

Presbyterians at the Crossroads

January 2006

Providence Presbyterian Church

Rev. Lisa Nance

www.providencepresb.org

bpickens@nc.rr.com or 639.5318. Thanks to all those who have already signed up for this year!

Pastor's Paragraph

Happy New Year! We greet each other with these words, in excitement and joy, each year. We pray that it will be a happy new year – one filled with good times and wonderful adventures! But we know that there will be hard times, times of doubt and worry, times of confusion and questioning. Does that mean that the year won't be good? No! Often it is within those dark hours of struggle that we gain the most.

This month we bear witness to Epiphany. Epiphany is traditionally celebrated as the day that marks the arrival of the Wise Men to see the baby Jesus. It was out of the darkness of night that these travelers found the light of Christ. Sometimes we too travel in darkness, seeking, searching, waiting....

Epiphany means a sudden insight or understanding of something. That insight doesn't come out of nothingness though. Often we wish we could grasp something, but we haven't exerted the effort to begin the process. Not matter how often I pick up a book written in another language and wish that I could read it, I am not going to be able. Unless....unless I am willing to begin studying the language. It is like that with our faith. Sometimes it takes a while, as we struggle in the dark, before we see the light. We have to be willing to spend some time with God, getting to know Him, before we can figure out what we are being called to do or who we are being called to become.

During this first month of the year, when resolutions are flying high and wishes of happy times are shared openly, take some time to reflect on where you are in your faith journey. Look at where you have been – think about where God might want you to go. Ask God for direction, open your Bible and talk to your brothers and sisters in Christ – God isn't bashful. The light might be a slow, quiet conviction in your heart, or it might be a flash of insight, but no matter what method God chooses, let the epiphany of Christ – the manifestation of the love of God – lead you through the darkness and boldly into the New Year!

*In Christ,
Lisa Nance
Interim Minister*

Flowers

The 2006 calendar for placing flowers in the Sanctuary is posted on the bulletin board behind the Sanctuary. Anyone wishing to reserve a date for placing flowers in the church is asked to mark the date on the calendar, and also contact Beth Pickens at

Those 12 Days of Christmas – What's that all about?

Having grown up in a denomination that didn't recognize anything on the Christian calendar except Christmas and Easter, sometimes I still find some of our days of celebration confusing. Like most of you, I was raised singing the twelve days of Christmas. And except for knowing that the "true love" was fond of sending fowl of every possible kind, I didn't much understand the song. So, I thought that I would share with you a bit of history of those twelve days of celebration and of Epiphany that officially bring them to a close.

The twelve days of Christmas actually begin at sundown on Christmas Day. They last until sundown on January 5. Epiphany, January 6, is celebrated as the day that the Magi arrived from the East to see the baby Jesus. It was the day that the world, represented by Wise Men, bowed in worship of the Christ child.

Originally, gifts were given over the 12 days rather than all at once on Christmas Day. Then, on January 6, as the celebration of Christmas came to a close, carolers would go through the towns singing Christmas songs and sharing good tidings with their neighbors. The Christmas tree would be taken down, and all the goodies on it would be distributed to the children. Friends would visit with one another and it was generally seen as a last chance to relax before "normal" life returned.

The actual song, the Twelve Days of Christmas, is believed by many to have been written in the 1600's as a way to teach the Catholic catechism to believers who were being persecuted for their faith. Here is a list of the believed meanings:

1 Partridge in a Pear Tree – The One true God revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.

2 Turtle Doves – The Old and New Testaments

3 French Hens – Faith, Hope and Charity

4 Calling Birds – The Four Gospels and/or the Four Evangelists

5 Golden Rings – The first five books of the Old Testament, the "Pentateuch" which contains the law condemning us of our sins.

