

# Hope Church

DECEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER



## THIS MONTH WE SPOTLIGHT STEVE & LOIS ANDERSON

Steve & Lois met at the Air Jamaica terminal at JFK airport about 8 years ago. As told by her, she was trying to fast talk her way onto her much-needed vacation flight – without a valid passport – and so she tried not to pay attention to the inviting looks from the not-so-bad-looking guy at the ticket purchase counter. (She says Steve’s version would have had her drooling at him from the moment he joined the line behind her!) Regardless of whose version is more historically accurate, he (appropriately chaperoned by his grandmother) ended up giving her a ride home – all the way from Queens to Brooklyn – after she decided to miss her flight. Back at the airport the next morning, Steve went to see Lois safely off, asking her forgiveness that he couldn’t find an open florist at 8:00am. And the rest is indeed history.

But here is where they claim God’s plan. It turns out that Steve had been a well-known jockey in Jamaica, riding a prize horse for an ex-beau of Lois’ mother. And for many years before this chance encounter in a



## Celebration Worship Services

**Every Sunday Morning**

8:45AM Prayer

**9AM Worship Celebration**

9AM Sunday School  
for all ages

10AM Refreshments &  
Fellowship Time

**10:45AM Worship Celebration**

different county, his picture had occupied the pride spot behind the couch in her living room in Kingston. Talk about long-term planning! They started dating after Lois’ return from vacation and, after a whirlwind courtship resulting in a proposal at her favorite French restaurant on Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, less than a month after their first date. Marriage and Zachary came soon after, followed by their momentous move to Douglassville.

Both Lois and Steve agree that the move was a sea-change, taking them away from norms like the subway and the (building) “super,” and introducing them to strange new realities such as sump-pumps and mulch (neither had ever heard of either thing before!). But there were also positive changes. One of the earliest and best was coming to Hope Church.



According to Lois, she had noted the proximity of the church during the first of their few visits before buying their new home. She hoped and wondered if it would be the close-knit and warm church “home” she had been craving, different than their then-current attendance at the much larger Brooklyn Tabernacle. They both think it has fulfilled all their needs for a church community,

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Kim Simcox, Administrator Email: [Admin@HopeChurchAmity.org](mailto:Admin@HopeChurchAmity.org) Editor: Marie Hacik Email: [besta2@verizon.net](mailto:besta2@verizon.net)

and love their Hope Church family. Lois currently serves as the lead-teacher for the younger Children's Church, and they are always listening for God's calling for other ways they can give back to Him.

Steve works in the produce department at the Giant supermarket in Royersford, and Lois is a paralegal and the contracts administrator for a biopharmaceutical company in Exton. Steve's hobbies are taking care of "his" grass and taking frequent "union breaks" to chat with his next door neighbor. Lois fancies herself a toolbelt diva, and tries to sneak in a few minutes of reading when no-one is looking. Like most boys his age, Zachary loves all karate-based action cartoons (Dragonball Z, Avatar), cars, playing Wii, Pokemon cards, and, occasionally, reading - which he is exceptionally good at. And also dancing to his new fave music: the Funk! Lois' mom also lives with them, and her favorite things to do are gardening and cooking traditional Jamaican food.

They find themselves constantly busy with the demanding schedule of their 6 year old son, Zachary - and learning how do without an on-call handyman/building super in the service of their house! In addition to Zachary, they each have an older daughter from previous marriages. Steve's daughter works in New York, and Lois'

daughter attends college in Virginia.

Lois and Steve say, in spite of the differences and new challenges, they are really very happy living in their little village, raising their family, making new friends, and getting closer to God.

God had a plan for Lois and Steve Anderson. At least, that's their story - and they're sticking to it.

### **Sermons by Pastor Ken DeWalt**

Sermons are now available in MP3 form for live or downloaded listening. Go to: Hope's web site [www.HopeChurchAmity.org](http://www.HopeChurchAmity.org)



34 of Hope's praise songs are now available on the Hope's website!!!

