

The Communiqué

DECEMBER
2009

FROM PASTOR KEN'S PEN (UH...PC!)

"What If Political Correctness Ruled Over the Birth of Christ?"

And Joseph went up from Galilee to Bethlehem with Mary, his espoused wife, who was great with child. And she brought forth a son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. And the angel of the Lord spoke to the shepherds and said, "I bring you tidings of great joy. Unto you is born a savior, which is Christ, the Lord."



"There's a problem with the angel," said a Pharisee who happened to be strolling by. As he explained to Joseph, angels are widely regarded as religious symbols, and the stable was on public property where such symbols were not allowed to land, or even hover. "And, I have to tell you, this whole thing looks to me very much like a nativity scene," he said sadly. "That's a no-no too!" Joseph had a bright idea — "What if I put a couple reindeer over there near the ox and ass," he said, eager to avoid sectarian strife.

"That would definitely help," said the Pharisee, who knew as well as anyone that whenever a savior appeared judges usually always went to be on the safe side, "and surround it with deer or woodland creatures of some sort. Just to clinch it, throw in a candy cane and a couple elves and snowmen, too," he added. "No court can resist that."

Mary said, "What does my son's birth have to do with snowmen?" "Snowpersons," cried a young woman, changing the subject before it veered dangerously toward religion. Off to the side of the crowd, a Philistine was painting the nativity scene. Mary complained that she and Joseph looked too tattered and worn in the picture. "Artistic license," he said. "I've got to show the plight of the haggard homeless in a greedy, uncaring society in winter." "We're not haggard or homeless. The inn was just full," said Mary. "Whatever," said the painter.

Two women began to argue fiercely. One said she objected to Jesus' birth "because it privileged motherhood." The other scoffed at virgin births, but said that if they encouraged more attention to diversity in family forms and the rights of single mothers, well, then she was all for them. "I'm not a single mother," Mary started to say, but she was cut off by a third woman who insisted that swaddling clothes are a form of child abuse, since they restrict the natural movements of babies.

With the arrival of ten child advocates, all trained to spot infant abuse and manger rash, Mary and Joseph were pushed to the edge of the crowd, where arguments were breaking out over how many reindeer (or what mix of reindeer) had to be installed to compensate for the infant's unfortunate religious character.

An older man bustled up, bowling over two merchants, who had been busy debating whether an elf is the same as a fairy and whether the elf/fairy should be shaking hands with Jesus in the crib, or merely standing to the side jumping around like a sport's mascot. "I'd hold off on the reindeer," the man said, explaining that the uses of asses and oxen as picturesque backdrops for nativity scenes carry the subliminal message of human dominance. He passed out two leaflets, one denouncing manger births as invasions of animal space, the other arguing that stables are "penned environments" where animals

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Celebrations	2
Bits from Betty	2
Elder Biographies	2
Budget	3
Finances	3
Christian Education	4
Outreach	5
Worship	5
Missions	5
Calendar	6
Fellowship	7
Music	7
Presbyterian Women	7



MINISTRY FAIR

Thank you to all who participated in last month's Ministry Fair. What wonderful information was shared by all the committees. We are blessed with so many people who give of their time and talents. And to all who signed up to become part of a committee or subcommittee, we are so delighted that you are going to share your gifts with us. The Lord definitely has a plan for all of us.

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

- 3 Russ & Norine Spitzer
 15 Paul & Georgia McWilliams
 22 Bill & Linda Dixon
 22 Ken & Pat Folmsbee
 22 Lauren & Anne Preston
 27 Rodney & Rosemary Dostal

**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

- 2 Stephanie Kondo
 5 Roger Grover
 18 Mike Tucker
 21 Scot Fulks
 22 Doug Amidon, Gene Chilson
 & Buzz Paulson
 23 Harold Ledbetter
 24 Vinson Ward
 29 Bill Robinson

**WANT TO ADVERTISE?**

Do you have items to sell? Are you looking to buy? Do you need a service provided—lawn mowed, windows washed, errands run? If so, you can put a classified ad in the next issue of the **Deacons' Beacon**. For more information, contact Russ Spitzer at 352-343-0153 or russnor@embarqmail.com.



