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Community Church

A United Methodist Congregation

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Discipleship: John Toellner

Evangelism:

Fellowship: Pam French

Ministry: Jamie Greenier

Worship: Liz Wade

Communications: Katie Morgan

Church Secretaries: Carole Helsel - chelsel@communityumc.info

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Phone: (724) 744-3413 FAX: (724) 744-4758

E-mail Address: info@communityumc.info

Church Web Page Address: www.ShareChristWithOthers.org

Worship Services

- Saturday Evenings – 6:00 p.m.- Current Contemporary Worship
- Sunday Mornings – 8:30 and 11:00 a.m. - Traditional Worship
- Sunday Morning - 10:45 a.m. - Current Contemporary Worship
- Sunday School – 9:45 a.m.

Community Connection is published monthly for members and friends of Community United Methodist Church. Deadline for submission of articles is the 10th of every month unless otherwise noted. Articles can be delivered to Pastor John, Pastor Rich or to the church office.



STAYING FOCUSED...

“HOME FOR CHRISTMAS”

Most of us have some favorite Christmas music. Some of us play it over and over to help us get into the Christmas spirit. In my childhood home we even had a playlist of sorts, in that my sisters decided which Christmas songs could be played when, and there was great anticipation as the most favorite songs began to fill our home as Christmas Day drew near.



I still have my favorites and one is not a carol or even of any spiritual meaning. "I'll Be Home for Christmas", recorded by Bing Crosby in 1943. It was released during World War II when so many young men (and a few women) were so very far from home at Christmas. It is a sentimental ballad purportedly written by a college student who was homesick, but given the world setting into which it was broadcast, it immediately resonated with families separated by war and the reality that many would never again be home for Christmas. The heart-rending last line states; "I'll be home for Christmas, if only in my dreams".

For many of us, our most precious Christmas memories are bound up in childhood recollections of presents, special foods, visiting relatives, snow and brightly lit trees. We nearly all have a memory of a place and time, and of people, that fill our hearts with longing. I am convinced that longing may include idyllic childlike nostalgia but it is much, much more profound than that.

The human heart longs for the reality that Christmas represents. I believe as children we are somehow more open to the hope of Christmas, of "peace on earth" and the joy of "for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" ^{Luke 2:11}. The message of Christmas is God coming to us, "Emmanuel, which means God with us". ^{Matt 1:23} It means a homecoming, a bringing back into relationship that which was estranged. The birth of Jesus in the manger in Bethlehem means that we can be "Home for Christmas". We can be back where we belong, back in harmony, back where we are cared for, protected, and nurtured.

Continued on page 2

Staying Focused continued from page 1

Our theme during Advent, the four weeks leading to Christmas, is “Home for Christmas”. The worship and preaching will focus on the meaning of the coming of Jesus, and the invitation to be at peace with God, as we accept the gift which God has given. We invite not only the members and friends of Community Church to worship during December, but we urge you to invite your family and friends to join you in coming “Home for Christmas”.

As we all prepare our homes for the celebration of Christmas, let us be sure to prepare our hearts for Christmas. Nothing else we do will make Christmas meaningful in that way that worship and devotion will. Let us be sure to make room in our busy schedules and in our hearts for the childlike simple joy of hearing the Good News of God’s love for us. We are all invited to come “Home for Christmas”. In the words of another favorite Christmas song; “O come let us adore him, Christ the Lord”.

Grace & Peace,

Pastor John



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from Your Church Staff

DECEMBER CALENDAR

Sundays	8:30 & 11 a.m.	Traditional Worship Service
	10:45 a.m.	Current Worship Service
	7:00 p.m.	Community Ringers rehearsal
	8:30 p.m.	AA's Open meeting
Wednesdays	4:30 p.m.	F.E.A.S.T.
	7:00 p.m.	Disciple 2, Disciple 3 & Disciple 4
Thursdays	9:00 a.m.	Busy Hands Sewing Group
	9:30 a.m.	Disciple 2
	11:00 a.m.	Stroke Support Group
	6:00 p.m.	Disciple 1
	7:00 p.m.	Youth Worship (grades 7-12)
Saturdays	6:00 p.m.	Current Worship Service
1st & 3rd Sundays	6:00 p.m.	UMKids, FaithWeavers & CLUB 56
1st & 3rd Mondays	7:00 p.m.	Soaring Eagles Bible study
2nd & 4th Mondays	9:30 a.m.	Mom's Circle