### **Sunday, Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> 9 & 10:45am**



Communion served at the conclusion of both services  
**Second Sunday of Advent**

Sermon Series: From Nazareth to Bethlehem

**Scripture:** Matthew 1:18-25

### **Sunday, Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> 9 & 10:45am**

**Third Sunday of Advent**  
Sermon Series: From Nazareth to Bethlehem

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 1: 21-28

**Thursday Dec. 15, 7pm  
BLUE CHRISTMAS Service  
Luke 2: 22-32**  
**A service of HOPE for those who feel a lack of hope in this season of the year.**

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### **Sunday, Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> 9 & 10:45am**

#### **FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT**

Sermon Series: From Nazareth to Bethlehem

**Scripture:** Luke 2: 1-7

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### **Saturday, Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> 9 & 10:45am**

#### **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES**



#### **6:30pm SLEEPOVER AT THE STABLE**

A Hope Christmas Treasure Family service and children's play



#### **8:00pm CANDLELIGHT SERVICE**

Sermon Series: From Nazareth to Bethlehem

**Scripture:** Luke 2: 8-14



#### **11:00pm WATCHNIGHT COMMUNION**

Remember Your Baptism

**Scripture:** Mark 1: 7-11

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**Sunday, Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>  
Combined Worship  
Services at 10:45am ONLY  
and**

**NO Sunday School or  
service at 9am today**  
Sermon Series: From Nazareth to Bethlehem

**Scripture:** Matthew 2: 1-12  
Wise Men's Gifts

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Greeters Needed!**

#### **We need you!**

You can choose either worship service. So pick a Sunday and be that special greeter for that day.

If you are interested, please sign the Greeter Schedule or see Tami Willumsen or call her, 610-370-5446. Thanks.

## **COMMUNION SERVERS NEEDED!**

for the 9:15 & 10:45 a.m. services. No experience needed, we will help if you are new. If interested, please see Cris Y-D or phone 484-332-2582 email: [cris\\_yd@yahoo.com](mailto:cris_yd@yahoo.com)

## **ELETRONIC GIVING A Simple, Generous Choice**

and convenient way to provide consistent financial support to our church. Please contact the church office to learn how you can participate. Application forms are available on the tithe & offering boxes and on the welcoming tables.

## **January Newsletter Deadline**

Marie Hacik, Editor

Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup>. is the deadline for submitting information for the January issue. Please submit articles or announcements by email to: [besta2@verizon.net](mailto:besta2@verizon.net)

NOTE: Articles & pictures due by the 15<sup>th</sup>. of each month.

## **Miller-Keystone Blood Drive**

Next scheduled Blood Drive will be held on Sunday, December 18

## **Reports Adult Ministry News**

### **Small group doing WELL**

Pastor Sam Geiger's weekly Thursday 7pm Bible Study at Gently USED BOOKS (next to Redners Market) for a very non-denominational, community welcoming Christian discussion of what we believe and how we respond to it try it out some time.

### **Are YOU possibly being called to lead one of these new groups or classes?**

- Good Sense Budgeting by the Bible
- Woman's 9am Sunday School Class
- Young Adult or Senior's Singles Group
- Daytime Bible Study
- Mom's & Kids Bible Study
- Women's weekly Bible Study
- ETC.... If so, please contact Pastor Ken at 610 223 8630 or [kendewalt1@gmail.com](mailto:kendewalt1@gmail.com)

### **HOMEBOUND NEEDS**

Pastor Ken and Lay Pastor's meeting the care and homebound needs of more attenders of Hope.

If you feel led to discover what this unique ministry of pastoral visitation is all about, see Pastor Ken.



## **“MONTHLY PRAYER SERVICE”**

This is an open invitation for anyone to come & join in for a casual & relaxing time of spontaneous prayers. Please join us the last Friday 7PM to 8PM each month in the Worship Center.