If you have a business, you can also place an ad in the **Deacons' Beacon**. Contact Julie Fulks at 352-636-3173 or juliefulks@comcast.net.

GriefShare GRIEFSHARE PROGRAM
 COMING IN JANUARY 2010


Griefshare is a 13-week support group to help people grieving the death of a family member or friend.

The presentations are by DVD videos and workbooks that will be provided. Pastor Ken and Pat will co-facilitate the group on Sunday afternoons (2pm) beginning sometime in January. Your loss need not be recent and is open to anyone who is still struggling with their loss. This group is not designed for grief brought about by other losses (e.g. loss of job, etc.) but is geared specifically for loss through death. Watch for a start date and if interested, let Ken or Pat know as soon as possible.

THANK YOU

To our lay readers, ushers, greeters, communion servers and flower arranger for the month of November:

Scot Fulks	Rosie Hawthorne	Jim Brate
Julie Fulks	Cecelia Ingraham	Pud Williams
Jim Bassett	Dottie Bridges	Lois Weber
Margie Pohle	Patricia King	Linda Dixon
Anne Preston	Laurel Ziegler	

**BITS FROM BETTY**

Please update your directory with the following corrections and additions:

Fulks, Julie & Scot—new phone: 636-3173

Montgomery, Wanda—new address & phone (welcome back!)

107 E. Lakeside Dr., HITH, FL 34737; 324-3454

Waalewyn, Ton & Jeri—5446 Sea Leopard, Tavares, FL 32778

Phone: 742-0735

Kandell, Alma—corrected phone: 742-0887

Alcorn, Pat—corrected phone: 781-635-8923

Rumford, Sue—new address & phone: 8015 N.W. 28th Place,

Apt A120, Gainesville, FL 32606 Phone: 352-373-4366

MEET THE ELDER NOMINEES

Marvin Pool moved to “The Springs” in Yalaha in 2001 with his wife, Linda, from Crawfordsville, Iowa. Both joined Community Church by letter of transfer in the fall of 2001. Marvin was an Elder in the United Church of Crawfordsville in southeast Iowa and served on the Parish Council and numerous committees. He was born, raised and attended school in south central Iowa. Marvin has two sons, one daughter, and seven grandchildren. He retired earlier this year from Del Air Heating and Cooling where he had worked since moving to Florida. Now he has time for boating and “tinkering” with anything that quits working!

Jim Reasor was born in Chicago, Illinois, attended high school in Indianapolis, and received his BSME and MS from Purdue University. He married Carol Montgomery in 1956, and they had five children and twelve grandchildren. Jim enjoyed coaching youth baseball and basketball at Sterling Heights and was a commissioner for one year. At First United Methodist Church in Warren, Michigan, Jim was a trustee for two years, and also served as a deacon for three years and an elder for three years at Community Presbyterian Church in Clarendon Hills, Illinois. He worked for TRW, International Harvester and Elkay Manufacturing before retiring in 1996. Jim spends his spare time boating, playing tennis and bocce, and enjoys working with stained glass. He and Carol reside in Royal Harbor.

Community Church **FINANCIAL RECAP** as of 10-31-09

Operating Account

Beginning Balance	\$25,562.87
Disbursements	-\$13,244.29
Deposits	+\$14,768.97
Ending Balance—Operating Account	\$27,087.55

	<u>September</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Budget 2009</u>
Pledge Receipts	\$6,348.00	\$73,299.00	\$100,000.00
Non-Pledge Receipts	\$3,800.00	\$37,823.09	\$ 65,000.00

Contributions Received—Capital Campaign	\$ 80,236.37
Balance Land Purchase Mortgage	\$311,064.81

P & L Recap YTD

Year-to-Date Operating Income	\$113,168.48
Year-to-Date Operating Expenses	\$123,591.57
YTD Income (Loss)	- \$ 10,423.10

