

# *The Bethany Letter*

JANUARY 8, 2008

VOLUME 2008

ISSUE NO. 1

*The Rev. Stephen Gehlert, Senior Minister*

*The Rev. Mark Steiner, Visitation Minister*

---

## The Work of Christmas

Christmas is over; the baby has been born. Epiphany is behind us; the magi have brought their gifts. What does it all mean? I found these words by Howard Thurman, from *The Mood of Christmas*, profound, helpful, and inspiring:

*When the song of the angels is stilled,*

*When the star in the sky is gone,*

*When the kings and princes are home,*

*When the shepherds are back with their flock,*

*The work of Christmas begins:*

*To find the lost,*

*To heal the broken,*

*To feed the hungry,*

*To release the prisoner,*

*To rebuild the nations,*

*To bring peace among brothers and sisters,*

*To make music in the heart.*

Christ's coming means nothing to us, if it doesn't effect what we live for and how we live. He comes to help us turn from the empty life of living only for ourselves, to a full, abundant life, lived for God and others. Thank God that we have that wonderful possibility! Thank God, that the light of God's love has come to us in the Christ child to show us another way.

*Blessed Epiphany,*

# Sunday - January 13, 2008

Scripture: Matthew 3:13-17

Sermon: *Baptism: Gift and Responsibility*

## Sunday Morning Opportunities ...

**8:30 a.m. Worship** (Fellowship)/ 7<sup>th</sup> Day

**9:15 a.m. Church School** for Children and Adults

**10:30 a.m. Worship/ Chancel Choir/ Children's Sunday School/ Baptism**

**11:30 a.m. Social Hour/ Women's Fellowship**

**Adult Classes at 9:15 a.m.:** Lounge Class; Bible Discoveries; Seasons of the Spirit; Seekers; Senior High;  
(Please arrive on time) Upper Room; Perspective Class

---

## Welcome Our New Chancel Choir Director

It's great to share the good news that a new Chancel Choir Director has joined the Bethany Staff. Philip Formes had his first rehearsal with the Chancel Choir on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, and directed the Choir for the first time on January 6<sup>th</sup>. Philip (Phil) is well qualified for this position. He holds a BA in Music Performance from the New England Conservatory of Music, has done graduate studies at the University of Cincinnati – College Conservatory of Music, and is expected to receive a Master's in conducting from Akron University this spring and begins a doctoral program in the fall. He has been involved in a number of church and non-church choirs and choruses. We are very excited to have Phil join our music ministry. A warm and humble spirit compliments his educational background and talents. We trust, that through his leadership, the choir will be nurtured as a loving, caring part of the Bethany family and that music will continue to enrich our worship. We are also very grateful to Carolyn Curtis for her service as interim director. Thanks, too, to the members of the Chancel Choir for their continued dedication during the interim. We look forward to working with Phil in this position. Please take a moment to welcome him when you can.

*The Chancel Choir Search Committee*

## What goes up must come down.

In observance of this universal truth, please join us on **Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup>** to take down the Christmas decorations in the Sanctuary. We will feed you breakfast at 9:00 a.m. (Mancinelli has something delicious planned) and we anticipate a quick UN-decorating to follow. Hope to see you there!

## IHN Training

All IHN volunteers are being asked to attend one session of IHN Volunteer RETRAINING in January. There are three sessions to choose from and each one is two hours long. Please let Carolyn know which session you will be attending. If possible, she would appreciate you letting her know a week before so she can communicate this to the IHN office so they know how many to expect. Thanks in advance for fitting one of these sessions into your already busy schedule.

Carolyn B. Hofmann

☞ **Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup> 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm**

Northwest Ave. Church of Christ, 737 Northwest Ave., Tallmadge 44278

☞ **Thursday, January 17<sup>th</sup> 7:00pm - 9:00 pm**

Trinity Lutheran of Loyal Oak, 3281 S. Cleveland-Massillon Rd., Akron 44203

☞ **Sunday, January 20<sup>th</sup> 2:00pm - 4:00 pm**

Fairlawn West UCC, 2095 West Market St., Akron 44313

**Adult Church School Classes**

**Bible Discoveries** will be discussing pgs. 133-145 in the book "Desire of the Everlasting Hills." Please come and join the lively discussion ~ even if you have not read it! All are welcome.

