

# By the Way

*Celebrating and Sharing God's Love in Christ*

***December 2011***

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## CHRISTMAS FUND FOR THE VETERANS OF THE CROSS

by Suzanne Setlock

Grace to you and peace in this season of light and life!

At this joyous time of year, our thoughts turn to light: the light that shone in Bethlehem's sky, illuminating the path of wise visitors from far away; the candles of the Advent wreath, each week bringing us closer to the holy night of Jesus' birth; and, at last, the celebration of the inbreaking of God's own Light into human history – a light that blazes so brightly that it cannot, will not be obscured. In Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, we see the radiant, loving face of the One who came to save us from ourselves and who desires that we be reconciled, with God and with one another.

For 109 years, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a means by which we – as members of the United Church of Christ and its predecessor denominations – reflect the light of God in the world, individually and in community. The Christmas Fund, one of four Special Mission Offerings received annually in the United Church of Christ, is a beacon of light for many who have served, and who continue to serve, our church.

Your generous giving to the 2010 Offering enabled the Pension Boards' Ministerial Assistance program to provide, on behalf of the whole church, \$1,504,420 in Pension Supplementation, Health Premium Supplementation, Emergency Grants and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks to individuals and families facing financial crises.

The global economic climate continues to affect most profoundly those with the most limited financial resources and the need continues to be great. We are grateful for your partnership in this vital ministry, and ask that you consider supporting the Christmas Fund Offering again, prayerfully and to the best of your ability. Last year nearly 1,600 clergy and lay individuals received some sort of assistance. Your gift to the Christmas Fund helps us to reach out in love and compassion to provide assistance to those in the greatest need, who selflessly have given of themselves for the sake of the Gospel.

December 18th is the designated offering date.





Those recently hospitalized or ill:

- † Joyce Cox
- † Marie Giesecke
- † Elaine Williford
- † Shirley House
- † Deede Starret
- † Barb MacCarthy
- † Dulie Ware
- † Bremmer Miller

Our heartfelt sympathies to the family and friends of John Berger who passed away November 15th. He will be missed.

Dear Heavenly Father,

As we remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the freedoms we enjoy every day, we think of how they have followed in the footsteps of your son, our Savior, Jesus Christ. Please hold our servicemen and women in your strong arms. Cover them with your sheltering grace and your presence as they stand in the gap for our protection.

May the members of our armed forces be supplied with courage to face each day and may they trust in the Lord's mighty power to accomplish each task. Let our military brothers and sisters feel our love and support.

In the name of Jesus. Amen.



Christmas is a favorite season of the year. It is an exciting time, filled with expectation and promise. Yet, many people hate to see the day come. For them it is a lonely, empty, disappointing time. I believe Christmas can be an enriching and fulfilling experience; that it can be a time of joy and gladness.

At the heart of Christmas is the doctrine of the incarnation.

John tells us, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). The message of Christmas is that God is with us.

Too often we see Christmas as a time of buying and selling, getting and giving, coming and going. In the process, the good news about God is lost in the tinsel and trappings of the secular emphasis.

When the good news about God is lifted up in pageantry, symbolism, cantatas, and special services; when the life of God is celebrated in our midst, Christmas takes on new meaning and fulfillment.

Through the years of my ministry I have seen the difference that Christ can make in the lives of people at Christmas. When Christ is the center of our celebration, Christmas becomes an exciting time.

If it is possible to put Christmas in perspective, it is also possible for us to make the season one of spiritual enrichment. The Christian tradition has a wealth of symbol and celebration to enrich our lives. The season is more enriching when we move on the inside of the Christ-event and lay hold of the power of love which is so evident yet so neglected.

The key to the inside of Christmas is the affirmation: "God is with us." That's what the joy is all about. That's what brings a new perspective to life. The New Testament rings with the proclamation. John tells us that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Luke quotes the angels' glad tidings to the shepherds, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). The good news of Christmas is that God is with us in Jesus Christ.

The real issue of Christmas is that God, who is with us and reigns over us, loves us. John expressed it well: "for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Christmas can be summed up in six words: "for God so loved the world."