CHURCH CONTRIBUTIONS AND TAXES

For those who missed the Ministry Fair, let me repeat some information from the Stewardship and Finance display. We listed the following five ways in which you can contribute to Community Church:

- ◆ Buy Dr. Crowder’s book , An Improbable Journey. The cost of each book is \$30, payable to Community Church Capital Campaign.
- ◆ Contribute by cash or check. Betty will send the total of your 2009 contributions in January 2010 for tax purposes.
- ◆ Make a noncash charitable contribution. Donor forms are available in the church office if you wish to itemize deductions for gifts to Community Church or PW Thrift Sale.
- ◆ Contribute a charitable gift annuity. This provides an opportunity to make an immediate gift to Community Church and also



receive a lifetime income. The gift minimum is \$10,000, and the minimum age is 55, except for younger donors who wish to provide lifetime income for a parent or other loved one. You may visit www.presbyterianfoundation.org for further information or call Pat Ohlmann at 800-858-6127 or email jpo@fdn.pcusa.org.

- ◆ Include Community Church in your last will and testament We hope and pray that this gift remains in the distant future. The estate tax is scheduled to be reinstated in 2011 at a rate of 55%. Our display included a sample statement in which the last earthly home is given to Community Church. This gift eliminates the estate tax.

A Christian’s last will is also his testament—his testament to his love for God, for those loved ones whom God has entrusted to his care, and for his fellow man who can be helped by the material blessings which God has granted to him.

Some of our members use the standard deduction in calculating their income taxes. Others itemize deductions in order to reduce the amount of income tax, when these deductions exceed ten percent of the adjusted gross income. If you itemize deductions in the 10% bracket, a \$100 contribution to Community Church reduces your income tax by \$10. Likewise, itemizing in the 15% bracket and making a \$100 contribution would reduce your income tax by \$15.

Our display also included adjusted gross income levels at which federal income taxes begin, using the standard deduction. These income levels are based on the 2009 tax brackets. The Earned Income Credit Table will be printed in December 2009, so some levels were approximated. If you are interested in more specific details or information, contact Wallace Hoffman at 728-4723 or email joggers@embarqmail.com.

Wallace Hoffman,
Stewardship and Finance Chair

Pastor Ken....(cont'd from pg 1)

are incarcerated against their will. He had no opinion about elves or candy canes.

“Free the Bethlehem Two” signs began to appear, referring to the obviously exploited ass and ox. Someone said the halo on Jesus’ head was elitist. Mary was exasperated. “And what about you, old mother,” she said sharply to one woman. “Are you here to attack the shepherds as prison guards for excluded species, maybe to complain that singing in Latin identifies us with our Roman oppressors, or perhaps to say that I should have skipped patriarchal religiosity and just joined some dumb New Age goddess religion?”



“None of the above,” said the woman. “I just want to tell you that the Magi are here.” Sure enough, the three wise men rode up. The crowd gasped, “They’re all male, and not very multicultural!” “Balthazar here is black,” said one of the Magi. “Yes, but how many of you are gay or disabled?” someone shouted. A committee was quickly formed to find an impoverished gay female wise person among the halt and lame of Bethlehem. A calm voice said, “Be of good cheer, Mary, you have done well and your son will change the world.”

At last, a calm person, Mary thought. She turned to see a radiant and confident female face. The woman spoke again: “There is one thing, though. Religious holidays are important, but can’t we learn to celebrate them in ways that unite, not divide? For instance, instead of all this business about ‘Gloria in Excelsis Deo’, why not just ‘Season’s Greetings’?”

Mary said, “You mean my son has entered human history to deliver the message, ‘Hello, it’s winter’?”

“That’s harsh, Mary,” replied the woman. “Remember, your son could make it big in midwinter festivals if he doesn’t push the religion thing too far. Centuries from now in nations yet unborn, people will give each other pricey presents and have big office parties on his birthday. That’s not chopped liver.”

“Let me get back to you,” Mary said.

