



The Enlightener

ODENTON, MARYLAND 21113

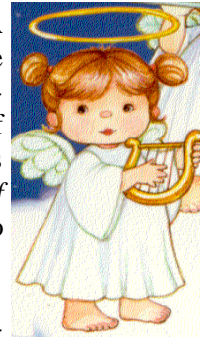
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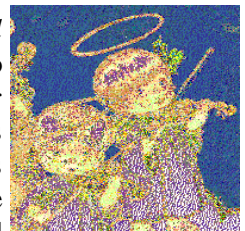
Why Angels Don't Run Out

Something happened, right before 11 AM church. The pastor's door swung open just a little. A slightly hesitant messenger delivered this message: *We've run out of angels!* Now here is cause for Christmas alarm! But it wasn't what you might think. No pageants to be canceled. No Christmas Eve services altered. It was just that so many people had opened their hearts to the children of local inmates, so many said yes so fast, there were no angels left to assign later congregations. This was surprisingly *good news*. But when I came home with that image on my heart... *running out of angels*. So I want to say to you this Christmas what I said to our friend in the doorway. "Not to worry. We won't run out of angels." this or any year.



One glory of this season: God's supply of angels. Now *angel* just means *messenger* in the New Testament. Despite our art work, this isn't mere kidstuff! Angels abound. There are messengers aplenty in the Christmas story. Gabriel is busy. He will be with Zechariah in the Temple Holy of Holies to announce the coming of John the Baptist. 'And in Nazareth to have a word with Mary, "Do not be afraid, for you have found favor with God... you shall conceive and bear a son." And on the sacred night itself, messengers galore. That wonderful announcer on high calling to the shepherds. "I bring you good news... to you is born a Savior." But this was no solitary voice. There are those marvelous backup singers, the "multitude of the heavenly host". Surely all this can be enough to convince us come Christmas, angels are not in short supply. But there is a finer evidence. The angel-of-all-angels comes in the ageless story. When Mary is delivered, we are too. And by the self same angel.

Jesus Christ is born. *And he himself is the angel of all angels because he is the messenger of all messengers!* This is not just about cute kids in robes and halos. This is about the child who comes with the message that we are God's children. Joseph gets the word about this messenger right early. "You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." This is the messenger who says, "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them, for to such belongs the Kingdom of God." This is the One who says of the little ones, "...Unless you believe like one of these..." This messenger says, "Repent and believe, for the Kingdom is at hand." "I and the Father are one." "No one to the Father but by me."



Why don't angels run out? *Because God won't tire of bringing us God's message.* 'Not even in hard times, bad times, our times. He will search heaven high and low for those who can bring and sing us his Word. He will even empty himself into servant form, be born in a stable and lifted on a cross. Nothing could be more angelic. And yes, God will continue to speak to us by the hearts and hurts of the kids, our own, the community's and the world's. He will not run out. So when we come to them in his name we dare not "entertain his angels unaware."

With Beverly, Micah and Meghan, I wish you every Christmas Blessing!

Ken



Connecting Through Worship and Praise

November 30 Advent I

See the Son of Man Coming!

Mark 13: 24-33; John 1: 1-12

Skip the Crunch, Kneel at the Creche!

A Guest List of One

**WE PREPARE OUR HOUSE OF PRAISE
FOR THE COMING OF THE CHRIST.**

December 7 Advent II

Nothing Is Impossible with God

Luke 1: 25-38

Skip the Crunch, Kneel at the Creche!

"One Stop Shopping. ...

Where's the Infant's Department?"

HOLY COMMUNION. SETTING THE GREENS.

December 14 Advent III

The Child in YOU Will Leap For Joy!

Luke 1: 41-55

Skip the Crunch, Kneel at the Creche!

The Best of Christmas Sweets that Treat

SPECIAL MUSIC, SEASONAL ENSEMBLES

Our 2008
CHRISMON TREE



December 21 Advent IV

To All in Darkness, A Great Light!

