

# The Bethany Letter

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The Rev. Stephen Gehlert, Senior Minister

The Rev. Mark Steiner, Visitation Minister

## *Re-gifting the Frankincense*

January 6, was the 12<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas, Epiphany, the day when the church celebrates the arrival of the magi at Bethlehem. Maren Tirabassi has written a wonderful reflection on the meaning of this holy day. I'd like to share it with you:

*On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gold, frankincense and myrrh. (Matthew 2: 11)*

It's all about re-gifting, isn't it? Mary must have ...

This verse in Matthew is responsible for our practice of Christmas presents -- December decisions, often followed by January juggling. Our experiences of obligation, hope, anxiety, and expectation are probably as complicated as the magi's symbolic gifts to a messiah pointed out by a star, while they fled a king.

The contemporary term "re-gifter," invented on an episode of the NBC sitcom *Seinfeld* called "The Label Maker," was no compliment, since the offending character was caught giving away something he had received! Currently the fine art of re-gifting has several etiquette websites. The successful re-gifter should rewrap the present, refrain from using it first, and avoid giving it back to the original giver.

In fact, our lives are full of this practice -- we do give what we have been given. We give from our emotional gifts; we give from our skills and aptitudes; we give from the love we receive. A newer term is "paying it forward." An older term -- "tithing."

Mary didn't re-gift the frankincense. She re-gifted the Child -- to all of us. Epiphany is the season we come to understand the gift of Christ experienced in all aspects of our lives. Even in this month that may find us with too many bills or exchanging something the wrong size, we remember that part of our faith is trying to re-gift the precious one-size-fits-all gift of Jesus Christ to as many people as we can possibly reach.

God has given us everything in Jesus! We have so much to "re-gift" because of all we've been given. Re-gifting isn't a problem; in terms of God's gifts that's all we can do anyway. Nothing originates with us, it's all from God. God expects us, wants us, to "re-gift."

"Re-gifting!" - May God grant us a heart that's as eager to share what we've been given, as God was to give it in the first place. May God help us "re-gift" as much as we can of the abundant blessings God's given us.

With Epiphany Gratitude and Hope,



## Trust God to Give

So far we have received **151** cards totaling **\$279,829** in support of Bethany's ministry and mission for Christ in 2010.

### YF

Jan. 10	11:30 am	Just Peace Celebration Prep.
Jan. 17	6:30 pm	Just Peace Celebration
Jan. 24	6:30 pm	Sponsor's Surprise
Jan. 29	6:45 pm	Service at Temple Israel

### CONFIRMANDS

Jan. 10	11:30 am	Just Peace Celebration Prep.
Jan. 17	11:30 am	Conf./Mentor Meal, Mtg.
Jan. 17	6:30 pm	Just Peace Celebration
Jan. 29	6:45 pm	Service at Temple Israel



## ATTENTION

All Committee Chairpersons

Your committee's annual report is DUE!

The annual meeting has been moved up one week so it is very important to get your report into the office. Please contact Carol if you have any questions.

## Chili Supper

St. John's Episcopal Church

**January 12<sup>th</sup> 5:00 – 7:00 PM**

Adults (13 yrs. & up) \$6.00 Youth \$4.00

Kids under 5 Free!

All proceeds to be used for Outreach Ministry.



## Bethany Kitchen

**Saturday, January 16, 2010  
11:30 a.m.**

Bethany Kitchen provides a free luncheon for those in the community who need a meal. Help is always needed for food preparation, serving and cleaning up. *All are welcome to join us* and enjoy fellowship and lunch.

# Just Peace Celebration

**January 17<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 p.m. New Trinity**

Join us for an evening of Gospel Music, Fellowship and Praise as we honor the ideals of Dr. Martin Luther King and our Partnership with New Trinity. The voices of both congregations will join in song and celebration on Sunday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at New Trinity Missionary Baptist Church, located at 1380 Hartford Avenue, Akron OH 44320. Following the music program, we will meet with our New Trinity friends for refreshments; everyone is asked to bring a dish to share. If you would like a ride, call the office and we'll do our best to arrange one; to carpool be at Bethany's west parking lot by 5:45 the evening of the concert. Call Janice (Williams) Smith at 330-338-3184 for more information.