THEY CROWDED HIM OUT OF THE INN AND THEY’VE BEEN CROWDING HIM OUT EVER SINCE! Let us do all we can do to get the story straight, and don’t forget to take advantage of all the worship services this Advent season.

MERRY CHRISTMAS,

Ken

“HIS WORD—YOUR GIFT”

Just in time for the holidays – a gift for you! Take part in one (or more!) of the ongoing Bible studies and share the gift of His word with the fellowship at HCC.

Sundays, 10:00AM	Pairs and Spares Adult Discussion Group	Grace Place
Tuesdays, 6:00PM	Women’s Bible Study	Deatherage Hall
Thursdays, 4:00PM	Bible Study with Pastor Ken	Deatherage Hall

The Pairs and Spares group will be starting a four week Advent program beginning Sunday, November 29, using the book “The Best Songs Come at Night And Other Christmas Proverbs” by J. Ellsworth Kalas. Please join us. Pastor Ken will begin a new study on December 10, and the Women’s Bible Study is continuing with the lessons of Esther by Beth Moore, “It’s Tough Being A Woman”. Feel free to join any Bible study – at any time.

And coming up in December, a special children’s program for families in Howey and the surrounding area. While the moms enjoy a shopping break, we’ll be teaching and entertaining the youngsters with Christmas stories, crafts and treats. Want to join in the fun? Call Pat Polit at 352-638-6139 or just stop by. The more the merrier.

Joni Newkirk

Chair, Christian Education



Pre-Christmas Fun Day

10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Saturday, December 19

Neighborhood children, ages 5-12, have fun while mothers do last minute shopping.



REACHING OUT WITH OUTREACH

Your Outreach Committee continues to reach out to the communities we serve, to spread the Word and hopefully attract new members. We thank all of you who stopped by our booth at the recent Ministry Fair. Hopefully some of you will find our activities exciting and will join us on the second Thursday of the month at 6:30PM.

Thank you to all who joined us to stuff bags of goodies and participated in the annual "Open House" for the hundred or so children who came by for games and treats on

Halloween night. We had many great volunteers for the success of this event. Thanks, Pat Folmsbee, for directing this event.

It is not Christmas yet, but you would think so after seeing the Christmas angel tree on our lawn. The tree has angel cards with the names and Christmas wishes of children who are in foster homes and are represented by the Guardian ad Litem program. You select an angel, purchase and wrap the gifts and return them to



the church for delivery directly to the child. Murray and Marilyn McMahon are coordinating this project.

It's almost here! Our church will offer a pancake breakfast from 8:00-11:00 for 300 to 400 people on Saturday, December 12, with all profits going to our Capital Campaign fund. If you have not already signed up (to help set up, cook, serve, sell tickets, and clean up) and want to join in on the fun, call Don Burke @ 638-6185.

Diane Burden
Elder, Outreach Committee

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Worship Committee is running in high gear this time of year. We celebrated Veterans Day in November and Bill Brooks' birthday on November 22 with a special gathering after the 11:00 service. Hanging of the Greens took place on November 29 at both services.

A special thanks goes out to Presbyterian Women for purchasing oil filled Advent candles for the Advent wreath. Now Pastor Ken won't have to worry about the wax candles burning dangerously low during services. Also, thanks to Jim Kidd for making the wreath base in which the candles set.



The Advent wreath lighting cere-

mony will be as follows:

November 29

9:00 the Newkirk family
11:00 Jim & Carol Reasor

December 6

9:00 Murray & Marilyn McMahon
11:00 Bill & Linda Dixon

December 13

9:00 Bob & Billie Ronna
11:00 the Hammill family

December 20

9:00 Scot & Julie Fulks
11:00 Marvin & Linda Pool

On December 6, Pastor Ken will take some vacation time, so we will have an old friend, Rev. Don Doggett,

in the pulpit. Also on December 6, the election of officers will be held at a congregational meeting following the 11:00 service.

The choir will present the Christmas cantata in both services on December 20th as well as provide special solo and duet music for the 9:00 service and choral anthems for the 11:00 service. Christmas Eve service will be Thursday, December 24th at 7:00PM.