## Lounge Class

Questions of Faith II - 24 min. each  
January 13<sup>th</sup> ~ *What's the use of the Bible?*



★ **Committee Chairs** ~ Annual Committee Reports are due NO LATER than **JANUARY 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008.**

★ Please **PICK UP YOUR GIVING ENVELOPES** on the tables located in the hall outside the Social Hall. **Please** help us in saving on postage; **AND** if you are able to deliver any boxes not picked up (people in your neighborhood?) please let the office know.

★ Please inform the church office of any change in address or telephone number so we can keep our records up-to-date.

## Gifts for Baby Jesus

*The outpouring of gifts on Epiphany Sunday was amazing. During the Children's message the children collected an abundance of gifts, adding to what was brought to the 8:30 service. The altar was filled with gifts of diapers, wipes, baby food, clothing and more. These items will continue to be collected through January and may be brought to the table in the social hall. The gifts will be used to assist babies and their families served by Good Neighbors, Interfaith Hospitality Network and Williard Food Pantry. Thank you for your generosity.*

## Bethany Gifts at Christmas

Our Bethany members were very generous to those less fortunate during the Christmas Season. A total of \$4,735 was donated to the following areas:

- ♥ Gifts of the Heart (29 gifts) \$2,845
- ♥ IHN Gift Cards (31 cards) \$710
- ♥ Games/DVDs for the IHN families at Bethany (12 @ \$15 each) \$180
- ♥ HM Life Opportunities (40 gifts @ \$25 each) \$1,000

Thanks for your support of missions by donating these gifts.

## All I Wanted for Christmas... I Got!

Before Christmas I wrote that all I really wanted was something that would help Bethany continue an important ministry to families in times of grief and loss - at least one additional person to help coordinate funeral meals. So, what a wonderful blessing it was when Hilda Bowman came up to me on Christmas Eve and said that she would do this. Hilda will be joining Gail Cool and Holly Keenan as those serving in the rotation year, and Pat Mansfield who recently said she could serve during the summer. We'll be getting together soon to create four groups of helpers to work with our four coordinators. That's where all of you come in! We'll be sending out a confirmation request to those who've been on one of the lists in the past and welcoming new people to get involved as well. If you would be willing to help by preparing a dish or helping to serve, please be sure to let us know.

---

## Congratulations to...

... Jason and Laura Rorrer  
on the birth of their son,  
William Stone Rorrer,  
December 24, 2007.

Change of address ...

Nancy Zucco #207

**save?**

## Are you remembering to ACME Community Cash Back Program

**Receipt Ending Date: FEBRUARY 16, 2008**

Acme Fresh Market will issue a rebate check equal to 5% of the Cash Back amount printed at the bottom of the receipt. The Cash Back amount includes all Acme brand merchandise purchases. Locate Acme brand items easily by watching for shelf tags in the store. Ask your families, friends, co-workers and neighbors to save them too!

(R.S.V.P. stores not included in the program.) The YF is collecting ACME receipts. We truly appreciate your support as the proceeds help fund the youth mission trip.

### Our volunteer receipt counter is alarmed!

So far, we have not collected many receipts and if you NOTICE the ending date is much EARLIER this year ~ **February 16<sup>th</sup>**. Are you holding on to them? If so, bring them in so we can keep current on the count. If you are not saving your receipts PLEASE do so these next few weeks! It is such an easy way for our youth to raise money for their mission trip!

### What a Happy (Warm & Toasty) New Year!

"We'd be out in the cold!" I said without these new, energy-efficient windows. So, to help get them paid off, I said that I'd sleep out in the cold (in a tent on the church lawn) until we received gifts, memorial fund designations, or pledges to cover them. What a response you made! We began with a need of \$12,110 (not including interest owed to those we borrowed from to buy the windows). Although we won't have exact figures until all the December financials are finished, we know that we received gifts and memorial fund designations well in excess, not only of the basic need but also the interest cost. So the windows are paid for, the interest costs are covered and we have some left over to help us do other energy-saving measures around the church to better care for God's creation and be better stewards of the funds we receive for ministry and mission. Of course, I'm also happy that I got to sleep in my own bed on New Year's night. (I really would have done it, gladly, for as many nights as necessary.) Thanks to all of you for making sure that I didn't need to. Bethany is an awesome family.

