

News of Bethany

Bethany Presbyterian Church
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A Newsletter of Bethany Presbyterian Church

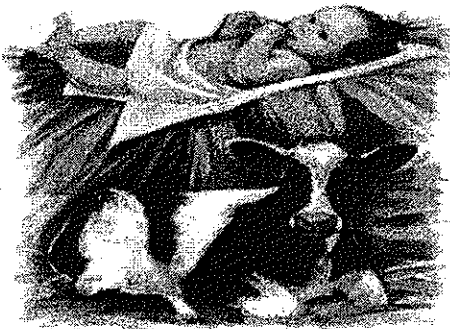
December, 2009

DECEMBER NEWS AND EVENTS

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*How Simply Wrapped,
This Richest Gift
Readings and Prayers
for Gift-Opening*



How simply wrapped, this richest Gift, From Heav'n to earth come down: In swaddle lain upon the hay, Not even tinsel for a crown. No bow adores the present Lord Nor ribbons wrap him tight: But hugged in warmest mothers' love Against the chill of Beth'lem's night. This is the richest Gift of God; Salvation's promise won! In swaddle lain upon the hay; This present Lord: Gods only son.

Before Gift Opening

Heavenly Father,

So simply wrapped, your richest Gift was once bestowed to humankind. In these gifts, some simply wrapped, some sumptuous to behold, let us see reflected the strong and saving love once given to us in Bethlehem.

In Christ our Savior's name. Amen

After Gift-Opening

Lord Jesus Christ

In your birth we see God's richest gift come down-it is the richest of heaven itself. As our celebration draws to a close, come with us, Lord Jesus. Keep us mindful that the richness of your presence is ever with us. Bless us to be a blessing.

We offer you are thanks and praise

This Richest Gift

And it come to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that the world should be taxed. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to be taxed every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first born son, and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

-Luke 2:1-7

OUR MISSION

Bethany Presbyterian Church is a church making an impact on the lives of all people through the love of Jesus Christ.



A Listening Ear Hears

Friends, I would like to share with you a story. It is a Bethany story. You may have heard it or not, but it is our story. Over the past 115 years Bethany has had much to be thankful for. Since the Sabbath class of First Presbyterian Church decided to press for a Mission School in the west end in the year 1897, our ancestors of the faith have led us to where we now stand.

These leaders of what came to be Bethany Presbyterian Church, saw the importance of learning about the faith and sharing that faith with others, particularly our children and youth. These ideals have never faltered at Bethany and what I have come to believe is indeed the calling God shared with our ancestors of the faith. As we look back over our 106 years as a chartered congregation and the 9 years prior to that, we can see what can happen when people make faith-filled decisions in their lives.

I have seen what an open heart can do while working with the members of Bethany, especially our elders and deacons. I have always believed that it is better to leave positions opened than to fill positions with persons that cannot fulfill all that the position needs. Churches need leaders that will take seriously the call to be the spiritual leaders of the Church.

Our elders are not merely there to protect our building, to maintain our programs and to make sure there is someone in the pulpit to preach and teach. Our elders are called to be open to the nudging of the Holy Spirit, to be guided by Scripture and to discern the direction we are to go as a church. As a pastor, I am called to lead but not control, to model a mature prayer life and to be in conversation with our leaders as they wrestle with difficult issues in the church.

I am so proud of our leaders. Our Session has wrestled with questions of budget and finance in the fall of 2008 and we have had a good year financially, though of course we are not walking on easy street by any means. They listen to God's guidance and raise issues that need addressing, wrestle with them, pray about them and take a risk of faith.

Whether it was stepping out and beginning a relationship with a church coach, not knowing where it may lead or being willing to ask questions about the spiritual needs of the youth, our elders continually lead with open hearts and lead with integrity. I can not be more proud of Bethany.

Our Deacons also have stepped out in faith. They are a wonderful example of persons who minister with compassion. During the last year they have supported one another as well as those who are homebound or in need of support.

Every deacon has at least 2-3 persons they check in with at least monthly and support as needed. They operate our food distribution program to the Council of Churches, the blood replenishment program, card ministry, and special programs like Thanksgiving baskets and Poinsettia and Tulip ministry to shut-ins. We have a church that cares.

