

December
2009



Church Street News

Presque Isle Congregational Church, United Church of Christ

'Tis the Season



As we approach Advent and Christmas, we invite you to consider how the programming and special services of these seasons can be sacred for everyone in our community. Let's keep an eye out for newcomers and visitors who may be seeking connection with a community of faith for many reasons. Each deserves a warm welcome and some personal attention. Some within our church family have experienced loss through death, divorce or family relocation, and this season will be approaching "the first Christmas without...". Extra loving care from their faith family will be needed. In these ways, we might become living examples of God's hope for renewal, peace in a busy world, joy in the community of faith, and love for all.

Excerpt from "Tis the Season" by Susan McIlveen, *Seasons of the Spirit*, Wood Lake Publishing

During December we can reach out beyond our church as well through the Christmas Fund, Gifts for the Christ Child, and food & monetary donations to GIFT. May we take advantage of opportunities to be "living examples" through all our giving in this coming Christmas season.

Christmas Fair

The Christmas Fair will be here soon. Inquiries have been coming in asking about the date and the menu. It's very encouraging to hear from members of our local and surrounding communities who have many positive comments about past fairs and definitely plan to attend this year's.

Be sure to save the date - December 12 from 9:00 am - 2:00 pm

The Brunch menu sounds yummy- baked ham and a variety of stratas (meat and vegetarian) and your beverage of choice (coffee, tea, juice).

Workshops have been held on Tuesday evenings throughout the month of November and many talented individuals put their skills to work making Christmas crafts.

The following tables will have items for sale: **Twice-Nice Gifts** (items which can be re-gifted); **Gently-read Books** (current books in good condition); **Christmas Crafts** (ornaments and decorations); **Food Sale** (desirable items include small main dishes, packaged for freezing; yeast breads; Christmas cookies; pies; stews and soups; etc.); and **Christmas Greenery Arrangements** (appropriate for seasonal decorations). To volunteer, contact Ann Wight (769-6791) or Susie James (764-5332).

A portion of the Christmas Fair proceeds will be given to GIFT, our local food pantry.



Advent

We will begin the Advent season of preparation and waiting on Sunday, November 29. This is the first Sunday in the new liturgical year. Our tradition calls for lighting candles on the Advent wreath to remind us of the hope Christ brings to the world. The round shape of the wreath reminds us of the unbroken love of God. The green branches speak of new life and the candles proclaim the light that came into the world with Jesus Christ.

Christmas Flowers

If you wish to place flowers in the Sanctuary in memory of loved ones and have the names printed in the bulletin for Sunday, December 20, please call the church office with the information by Wednesday morning, December 16. Flowers may be delivered to the church by noon on Saturday, December 19.

Christmas Fund



Joy at Christmas is a response to God's promise of new life through the birth of Jesus. It is a joy we are called to share widely, through our witness and gifts, both to loved ones and to distant neighbors.

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund, one of four Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ (UCC), is an important way of sharing our joy at God's renewing and life-giving grace. The Offering, which is administered by the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance of the Pension Boards on behalf of the UCC, is an expression of joy and gratitude to, and for, those who serve the church.

Gifts to the Christmas Fund help provide pension and health premium supplementation to low-income retirees, emergency assistance to the families of clergy and lay employees and Christmas Gift Checks to hundreds of annuitants.

Amidst the depressed economic climate which continues to drag on, your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. The requests for Ministerial Assistance provided by the Christmas Fund are greater than at any point in recent history.

This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care. Please give generously to the annual appeal for The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund.

Contributions to the Christmas Fund will be collected throughout the month of December.

Thank You for Your Pledges

The Trustees thank all who have already committed to financial support of our year 2010 ministry and programs. If you wish to make a pledge to support the ministry of our church in the coming year, please return your Commitment Card as soon as possible. If you did not receive a card and wish to pledge, the cards are available. We need your support to carry out our mission of providing a house of worship in this community and ministering in Jesus' name.

Light Parade

We are planning an entry in this year's Presque Isle Holiday Light Parade (Sat., Dec. 5). The primary props will be the angels (flyers) and stars used in last year's Christmas story. We will also have the red stadium horns. We need walkers to carry the angels, stars or carry/blow the horns. If you and your children want to be a part of the parade and help represent our church, E-mail or call Pastor Bob – soon, please.

Gifts for the Christ Child



On **Sunday, December 20**, we will receive our annual Gifts for the Christ Child (*White Gifts*). Again this year, our gifts will be given to adults, public wards, who are in custodial care through the Department of Human Services. These persons have no other immediate family to embrace them in the Holiday Season. We have this chance to open our arms and enlarge the circle of our "family" again this season. Name tags, with gift ideas and suggestions are available at the church. We continue to be one of the few groups remembering these persons at this time of year. Thank you for supporting this ministry.

Telling the Christmas Story

On **Sunday, December 20**, we will gather in worship to tell again the story of the birth of Jesus. Our children always play a role in our retelling of this most familiar story. Christmas is a time, however, to remember that we are all children of God, who love to hear the story told again and again.

Christmas Concert



Take a some time to enjoy the sounds of Christmas. Our Christmas Concert, directed by Susan Grove-Markwood and featuring organ, piano & vocal selections performed by members of the church, will be held on Sunday, **December 20, beginning at 2:00 pm.**

Christmas Eve Service

The **Christmas Eve Candlelighting Service** featuring Readings, Carols and Candles will begin at **7:00 pm** on Thursday evening, December 24. This is a very popular service so plan to arrive early.

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<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
1			7:00 AM Men's Group 11:30 AM Women's Group 4:00 PM Writer's Group			Presque Isle Holiday Light Parade 5:00 PM 
<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Second Sunday in Advent</i> 8:30 AM Choir 10 AM Worship 10 AM Church School	3:00 PM Girl Scouts 4:30 -6:45 PM TOPS		7:00 AM Men's Group 11:30 AM Women's Group 4:00 PM Writer's Group 6:00 PM Women's Group II			Christmas Fair and Brunch 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM 
<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Third Sunday in Advent</i> 8:30 AM Choir 10 AM Worship 10:00 AM Church School	3:00 PM Girl Scouts 4:30 -6:45 PM TOPS		7:00 AM Men's Group 11:30 AM Women's Group 4:00 PM Writer's Group			
<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Fourth Sunday in Advent</i> 8:30 AM Choir 10:00 AM Worship - <i>Christmas Play</i> 2:00 PM Christmas Concert	3:00 PM Girl Scouts 4:30 -6:45 PM TOPS		<i>Tentative</i> 7:00 AM Men's Group 11:30 AM Women's Group	7:00 PM Christmas Eve Service of Readings and Carols 	Merry Christmas	
<i>27</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i>		
8:30 AM Choir 10:00 AM Worship NO Church School	4:30 -6:45 PM TOPS		<i>Tentative</i> 7:00 AM Men's Group 11:30 AM Women's Group			