Thursday	December 1	7:00 p.m.	Safe Sanctuary Training
Friday	December 2	7:00 p.m.	Off the Streets
Sunday	December 3	7:30 p.m.	"A Merry Carol Christmas"
Tuesday	December 6	12:00 p.m.	Super Seniors
Thursday	December 8	7:00 p.m.	Choir Christmas Party
Saturday	December 10	9:00 a.m.	Breakfast with Santa
Sunday	December 11	5:00 p.m.	Christmas Dinner
		6:00 p.m.	Children's program "The Christmas Puzzle"
Wednesday	December 14	7:00 p.m.	Taize Prayer Service
			Trustees Meeting
Thursday	December 15	7:00 p.m.	Church Conference
Friday	December 16	7:00 p.m.	Off the Streets
Monday	December 19	6:30 p.m.	Ark Council meeting
		7:00 p.m.	Dartball
Friday	December 23	7:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Eve Worship
Saturday	December 24	4:00 p.m.	Family Oriented Christmas Eve Worship
		6:00 p.m.	Current Christmas Eve Worship
		8:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Worship
		11:00 p.m.	Christmas Eve Worship with Communion
Sunday	December 25	8:30 a.m.	Traditional Worship
		10:45 a.m.	Current
		11:00 a.m.	Traditional Worship

DECEMBER SCHEDULE

ACOLYTES - Contact Vicki Monaco - 724-744-0283

Dec. 4	8:30	Adam Power & Michael Yakubisin	11:00	Luke Fleming & Jared Wright
Dec. 11	8:30	Luke Fabac & Daniel Coughenour	11:00	Annamarie Miller & Sydney Fleming
Dec. 18	8:30	Zoe Moser & Marissa Fabac	11:00	Jared Wright & Zachary Tusay
Dec. 25	8:30	Stephanie Hilderhoff & Natasha Popovich	11:00	Vivian Somes & Jonathan French

SUNDAY GREETERS - Contact Sandy Wessel - 724-744-3754

Dec. 4	8:30	Barbara and Charles Altman & James McMahan Family
	11:00	Vicki and Jeff Monaco & Carrie and Brian Botkin
Dec. 11	8:30	Jean and Frank Antoline & Jim Ciongoli Family
	11:00	June and John Forringer & Linda and Bill Blank
Dec. 18	8:30	Toni and Don Buddemeyer & Lee Ann and Jamie Grace
	11:00	Pam and Neil French & Peg and Michael Haraczy
Dec. 23	7:00	Tammy and Chris Fleming & Colleen and Jim Bosco
Dec. 24 (MMR)	8:00	Cindy and Ron Hawranko & Kelly Brown
Dec. 24 (Sanctuary)	11:00	Jim and Sybil Kunkelmann & Sherry and Scott Mains
Dec. 25	8:30	Pat and Jim Blosat & Nancy and Martin Mlakar
	11:00	Judy and Jerry Nedley

LITURGISTS - Contact Judy Newport - 724-744-4995

Dec. 4	8:30	Mackenzie McClain
	11:00	
Dec. 11	8:30	Larry Brammell
	11:00	
Dec. 18	8:30	
	11:00	
Dec. 25	8:30	
	11:00	