Love is supreme at Christmas. Love is best expressed in redeeming relationships. Robert Browning demonstrated this love when he met and married Elizabeth Barrett, known as the invalid of Wimpole Street. One

*(Continued on page 3)*

# Worship Schedule

<b>December 4</b>	<b>2nd Sunday in Advent</b> Holy Communion Sermon: "Fear Not, For Behold...the Angels Sing" Scripture: Isaiah 7:10 Theme: Angelic Light in the Darkness of Life
<b>December 11</b>	<b>3rd Sunday in Advent</b> Sermon: "In Search of Angels" Scripture: Isaiah 6:1-9a; Hebrews 13:1-3; Luke 1:26-38 Theme: Angelic Light; Symbol of Christmas
<b>The Christmas Pageant 5:00 p.m. followed by Our annual Lasagna Dinner at 6:00 p.m.</b>	
<b>December 18</b>	<b>4th Sunday in Advent</b> Christmas Cantata "Tapestry of Light (A Celtic Christmas)"
<b>December 24</b>	<b>Christmas Eve</b> 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Vespers Carols, Story and Candlelight "Christmas Shines in the Eyes of Children" 11:00 p.m. Christmas Message, Carols & Candlelight "The Stable Which Once Had Something Inside It That Was Bigger Than Our Whole World."
<b>December 25</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b> A Special Day of Carols and Story

(Continued from page 2)

morning after their marriage, she slipped up behind him and placed a manuscript into his pocket and said, "Please read this and if you do not like it, tear it up." Robert Browning read the love poems she had written to him and we know them today as the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. One of the deeply-moving lines reads: "The face of the world is changed, I think, since first I heard the foot-steps of thy soul."

Christmas is a time when we hear the footsteps of God. When God is near, all the world is changed.

Have a Wonderful Christmas season. May God Bless you.

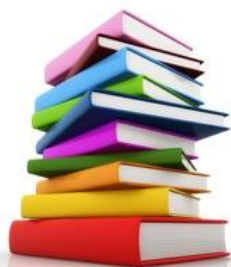


## COMPARATIVE RELIGIONS SERIES

On Sunday, January 15th, from 3:00–5:00 p.m. we will have the first in a series on Comparative Religions led by Rev. Ron Purser. The first will concern Islam and its relationship to Christianity. Light refreshments will be provided. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

## MEET THE AUTHOR

January 23, 2012



How does the book title the *Yada Yada Prayer Club* grab you? It is an enjoyable, light read, by local author Neta Jackson. To help us kick off our newly formed group, Neta has agreed to attend our January 23 meeting! So,

pick up a copy of her book, or download it to your Kindle or e-Reader, and be ready to meet Neta and find out about her writing and ministry. We'll discuss the aspects of the book and characters over coffee, treats, fellowship and of course, prayer. Neta has offered to sign copies of her book for you, if you're interested.

We'll also look at other suggested readings for the year, so if you have a favorite book or if there is something you've been wanting to read please be ready to share it with the group. We can also explore ways to make our group successful by agreeing on some basic book club etiquette.

Please join us, and bring a friend, to our inaugural meeting on January 23, at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Hall

Submitted by:

Kathy Haben, Member at Large

## TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT AND LASAGNA DINNER

Please mark your calendar for Sunday evening, December 11th for our annual Christmas Pageant followed by the festive Lasagna Dinner. Rehearsals for the pageant continue during regularly scheduled Sunday school. Adult volunteers are needed to assist with costumes animals, dinner set-up and clean-up. Many children ages 5 and up are needed for this traditional LHC event. Friends are encouraged to join the fun! Please contact Jane Shelton (630.584.7055) with any questions or if you know of any infant babies who'd be able to play the Baby Jesus.

Following the pageant we will once again hold our annual Lasagna dinner. The cost is \$5 per person or \$20 per family. Please get your reservation in so that we may plan accordingly. You may call the church office (630.584.4013) or email your reservation to [lhchome@aol.com](mailto:lhchome@aol.com) Please consider helping to set up or clean up. We hope you'll be able to join us for traditional Little Home Church holiday event.