6 Geese-a-Laying – the six days of creation

7 Swans-a-Swimming – the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, the seven sacraments of the Catholic faith

8 Maids-a-Milking – the eight Beatitudes

9 Ladies Dancing – The nine Fruits of the Spirit

10 Lords-a-Leaping – The Ten Commandments

11 Pipers Piping – The eleven faithful Apostles

12 Drummers Drumming – The twelve points of doctrine in the Apostle's Creed

Hope this sheds a little light on our celebration of Epiphany!

Providence Youth

Thanks to the Providence Youth (7th-12th grade) for organizing a successful Christmas mission project in 2005. These youth, along with the help of our congregation, collected two car loads of new, unwrapped presents for children of all ages to be taken to Pride for Parents in Raleigh. These gifts were delivered on Sunday, December 11.

Also, on Saturday, December 17 a group of 20 youth and leaders went to Mike's Farmhouse in Richlands, NC for a Christmas-themed hayride and dinner at Andy's. They are also planning several other events for the upcoming months, and encourage all youth within this age group to be at their next meeting on Sunday, January 15 at 6:00 p.m. in the manse. If you have questions regarding this youth group, please contact any one of the youth leaders: Bob and Jenni Dry, Mary Langdon, Kristy Stephenson, Clyde Wiley or Joanna Wiley.

Pioneer Clubs

After a break during the holidays, Pioneer Clubs will be back on track with their monthly meetings on Sunday, January 15 at 5:00 p.m. There will be lots of exciting things taking place during this last half of the Pioneer Clubs year, so all children ages Preschool through 6th grade are encouraged to be at each meeting. Anyone with questions regarding Pioneer Clubs should contact Georgeanna Phillips at 207.0604 or Kathy Wood at 639.8399.

Presbyterian Women

The Presbyterian Women would like to invite all women within the congregation to come and be a part of their monthly meetings and other events and projects throughout the year. There are two Circle groups that meet each month. The Daytime Circle meets at 10:00 a.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, and the Evening Circle meets at 7:30 p.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of each month in the Fellowship Hall. During these meetings there is a time for fellowship, refreshments, old and new business, and Bible study. The next meeting is Tuesday, January 17.

On Saturday, January 7 at 9:00 a.m., the Presbyterian Women will take down the Advent and Christmas decorations in the church. All women are asked to come and help with this project.

Also, the Presbyterian Women are selling their cookbooks at a cost of \$15 per book. These cookbooks make great gifts. The proceeds from the sale of these books will go towards the Parking Lot fund.

Anyone with questions regarding the Presbyterian Women should contact the Co-Moderators for 2006, Kay Dry at 639.9784 or Carolyn Stevenson at 894.8862

Church Schedules

Please review the bulletin board in the hallway behind the sanctuary for updated Acolyte/Bell Ringer, Children's Sermon, Children's Church, Usher and Nursery schedules for 2006.

If you have questions regarding any of these schedules, please refer those to the appropriate contact provided below:

Acolyte/Bell Ringer: Wendy Stephenson

Children's Sermon: Will Walls

Children's Church: Kathy Wood

Ushers: Russell Wood

Nursery: Jenni Dry or DeEtta Wood

If you need to make a change in the schedule, please note it on the schedule posted in the hallway, and notify DeEtta Wood so that it appears correctly in the bulletin and newsletter.

S.T.A.R.T. 2006

On Saturday, January 28 from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. New Hope Presbytery will offer a winter workshop for leaders and learners. This training will be held at First Presbyterian Church in Goldsboro, NC with keynote speaker Rev. Ed White. S.T.A.R.T. is **Specific Training and Resourcing Together** and is a winter training event designed to provide individuals in New Hope congregations with information and skills they will need as they begin to plan for the new year. The event is sponsored by the Division of Congregational Ministries. Registration is from 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m., Worship from 9:00 a.m. – 10:05 a.m., Morning Sessions from 10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m., Lunch from 12:15 p.m. – 1:00 p.m., and Afternoon Session from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Registration is \$13 per person and includes lunch.