Alan & Elena Kipple
101 Rocko Drive
Myrtle Beach SC 25579

Kevin Yeagers
354 Crystal Springs Road
Bradfordwoods PA 15015

Valerie Halloran
103 Fairview Drive
Irwin PA 15642

John & Liz Gnecco
208 Plantation Drive
Greensburg, PA 15601

Remove

Wendy McCauley - death
Thelma Kurz - death



Wednesday Feast Menu

December 7

Beef Tips & Noodles

December 14

Soup & Salad

December 21

Pasta

December 28

Pizza & Salad



Consecration Weekend a Wonderful, Blessed Time

On November 5 & 6 we celebrated our Consecration Weekend. Our theme “**stewardship...A Matter of the Heart**” was based on Jesus’ teaching in Luke 12:34; “*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*”. It was such a joy and blessing to have former pastor Jim Patterson (and Bonnie and some of the family) back with us to lead the weekend. Jim preached at Saturday night “Current” and again on Sunday morning at both 8:30am and 11:00am, and something brand new was achieved when Jim’s 11am sermon was televised in the MMR to the Sunday “Current” service where Jim was seen in near realtime on the big screens. (Thanks to Dave O’Block and the Audio/Visual Team)

The response in “Time and Talent” cards and in the “Estimate of Giving” cards has been outstanding. The numbers are not finalized yet, as cards continue to come in from those who could not be with us that weekend. To date there are 276 cards returned with promises of areas of service in our life and ministry. Many names are first time responders and we hold out the real promise that the continuing submissions may push the number of “Time & Talent” cards to a record level. If you have not returned a card you are invited to do so. They may be found in the church office, the Welcome Center in the sanctuary and at the Welcome table in the MMR.

To date 294 “Estimate of Giving” cards are in and the promises reflected in those cards are humbling and hope-filled. The formula to interpret the cards is somewhat complex but in the most simple terms, the promised giving to Community United Methodist Church for 2012 is projected to be up by 19%. Praise God! And more cards are being returned every day and this number will likely grow. If you have not returned a card, you are still most welcome to do so. Cards were mailed to members homes but if you did not receive one, they are available at the church office or call the office (724-744-3413) to have one sent to you.

The Celebration Dinner was wonderful. The food was delicious (thank you Kendra & crew), the crowd huge (about 400), the homemade pie was scrumptious and to top it all off we had a little time to reflect on our first 50 years and to glance ahead to the future. Long-time member Larry Brammell shared recollections of the early days of Community Church and of Dr. Hogg’s leadership. Rev. Jim Patterson again greeted the appreciative crowd. Then Rev. Chris Livermore and Rev. Ron Geisler, both former Associate Pastors here, reflected on the vital ministries of CUMC both in their days here and now and as envisioned for the future. Rev. David Janz sent well wishes and Rev. Dale Smith sent a beautiful letter, which is reprinted in its entirety on page 18. Be sure to read it.

It was a truly blessed day! Thanks to all who made it so, to all who participated, and most of all to our Lord Jesus Christ who invites us all into his kingdom, both now and for life everlasting.

Playgroup

Some favorite activities at Playgroup lately are finger painting, riding bikes and playing in the gym. We made paper turkeys, noodle necklaces, and Native American headbands during November. Soon we will be learning Christmas songs. Our last day before the Christmas break will be Thursday, December 22nd. We will resume on Tuesday, January 3rd. Have a joyful Christmas!

Preschool

Preschool topics for November included bears, harvest day, opposites and Thanksgiving. To celebrate Thanksgiving we held a feast - preschool style. Songs and finger plays were performed for the parents and caregivers. Our feast included chicken nuggets, cornbread, pumpkin pie and apple juice. Our last day before the Christmas break will be Wednesday, December 21st. Monday, January 2nd will be an Ark Preschool In-Service Day. Preschool will resume on Wednesday, January 4th. We wish all of you a blessed holiday season!

Noah’s Kids

Merry Christmas everyone! November seemed to fly by so quickly! Now we are looking forward to Christmas. We will be celebrating beginning with collecting money and shopping for Holiday Helping Hands. Then it will be time to collect food for the food bank. Finally, we will celebrate with special treats and a Christmas party. Though we will be busy Jesus’ birth will always be the center of all our celebrations and we hope it will be yours too! We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Blessed Healthy New Year!