### EVANGELISM UPDATE—NEW MEMBER “HOSTS”

A vital and strategic goal for Little Home Church is to add new members. This year the Evangelism Ministry is working to include a larger group of our congregation to identify specific potential new members. We now have 15 “hosts” who are actively promoting Little Home Church and extending an invitation to individuals to experience our Church activities and consider membership. Our group of potential members is currently more than 20.

Please contact Bob Kaska, Evangelism Ministry Chair, if you wish to be a “Little Home Host” or suggest a potential new member (630.235.2306 or [kaska@chicagoelectric.com](mailto:kaska@chicagoelectric.com))

Little Home Church—Member “Hosts”:

Bob & Kathleen Kaska; Gary & Rita Estes; Ann McLaughlin; Greg Hege; Judy Hopkins; Rich & Nancy Doerr; Marilyn Poole; Karen Hansen; Peter & Jennifer Gatsch; Carol Berger; Jan Marchese.



*Come share in the spirit of the season  
& bring a friend!*

Join us for the 2nd Annual Women's Advent Worship & Tea to be held on Tuesday, December 6, at 10 am. All are welcome, so invite your friends and family to this lovely holiday event and share the beauty and warmth of our Little Home Church.

Please RSVP and sign up to bring an hors d'oeuvre or dessert by either noting it on the sheets located in the Parish Hall, emailing [lhchomelori@aol.com](mailto:lhchomelori@aol.com) or calling 630.584.4013. There are also event postcards available in the Parish Hall to use for inviting family and friends. Come help with set-up on Monday, Dec. 5, between 1-3 pm.

Nancy Schatzeder will lead the worship service, Karen Miller will be our guest pianist and Jen Haseltine will once again be the soloist. If you would like to participate in the service by reading one of the scriptures or poems, please contact Anne Bouchard at [annebouchard@gmail.com](mailto:annebouchard@gmail.com) or 630.234.8167.

Remember to celebrate the season and wear something red to the event!



*Submitted by Kathleen Sullivan Kaska, Evangelism Ministry*

## WE NOTICED

Thank you to Valeri Baldwin for purchasing a new vacuum for our church clean ups. Works much better and cleans too!

Thanks to Everyone who contributed in so many ways to decorate our church for Christmas and provide such yummy dishes for our potluck.

Thanks to Jan Marchese for the excellent job she is doing as our council clerk.

Thanks to Gary Estes for cleaning out the broken refrigerator, repairing the lights in the sanctuary and replacing the cover that blew off the bell tower.



## A NOTE FROM STEWARDSHIP

As we approach the end of this year, please check to see if your 2011 pledge is up to date. If it is, thank you. If it is not, will it be possible to bring it up to date before year end? If you can, your church council and Stewardship chair would be most appreciative.

Looking forward to 2012, have you submitted your new pledge? If you have, I will be sending Thank You notes soon. If you have not committed, please try and do so before year end so we can plan our budget for the upcoming year.

Thank you for your generosity.

Suzanne Setlock  
Stewardship Chair

## Email Messages from LHC

Rejoice! We are now sending information about our Church events and activities via email through a subscription with Constant Contact utilizing our Church Windows email database. The first email was sent on November 23 to promote the Women's Advent Worship & Tea along with a list of upcoming dates of events and services throughout the Christmas season. A total of 117 addresses were sent the email message with 67 "opens" and 9 "bounce backs" reported. Not bad in the world of email marketing.

### Sounds easy, right?

Office Manager, Lori Prang, and graphic designer, Kathleen Sullivan Kaska spent 8 hours over two days together in front of the LHC computer wading through the dozens of steps required to create and send one email blast. We learned much (mostly from mistakes) but we were pleased with the result of our persevering. Of course, there are still kinks to be worked out.

### Next steps

Appropriate message formats will be developed for both simple Church notices and multiple news items, along with a regular schedule for publishing. It is important to include as many member and friend email addresses to the database as possible. So if you did not receive the recent email blast, please email Lori at [lhchomelori@aol.com](mailto:lhchomelori@aol.com) and you will be included.