## OFFICE CLOSED

**MONDAY, JANUARY 18<sup>TH</sup>**

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

## Men's Volunteer Breakfast



It is a great time for men of the church to get together to share faith, food, and fellowship together; as well as a few chores with which the custodians could use some help. The men gather the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 8:00 a.m. (Next breakfast **January 20<sup>th</sup>**) You can help make this time possible by providing breakfast for 8-10 men once during the year. If you'd like to help in this way call Nancy Read at 330-928-3002.

## ANNUAL MEETING & DINNER

*change of date* →

**January 24<sup>th</sup> 11:30 a.m.**

Everyone is invited to the annual meeting and dinner. It's a great time to celebrate God's presence and guidance with us through our last year of ministry and mission and hear about hopes for new ways to serve God and God's world in 2010. To help the Meal Committee know how many to prepare to serve please let us know (on your attendance card, by e-mail, or calling the office) if you can attend by Sunday, January 17<sup>th</sup>.

## Bethany's Phone System: Fully Functional

The old system was beyond repair, with no way to get the voice mail working. A new telephone system has been installed and you are able to call and leave messages in a variety of mailboxes (the system will prompt you to a directory if you do not know the extension). Note: to call out on the new system you'll need to press line 1 or 2 before dialing. Thanks to everyone for your patience while we were without voicemail.

# ACME

## Community Cash Back Program

### ENDS - February 20, 2010

*Receipts must have a date printed on them!*

The YF is collecting ACME receipts. Acme Fresh Market will issue a rebate check equal to FIVE PERCENT (5%) of the Cash Back amount printed at the bottom of the receipt. The Cash Back amount includes all Acme store brand merchandise purchases: Acme Fresh Market, Academix, Dining-In, Domestix, Electrix, Food Club, Full Circle, Paws, TopCare, ValuTime and World Classics products. YF truly appreciates your support as the proceeds help our youth ministry.

*Please remember...*

## You've Got Mail

Please check the "mail table" each Sunday before or after worship. The bulletin will always indicate what groups or individuals have mail waiting for them. Any items not picked up will be mailed the next day. PLEASE HELP BETHANY SAVE ON POSTAGE!

\* **Bethany Members** ... please **USE** your **NEW 2010** giving envelopes. Every member is assigned a box of *numbered* envelopes that identifies you as the contributor. Along with using your numbered envelope please write your name and amount given on the front of the envelope and mark check or cash.

**This is so helpful.**

\* **ALSO**, if you have had a change of address or telephone number please notify the office.

## Stewardship tip

Stewardship is management, and as stewards, we have been entrusted with the management of the entire earth. Because God cares about the plight of the poor, the Christian works to relieve suffering and change oppressive political structures.

**Prayer:** God, your voice moves over the waters. Immerse us in your grace, mark us with your image, and raise us to live our baptismal vows empowered by the Holy Spirit and the example of Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.



## In Sympathy ...

*We share our Christian sympathy with Mark and Ellie Steiner following the death of Ellie's sister, Dolores Levegood, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on December 30<sup>th</sup>.*

*We also extend our Christian sympathy to John and Pat Proctor on the death of Pat's mother, Mary Thomas, on January 3<sup>rd</sup> in Pineville, North Carolina. A memorial service will be held at Bethany sometime in April.*

*In addition, we offer our Christian sympathy to Pauline Raleigh and her family following the death of her husband, Wayne, on January 5<sup>th</sup>. Services were held in Alliance January 8<sup>th</sup>.*



## Esperanza

☎ **Chris Eberhardt 330-688-5171**

☎ **Matt Tasker 330-928-4446**

☎ **Anna Zeller 330-929-0852**

are willing to do some work to help with expenses.