Dear John, Rich, members of the staff, members and friends,

I have written to you on numerous occasions, and as you might suspect, this is one of those occasions when I find myself overwhelmed with a flood of memories and shared experiences which have shaped my life and ministry to this day. There are times when I feel my eyes welling up with tears as I read through letters, cards, minutes, reports and files of documents and as I leaf through the pages of our Pictorial Directories, remembering where we have been, what we have shared, and what God has accomplished through willing and obedient servants. As we have studied and reviewed the letters of the New Testament, I have always appreciated the gratitude which the Apostle Paul expressed for his good friends in the Body of Christ. These were good friends who had encouraged and supported him, partners and colleagues in ministry, people who had touched his life and influenced his faith in great and wonderful ways. When Paul wrote to the Philippian Christians he said, "I thank my God every time I remember you. . ."(1:3). As I have cited this verse on many occasions, I often say, "I thank my God for everything I am able to remember about you". These words certainly express our sentiment for you today.

My thoughts and cherished memories take me back to the fall of 1986 when Bishop George Bashore and my colleagues on the Cabinet lifted my name and appointed me as the next lead pastor of the Harrison City Community United Methodist Church. They said that they were sending me there to build the church for greater and expanding ministries. I would like to say that I was absolutely thrilled with the idea, but what I was really feeling was a kind of uneasiness which you might say was "fear and trembling". I had always believed that it was not me, but that it was really God in Christ, through the power of God's Holy Spirit at work in me that accomplished anything. I'm sure that we lived this out and continue to live this out every day in unbelievable ways here at Community Church.

Serving as one of your pastors during those nine years afforded me the opportunity of working with a long-range planning task force, as well as a very skilled, creative and perceptive building committee, in planning, designing, building and financing a major building addition which would enhance the continuing growth of ministry and service to the community. Many of the dreams which I had for ministry are now actually happening here at Community Church. The number of people involved or who have been involved in Discipleship Bible Study is probably five to six times larger than before. As a pilgrim myself, I have been very excited to see so many participating and actively involved in The Walk to Emmaus. The work teams who have traveled to various places in the country and the world, including Africa continue to be a beautiful expression of God's compassionate love and amazing grace to people who are homeless, hungry and hurting. I will always be grateful for the music and drama ministry, and my first exposure to regular contemporary worship, which you now call Current worship. The Ark Ministries, Helping Hands, the joyful Food Distributions, Stephen's Ministries to enlarge the scope of pastoral care, and now even a full-time chef or Director of Food Ministries, Christ-centered love and compassionate ministries continue to grow at Community Church.

We are sorry that we cannot join you in this Consecration Celebration and the 50th Anniversary of Ministry, but you will always be in our hearts and minds as we remember your kindness, generosity, and the warmth of your love. We will treasure our friendship with you always.

With love in Christ,
Dale and Mary Alice Smith



"A Merry Carol Christmas" Please reserve Sunday night, December 4th at 7:00 p.m. on your calendar!!! The musical groups of CUMC will be performing a night of merry Christmas music for your family enjoyment. Beautiful songs of Christmas and a sing-a-long will get you in the spirit of Christmas and the Reason for the Season. Come and enjoy an evening of entertainment. For more information, please contact Linda Lorenz.

Breakfast with Santa: Have you been naughty or nice? Don't miss the chance to eat with old St. Nick and his better half, Mrs. Claus Saturday, December 10 from 9:00 am - 11:00 am in the MMR. There is no cost to join in this merry morning, but it is asked that everyone bring a donation for Community Church's food bank.

Christmas Dinner and Children's Program - You are invited to our annual Christmas dinner and children's program on Sunday, December 11th at 5:00 p.m. in the Multi-Ministry room. The men will be cooking and serving a delicious ham dinner and this will be followed by the children's program "The Christmas Puzzle". Please make reservations by calling the church office or using the tear-off in our weekly worship folders. Reservations due by December 4th.