All Church news and event information for the email blast messages should be given to Lori for publishing. Include any photos or art elements you might have as well.

### Share the news

You can forward the church emails to friends and family by using the "Forward to a friend" button on the email blast message. It is also easy to respond with RSVPs by using the links noted in the message, and access the Church web site for the Church Calendar and Photo Gallery.

Here's to turning the virtual page in cyber-church connecting!

*Submitted by* Lori and Kathleen

## Archeologists Needed for Biblical Studies!!

Interpreting the Bible, our faith's foundational text, can be a daunting endeavor, not to be taken on lightly, or even alone. The stories found there are steeped in a culture and history, an experience, that none of us in this century can truly fathom. But do let's try. You are invited to don your work boots and gloves and join an expedition into a progressive study of our Bible.

Progressive study of our Bible is interwoven in art, literature, music, culture, history, and politics. To ignore it, or to fail to recognize its many voices and interpretation, is to fail to understand the origins and intentions of the Word, and much of the world in which we live.

So let's dig together. Bring your inquiring mind, your questions, your multiple intelligences and let's lift layers of text to discover context, currency, comfort, and challenge. Bring any Bible you have. Variety is spice! We'll start with Luke's 1<sup>st</sup> chapter and see where we go.

Thursday December 8, 7-8:30 pm in the Parish Hall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays thereafter.

Hosted by The Rev. Nancy Schatzeder



**SAVE THE DATE!!!**

**Saturday, January 21, 2012**

**CHILI COOK-OFF TIME!**



# DECEMBER-JANUARY

## December 2011

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

December 6 Women's Advent Worship & Tea 10:00 a.m.  
 December 8 Evening Bible Study 7:00 p.m.  
 December 4 Adult Bell Choir during worship  
 December 11 Christmas Pageant & Lasagna Dinner  
 Giving Tree presents due  
 December 13 Church Council Meeting 7:00 p.m.  
 December 17 Holiday Dinners due at Resurrection Parish  
 (Rt. 59/Army Trail) 8:00—9:00 a.m.  
 December 18 Christmas Cantata during worship  
 December 24 5:00 Family Candlelight Service  
 11:00 Candlelight Service  
 December 25 Regular 9:30 a.m. Worship Service

## January 2012

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

January 10 Church Council Meeting 7 p.m.  
 January 15 1st in a series of Comparative Religions 3—5 p.m.  
 Presented by Pastor Ron  
 January 21 Annual Chili Cook-Off 6:30 p.m.  
 January 22 Janual Congregational Meeting after worship  
 January 23 A Book & A Prayer Book Club meets 7:00 p.m.



**Pastor Ron's Cell Phone**  
**(630) 886-5677**  
**Church Office (630) 584-4013**  
**lhhome@aol.com**  
**www.littlehomechurch.org**

Little Home Church by the Wayside  
United Church of Christ  
32W128 Army Trail Road  
Wayne, IL 60184

## Join us for Worship:

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9:30 Sunday Worship and Children's School

Childcare provided from 9:00-11:00

630-584-4013

fax: 630-584-8427

[lhchome@aol.com](mailto:lhchome@aol.com)

[www.littlehomechurch.org](http://www.littlehomechurch.org)

[www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)



## Along the Way...

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### COMMUNITY CRISIS CENTER

We will continue to collect gently used winter coats and winter wear (boots, gloves, hats, scarves) for men, women and children at the Community Crisis Center.

Their need is on-going.

There is a drop off box in the Parish hall. As you go through your closets this winter season keep them in mind. Our donations are very much appreciated.



### Little Home Church by the Wayside

**Pastor**

Rev. Ron Purser

**Pastor Emeritus**

Rev. Don Heinrich

**Minister of Music**

Larry Dieffenbach

**Moderator**

Ann McLaughlin

**Moderator-Elect**

Wally Setlock

**Office Manager**

Lori Prang

**Custodial Services**

Odie Perry