Isaiah 9: 2, 6-7; Matthew 1: 18-25

Skip The Crunch, Kneel at the Creche

"Never Wrap 'Til Christmas Eve..."

(Then Swaddle Only)"

December 28 Christmastide I

Our Eyes Have Seen God's Saving Child

Luke 2: 25-35

"Hallelujah! No Christmas Returns THIS Year!"

**SEE ELSEWHERE IN THE ENLIGHTENER
FOR CANTATA AND CHRISTMAS EVE
NEWS!!!**

COMING THIS JANUARY

☞ A TIME TO WORSHIP:

Epiphany Worship Series:

When You've Found Him,

Bring Me Word!

(The World Responds to the Wonder of Christ: paradigms & perplexities; Saved or Not)

1. Once Upon a Time: The World Came to See Him (Worship vs. fear.)
2. The Defining Difference: Font, cross and Star — The Hebrew/Christian Conversation
3. [He Does] Not [Live] in Shrines of Our [Own] Making — The Secular Humanist Christian Dialogue

No Time for ...

'Light under a Bushel'

The Christian/Muslim/ Eastern Conversation

☞ A TIME TO STUDY:

A two session, three hour tour...

"By Water and the Spirit"

Exploring Baptism in the United Methodist Way.

Tuesdays, January 13 & 20

7:30 -8:45PM

Sign up on line:

www.nicholsbethel.org.

Or sign up at church.

Or just COME & SHARE!

(Registry helps us order materials.)



O Come, Let Us Adore Him

Several years ago, I wrote a newsletter article on the origins of some Christmas carols we enjoy during this sacred season. I decided to share with you a few more carols, interspersed with customs and the foundations for each.

Let me begin by saying, a carol denotes music of sacred context, whereas other Christmas songs are of secular nature. While we enjoy these secular songs, they generally do not find an appropriate place in traditional worship. *Silent Night*, perhaps the best known and loved through the ages, was written to satisfy an urgent need. On Christmas Eve, in 1818, the organ of St. Nicholas Church, Oberndorf, Bavaria, was in need of repair. Oberndorf was snow-bound and there was no repairman for miles around.

Nevertheless, there had to be some special music for the Christmas service. Franz Gruber, the church organist, presented the problem to his friend Joseph Mohr, vicar of the church, suggesting a new song might be helpful in the emergency. Mohr wrote the verses, Gruber composed the music and so was born the exquisite carol, sung in churches all over the World. Stirring our hearts with awe, in the hush of the Miracle of incarnation, we are reminded of God's great love for us.

The *crèche* was first presented by St. Francis of Assisi, in 1223 to help people better understand the story of the birth of Jesus. He built a full-size stable next to his church. In it, he created the nativity scene, with live animals and people. The *crèche*, as a Christmas symbol, has continued through the ages, in many forms and styles. We use it in church, filling it each Sunday, as we wait for Jesus' birth.

Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming is not commonly sung or appreciated, to the extent of some carols. Reference to a rose and tender stem is based directly on the prophecy of Isaiah: *And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a Branch shall grow out of his roots. (Isaiah 11:1)* A choral arrangement of the melody was written by Michael Praetorius, in 1609. Praetorius was a member of a prominent German family of musicians and wrote a

Continued on Page 4

Christmas Eve Evening of Services

Live Nativity
at 5:15, 7:45 PM

6 PM Family Worship & Praise ...a special, engaging time to share with our children and families in the joy of the Christmas story.

"A Midnight Clear"

8:30, 11 PM Traditional Candlelight Services

Concert at the Cradle's Edge
8:00 & 10:30 PM)
Evening Lesson: Luke 2: 1-20

**"Bethlehem Bound,
GLORY! GLORY!"**
Nursery available for all evening services.





*Christmas
 Cantata...
 One Small Child*

Sunday

December 21, 2008

8 & 11 AM Services

Featuring our Chancel
 & Adult Bell Choirs



Celebrate Our Joys!!