Jen Choudhry,  
Celebration Team Leader



## **Women's Sunday School Class Is Back!!**

Theresa Philby  
[wildbreeze@dejazzd.com](mailto:wildbreeze@dejazzd.com)

Starting Sunday, Dec 4<sup>th</sup>. at 9:00 am the Women's Sunday school class will be back in session. We will meet in classroom 1. It doesn't matter what season you are currently on in your life, young and eager to learn more.... all the way up to the seasoned & wise are encouraged to attend. Regardless of where we are at in our current walk with God we all are looking for ways to be the woman He designed us to be & to have His

light shine through us. We may feel overwhelmed in our responsibilities in our daily lives or just feel adrift but this class will be a place to come and dig into the Word to help us, together, find the balance, wisdom and perspective that we are looking for. We will be using the bible and will be utilizing study guides and also will occasionally do book studies. Come, join other like-minded sisters in Christ who are seeking to find biblical answers in today's world. If there is need for more info please don't hesitate to contact Theresa Philby, Cris Y-D or Chris Bergey.

### **Bible Study Class at Hope!**

Matt Hoffman leading the class on a book called "Everything Must Change: Jesus, Global Crises, and a Revolution of Hope" by Brian D. McLaren

We meet every Thursday. For more information, contact Matt [mrmatthewhoffman@yahoo.com](mailto:mrmatthewhoffman@yahoo.com)



### **Good Sense Budget Course**

The start of any year brings to mind wanting to have fresh starts. For some it is dieting, others want to run their first 5K.

Another big one that is common is to get a handle on the finances. In today's world and the economic uncertainties that is more of an urgent need than ever.

As Christians we strive to do all that we do in a God honoring way whether it is in how we tackle that diet so as to care for the temple God has blessed us with, or to run that race for His glory. We need to also approach how we handle the gifts that God has entrusted to us in a way that is pleasing to Him.

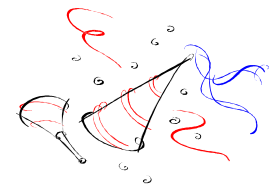
Here at Hope we are about to have our fourth year with offering the Good Sense Budget course. This is a simple, no-nonsense approach on how to assess our current financial condition, recognize weak areas in our household budgets and showing ways to make out a budget that works to pay off debt and plan for tomorrow so there is more ease in our day to day living. This course runs between 6-8 weeks & is actually FUN. We also incorporate much of the teaching and approaches from people like Larry Burkett and Dave Ramsey.

The class will start on Saturday January 7, 2012 from 10:00am-12:00 in

room 4, just in time to start your year out strong. There are sign-up sheets on the tables in the hall. There is a workbook that can be purchased for this course but the book is optional. If there are any questions

please contact Theresa Philby at 610-404-0506 or [wildbreeze@dejazzd.com](mailto:wildbreeze@dejazzd.com) or Audrey Dunekack ([audreyd\\_4@hotmail.com](mailto:audreyd_4@hotmail.com))

## **2012**



### **"Come as You Are" New Year's Eve party at Hope beginning at 8 pm on December 31**

This event is NOT sponsored by the Fellowship Team, but rather it is being put together by a few individuals and families who don't want to sit at home on New Year's Eve!

Bring a favorite snack and a game to share and be ready to dance and party into the New Year!

Any questions? Contact Jen Choudhry, who is not leading, but rather participating in, this event!

## **Open Arms Ministry**

Desiree James  
desjay.openarms@gmail.com

**Community Supper will not be on the last Friday of the month. Instead, our Christmas Community Supper will be on Friday, Dec. 23<sup>rd</sup>. 6 pm to 7 pm. Desiree James, leader of Open Arms Ministry, & her wonderful husband will be celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup>. on December 30<sup>th</sup>.**

**NOTE: Open Arms Ministry Team Meetings have been moved to every third Wednesday evening at 6:30pm in Room 3.**

**NEW MINISTRY OF THE HEART SOUTHEAST BERKS MINISTERIUM partners with EVERY DBSD building! Christmas Family Food Baskets; Adopt-a-Family Christmas program, etc.**

The Holiday Basket was a big success. We asked everyone to donate one dollar and one item off of the food list. We were able to raise \$123.10 and collect 5 bags of food thus far.

Thank you to the Hope Church Family and Amity

Manor for all of your help and support.