The Worship Committee will NOT meet on the first Tuesday of December since everything is on auto pilot for this holiday season. Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 5, when we will start planning the Lenten season.

Bill Foster,
Chair, Worship Committee

MISSIONS AND BENEVOLENCE

The very successful Ministry Fair is behind us, and we were able to sign up more folks who would like to help with the food pantry project. We are working on some ideas that would help the loading of the boxes on distribution day. Setting up boxes and labeling them as to "who gets what" is the hardest part of the whole project. And now that we have twenty-five family units, it is even more complicated.



We will be collecting food for the December delivery on Sunday, December 13, with packaging and delivery on Wednesday, December 16th. Just like last month, we are planning on packing special turkey or ham dinner preparations in each box. So for your donation this month, please give sweet potatoes, instant mashed potatoes, cranberries, stuffing mix and gravy, along with anything else you might like to donate.

The Missions committee was able to pay the fee for November training at the Rafiki organization for two of our

church members, Jean Wittmaier and Melanie Tucker. These women are planning on doing short-term mission work in an African orphanage sometime within the next year. In order to go, you must complete the day and a half training at the Rafiki headquarters in Eustis. Look for more information on this subject next year when they pick the time they will spend serving in Africa.



Pam Miles,
Chair

DECEMBER 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		<p>1</p> <p>Men's Breakfast 8:00</p> <p>Women's Bible Study 6:00 DH</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Choir 6:30</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Finance 2:00 GP</p> <p>AA 7:00 DH</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Work Day 8:30AM</p> 
<p>6</p> <p>Communion Sunday</p> <p>Cantata Practice 2:30</p> <p>Session 6:00</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Kidz 4 Christ Organizational Mtg 6:00 GP</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Men's Breakfast 8:00</p> <p>Membership 10:00 GP</p> <p>Women's Bible Study 6:00 DH</p> <p>Christian Educ 7:30 GP</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Food Pantry 9:00 GP</p> <p>Choir 6:30</p>	<p>10</p> <p>PW 10:00—Noon</p> <p>Bible Study 4:00 DH</p> <p>Outreach Mtg 6:30 GP</p> <p>AA 7:00 DH</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Pancake Breakfast 8:00—11:00</p> 
<p>13</p> <p>Fellowship Luncheon</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Men's Breakfast 8:00</p> <p>Women's Bible Study 6:00 DH</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Choir 6:30</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Bible Study 4:00 DH</p> <p>AA 7:00 DH</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Newsletter deadline 9:00</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Pre-Christmas Fun Day 10:00—4:00</p> 
<p>20</p> <p>Christmas Cantata 9:00 & 11:00</p> 	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Men's Breakfast 8:00</p> <p>Women's Bible Study 6:00 DH</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Choir 6:30</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Christmas Eve Service 7:00</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Merry Christmas</p> 	<p>26</p>
<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>		



NEW OFFICE HOURS
Monday—Thursday 8:30—1:30



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

What a wonderful way to kick off the holiday “eating” season! Our Thanksgiving Fellowship was such a huge success we ran a little short on dressing and turkey! I can’t thank you enough for the delicious food we all enjoyed. I know in years past Deatherage Hall has overflowed with people at our Thanksgiving luncheon, and I pray that will someday happen again.

Our veterans were honored at both services, and I know they feel loved and appreciated. Community Church added three new members during the 11 AM service. Virginia and Al Box, who returned from their 3 ½ year stay in Texas, and Cecelia Ingraham were

welcomed into membership.

December’s fellowship on Sunday, December 13th, will be sliced ham with all the trimmings. David and I will be donning aprons once more to prepare the hams and we depend on you, as always, to bring in anything that will complement them. Look for the sign-up sheet in the November 29th bulletin and sign up to bring your favorite “trimming”.