As the season of giving thanks approaches, we would like to say Thank You to our church family. You all have been so kind and generous, bringing meals to us each time Olivia goes into the hospital. We just wanted to let you know that she is doing very well! Since her surgery in May for the feeding tube, she has steadily gained weight and has been able to maintain the weight. The upper right lobe of her lungs that was discovered to be collapsed in May remains closed but we are hopeful that it will open up eventually with her current treatment program.

Cystic Fibrosis is not an easy disease to live with and Olivia has endured more than any 7-year-old should. But with the help of the wonderful people we have met at Nichols-Bethel, we will make it through one day at a time. Thank you all so very much and God Bless You!!!

GIFTS GALORE

FOR KIDS K – 6th GRADE



- Make many gifts for parents/family
- Choose from 9 gift making stations
- Gift wrapping station
- Christmas music
- Punch and cookies

**Saturday
 December 13,
 2008**

**9:30 a.m. -12 (noon)
 Nichols-Bethel
 Fellowship Hall**



book of rare historical value, *Syntagma Musicum*, which contains discussion of music and instruments in use at the beginning of the 17th century.

The *Advent wreath* helps us remember what Christmas is really about. We light a candle each week, for 4 weeks and light the center, the Christ Candle, on Christmas Eve. Candles symbolize Joy, Hope, Faith and Love. The evergreen wreath celebrates the circle of life everlasting, which Jesus offers us. He brings Light and Life to all.

O Tannenbaum (O Christmas Tree) is not commonly sung within worship services; however upon close examination of the text, one finds reference to God : *O Christmas tree, O Christmas tree---how sturdy God hath made thee. Thou bidst us all place faithfully our trust in God unchangingly.* The evergreen tree, of course, has been part of festivities since ancient times, when the Romans celebrated a winter festival called Saturnalia, in

honor of Saturn, their god of seed-sowing. It became part of Christmas tradition when it was adopted in Luther's time as a Christian symbol. The evergreen represents Christ, who is ever-living and eternal.

The *Chrismon* tree can be found in many Christian churches throughout the world. A common way of displaying Chrismons is by decorating an evergreen tree with them. The word Chrismon means Christian monogram. Each symbol is taken from the Bible and helps us remember Jesus' life and ministry, as well as the ways God is present in our lives.

O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him ----- Christ the Lord!

In His Service,

Linda



Nifty Notes From Children's Choir Class

Don't be surprised if you hear your child recently referring to Jesus, by many biblical names. In the anthems we are currently learning, Jesus is referred to as Savior, King, Emmanuel, Promised One, Gift, Lord and Messiah. In our discussions, the children are learning that God sent an unexpected King, as a baby, rather than a monarch. In our anthems we sing of waiting and preparation, as in, *Come, Come Emmanuel*, with choir chimes, in a contemplative style and *Get Ready*, a lively anthem of excitement about One who will " *chase the stormy clouds away and make our darkness bright*". Our Christmas Eve presentation, *Glory to God in the Highest*, tells the Christmas story in song, costume and drama.

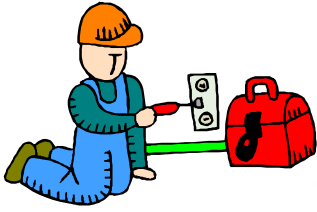
These children are a delight to my heart, as they share and sing with child-like faith and trust in God. We welcome any who would like to join us, at any time, throughout the year. Our door, to Room 208, is literally open at all times, so feel free to come.

We welcome donations toward purchase of xylophones, step-bells and various rhythm instruments, to enhance our learning.

From all of us, to all of you ---- a Blessed Christmas and a Hopeful New Year!

Rev. Linda

A REPORT FROM THE TRUSTEES



T

here were no major actions required of the Trustees in the last month. A new aluminum siding corner was installed on the parsonage to replace one that somehow managed to come off. A special thanks goes to Dan Gallery as he finished installing the last of the new emergency lights in the church. If the electricity goes out all will now have adequate lighting to exit the building safely.

