in some form and it really does make paying bills faster and easier.

Since your church offering is similar to paying a bill, it can be done using this electronic method from most banks. You just need to set it up either online or by stopping into your local branch office and allowing them to help you get started. Once it is set up you won't have to worry about remembering to fill out a check each time you normally bring your offering to church. The bank does it for you!

Since every bank's system is a little different on how you set up the payment, I can only give you some of the general things you might need to know. First, you will need to decide which account you wish to have the money drawn from—checking, savings, money market, etc. Next, you might be asked for the bank account number and the name of the person(s) on the account. Once that is established, if you are setting this up online, there will be a button that says something like “Add new merchant” which will be our church. It would be highly unlikely that our church will appear on their established list of “merchants” so it might be necessary for you to type in the name and address of the church—First Presbyterian Church of Castle Shannon, 3636 Poplar Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15234. Next they will want to know your church account number. That is your envelope number. It also might ask you what type of account this is, such as credit card, etc. You can call it “charitable donation” or something like that.

Once you have set up the service, you can choose to have the money deducted and sent to the church one of two ways: automatically (the usual choices are: monthly, weekly or bi-weekly) or do it yourself by going online each time you wish to donate. Either way, you no longer have to worry about writing out a check or placing cash in an envelope and remembering to bring it to church.

For our church the advantage is that the donations arrive in a timely, predictable manner that allows us to budget our expenses more carefully. In this age of tight finances, this can be very helpful to us.

If you would like to do this but you feel unsure about doing it by yourself, I would suggest one of several options:

1. Go to your local bank branch office. They will be very happy to help you set things up.
2. Ask a relative who understands how this works to help set it up, or
3. Call me. I would be happy to help you set this up.

I hope you will consider this way of handling your church offering in the future.

Edd Hale

Finance Chairman

EPIPHANY: A TIME TO...

The word Epiphany means “to make known.” On Epiphany, Christians celebrate the full manifestation of God’s glory in the coming of Christ. The day of Epiphany (January 6) brings Christmas to a glorious conclusion, but we are not to stop there. The season of Epiphany is God’s TIME to reveal God’s glory. It is:

A time to worship because it deals with the glory of God manifested in Jesus Christ. The season begins with the Wise Men coming to worship the newborn King. The season ends with the worship experience on Mount of Transfiguration.

A time of light because the light of Christ knows no end; it goes to the ends of the earth. He is the light to lighten the whole world. The light of Christ is not merely to shine on Christians, but through them, for the salvation of humankind.

A time to witness because the light of Christ needs to be spread throughout a dark world.

Be an Epiphany. Make known the presence of God by the witness of your life!

- Darell D. Golnitz
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Kingsport, TN

**BIBLE QUIZ**

Complete each sentence by using letters found in the greeting below, using one letter in each blank space. Letters may be used more than once.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Jesus answered, “I am the ___ and the truth and the life.” (John 14:6)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a ___ creation. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

The one who sows to please the Spirit will ___ eternal life. (Galatians 6:8)

Be joyful always; ___ continually.

(1 Thessalonians 5:16-17)

O land, land, land, ___ the word of the Lord! (Jeremiah 22:29)

PER CAPITA

Your offering envelopes for 2012 are available on the table in the back of the sanctuary. Please note that some of you have been assigned new envelope numbers for 2012. This was done in order to eliminate the need for ordering excessive envelopes which included numbers no longer being used. Included in your envelope box is a special envelope which can be used if you would like to help cover the cost of the per capita apportionment assigned to each church in the denomination each year. The amount of per capita that our church is asked to provide for 2012 amounts to \$23.73 per member.

January 2012

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 WORSHIP (Communion)	2	3	4 <i>*Scott S.</i>	5 6:45 Choir	6	7 8:00 a.m. Men's Ministry 10:00 a.m. Remove decorations
8 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 WORSHIP	9 6:30 Session Mtg.	10 <i>*Joan M.</i>	11	12 6:45 Choir <i>*Robin F.</i>	13 <i>*Nancy B.</i>	14
15 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 WORSHIP	16 6:30 Youth Group	17 <i>*Ginny C.</i> <i>*Edd H.</i>	18	19 6:45 Choir	20	21 8:00 a.m. Men's Ministry
22 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 WQRSHIP	23	24	25	26 6:45 Choir	27	28 <i>*Veronika S.</i>
29 9:30 Sunday School 10:45 WORSHIP <i>*Matt L.</i>	30 <i>*Brad T.</i>	31			<i>*Known Birthdays</i>	