The courses being offered are:

Understanding Church Finances; Putting Polity into Action; The Good News of Stewardship; Church Health, NOT Church Growth, is the Central Issue; What Should We Use for Bible School This Year?; Fighting Fairly: Healthy Responses to Church Disagreements – Biblical and Historical; Young People Don't Get Excited About the Story; Motivate your Member; Help Us Communicate More Effectively; Teaming Up: Shared Leadership in Youth Ministry; Change for the Sake of Congregational Transformation; Strong, Knowledgeable Lay Leadership; Transforming Your Church into a Community of Faith, Hope and Love; and The Word of the Lord Out Loud

For more information regarding this workshop, please go to www.nhpresbytery.org/start01.htm, or contact Rev. Lisa Nance.

January Birthdays

♪♪♪♪ *Happy Birthday to.....* ♪♪♪♪

January Schedules

Infant Nursery

- 1 Sandra Lordi and Elaine Wood
- 8 Darren and Joan Stuart
- 15 Linda Roberts and Carolyn Stuart
- 22 Lisa Nelms and Kristy Stephenson
- 29 Robbie and Kathy Wood

Toddler Nursery

- 1 Kay Dry
- 8 Amanda McLamb
- 15 Crissy Porter
- 22 Lisa Ingram
- 29 Roxann Porter

Ushers

- 1 Dick Embrey and Russell Wood
- 8 Bob Dry and Heath White
- 15 Ronnie Creech and Don Dupree
- 22 Hamilton Greene and Johnathan Reed
- 29 Randy Benson and Jim Ingram

Acolyte

- 1 Hannah Stephenson
- 8 Daniel Stephenson
- 15 Samuel Stephenson
- 22 Abigail Wood
- 29 Nathan Ingram

Bell Ringer

- 1 Daniel Stephenson
- 8 Samuel Stephenson
- 15 Hannah Stephenson
- 22 Joshua Collier
- 29 Jack Sherrill

Children's Sermon

- 1 Nancy Nelms
- 8 Wendy Stephenson
- 15 Darren Stuart
- 29 David Collier

Prayer List

The family of Linda Hutchins. Also, Rose Blasgow, Don Bullard, Josephine Byrd, Carol Clifton, Vera Critcher, Lovie Dorman, Mae Belle Gulley, Crystal Hamilton, Mary Hart, Chris Johnson, Gary King, Bobbie Langdon, Betty Lou Lee, Heather Macsuga, Eloise McLeod, Randy Moody, Diane Moose, Meadow Quinn, Kenneth Ray, Sandra Rice, Mary Serman, Alice Stephenson, Bobby Stone, Margaret Walton, Jesse West, and Margaret White.

- 7 Adam Ingram
Shelton Langdon
Wendy Stephenson
- 12 Joy Jones
- 14 Georgeanna Phillips
- 16 Nathan Ingram
Melinda Kendall
- 18 Joey Porter
- 19 Justin Wood
- 20 Billy Barnhill
- 21 Amy Hovermale
Chris Stephenson
- 22 Adam Shelp
- 23 Sallie Johnson
- 26 Laura Langdon
Kathy Wood
- 30 Scott Hovermale

If your birthday is in January, but is not listed above, please notify DeEtta Wood at 331.9046. Thanks!

January Upcoming Events

- 7 Presbyterian Women to take down Advent and Christmas decorations at 9:00 a.m.
- 15 Ordination and Installation of Elders during Worship at 11:00 a.m.
- 15 Pioneer Clubs at 5:00 p.m. – **Winter Wonderland!** Providence Youth (7th-12th grade) meet at 6:00 p.m. in the manse
- 17 Stated Session Meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- 17 Presbyterian Women Daytime Circle meets at 10:00 a.m., and the Evening Circle meets at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall
- 22 Deadline for items to be given to DeEtta Wood for the February newsletter
- 29 Men's Fellowship Breakfast at 7:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall
- 29 Doughnuts and Coffee in the Fellowship Hall at 9:45 a.m., followed by Combined Adult Sunday School at 10:00 a.m.