**Got a job? Give one of them a call!**

*Change of Address:*

**Jean Pekar**

Sumner @ Ridgewood

3690 Chestnut Chase

#101 Saunier House

Copley, Ohio 44321

# Thank you

## What a Wonderful Cantata!

*The Mystery and the Majesty* was a beautiful and moving weaving of scripture and song! The Chancel Choir sang with tenderness, joy and passion. The readers – Julianna Bebout, Jacob McClellan, and Scott Myers shared their texts with simple conviction. Haley Gallagher and Becca McClellan, the children who joined the choir for one special song, enriched the whole piece with their lovely voices. Thanks to Sue Parker for so excellently accompanying the Choir on both the organ and piano. Finally thanks to Director Beth McDevitt for finding this special piece and helping the choir to share their many gifts with such grace and spirit. You shared a true gift! Our worship was blessed! We are grateful!

## “Wish Radio” Exceeds All Wishes!

Every year Bethany’s children, their families and the Bethany family look forward to our annual Christmas pageant. Once again, we were not disappointed. *The Miraculous Christmas Wish Radio Show* fulfilled and surpassed all our hopes for a wonderful worship experience. Thanks to

- Directors Beth McDevitt and Laura Rorrer
- Pianist Sue Parker
- Stage Crew Heather Alberson, Taylor Giffen, Jacob McClellan, Keith McDevitt, Emily Sammons, and Anna Zeller
- Costumes Stephanie Gallagher & Debbie Larkins
- Light/Sound John Mancinelli
- Props Mark Jensen and Vicki McVan
- Video George Jensen

Together you shared a wonderful gift! You touched our hearts! Thanks to all of you!

## Christmas Carolers,

Thank you so much for the beautiful program of Christmas carols performed at Traditions. It was good to see so many familiar faces in addition to a lot of children who participated also. Those who heard the performance mentioned the next morning how much they enjoyed the music and how nice it was that the carolers shared this with the residents.

*Sincerely, Karen Butler*



## Altar Flowers in December given by

- 12/06 Addie Mabie and sons in memory of Neil Mabie
- 12/13 Olive Devine in memory of loved ones
- 12/20 & 12/27 Christmas poinsettias (see insert)

## Bethany Gifts at Christmas

- Thanks for all of your food donations for the Good Neighbors collection. We collected approximately 800 food items. Thanks to Bill Leas making the delivery to Good Neighbors.

- Our Bethany members were very generous to those less fortunate during the Christmas Season. Here is the breakdown for *Gifts of the Heart*.

Back Bay Mission	\$ 60
Bethany Kitchen	\$ 170
Chapel Hill Homes	\$ 105
Esperanza	\$ 65
Faith in Action	\$ 70
Good Neighbors	\$ 115
Hazle Scholarship Fund	\$ 45
IHN	\$ 175
Pastor's Discretionary	\$ 245
South Street	\$ 110
UCC camps	\$ 30
Willard Food Pantry	\$ 120
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,310</b>

- This is what was collected from the *Giving Tree* for HM Life Opportunities and IHN families:

HM Life Opportunities (45 gifts @ \$25 value)	\$1,125
IHN Gift Certificates (30ards)	595
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 1,720</b>

*Thanks for your support of missions by donating these gifts.*

## Thanks from Christian Ed

- The donated baby gifts from our Advent Celebration went to HM Life Opportunities.
- Thanks to the parents of the children’s pageant who donated snacks for rehearsals.
- Thanks to the knitters who made scarves that we gave to Bethany office volunteers and to the YMCA staff of the preschool.
- Thanks to Sharon Ward and Taylor Giffen and her mother for substituting in Betty Caiola’s class.