A new group, currently called the "Thursday Morning Group" has been formed. David Ritchie will initially chair this group. The group agreed to meet at 9:00 AM on the 1st & 3rd Thursdays of each month to have fellowship before tackling Trustee designated projects around the church. The first project will be to scrape the wall of the Fellowship Hall where past moisture has caused the paint to come off. The wall will be painted with Dry-Lok before receiving a good coat of white paint. It was also agreed that the "Thursday Morning Group" will convene on Saturday morning periodically to allow more of the Trustees and other folks to enjoy upgrading our beautiful church. As previously reported, all parishioners are encouraged to show up to any of the gatherings they can make. No prior experience is required.

As chair of the Automation Committee, David Ritchie reported that he and Charles Billings have installed new Cable/Internet access from Comcast in the church. On October 24, 2008 and a couple of days thereafter, David and Charles installed a new media distribution panel in the Church Office's Closet and ran conduit from the outside wall of furnace room where cable enters building to the office Closet. Inside the conduit they ran a Cable TV line, a telephone line and Cat5 line for future use. Those same lines were also run to 3 different locations -- the church office, the library and Rev. Linda's Office. Wiring the complete church with Internet, Phone, & TV is the ultimate goal of this project but it will take some time to get every room wired. The next two rooms on the agenda will be the fellowship hall and Rev Ken's office. As of November 3, 2008, both Rev. Linda's computer and the secretary's computer are using the new Internet connection. The new Comcast has greatly enhanced the internet capability of the church's computers in addition to allowing for future expandability.

Six under seat front access, four book bookracks have been ordered for the front two pews. The total cost will be \$190.80 for all six plus shipping.

In keeping with the effort to balance the budget, no expenditures have been placed against The Church budget in the last month.

Ken Dunshee, Trustee Chair

Do You Know??



Since the next newsletter will not be until the new year, This Month's DID YOU KNOW is: "JESUS is the reason for the season". Of course we all know that, but do we sometimes forget for a moment when we are shopping to help Santa? Of course we do, but it is important that we take the time to teach and remind folks the real reason for the "holiday".

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

We will be decorating our worship areas with Poinsettias as we joyously celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, God's gift to us. The 6" plants cost \$10.00 per pot. Dedications will be printed in the bulletin.

To donate flowers, please complete the form below and return it with the money to the church office by Sunday, December 7. No orders can be accepted after this date. No order forms will be accepted without funds, nor will money be accepted without an order form. Checks should be made payable to N-BUMC. Please do not remove flowers until after the 11:00 PM Christmas Eve Service.

I would like to give poinsettias:

_____ anonymously in honor of the birth of Jesus Christ, God's gift to us (no names will be printed)

_____ to the glory of God in celebration of the birth of His Son, Jesus

by _____

_____ in memory of _____

by _____

_____ in memory of _____

by _____

_____ in honor of _____

by _____

_____ in honor of _____

by _____



Check here for location of flower placement: Upstairs Sanctuary _____ Downstairs Contemporary Service _____

Your Name _____ Telephone # _____

(Needed in case of order/names clarification.)



ANGEL TREE PROJECT THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

This year we will offer the congregation the opportunity to fill Christmas stockings and provide gifts for children selected by the Salvation Army of Arundel County. Soon you will see red stockings for you to take and fill anyway you choose. There is no cost or gift selection noted. Just fill it as your heart sees fit. We will also offer the chance to take an Angel Tree Gift tag with child's age and gender. Both the stockings and presents should be returned to the church by December 7th so they can be delivered to the Salvation Army for



**PLACE
HOLDER
FOR DEC
CALENDAR**

**PLACE
HOLDER
FOR DEC
CALENDAR**

**PLACE
HOLDER
FOR JAN
CALENDAR**

**PLACE
HOLDER
FOR JAN
CALENDAR**

HANDY HELPERS AROUND THE HOUSE

I know you've all heard the whisperings. There is definitely something stirring -- something a bit magical that's happening every other Thursday at NBUMC. Yes, it's that mysterious new group: the **THURSDAY MORNING WORK CREW!**

Whether you're retired, a stay at home mom or dad, or even if you've just got some spare time on your Thursday mornings, this is the place to be. We're meeting every first and third Thursday of the month from 9:00am to 11:30am to share a little breakfast (coffee and donuts), a little fellowship, a little praise and a little elbow grease. And the next meeting is only a few days away!