*With Gratitude, Steve*

### Please remember in your prayers

- † Anna Rorrer, Children's Hospital
- † Ralph Gray, Akron General
- † Jim France, Akron City Hospital
- † Lynette Shepperd, Home (from hospital)

### † In Sympathy...

*We extend our Christian sympathy and prayers to the family of Bethany member, Geraldine Hunter, who died December 23<sup>rd</sup>.*

*We extend our Christian sympathy to the family of Donna Koudela on the death of her brother, Robert Olson, January 2<sup>nd</sup>.*

*We also extend our Christian sympathy and send prayers to Linda Smith and her family on the death of her husband, Ken, who died January 7<sup>th</sup>.*

† **Prayer:** *Creator God, our soul's delight, your voice thunders over the waters, liberating the future from the past. In the Spirit's power and the waters of rebirth, Jesus was declared your blessed and beloved Son; may we recall our baptism, and be disciples of the Anointed One. Amen.*

**Thank YOU!**

**The Chancel Choir** thanks our "friends of the choir" ~ Gary and Nancy Jensen ~ for hosting the reception after the Christmas concert. They arranged our cookies and supplied punch, cheese and crackers and cleaned up too! What a team! Also, thanks to Bob and Joyce Lovell for jumping in as well.

**The Chancel Choir** thanks the congregation for yet another successful year with the 2008 Akron Entertainment book fundraiser. The profit was \$360.00, of which 10% was tithed back to the church.

### Dear Bethany Family,

Happy New Year to everyone. Thank you for the beautiful poinsettia, the cards, and visits during the past year. *Evelyn Vance*

**Thank you!** Thank you! There are so many in my Bethany family to thank that I would need a page of the newsletter. So, thanks to Pastor Steve and Rev. Mark for their trips to Cleveland! Thank you for the prayers, cards, flowers, visits and goodies from so many!

*Love and prayers, Doris Brubaker*

### IHN Host Week

Thanks to all of our volunteers for helping with our IHN Host week in December. We know this was a busy time of year for all involved and we appreciated the time our volunteers gave to our families by providing leadership each evening, fixing a meal, driving the van, doing the laundry, and staying over night. Thanks to the Youth for providing the stockings, and to those who attended the Pot Luck dinner with New Trinity and our IHN guests. It was a great week.

*Bob and Carolyn*

**Thank you** for the beautiful Christmas arrangement of altar flowers delivered by Ernie Albert. We had a very nice visit. Many thanks also for the visits by the ministers and all your cards and prayers.

*Sincerely, Al Butler*

Calendar for additions to ~ or ~ changes to the  
2008 monthly calendar mailed to you.  
January 9<sup>th</sup> to January 20<sup>th</sup>

01/09 9:30a Bible Study (CE)  
7:30p Spiritual Council  
01/10 7:30p Choir Practice  
01/11  
01/12

## Sunday ~ January 13, 2008

† Nursery Available ~ 9:15 – 11:30 a.m.

† ANNUAL REPORTS DUE TODAY ✨

8:30a Worship (Fellowship)

9:15a Church School for All Ages

10:30a Worship/ Children's Sunday School/ Baptism

11:30a Social Hour

11:45a Safe Church Info Session (Choir Rm.)

5:30p Youth Committee

01/14 9:00a Quilters

9:30a Shawl Ministry (Lounge)

7:30p Kerygma (Adult Libr.)

01/15 8:15a Staff Meeting (Lounge)

7:00p PIM Stewardship Class (Lounge)

7:15p Finance Committee Meeting (Bible Disc.)

01/16 8:00a Men's Breakfast (Lounge)

9:30a Bible Study (CE)

6:45p C.E. Committee Meeting

7:30p Consistory (Lounge)

01/17 6:15p Confirmation Meal, Music, Class

7:30p Choir Practice

01/18 10:00a Newsletter Deadline for 01/22

6:00p Wedding Rehearsal

01/19 11:30a Bethany Kitchen (S. Hall)

4:00p Seguin Wedding

## Sunday ~ January 20, 2008

† Nursery Available ~ 9:15 – 11:30 a.m.