Let's help to meet the needs of financially marginalized students. For more information and/or list of needs, please see November's Newsletter located in your mailbin and/or on the information tables by the entrance doors to the Worship area.

Desiree James  
desjay.openarms@gmail.com

**Angel Tree Mission** to assist the Salvation Army in providing Christmas presents to children in very low-come families.

We at Hope Church are participating in the Salvation Army Angel Tree Mission.

The birth of Jesus was the most wonderful gift ever given, so let's remember that as we open our hearts and our pockets for these little ones.

If you are interested, gift tags are available on the bulletin in the back of the Worship Area. The gifts are to be placed under our tree by Friday, Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for considering this wonderful tradition and making a child's Christmas that much brighter!

Any questions ... Contact Karen Roach at (610) 705-9749



## **Ring the Bell Day!**

On December 10<sup>th</sup> at Redner's Market in Douglassville Hope Church will be ringing the bell for The Salvation Army. Please come out and join us in this wonderful tradition!

Sign up list is located on the Sign-up Table outside of Room 3. For more information, please contact Karen Roach.

## **Mission News**

### **LIGHT OF LIFE MISSION**



John and Terry Brynan

By: Dave & Bonnie Reppert  
John and Terry, missionaries, continue to bring the light of Jesus Christ to the Pokot people of Kenya, Africa. Sunday, Oct. 30, Hope Church was honored for the Brynan's to worship with us. Sharing during the Mission Moment, we learned what God has been doing in Kenya. At the present time, construction of a Safe Haven & Orphanage for girls is being erected & will be able to accommo-

date 40 girls. Phase One is building the dormitory, with a dining hall/kitchen/learning center to follow. We at Hope Church will be having a "potluck", with John and Terry sharing lots of pictures, stories, and telling how God is using them to help the Pokot people. A date has not been set. We will advertise as plans get underway.



## Welcome to Red Bird Mission

Appalachian Mountains the need remains critical in the isolated, rural distressed area.



**A note from Kentucky--** What a great time Al Hartman and Bob Philby had this October on their trip to Red Bird Mission, working through the work camp to make life a little more liveable for an elderly couple. The lady of the house was severely handicapped and needed a handicapped shower installed in place of her cast iron tub. Mr. Lawson,

her husband, kept them busy listening to the folk lore of the Kentucky Mts. He was very entertaining and inspiring. Life is hard for these people, the economy is poor, the location of these homes are in the mountains, far from the towns and the difficulties this causes makes life hard. Al and Bob were joined by a christian couple from Harrisburg. The four of them plus many other Christians from other churches all chipped in to share God's love through the work that they so generously performed. Everyone was given their own task to do and our people worked on the Lawson's home. The job was very challenging but very rewarding. It got frustrating when we hooked the water backwards and the hot water came out of the cold side and the cold out of the hot side. Never mind, our men soon fixed their mistake and the folks now have a little something to laugh about. They will not forget the love, the fun, the experience, of the days with our men on task for our God. --Al

## Reports

### **Jolly Time Seniors**

by: Fran Loughhead  
At our last meeting on Oct 3 we were privileged to have

Desiree James as our guest. She told us so much about her Open Door Ministry and some of the behind-the-scenes activities that made the dinners come to reality, as well as some of her plans for the future.

We reluctantly voted to dissolve the group known as the Jolly Time Seniors since about 1995; hopefully making way for a younger, more active group of Hope "mature" but active individuals and couples. We have met regularly since our beginning & have originated many activities other than "meeting and eating" including assembling & posting the earlier newsletter, fundraising through sales of cookies, crafts, hoagies, flowering bulbs and plants, and the Redner Save-A-Tape project which has been returned to the administrative staff and still welcomes your validated receipts.

We plan to have a Jolly Time Senior reunion in the near future.