**Please remember in your prayers...**

- † Karen Butler, Traditions (216 Memory Unit)
- † Sarah Mellott, home
- † Ann Gerlinger, Gardens of the Western Reserve

**Calendar for additions to ~ or ~ changes to the  
2009 monthly calendar mailed to you.  
January 11<sup>th</sup> to January 24<sup>th</sup> 2010**

- 1/11 9:00a Quilters  
9:30a Prayer Shawl Ministry (L)  
7:00p Bell Choir Practice
- 1/12 9:00a Staff Meeting (L)  
7:15p Finance Committee Meeting
- 1/13 11:00a Youth Sponsors' Meeting  
6:30p **Orientation of new Deacons/Elders (Libr.)**  
**Supper provided**  
7:30p Consistory
- 1/14 7:30p Chancel Choir Practice
- 1/15
- 1/16 11:30a **Bethany Kitchen**

Names of **Sunday Volunteers** are published **AHEAD OF THE SCHEDULED** Sunday as a kindly *reminder* and early *thank you!*

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 the necessary changes on our schedules

**Please use this calendar as it is up-to-date!**

**Sunday ~ January 17, 2010**

† Nursery Available 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.

- 8:30a Worship** (Fellowship)  
**9:15a Church School** for Children and Adults  
**10:30a Worship/** Children's Sunday School  
11:30a Coffee Hour  
11:30a Youth Committee Meeting  
5:30p Youth meet at Bethany to ride to NT  
5:45p Meet to carpool to NT  
**6:30p JUST PEACE CELEBRATION!** (New Trinity)

**Volunteers for January 17<sup>th</sup>**

- Cup Washing: A. Zeller  
Greeters: R.&P. Haft / T.&B. Eberhardt  
Lay Reader: A. Cool  
Music: 7<sup>th</sup> Day / Chancel Choir  
Nursery: A. Thompson, S.&M. Ferda, C. Eberhardt  
Ushers: C. Hofmann, M. Jensen, M. Seguin,  
M. Seymour, R. Berie, C. Bedillion, C.&D. Schreiber  
Van Driver: S. Gaskill  
Visitor Outlook: L. Goodwin

- 1/18 **Office Closed**, Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 1/19 7:30p Kerygma
- 1/20 8:00a Men's Breakfast
- 1/21 7:30p Chancel Choir Practice
- 1/22
- 1/23



**Family Sunday**

**January 24, 2010**

- † Nursery Available 9:15 to 11:30 a.m.  
† Children remain in second hour worship  
† IHN Guest Week

- 8:30a Worship** (Fellowship)  
**9:15a Church School** for Children and Adults  
**10:30a Worship/** Baptism, New Member  
**11:30a Annual Meeting & Dinner**  
6:00p IHN Meal (SH)  
6:30p YF

**Volunteers for January 24<sup>th</sup>**

- Cup Washing: C. Eberhardt  
Greeters: R.&S. Holle / J.&S. Mancinelli  
Music: 7<sup>th</sup> Day/ Chancel Choir  
Nursery: T. Jensen, J. Williams, D. Schreiber,  
E. Sammons  
Ushers: L. Luginbill, F. Read, J. Grazulis, J. Seymour,  
H. Koudela, K. Koudela, J. McClellan,  
Van Driver: C. Jones  
Visitor Outlook: B. Lees

**let the office know if you are attending**

# *Christmas Poinsettias*

Ernie Albert & Cheryl Philips, in memory of Marie Albert  
Jeannette Allen, in honor of all loved ones, past and present  
Donna Bidwell in memory of Jim Bidwell, husband & father and in honor of Marcia Spring  
Jenny Bisesi, in loving memory of daughter Linda and brother Carl  
Ralph & Mary Bowmaster, in memory of our loved ones  
Bob and Jan Charton, in memory of parents  
Beverly Edwards & Family, in memory of Jerry Edwards

Warren & Mary Jo Graves, in memory of loved ones  
Dick & Phyllis Haft, in memory of loved ones  
The Hagen Family, in memory of John Devine, Devine & Hazle grandparents, and Iva & Ed Hazel  
Ozzie & Ruth Hibbard, in honor of Major Paul R. Sanford  
Carolyn B. Hofmann, in memory of parents Helen & Gus Hofmann and nephew Todd Hofmann, in memory of friends Dorothy Rea and Esther Ferner, in honor of Mission Co. Members for their dedication & who do so much to help so many, in appreciation of Sharon Alberson for sharing her time & talent to benefit the missions of Urban Ministries, Hope Homes and Faith in Action, and in honor of our many Bethany IHN volunteers who take time to help with our host week and show compassion to our families.