8:30a Worship (Healing & Reconciliation)

9:15a Church School for all Ages

10:30a Worship/ Children's Sunday School

11:30a Social Hour

11:45a 7<sup>th</sup> Day Practice

6:00p JUST PEACE CELEBRATION at NT ✨

♥ Names of **Sunday Volunteers** are published  
AHEAD of the scheduled Sunday as a kindly  
reminder & an early *thank you!*

### Volunteers for January 13<sup>th</sup>

Esperanza Cup Washing: Ariel, Emma, Keith

Greeters: Pat Cochran / Pam Silliman

Lay Reader: Emma Jensen

Music: 7<sup>th</sup> Day/ Chancel Choir

Nursery: T. Jensen, M./ S. Ferda, E. Jensen

Social Hour: Women's Fellowship

Ushers: R./S. Holle, F. Read, J. Grazulis, J. Seymour,

R. Berie, A. Renner

Van Driver: L. Goodwin

Visitor Outlook: L. Goodwin

♥ If you are **unable** to volunteer the day you are  
scheduled, **please remember** to:

➤ **find someone** to take your place  
... and then

➤ **call the church office** so we may make  
necessary changes on our schedules

### Volunteers for January 20<sup>th</sup>

Esperanza Cup Washing: Emma

Greeters: The Spencer Family/ The Bebout Family

Lay Reader: Linda Goodwin

Music: Special Music/ Chancel Choir

Nursery: S. Ward, J. France, B. Lees, K. McDevitt

Social Hour: Youth Committee

Ushers: J./S. Mancinelli, B. Charton, S. Truby, S. Ward,

J./J. Ingram, C. Eberhardt

Van Driver: B. Read

Visitor Outlook: J. Ingram

*Christmas Poinsettias* Thank you all for beautifying the altar this season!

Ernie and Marie Albert, in memory of our parents  
Rick and Sigrid Albert, in memory of our grandparents  
Jeannette Allen, in memory of husband and daughter  
Bobbie, Robin & Laura Berie and Jaren Barnett, in memory of Bob Berie  
Donna Bidwell, in memory of Jim Bidwell and honor of Marcia Spring  
Donna Bidwell, in memory of Jim Bidwell, Barb Bidwell and grandparents  
Jenny Bisesi, in loving memory of daughter, Linda Kopina  
Ralph and Mary Bowmaster, in memory of our loved ones  
The Caiola's and Withrow's, in memory of George – husband, father, grandpa  
Phyllis Casper, in memory of Jack Casper and loved ones  
Bob and Jan Charton, in memory of parents  
Helen Davis, in memory of family  
John and Cathy Dix, in memory of Gwen & Dale Hawk & in honor of Janet & Harlan Dix  
Gary and Carol Eiber, in memory of parents, brother and son  
Marge Gaskill and family, in memory of Donald and Mary Powers  
Dick and Phyllis Haft, in memory of loved ones  
Ozzie and Ruth Hibbard, in memory of Ward & Eleanor Henderson  
Carolyn B. Hofmann, in memory of parents, Helen & Gus Hofmann, and  
in memory of nephew, Todd Hofmann, and friends Esther Ferner and Dorothy Rea  
Jim, Sue, Kristy and Steve Jacobson, in memory of Carolyn Jacobson  
Kathe Kirstein, in memory of Fritz Kirstein  
Lenora Luginbill, in memory of Chuck Luginbill  
Sarah Mellott and family, in memory of Calvin Mellott  
Sharon Otto, in memory of Odell and Harriett Otto  
Jeannette Paddison, in memory of all our family members  
Robert and Dorothy Peyak, in memory of our dear parents  
Bob and Martha Peyak, in memory of Martha's Dad Robert and brother Matt  
Nancy and Robert Ractliffe, in loving memory of Leroy & Grace Brumbaugh  
Nancy and Robert Ractliffe, in loving memory of Augustus & Phyllis Ractliffe  
The Bob Read Family, in memory of Andrew J. Lampe  
John and Kathy Ruch, in memory of our parents  
Margaret Saltsman, in memory of husband Riley, and our parents  
Clyde, Lynette, Sue, Phil, Dian, Dale, Beth and Bob, in memory of loved ones  
Lynette Sheppard and Jorja Evans, in memory of parents George & Ethel Haigh  
Edna Truby, in memory of Peggy McVan  
Tim and Sue Truby, in memory of Delores Beal and Jim Truby  
Evelyn Vance, in memory of all my loved ones