So try out something new this Thursday and join us down in the fellowship hall at NBUMC. And if you're thinking about coming, please try to let me know so I can be sure to have plenty of coffee and donuts for all.

God bless and see you all soon!

Dave Ritchie
Acting Chair of the "Thursday Morning Work Crew"
h/w: 410-798-6144
dave@javelinasoftware.com

*I want to express my thanks and appreciation to everyone that made our ham and oyster dinner a huge success. It was heartwarming to see the youth take an active part in serving and doing an excellent job with **smiles on their faces**. The food was very good with the oysters rating Number 1. We will have the results of the dinner after all the oysters have been sold. If you are interested in purchasing the oysters (frozen) the cost is \$12 per dozen.*

Thanks to all, Dolores

UMM

UMM will be meeting on Sat morning, Dec 6th (8:00 AM) to erect the Nativity and other Christmas decorations. We will be meeting some time in Jan (date TBD) to disassemble the above following the holidays.

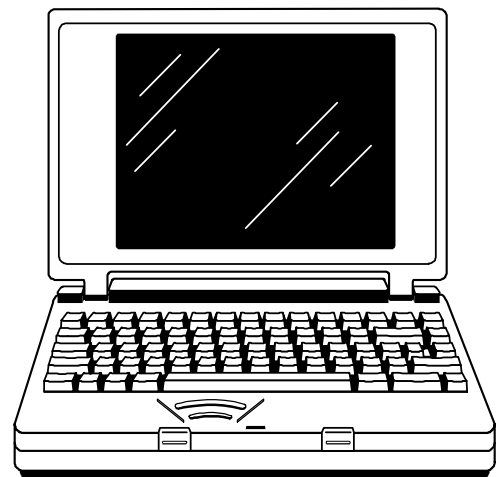


Please make a note of new email addresses for the church:

Church office:
Office@nicholsbethel.org

Rev Ken:
Rev.ken@nicholsbethel.org

Rev Linda:
rev.linda@nicholsbethel.org





United Methodist Women

THE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN wish to thank everyone who helped make our Dinner and Silent Auction a great success! Your donations of gifts, your attendance and your purchases are very much appreciated. And a special thank you to Delores and Ken D. who spent the entire day in the kitchen preparing such a delicious dinner.

United Methodist Women's Christmas Party will be held on Friday, Dec. 12th at 6:30. More information will follow. Mark your calendar and save the date. We always have fun, and this year the Arundel High School Chorus will be providing music for us.

ENVISION THE DREAM = BUILDING THE FUTURE

Capital Campaign

We are pleased to announce that \$661,830.46 has been collected to date in our goal to build a Family Life Center here at Nichols-Bethel. We rejoice in that most of you have completed your pledge or are on time with your commitments. Quite a few of you have exceeded your pledge, which is wonderful. We also have other faithful folks who regularly contribute to our campaign who did not pledge. However, \$198,923.04 is still outstanding and several pledges have not been activated.

God does not foresee equal gifts from all of us, just equal sacrifice, and a shared level of commitment. With eyes of faith, we can see a beautiful, new Family Life Center here at Nichols-Bethel United Methodist Church. "With God, all things are possible."

Capital Campaign Committee

BUILDING COMMITTEE CONTINUES WORK ON THE NEW FAMILY LIFE CENTER

As we communicated in the November, 2008 Newsletter, the estimated total project cost to build the main structure (Base Bid) of the Family Life Center exceeds three million dollars. The Building Committee is very aware of the challenging economic times and the uncertainties now before us. As a result, the Building Committee has requested our architect, Jack Althouse, to develop additional alternatives which will lower the overall costs for our project within the same master plan design. The Building Committee will be reporting back the recommended changes at the scheduled Administrative Board meeting in January, 2009.