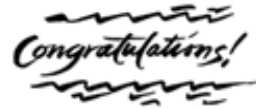
Fruit Baskets - The Sunday School would like to invite the congregation to participate in collecting fruit for fruit baskets for the shut-ins. We will be collecting the fruit on December 10th and 11th. There will be boxes located throughout the church to place the fruit in. The baskets will be assembled on Monday, December 12th at 9:00 a.m. We are in need of volunteers to help assemble the baskets. If you are able to volunteer or have any questions, please contact Polly Geiger at 724-864-4531.

Christmas Family Outreach - A large "THANK YOU" to all of you wonderful people who helped in many ways with the thanksgiving Family Outreach. The Outreach program is now moving into the Christmas Season. We are again looking for volunteers to shop for and deliver groceries to families in our community. Please understand, all we ask is your time, our church provides the rest. The sign up sheets are located on the table at the church entrance and on the bulletin board by the lower entrance. The distribution of the names and groceries will be Thursday, December 15th between 6 and 7 p.m. Any questions please contact the church office, 724-744-3413 or Jim & Sybil Kunkelmann at 724-515-5499. May your blessings be abundant this Christmas Season!



We extend our Christian love and sympathy to the following persons who have lost loved ones:

- ◇ Joe and Bev Yakubisin & family on the death of Joe's father Joseph Yakubisin
- ◇ Jon McCauley (husband), Sandy Wessel (mother), Kelly & Joe DiRemigio (sister) on the death of Wendy McCauley
- ◇ Vanessa and Rick Baugh & family on the death of Vanessa's mother, Rosemont Solomon
- ◇ Pam Ramsey & family on the death of Pam's sister, Susie
- ◇ Patty, Sue and Jay Wright & family on the death of Patty's mother and Jay's grandmother, Helen Kinzey
- ◇ John and Julie Harvison, Joanne Harvison, Linda and John Kotok and family on the death of Thelma Kurz



Births

Congratulations to Greg and Sarah Stakor on the birth of their daughter, Rebecca Katherine. Proud grandparents are Doreen and Mark Stakor

Baptisms

Congratulations to the following families who had their children baptized recently:

- Sean and Elizabeth Benjamin - daughter Genevieve Kay
- Scott and Danielle Lang - son, Mason Theodore
- Brice and Lynda Baker - son, Zachary Austin. Proud grandparents are Dwight and Flo Willaman
- John and Jennifer Wally - son Jacob Matthew
- Andrew and Deeann Polakovsky - daughter Heidi Ann

Weddings

Best wishes for a long and blessed marriage to the following couples:

- Jason Deramo and Julie Santore on November 5th
- Christopher Werner and Margaret "Maggie" Jackson on November 11th
- John Mazzone and Heidi Ellis on November 12th



A Merry Carol Christmas

December 4th - 7:30 p.m. - Sanctuary

Christmas Dinner & Children's Program

December 11th - 5:00 p.m. - Multi-Ministry Room

Christmas Eve Eve Worship Service

December 23rd - 7:00 - Sanctuary

Christmas Eve Worship Services

December 24th

4:00 p.m. - Children & Family Worship - MMR

6:00 p.m. - Current Worship - MMR

8:00 p.m. - Traditional Worship - MMR

11:00 p.m. - Traditional Worship with Communion - Sanctuary
(No Kids 4 Christ or Toddler Care)

Christmas Day Worship Services

December 25th

8:30 a.m. - Traditional Worship in Sanctuary

10:45 a.m. - Current Worship in Multi-Ministry Room

11:00 a.m. - Traditional Worship in Sanctuary

(No Sunday School, Kids 4 Christ or Toddler Care)



E-Giving News

Last year our church arranged for people to be able to make their contributions to the church by means of “electronic giving”, or “on-line giving”. Many people have begun to use this convenient tool to offer their tithes and offerings to God’s glory and use through Community United Methodist Church.

It’s easy to sign up. Just go to the church website: www.sharechristwithothers.org and click on the “Community Church Resources” on the left side of the homepage. Then select the “Online Giving” tab. The secure services for E-Giving are provided by Vanco Services, Inc. They are the leading provider for the United Methodist Church in the country. The directions to create an account are simple and quick.