Jim, Sue, Kristy & Steve Jacobson, in memory of Carolyn Jacobson  
Kathe Kirstein, in memory of Fritz Kirstein  
Lenora Luginbill & Family, in memory of Chuck Luginbill  
Sarah Mellott & Family, in memory of Calvin Mellott  
Sharon Otto, in memory of Odell and Harriett Otto  
Beth Oyler and Sue, in memory of our loved ones  
Bob & Martha Peyak, in memory of Robert Peyak, Robert & Matthew Leising  
The Pietrowski Family, in memory of Lucile McBride and Doloris Pietrowski

Mr. & Mrs. Robert Ractliffe, in loving memory of parents – Grace & Leroy Brumbaugh and Phyllis & Augustus Ractliffe  
Bob & Linda Read and family, in memory of Andrew J. Lampe  
Brad & Suzanne Roach, in memory of parents Margaret & Walter Lauck and Dorothy & Will Roach and in honor of Jason, Tamara, Tim, Julia & Tyler  
Marilyn Rowe, in memory of loved ones  
John and Kathy Ruch, in memory of loved ones  
Clyde and Lynette Sheppard, in honor of our six wonderful grandchildren  
Lynette Sheppard & Jorja Evans, in memory of parents George & Ethel Haigh  
Linda Smith, in memory of Kenneth Smith and Mr. & Mrs. Wilber Lynn  
Marcia Spring, in honor of Donna Bidwell, and in memory of Barbara Bidwell  
Edna Truby, in memory of Peggy McVan

# IHN Updates

In 2010 we will host IHN families five different weeks just as we have the last five years. This mission is possible because of the many Bethany members who volunteer. You know how the program works. On Sunday the beds arrive. We make up the sleeping rooms for each of the families and prepare for their visit. The van driver picks up the guests at the Family Center at 5:00 p.m. and brings them to Bethany. Our team leader orients the families for their new home for the week. Volunteers provide a meal and more volunteers stay overnight with the families.

The morning van driver takes the families back to the family center at 7 a.m. The kids are taken to the school where they were registered before they became homeless. The parents are taken to the Family Center. There they can shower, do wash; use the computer to search for housing and jobs. They also work with the social workers to find housing and jobs. The social workers are at the family center Monday – Friday.

For the first years of IHN the Family Center used volunteers to cover the day shifts on Saturday and Sunday. For the last few years, the Network has paid a student minimum wage to be at the Family Center on weekends. IHN has been experiencing some financial challenges as most non-profit agencies have this past year. One way to cut expenses is to do away with the paid help on weekends. This means we are back to volunteers staffing the Family Center on Saturday and Sunday. Beginning this month, the host church is now responsible for getting the volunteers for the Family Center during their host week.

Our next host week begins Sunday, January 24. This means we will need to find three volunteers for Sunday, January 24 for 3 shifts - 8:30 - 11:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. and 2:30 - 5:30 p.m.. And we will need to find volunteers for the same three shifts on Saturday, January 30 at the end of our week. The alternative to finding volunteers is paying a student \$24 for the 3-hour shift. The Mission committee cannot cover this cost. Volunteering at the Family Center involves just being at the center. You can read or play with the kids, visit with the parents, or read a book.

In addition to requesting our Bethany family to volunteer to be a van driver, prepare a meal and over night volunteer, we are looking for volunteers for the Family Center. I am also looking for two new team leaders to take the responsibility for getting the overnight volunteers and one to secure the Family Center volunteers. The team leader makes the phone calls a few weeks before our host week and recruits the volunteers needed.

Please consider volunteering to help this week and contact one of our team leaders: Carol Clemente - meal preparation, Bob Pletzer - overnight volunteers, Frank Read - van drivers and Carolyn B. Hofmann - Family Center Volunteers. Thanks to our many volunteers who help make this week possible.

Did you make a new years resolution to get more involved in hands on missions this year?

I hope you did!

Thanks for considering this new volunteer opportunity.

Carolyn B. Hofmann, Mission Committee