Recently I have noticed many have concerns upon their hearts. We are concerned about a decline in worship attendance due to illness, age and death. We are concerned about the decline in our economy. We are concerned about possible changes in health care. We are concerned about illness, the H1N1 virus and Flu virus. We feel overwhelmed and uncertain about our future and we wonder what Bethany will look like and be like in the future.

Yet in the midst of all these uncertainties, there is hope. We can see the Lord Jesus working in us and through us. We can see God nudging us in how we are to enact our God-directed vision.

Revelation 21 says: *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End."*

making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End."

We have a God that is present with us in the ministries of Bethany, in our callings from God and in our daily lives. We have God that knows all our concerns that are upon us. The ones we can change and the ones we need to accept. We have a God that knows what Bethany needs to thrive spiritually and numerically. We have a God that calls us to be fluid and move with the movement of the Holy Spirit and the growth we all experience as we mature in our faith and life.

115 years ago a group of folks sensed a vision. Our elders sensed that same vision and have made decisions to move with the wind's breath. When our Elders asked the Bethany Youth what would make worship more meaningful, they didn't know what would happen, what they would say, where that would go. That question was full of openness. It was allowing the spirit to get involved.

From that question and the youth's response something special was being formed. With the blessing of Christian Education and the approval of the Session, our worship possibilities are being opened.

Beginning January 17, 2010, Bethany we return to a two-service Sunday morning schedule. At 9:00 a.m. we will have a Alternative Worship Gathering for Children, Youth and Families. Fellowship Time will be 9:45-10:25 a.m. and at 10:30 a.m. we will take part in traditional worship with the children and youth having a choice of attending Sunday School or staying in Traditional Worship. The Adult Sunday School class will continue to be offered at 9 a.m.

How did we get to this place? We are here because of one of our most successful programs – Vacation Bible School. When we restarted the VBS program it's success led to Totally Awesome Wednesdays spinning off as a monthly children's program, which led to the extending the ages to include youth, which led to including youth in the VBS program the following year, which led to starting the youth group last year, which led to the youth beginning to attend worship this summer, which led to the youth attending Sunday School, part of worship and the youth program every Sunday, which led to asking the vital question: "How can worship be more meaningful?"

This new service would never have been a possibility if our elders would have not asked that question – *What would make worship more meaningful for you?* The youth wouldn't have vocalized the issue.

God has been nudging our leaders to reach out to our children, youth and their families, making Bethany Church a place where our families can grow spiritually and learn how to be the Church in the world.

We each have special memories of church from our childhood, memories that are as clear today as when they first happened. But we also know that much of what is meaningful to us isn't always meaningful to others. We each must find what tomorrow means for us.

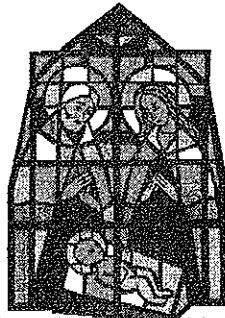
What does tomorrow mean for you? What does this Advent time mean for you as you reflect upon the promises made in that little babe born over 2000 years ago far away from where we now sit? May you find yourself in the Bethany story and find how God is continuing to call you as God works in each of us to fulfill God's plan for the world.

May you feel the richness of Christmas this year in your life and in your soul.