In addition to regular “tithes/offerings”, you may designate offerings for special giving. Options permit giving to “2nd Mile”, “Family Outreach”, “Missions”, “Other”, and seasonal offering, like “Easter Offering”.

If you have not considered E-Giving, why not check out the website? If you pay most of your other bills on-line, as more and more people do, consider this easy way to contribute to Community Church.

You will notice a new designation line has been added to your offering envelopes, “E-Giving”. This provides a way to have an envelope to place in the offering, to participate in this symbolic act of giving, even though your offering is being handled electronically. We are also producing an “E-Giving” card that will be available at the church to permit people who give on-line to opt out of receiving envelopes and still have a way to place a symbolic gift in the offering.

“E-Giving” is here, take a look and see if it works for you.

*A special “Thank You” to all who helped with the funeral dinners for Wendy (Wessel)McCauley and Thelma Kurz. You may have either baked a cake, helped in the kitchen, served, set up or cleaned up. Each of you are so appreciated and the fellowship we have is wonderful. May God bless and watch over each of you always.
Loves and Hugs, Carolyn Evans*

Thank you so much for all the prayers and concerns during my recent illness. A special thanks to the Pastors for their visits. ~ Ruth Kunkle

Church Conference - Our annual church conference will be held on Thursday, December 15th at 7:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall. It is an open meeting and everyone is invited to attend.

United Methodist Women On Sunday November 20th we had the honor of presenting Dwight and Flo Willaman with Mission Awards. Dwight and Flo have both been very involved with the inner working of the church since they became members. Dwight has served on many committees and chaired the Staff Parish Relations Committee, Disciple Group - teaching and counting team - just to mention a few. Flo has been teaching Disciple and was on the counting team as well - that was until the recording treasurer decided to retire. Flo took on that position about 10 years ago and has put in many hours of her time. Both Dwight and Flo have given much of their time and talents to Community United Methodist Church. “Thank You”

Off The Streets - Off the Streets is a fun evening of fun and fellowship for all Middle School and High School students. We play basketball, volleyball, dodge ball, dance party, etc. Snacks are also provided. Join us in the MMR and bring friends! It is on Fridays from 7:00p.m.-9:30p.m. Upcoming dates are December 2nd and December 16th.

Divorce Care - A new small group will begin meeting on January 10th and continue until April 3rd from 7 p.m.-9 p.m. Go to our website at www.ShareChristWithOthers.org or call the church office for registration information.

Camp Allegheny - January 20-22, 2012 - Camp Allegheny is an exciting spiritual weekend for our youth! It will take place January 20 - 22, 2012 and is for youth in 3rd through 12th grade. With all of the youth that are sure to register, we will need plenty of volunteers!! Registration is available online at the following links: Volunteer registration - <http://www.planetReg.com/E1124424593> or Camper registration - <http://www.planetReg.com/E1116493093>. Look for manual registration forms the weekend of December 3rd/4th after all services. Cost for camper = \$55.00 while the cost for volunteer = \$30. Please contact Frank Audia at faudi@communityumc.info or Nancy Moser at namoser@windstream.net should you have any questions.

Coming this Winter - Stay tuned for more information about upcoming Bible Studies and Small groups beginning in January 2012. Check the website www.ShareChristWithOthers.org for details soon. Some groups are: DivorceCare, GriefShare, Homebuilders for Young Couples, Young Singles, Women and Exercise. Contact Elizabeth Somes at esomes@communityumc.info for more information.

Good Grief Corner

“Understanding Grief”

God’s Devotional

God’s Daily Answer



Spotlight on a Stephen Minister

Merry Christmas everyone! My name is Lori Madeira and I have been involved with Stephen Ministry since the fall of 2007. My husband Kip and I used to live in Charlotte, NC and that's where I was first asked to join Stephen Ministry.