In order to continue to move our building program forward, the Building Committee authorized our civil engineer, Terry Schuman, to continue site work planning and to move forward with the soil borings (this involves drilling into the soil to a depth of about 25 feet to determine how to design the footers for the new building). The results of these borings have an unlimited life and are required to begin construction of any section of the Family Life Center.

Late May, 2009 would be the earliest construction could start. All finances and approvals must be in hand before an actual date can be set. The Building Committee will continue to work with the Finance Committee to develop alternative sources of funding including grants, if available, bond programs, and financing options to present to the Administrative Board.

Our project presents us with excitement, challenge, opportunity and work to be done. We can now see what our vision may look like. Many have expressed enthusiasm with our model and rendering. We can see more precisely what our needs will be to bring this building to life. We have a clear mandate to grow from current trends into greater stewardship. And we serve a community about to get larger with new neighbors and new calls for us to serve Christ by serving one another and serving them.

To him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen. Eph. 3: 20-21



UMYF NEWS!

Looking Ahead:

December 6	Adult Fellowship Christmas Party and TALENT SHOW!!!!
December 7	7:00 Rehearse for Christmas Eve
December 14	6:00 Christmas Movie Night and Christmas Eve Rehearsal
December 20	Caroling and Party! Meet at 4:00 Bring white elephant gift!
December 21	5:00 Christmas Eve Rehearsal!
December 24	Family Service Performance
December 28	Happy New Year! No Meeting
January 4	5:00 Regular Meeting
January 11	5:00 Regular Meeting
January 18	5:00 Regular Meeting
January 24	Super Bowl Sub Assembly
January 25	Super Bowl Sub Distribution
January 25	5:00 ROCK meeting

Christmas Party and Caroling

We will venture out in the greater Odenton area again this year to carol to our shut-in members of the congregation. We will be taking cards and little gifts to remember them this holiday season. We will then return to the church for our annual Christmas party where we will dance and eat the night away. Plan on bringing a wrapped "white elephant" gift. These gifts are for our "white elephant" gift exchange during the party. They should be gifts under \$5 and not gender specific. Parents are invited to join us and we will need help driving! It is always one of the highlights of the year! Don't miss it!

Christmas Eve Service

The UMYF will again participate in the family service Christmas Eve. We will not be singing, but will be delivering one of our choreographed

skits, similar to youth Sunday. Please plan on joining us for rehearsals and for the service. What a great chance to bring a special message for the holiday!

ROCK Retreat

We are looking forward to ROCK retreat this year! Please bring you \$125 to Meghan to pay for hotel, 2 breakfasts, and 1 lunch. You will need a few dollars for our dinner stop on the way to the ocean on Friday night, and dinner on our own night on Saturday. If you have not already registered, you need to see Meghan NOW! ROCK will sell out!

Camp Hope

Please indicate your interest in attending Camp Hope 2009! Deposits are quickly coming due in February and numbers of youth and adults attending are quickly needed. So, please sign up on the sheets in the youth room if you are planning on attending. Camp Hope will be the third week of July. Youth must be 14 years old on entering the 9th grade to attend.

Super Bowl Sub Sale

The super bowl sub sale is coming in January! Get ready to take those sub orders and make the assembly line! We will be selling subs the week BEFORE the Super Bowl because we will be at ROCK the weekend of the actual Super Bowl, and therefore not available at church to distribute **them**.

January Bible Study

Please join us for 3 Bible studies during the month of January. We have some brand new curriculum to try out. Join us those weeks from 5:00 – 6:00 in the youth room.

This
page
for ads

December 2008 - January 2009



The Enlightener

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METHODIST CHURCH
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Odenton, Maryland 21113**

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Inside This Issue:

- Christmas Gift Making event for Kids
- Update on New Life Center Building
- Christmas Eve Service
- Cantata! We're making music
- Youth Updates and Happenings

Hello and Welcome!

If you are visiting Nichols-Bethel for the first time (and an Usher just handed you this newsletter) we want you to know we're glad to see you! Inside these pages is just a glimpse of who we are ... there's lots more. Come back and see us next week; we'll be looking for you!!