Merry Christmas,



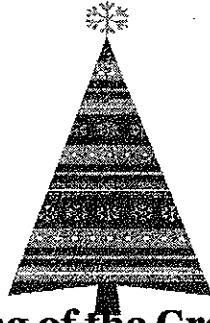
The Rev. Laura C. Kelsey



Advent and Christmas Worship Schedule

- November 29, 2009** **1st Sunday of Advent Worship @ 10:30 a.m.**
Message: *Embracing the Calm of God in the midst of the Storms of Life*
Scripture: Luke 21:25-36
Lighting of the Advent Wreath: *The Session*
- December 6, 2009** **2nd Sunday of Advent Worship @ 10:30 a.m.**
Message: *Blessings and Prophecy*
Scripture: Luke 1:68-79
Lighting of the Advent Wreath: *The Deacons*
- December 13, 2009** **3rd Sunday of Advent Worship @ 10:30 a.m.**
Message: *Bethlehem on Trial – A Play*
Scripture: Zephaniah 3:14-20; Luke 3:7-18
Special Focus: Christmas Play
Lighting of the Advent Wreath: *The Christian Education Ministry*
- December 20, 2009** **4th Sunday of Advent Worship @ 10:30 a.m.**
Message: *Image-Breakers*
Scripture: Luke 1:39-55
Special Focus: Joy Offering Sunday
Lighting of the Advent Wreath: *Sharing and Caring through Prayer*
- December 24, 2009** **Christmas Eve @ 7 p.m.**
Message: *Journey to Bethlehem*
Scripture: Luke 2:1-20; Titus 2:11-14
Special Focus: A Christmas Carol Communion and Candlelighting Service
Lighting of the Advent Wreath: *The Music Ministry*
- Christmas Eve @ 11 p.m.**
Message: *One Small Light – An Original Christmas Story by Karen McIntyre*
Scripture: Isaiah 9:2-7; Luke 2:1-20
Special Focus: A Christmas Carol Communion and Candlelighting Service
Lighting of the Advent Wreath: Rev. Laura C. Kelsey
- December 27, 2009** **1st Sunday after Christmas Worship @ 10:30 p.m.**
Guest Preacher: Rev. Charlie Gross
Message: *What Should We Wear?*

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS EVENT SCHEDULE



November 28, 2009

Hanging of the Greens beginning @ 9 a.m.

We will be decorating the Church for Christmas on Saturday, November 28th. This is always a fun time of working together and fellowshiping with one another. We hope to see you at Bethany to aid in putting up and decorating the Christmas Trees, hanging wreaths and garland and enjoying this time together.

December 6, 2009

Advent Dinner @ 5 p.m.

A special time of sharing a potluck meal, celebrating the coming birth of Jesus Christ, and singing Christmas Carols and listening to special music of the season.

December 13, 2009

Christmas Cookie Sale @ 12-4 p.m.

The Fundraising Team is offering a Christmas Cookie Sale to benefit the Sanctuary Carpet Fund. We encourage our bakers to assist with the making of these wonderful homemade cookies and those who are not bakers to donate money for supplies and/or come to the sale to purchase cookies for your home or to give away at Christmastime.

December 20, 2009

Progressive Dinner for All @ 4 p.m.

There will be a All-Church Progressive Dinner on Dec. 20th. We will meet at the church at 4 p.m. and return around 8 p.m. Attendees will have appetizers at one house, the main course at a different house, then Christmas Caroling at local Assisted Living locations with Dessert following.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION



HAPPY BIRTHDAY, *Jesus!*

TOTALLY AWESOME WEDNESDAY
CHRISTMAS PARTY @ DONEGAL
HALL

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 9 6-8 P.M.

COME AND SING HAPPY BIRTHDAY
TO JESUS WITH US!

JUST A REMINDER: TOTALLY
AWESOME WEDNESDAY IS OUR
MONTHLY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN
AGE 3 THROUGH 12TH GRADE YOUTH.
THE EVENING
INCLUDES DINNER, BIBLE STORY,
CRAFTS, AND GAMES!

JUST A REMINDER ON
JANUARY 17, 2010 THE
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
TIME WILL BE
TOGETHER WITH THE
10:30 SERVICE.

ALL CHILDREN AND YOUTH ARE
INVITED TO PARTICIPATE
IN THIS YEAR'S CHRISTMAS PLAY.
"BETHLEHEM ON TRIAL"
DECEMBER 13, 2009 @ 10:30 WORSHIP.
IF YOUR CHILD/YOUTH ARE
INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT
PASTOR LAURA AT THE CHURCH
OFFICE @ 717-393-2690 OR ON HER
CELL @ 717-490-4818

YOU ARE INVITED....

Give added meaning to the Advent Season by joining the Adult Sunday School class each Sunday at 9:00am in the parlor. Our theme: "Come Home for Christmas". The picture of being home for Christmas touches a soul longing within each of us to follow the path that leads to the manger of Bethlehem-to find our way home to the love of God.