Why did I feel called to be a part of this ministry? I went through a very difficult time back in the late summer of 2002. I began to feel sick. I had heartburn, couldn't eat, had strange headaches, numbness in my right leg and arm, and a tingling sensation in my chest, neck and chin. My first thought was, "I'm having a heart attack!" I was feeling so bad and so blue; I desperately wanted to see a doctor. The doctor I usually saw wasn't in the day I went, so I reluctantly saw another physician at the practice. He said it sounded like I had some kind of stomach issue and I should get an upper G.I. I went home, not feeling the diagnosis was correct. I called back to get an appointment with my regular doctor. She said she didn't feel an upper G.I. was necessary, but ordered blood work instead. After repeated jabs with a needle and probably six trips to the doctor in two weeks, she said to me, "There is nothing physically wrong with you. I think you have anxiety and panic disorder." Huh? Me? No way. I've got it all together. I'm not crazy! But after the doctor explained further, it all began to make sense. My doctor prescribed medication for me and told me to get counseling. I finally felt relieved that I knew what was wrong.

During this time, I experienced the love of God in a way I had never known before. We had been attending Harrison UMC in Pineville, NC off and on, but not on a regular basis. After my diagnosis, I decided to meet with one of the associate pastors, Gayle Montgomery, to discuss my circumstances and she said, "Oh honey, God has something big in store for you!" She said all this with a big smile and I wondered how she could be so joyous when I thought I was going crazy. But after becoming a member of the church and joining the small group "Alpha", God became so much more real to me. I was helped through a difficult time by people who opened their hearts to me and showed me the love of Jesus.

I felt the call to do something to help others who were going through difficulties as well. I was approached by a staff member of the church asking if I would be willing to participate in Stephen Ministry. I gladly said yes! The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, "All praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the source of every mercy and the God who comforts us. He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us." (NLT) I was given comfort by God through wonderful Christian friends, and I felt God wanted to use me to do the same.

If you are hurting, tired, depressed, lonely, overwhelmed, and need someone to walk with you through your trials, won't you consider a Stephen Minister? They won't fix what's broken, but they will be present with you, pray with you and be the hands and feet of Jesus when you need someone to care. It's free, it's confidential, and you will be blessed.

What does your Friendliness Meter Read?

By Elizabeth Somes

"A friendly smile makes you happy, and good news makes you feel strong" [Proverbs 15:30](#) (CEV)

In our New Member CLASS 101 we ask participants what attracted them to CUMC. Often one of the responses is that the people are friendly. Being "friendly" is one factor that draws individuals to join CUMC *but being a "friend" is what will cause them to stay.*

Do you consider yourself "friendly"? Research shows that most folks—even the most grouching among us—consider themselves friendly. A better question might be "are you a "friend" to others?" Do you have personal relationships with others in the church? Studies suggest that a person needs at least six friends in a church to feel a sense of belonging and to become involved.

In the booklet [Friend-O-Nomics](#) 750 people were asked, "What's the most important factor that makes a place friendly?" Here is a summary of the top-five characteristics and a few ideas for practicing them –

Belonging: "The number 1 quality of a friendly place is that it 'makes me feel like I belong'." This not only includes visitors but those who have been around for a while. Some ways to feel you belong include; sharing meals together such as FEAST, connecting with others in small groups and serving in ministry together.

Comfort: A warm and inviting environment includes some physical elements such as signs and comfortable seating but, far more significant is making people feel important. Using someone's name, expressing genuine interest in them, making eye contact and offering to walk through the building with a person who doesn't know where to go are some ways to make people feel comfortable. Never make judgments about a person's appearance.

Relaxed Fit: Many people who come to CUMC haven't been to church in a long time or grew up in different faith traditions. Special events that are held outside the traditional church setting are great ways for people to "warm up" and feel at ease. Utilizing technology, social media and common language are other ways to help people feel relaxed. Sharing a good laugh is perhaps the best way of all to help people relax.

Talk to Me: Small talk is the place to start ... "Hi. I noticed your shirt has the ___ logo. Do you work there? Did you go there to school? etc.?" or "I couldn't help but overhear you went to the movies last night. How was it?" Meaningful conversations can grow out of small talk and relationships grow out of conversations and relationships grow into the church.