### **Secret Prayer Sister**

by: Jan Birkins

The Secret Prayer Sisters will once again be having our Annual Christmas Dinner on Sunday, December 11th at 4:00pm at Vincenzo's Ristorante, 1333 Old Swede Rd., Douglassville. This year we will be joining fellowship

and dinner at this new restaurant in the Douglassville area. The 15 Christian sisters involved will be presenting their sister with a Christmas gift and will also find out who their Secret Prayer sister has been for the year 2011. We will be ordering from the menu and a sample menu can be found on the bulletin board in the church hallway.

Jan Birkins 610-955-5737 or  
Jebirkins@gmail.com Secret

### **Prayer Sisters**

is a group that encourages those participating to pray in specific ways for a sister in Christ and encourage her through written notes, cards & small gifts or other special secret ways. The time period is a 12- month commitment of early January thru Mid-December. We will gather together a couple of times during the year to fellowship & do an outreach activity.

There is a special meal & fellowship time for the revealing at our Christmas gathering dinner. This is a wonderful ministry of encouragement and fun too. Lifting each other up in prayer is a special privilege. One often finds that in encouraging another, you, yourself, are encouraged as well!

All of the ladies of the church are invited to participate in this ministry of caring and sharing with other sisters in Christ. You will each be

given a 'sister 'that you will need to pray for and encourage. It is wonderful to have someone that prays for you daily & is there to send you an encouraging note from time to time. You can be the instrument that God has placed in this person's life to give them the encouragement they need right when they need it.

"A word spoken in due season, how good it is!"; Proverbs 15:23. Praying daily for your sister will strengthen you and the rewards can be immeasurable.

If interested in being part of this amazing women's ministry for 2012 please contact Theresa Philby at wildbreeze@dejazzd.com or 610-404-0506 or look for the Secret Prayer Sister questionnaire on the sign-up tables; place your completed form in mailbin 37. You will be a blessing and be blessed when you do.

### **Fellowship Team**

by: Cris Y-D

The Fellowship Team has been looking at the possibility of attending the Sight-n-Sound production "Jonah" possibly in April. If we can get at least 15 people who are interested we can get a discounted rate. Please email cris\_yd@yahoo.com or Marie besta2@verizon.net or call Cris Y~D 484-332-2582 (I am on Verizon). I have a suggestion for

making this trip a little more affordable.

January we celebrate Heritage Day...we are planning a Heritage Covered Dish Meal that Sunday.

February is Valentine's Day ~ Sweetheart Dinner

March ~ Baby Picture Game/contest.

## **CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES**

### **The OTHER Figures in the Christmas Nativity Scene**

by Jen Choudhry,  
Celebration Team Leader

Everyone is familiar with the traditional Christmas Nativity scene. Baby Jesus lays in a manger while Mary and Joseph lovingly gaze at our newborn Savior. An Angel stands over the Baby as He peacefully slumbers swaddled in the cloth. Three wise men look upon the Babe, each bearing a special gift fit for a king.

But did you ever wonder about the other figures in the Nativity scene? Now before you wonder what other characters I may be referring to, just think for a moment about the Nativity scene you set up each December and place on your mantelpiece. You

know those figures that usually get shoved in the back or side of the stable? Or perhaps your mantel is crowded, so these figures get left in the box? Yes!! Those figures! The ANIMALS from the stable!! These animals called the stable their home long before it was utilized as the birthplace of our Savior. Did you ever wonder what they thought about the scene played out before them on that Christmas night?

This Christmas Eve, the children of Hope Church will be honoring the birth of the Baby Jesus by retelling the Christmas story through the perspective of the animals in the barn that night. The drama, entitled Sleepover at the Stable: A Children's Christmas Fantasy (written by Douglas J. Eboch) is sure to delight audiences of all ages. Come learn the Christmas story through the eyes of the characters who witnessed it all!

The Children's drama will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Then join your Hope Church family and share in the Candlelight Service at 8:00 p.m. and the Watch Night service at 11 p.m.

All are encouraged to join in the Hope Church tradition of sharing one

dozen favorite Christmas cookies with your family at Hope. Between services we all can delight in the birth of our Savior, fellowship with one another, and enjoy a scrumptious cookie (or two or three!)