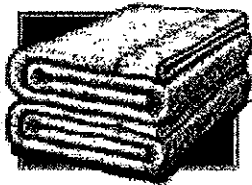
Come home for Christmas

BETHANY MISSION CORNER

SESSION MISSION COMMITTEE

I am so glad to be able to report that the blanket appeal for refugees in the county has been a great success. To date 14 new and good condition used blankets have been delivered to Church World Service. It is a happy thought to realize that 14 individuals or families are now better able to withstand the Pennsylvania winter. Congratulations and thank you to all who donated the blankets.

Christmas will soon be upon us! This year we have two projects underway to assist those less fortunate than ourselves. I'm sure you recall that Session voted to "adopt a family" this year for Christmas. Working with Tabor Services we have undertaken to help a single mom with 2 young daughters to have a joyous holiday. Briefly, the Mom is working part time and is looking for steadier work. The daughters are ages 9 and 5 and according to the Mom would not have any gifts to open at Christmas without our support. You will find the gift suggestions on the "giving tree" in the Narthex. Look carefully because the gift suggestions for our Conestoga senior partners are also there. SO weather you choose to help a senior have a gift or help this family to have a happy Christmas please let us to live our faith in a meaningful way this Advent Season.



GIVING TREE

Share the joy of the season with residents of Conestoga View. This is a long standing tradition at Bethany. We have the opportunity to buy gifts for those who may have few others to help them celebrate Christmas. Ornaments decorated by our Sunday School children, which contain gift ideas for the 25 residents, can found on the tree. Gifts must be returned by Friday, December 18. Be sure the resident's name and room number is on your gift. Thanks for UNdecorating the tree.



JOY OFFERING

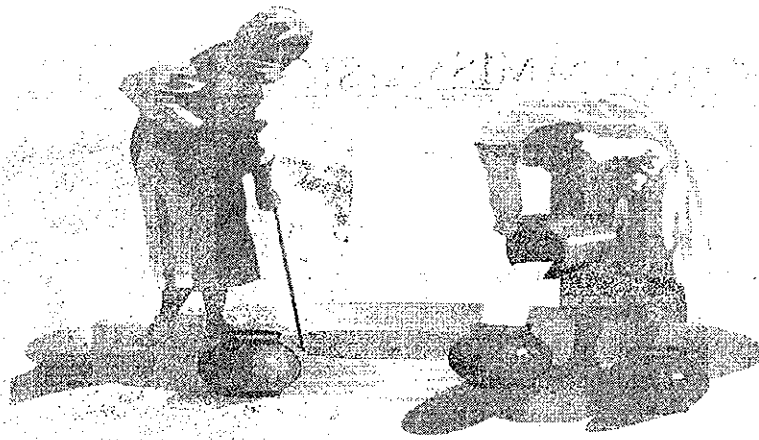
A Presbyterian tradition for almost 70 years, the Christmas Joy offering is one of the 4 special offerings designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A) to provide congregations direct ways of supporting specific causes that help those in need.

Bethany Presbyterian Church will be collecting the Christmas Joy Offering through Christmas Eve. 50% of the receipts to the Christmas Joy Offering are distributed to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs that provide support to retired and active church workers and their spouses and families. The other 50% supports Presbyterian-related racial ethnic education through the National Ministries Division of the General Assembly Council.

Please pray and reflect upon how you would like to respond to God with joy during the Advent season.

Thank you for your continued support of Bethany and its mission opportunities.





Come to The Well
A New Multi-Visual,
Multi-Sesory, Experiential Worship Gathering
Beginning January 17, 2009
Sundays 9 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

Bethany is excited to announce a new worship gathering that will consist of current (and some refurbished) music, multi-visuals, multi-sensory, and worship centers, with a flexible and relaxed atmosphere.

We will meet downstairs in Donegal Hall every week starting January 17th at 9 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Everyone is welcome!