Smiles: Smiles are contagious, they make you look and feel better and can be the single factor in welcoming another. Smiles are not just for the faces of greeters and leaders they are for everyone who has breath and a God who gives them life!

If you are interested in reading more in this little booklet, please contact Elizabeth Somes at esomes@coimmunityumc.info or 724-744-3413 ext. 204 for a copy.

SPECIAL TO CUMC -- Sunday mornings after the 10:45am Current and 11:00am Traditional service exiting the parking lot on to Route 130 can be a bit stressful with so many cars trying to leave at one time. Why not **increase your Friendliness rating by hanging out 5-10 minutes after the service ... talk to some folks you don't know, pray with a friend, help clean up, laugh a little, and don't forget to SMILE! ***

SAVIOR ORNAMENT


This Christmas, celebrate Jesus' birthday by making this keepsake ornament.

What you need:


- Wooden clothespin with round end
- Black permanent marker
- White cloth or felt
- Small wooden star (available at craft stores)
- Yellow paint
- Paintbrush
- Gold glitter (optional)
- Glue gun (and an adult)
- Straw-colored raffia (available at craft stores)
- Ribbon

What you do:

1. On the clothespin's round knob, draw two dots for eyes.
2. Wrap the white cloth around the clothespin, like a swaddled baby.
3. Paint the star yellow; add glitter, if desired.
4. With the glue gun and adult supervision, glue the raffia to the bottom inside of the wreath. Then glue the swaddled clothespin atop the raffia and glue the gold star atop the wreath.
5. Tie a ribbon around the top, near the star.
6. Hang the ornament on your Christmas tree or tie it on a gift.



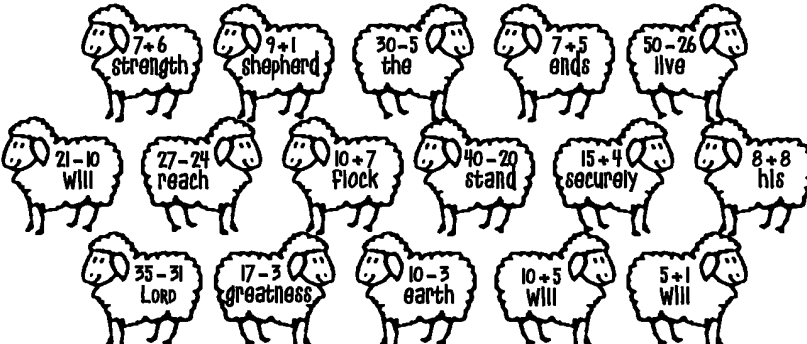
PUZZLE



A PROMISED RULER

Prophets told of Jesus' birth hundreds of years before it happened. Never had a baby's arrival come with such a promise.

Directions: To read what one prophet (Micah 5:4, NIV) said about Jesus, complete the math problems below. Then fill in the words, using the math solutions as your guide.



$7+6$ strength
 $9+1$ shepherd
 $30-5$ the
 $7+5$ ends
 $50-26$ live
 $21-10$ will
 $27-24$ reach
 $10+7$ flock
 $40-20$ stand
 $15+4$ securely
 $8+8$ his
 $35-31$ LORD
 $17-3$ greatness
 $10-3$ earth
 $10+5$ will
 $5+1$ will

"He 15 and 20 his 10 17
 in the 13 of the 4 And they 11 24
19, for then 16 14 6
3 to the 12 of 25 7."

MICAH 5:4, NIV

Answers: "He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth." Micah 5:4, NIV

Community Church Testament Players presents...

THE Christmas PUZZLE

The Children's Christmas Program
 Sunday, December 11th, 2011
 Family-Style Dinner at 5PM
 Program at 6PM

The setting is grandma's living room. Four cousins are snowed in and the power is out: no video games, no TV, no movies, no cell phones, and the list goes on...a total bummer! And so begins *The Christmas Puzzle*. The cousins discover God's picture perfect plan as they struggle to complete a jigsaw puzzle with nothing but clues from the Bible to guide them.