I want to take this opportunity to wish you a blessed Christmas season, and I leave you with this short poem which suggests to us the true gifts we should give:

*To your enemy, forgiveness.
To your family, love.
To an opponent, tolerance.
To a friend, your heart.
To your church, support.
To every child, a good example.
To all, charity.
To yourself, respect.*

Merry Christmas

Rosie Hawthorne,
Fellowship Elder

NOTES FROM NORINE

Greetings,

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving and spent quality time with family and friends. I want to thank everyone, on behalf of the choir, for keeping our secret in order to surprise Bill Brooks for his 90th birthday. We know it meant a lot to him and Marti to have so many of you attend his surprise party.



Christmas is almost upon us. I count the days by how many practices the choir has until December 20th when they present the Christmas cantata entitled “Call Him Jesus” at both services. No matter how much we practice, we never feel ready, but

the Lord seems to get us through our challenges. Only a choir member can know how hard they work at practice. I do appreciate each one of our choir members for their loyalty and dedication to the choir, our church, and to the Lord. For it is truly for HIM that we sing. When the choir is learning a cantata, we must spend one hour of rehearsal time on learning new anthems, the choral call to prayer, benedictions, and introits. The second hour is spent learning the cantata. For Christmas, we must also be prepared for the Christmas Eve service. We have a lot going on, and very little time to learn it all, but we always do our best for you.

I personally become a wreck until

after the cantata is OVER. Some have expressed to me that I take it too personally. But it is my responsibility to this church, as well as to the Lord, to oversee the quality of music we sing for you, and try to open your hearts, and even touch your hearts with our music. That is my goal, and I can only attempt to achieve it by taking it to heart myself.



I hope you will invite a guest to come worship with you on December 20th. I hope it will be a blessing to all of you.

I wish you all a blessed Christmas, and a healthy, prosperous New Year.

Norine

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

At this time of year getting a head start could mean many things, especially if you connect it to planning ahead to accomplish everything on your “to do” list. At our December 10th meeting, Presbyterian Women will learn about a head start that we first heard about in the 1970’s. Yes, the federally funded program serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers and

pregnant women is active in Lake County. Mara Folsom, a Head Start Family Service Worker, and Julie Fulk’s sister, will tell us about the current program to help combat the effects of poverty on children and families.

Presbyterian Women gather at 10:00AM in Deatherage Hall for fellowship, coffee and refreshments.

The general meeting begins at 10:30AM and ends at noon. We invite all women to join us on December 10th or any future meetings on the second Thursday of the month.

Anne Preston
President



COMMUNITY CHURCH

420 N. Palm Avenue

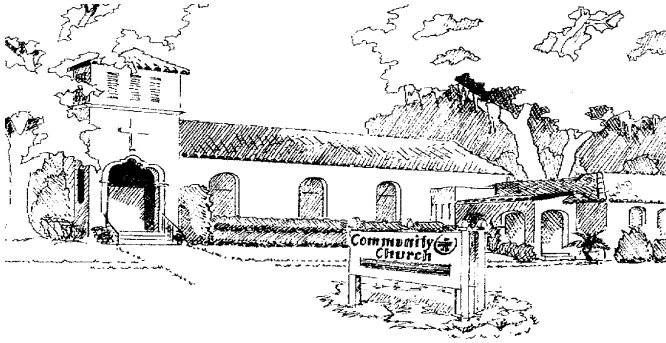
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The Communiqué

A monthly publication of

Community Church

Howey-in-the-Hills, Florida

Worship Services	Sunday 9:00 & 11:00 AM
Sunday School (Children)	Sunday 10:00 AM
Nursery Provided	Sunday 9:00 & 11:00 AM
Pairs and Spares (Adult)	Sunday 10:00 AM
Children's Church	Sunday 11:00 AM
Fellowship Luncheon	Sunday (2nd) 12:00 PM
Women's Bible Study	Tuesday 6:00 PM
Choir Practice	Wednesday 6:30 PM
Presbyterian Women	Thursday 10:00—noon (2nd)
Crafters	Thursday 9:30—noon (4th)
Bible Study	Thursday 4:00 PM