If you want to help in any way, see Pastor Laura. You can call her at 490-4818.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS AND CHANCEL FLOWERS

GREETERS

6 Judy Maier, Elaine Bornstein
13 Brian Ashba, Jo Fleckenstein
20 Barbara McCrary, Jo Fleckenstein
24 TBA
27 Gary Peters,

USHERS

6 Gary Peters, Landon Proffitt
13 Fred Fetterman, Sue Fetterman
20 Bob Schwartz, Jean Schwartz
24 Brian Ashba, Diane Ashba
27 Maurice Benner, Elaine Bornstein

LITURGISTS

6 TBA
13 Judy Maier
20 Lori Pickell
24 TBA
27 Doug Smith

DECEMBER CHANCEL FLOWERS

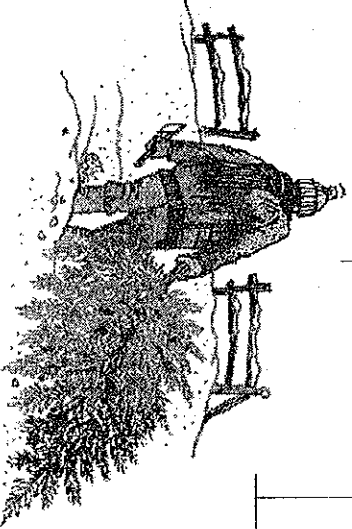
6 Fred and Joanne Geiger
13 Betty Irwin
20 Poinsettia Sunday
24 M. Maxwell Smith
27 M. Maxwell Smith

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

12/01 Mrs. Betty Gingrich
12/12 Mr. Donald Murray
12/20 Ms. Lisa Oster
12/25 Mr. Douglas Smith

12/26 Mrs. Anne Trach
12/27 Mrs. Betty Gehman
12/27 Mr. Robert S. Walker
12/30 Ms. Kelly Rine

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
9:00am Bethany Sunday School 10:30am Bethany Sunday Worship 11:30am Bethany Fellowship 2:00pm Oromoo Worship 4:00pm Oromoo Fellowship 5:00pm Advent Dinner	6:45pm Boy Scouts 7:00pm Cub Scouts	7:00pm Session	7:00pm Choir 8:00pm AlAnon	6:30pm Sharing and Caring through Prayer 7:30 pm A.A Study Group	7:00pm AlAnon	8:00am Men's Breakfast
6 9:00am Bethany Sunday School 10:30am Bethany Sunday Worship 11:30am Bethany Fellowship 2:00pm Oromoo Fellowship 4:00pm Oromoo Fellowship 5:00pm Advent Dinner	6:45pm Boy Scouts 7:00pm Cub Scouts 7:00pm Deacons	7:00p.m. District Round Table	6:00pm TAW 7:00pm Choir 8:00pm AlAnon	8:00am Oromoo Session 7:30 pm A.A Study Group	7:00pm AlAnon Troop 4 Campout	12 12:00pm Oromoo Bible Study 12:00pm Christmas Cookie Sale
13 9:00am Bethany Sunday School 10:30am Bethany Sunday Worship 11:30am Bethany Fellowship 2:00pm Oromoo Fellowship 4:00pm Oromoo Fellowship 5:00pm Youth Group	6:45pm Boy Scouts 7:00pm Pack Committee Meeting 7:00 pm Deacons	7:00pm Holiday Pack meeting	7:00pm Choir 8:00pm AlAnon	7:00pm Christian Ed 7:30pm A.A Study Group	7:00pm AlAnon	19 5:30pm White Deer Run
20 9:00am Bethany Sunday School 10:30am Bethany Sunday Worship 11:30am Bethany Fellowship 2:00pm Oromoo Fellowship 4:00pm Oromoo Fellowship 4-8pm Progressive Dinner Troop 4 Campout	1:00pm PW Bible Study 6:00pm Boy Scouts Dinner/party			Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion Services 7:00pm & 11:00pm	Merry Christmas Office Closed	26 12:00pm Oromoo Bible Study
27 9:00am Bethany Sunday School 10:30am Bethany Sunday Worship 11:30am Bethany Fellowship 2:00pm Oromoo Fellowship 4:00pm Oromoo Fellowship	6:00pm Patrol Leaders Meeting			New Year's Eve		



December 2009

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS FROM NOVEMBER 3, 2009

Clerks Report: Larry J. Doyle

The Clerk presented for approval the minutes of the regular scheduled Session dated October 6, 2009.

The Clerk Read a request for a Letter of Transfer from the First Presbyterian Church on Orange Street dated October 16, 2009 for member Thomas K. Paul who joined on October 11, 2009.