**GSP**

By:  
Nancy  
Hartman

The GSP class has been busy wrapping the gifts for the handicapped adults and some for some underprivileged children. It took us 3 weeks but we can give a sigh of satisfaction for a job well done that will bring much happiness. The happiness comes not only for the receiving of gifts but in the giving. You hear that expression so often but when you truly experience it, it brings a warmth and contentment that is not soon forgotten. The giving spirit is not just for December but should continue all year. God doesn't limit HIS giving and his concern for us to one month a year but His mercy and love extends throughout our life time.

He picks us up when we are down and helps us smile throughout our difficulties. We can smile because He is in charge. We need only to listen and follow and things seem to

resolve themselves eventually, and sometimes even better that if we were solving it.

We have a new member in our class, her name is Mandy, and we welcome her to our little group.

Peace and Happiness to you and yours from the GSP group---Nancy



**December  
Happy  
Birthday!!!**

- 1 Ryan Best
- 2 Siedah Cazaubon
- 6 Craig Donofrio
- 7 Mike Amtsberg
- 11 Karen Roach
- 14 Doug Keeler  
Jen Boettlin
- 17 Wendy Lucas
- 18 Michelle Gobble
- 19 Ed Clemson  
Cindi Williams
- 25 Melvin Fick, Jr.
- 29 Donna Hastings
- 30 Megan Stevanus



**Prayer Chain Team:**

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:16  
"I was sick and you looked after me." Matt. 25:36

PRAYER WORKS! We are dedicated to providing a place for people to come when they or those they love need the power of

prayer. We will be offering words of comfort, concern or congratulations.

Hope's Prayer Chain of people in need of prayer is listed in our weekly church bulletin.

To be added to the prayer list or would like to join our team, contact Pastor Ken or Verna Reigel at 610-582-7646 or e-mail vrpuple43@dejazzd.com

# Thank You!

Thank you to Kelly McKinney, Carole Rhoads & Tony Choudhry for providing childcare on November 13 during the Congregational Advance meeting. By serving this way gave parents of Hope to attend the meeting, to have a voice and to hear how the Lord is guiding and leading Hope Church in new ways.

Thank you to Ran Birkins for his dedication in providing Hope Church with an awesome website. Ran is also seeking information and new methods for the site. His latest additions are the sermons and our very own Praise Team songs!!!

Thank you to Jim Brashear, Lead Team and to the congregation for all their support, work, prayers and discernment during the Advance process. Please keep Hope in your daily prayers as

we will be advancing with the Lord's guidance.

Thank you to all who stayed after service on Sunday, November 6 to help move the chairs out of the worship area for the Election Day and for those who came out on Saturday, November 12 to put the worship area back together. Thank you to Audrey Dunekack, Tiffani Bailey, Chris Williams and Kim Simcox for taking advantage of the the worship area being cleared and cleaning the carpets!



*Dear Hope Church,*

*Enclosed is a check in the amount of \$1,000 to your church.*

*We have seen much development in the Douglassville area in the past fifty years, when a few people conceived the thought that a community, named Amity Gardens, should be created. And although I believe that development, with its additions, now embodies 4,000 or 5,000 people, it has only produced one new church, namely your church. I wish to help that church as the most deserving recipient of this gift.*

*May God bless you in your ministry.*

*Sincerely,  
L. Stanley Mauger*

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## Advance Congregational Meeting

Held on Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup> was a wonderful success!! The potluck meal was yummy! The fellowship was fun! And the meeting was packed full of suggestions, exciting new ideas and information.

Please contact Kim Simcox at the church if you would like to receive a copy of the minutes.

Keep watch in the upcoming bulletins and newsletter and announcements. Hope's Lead Team will be schedule Listen Session to keep all informed and to for all to help with the planning and advancing!!!

Please keep Advance in prayer and let's share in the exciting advancement of Hope Church as the Lord guides us forward!