The clerk read a letter from Rosanna Creasy requesting that her name be removed from the rolls of Bethany Presbyterian Church. She has recently moved to Woodcrest Villa and she will attend the worship service. Also the services are available on closed circuit TV.

The Clerk read a letter from Rev. Scott Fisher, Chairperson, Work & Witness Dept., regarding the 2010 Mission Support Commitment. Bethany will not pledge any monies to the 2010 Shared Mission Support, but will pledge to direct Mission Support for 2010 for the amount of 1,500.00 directed to the project number for the Oromoo Church.

Pastors Report

Visited all in the hospital and take home communion to Janice Newswanger and John MacAlarney. Visited various members of the congregation.

Presbytery work included the regular Oromoo Commission meeting, Presbytery meeting, Implementation Team and the Administration Dept. and Human Resources Davison for the Presbytery.

Took Part in leadership of the weekly Youth Group program, Totally Awesome Wednesdays, Monthly Youth Activities Night and have attended Deacons, PW, Fundraising Taskforce and the Christian education Committee meetings. Also have taken Basement and Sub Sales.

Met with the founding pastor of a 6 week old Church started called Veritas—an alternative worship experience.

Deacons

Reported the Deacons are concentrating on the upcoming Thanksgiving Baskets. Michele DeBord is shepherding the project and that are well along to meeting their needs.

Mission Committee

The Tabor Services have given us a family to adopt for the holiday presents. The family lives in the city and includes the mother, father and two daughters ages 9 and 5. It is requested that we have two items per member plus regular gifting.

Finance Committee

Elder Peters distributed a copy of the letter from the "City of Lancaster, Office of Mayor J. Richard Gray" requesting Bethany make a donation to the city-lue-of taxes totaling \$4,753.34. This is based on estimated tax bill that would be 14,404.08. No action will be taken on this because of Bethany's finances. As a non-profit we are not required to pay taxes to the city.

Membership Committee

Elder McCrary reported that the cards have been sent out to the visitors that have listed their visitation to Bethany.

Membership Committee

Elder McCrary reported on the slate for Elders and Deacons. Elder: Brian Ashba (1 year), David Schwartz (1 year), and Lori Pickell (3 years). Deacons: Joan Creswell, Jake Sippel, Michelle Atwater and Maurine Smith. Nominating Committer: Sue Paxson, Gary Peters, Sylvia Doyle and Jim Grossman. Financial Reviews Committee: Lori Pickell Michelle Atwater and Paul Siegler all for the year 2010.

Evangelism

The meeting is being held on Thursday and all are invited.

Property

The scout exterior painting project is completed and they did a fine job.

The Church's fire inspection is completed and we passed. The only exception is the fire doors should be closed at all times.

The carpet fund has one-third of its needs to date.

Old Business:

Elder Ashba reported the Christian Ed. Committee has met with the youth of the church to discuss their needs in the worship service. It was determined that a contemporary type service would be more meaningful.

Motion to have an alternative worship service that would run from 9:00am to 9:45 am on Sundays. The worship service would start January 17, 2010. It will be geared to children through high school and families.

New Business

Motion to eliminate the shaking of hands for the greeters and during the passing of the peace for the flu season.

Financials

Income & expenses to date - as of 30-Sept-09			
All Funds			
	Budget	Actual	Difference
Income	144,016.66	155,739.93	11,723.27
	<u>144,016.66</u>	<u>144,432.40</u>	<u>(415.74)</u>
Total			11,397.53
Net Worth:	Operating		9,228.54
	Building/ Music/Memorial		14,746.84
	<u>Total</u>		<u>23,975.38</u>

STEWARDSHIP FOR 2010 AT BETHANY

We want to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Bethany Family for their heartfelt dedication to the 2010 Pledge Program at Bethany.

We know that difficult times are with us; however, our family has continued to step up and show their positive and resilient nature.

I also want to thank those members who helped with stuffing of envelopes in an effort to make the procedure easier for those committed to the process.

They were: Bob and Jean Schwartz, Judy Maier, Maurice Benner, Jennifer Book, Laura Kelsey and my wife, Nancy Peters.

Thanks, again to our Blessed Family.

Gary L. Peters
Stewardship Chairperson

Bethany Presbyterian Church
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Lancaster, PA 17603

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