# Team Reports

## Nomination Team News Recognition & newly elected leaders

### Welcome new servants

*Nicole Halberg, Discretionary Fund Team*  
*Cris Y-D and Desiree James, Fellowship Team*  
*Phil Richmond, Finance Team Leader/Treasurer*  
*Cindi Williams, Finance Secretary*  
*\*Lee Horn, Jr, Finance Team*  
*MaryBeth Richmond, Tithe & offering Secretary*  
*\*Sheree Horn, Payroll Administrator*  
*\*Amanda Couch, Payroll Administrator Assistant*  
*\*Bob Simcox, Lay Delegate / Lay Leader*  
*Gail Grad, Lay Member at Large Lead Team*  
*Karen Roach, Nominations Team*  
*\*Michael McKinney, SPR Leader*  
*Desiree James, SPR*  
*Nicole Halberg, SPR*  
*MaryBeth Richmond, SPR*  
*Kerk Halberg, Trustee*  
*Kelly McKinney, Trustee*  
*\*Shelly Sobel, Youth Ministry Team Leader*

### Thank You for serving

Bob Simcox from Discretionary Fund  
Bob Philby from Finance Leader & Treasurer  
Amanda Simcox from Finance Secretary  
Kim Simcox from Tithing Secretary  
Cris Y-D from Lead Team Member and Trustee  
Bob Simcox from Lead Team Leader

*Thank you to those who have agreed to serve  
for another year (\* denotes)*

## The Last Word

# **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

Isn't it sad that more and more we are being told by our bosses, our political leaders, our advertisers in any media, that MERRY CHRISTMAS is no longer an appropriate greeting for this season of Hope we call CHRISTmas?

We are encouraged to say, "Season's Greetings", or, "Best Wishes for the Season", or some other pretty meaningless phrase. I heard the other day that even the word, "Peace!" could be construed as too 'Christian' a phrase in a world of various faiths; even though every major faith system of the world acknowledges peace as its primary reason for existence.

But this re-direction of our seasonal salutation is hardly new. It was in February of 1974 that I first learned to be careful of how I greeted people in the Christmas Season.

I was in my first year as buyer of a new category of craft and Christmas products for the Stauffer's of Kissel Hill stores in South Central Pennsylvania when I was taught by my mentor, Paul Stauffer, that most of the American business persons in the seasonal trade were Jewish and that it would be more appropriate of me to send them 'Season's Greetings' rather than Merry Christmas cards. But this wasn't a mandate against naming an entire season. It was just common courtesy for people of another faith. My Jewish partners in the decoration world sent me 'Merry Christmas' cards and indeed, some sent me Holy Mary & Baby Jesus cards.

In the 1980's, when I began to deal with more Asian exporters of decorations and trimmings the world of American Inclusiveness was becoming more and more non-Christian and so all of my professional cards read "Seasons Greetings".

In December of 1993 the rising crescendo of anti-Christian Christmas came to the home town of our company and our family's home church, Lititz United Methodist. The ACLU, on behalf of one angry citizen, fought to have the Christmas Creche manger scene removed from the Lititz town square. Several months after Christmas it was determined that the square was only rented to the town by the local Moravian Church for \$1.00 a year so the court authorized the creche to stay and it remains to this day. But had that not been so it, like so many other Christian symbols of our past would have been removed from government property.

Today it's hard to find Christian symbols anywhere outside except in church yards and on Christian homes. But perhaps this is a necessary evolution. I believe in the sovereignty of our inclusive national constitution. I believe no one religion should force its beliefs on persons of another, or no religion. However I also believe that the essence of some holidays is in the religion which birthed them. Sadly Jesus' birth has gradually been supplanted by Santa Claus, And even he has gone from holy Saint Nicholas of Eur-Asia to the jolly old elf of North Pole fame.

So I choose to strike out in the name of CHRISTmas. I still greet persons generally with a, "Merry Christmas!" (Unless I know they might be offended otherwise). I decorate inside and out with symbols of my faith. And I thank God that in several months another holy holiday will arrive which has not been opted out of the nations Christian Consciousness. No one is encouraged to wish a, "Happy Spring", instead of a, "Happy Easter" to anyone by self appointed 'thought police'.

And Easter should be a Christian's holiest holy-day anyway,

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

