

**First United Presbyterian Church  
102 North Main Street  
Houston, PA 15342**

# ***The Heavenly Herald***

*On Giving Good Gifts*

In Matthew 7:9-12 Jesus says:

“Which of you, if your child asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, you who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him? So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”

Dear Friends,

**There’s an art to giving good gifts** isn’t there? As much as we want to give good gifts it is not so easy! How do we decide what makes a good gift?

**A good gift**, first of all, **does no harm!** This seems obvious but even this is a challenge. We may find ourselves reading labels a lot more to see if harmful chemicals might be included. Knowing the person to whom this gift will be given tells the giver not to give liquor to an alcoholic, or sugary goodies to a diabetic.

A good gift may be exactly the right size, color, brand or version of a long desired item. Or conversely, a good gift may be a complete surprise, never dreamed of but **perfectly suited for the recipient**. A growing number of requests are for “consumables.” We have so many things we can’t use them all or store them all. Our barns and rental storage units are filled to capacity. So food we love to eat, entertainment we enjoy, a hair cut, manicure or massage are very welcome.

This year I have heard more reference to giving charitable donations in honor of the recipient. But even better, are the gift certificates for charities which are sent along with the catalogue or website so that the recipient can choose the particular use of their gift. Heifer Project International has this option. This kind of giving **does a lot of good for a lot of people**.

**Giving good gifts does the heart of the giver good as well.** Giving good gifts fulfills the Law of Moses. I hope your heart is happy with the gifts you have given this Christmas!



<i>Inside this issue:</i>	
Youth Group	3
Nominating	4
Classes	5
News	6
Church Calendar	7
Serving the Church	8
Birthdays	9

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Jesus used our own experience with gift giving to teach us about God's gifts to us. In the Gospel of Luke 11:13 Jesus is quoted slightly differently, "I you then, who are evil, know who to give good gifts to your children, how much more will **your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit** to those who ask him!"

**Gifts of the Holy Spirit fit the bill completely! Gifts of the Spirit do no harm; they may be long desired or a complete surprise but they fit the recipient exactly right; they do a lot of good for a lot of people; they take up no storage space because they are meant to be used up in building up others in the Body of Christ.**

God, our Father, has given the members of this congregation many, many good gifts of the Holy Spirit. I thank everyone who has contributed their time and energy in sharing their spiritual gifts with all of us through out the Christmas season and this passing year. The officers: Elders and Deacons, Clerks, and Treasurer; our staff: secretaries, treasurers, custodian, and musical director; and all the volunteers teachers, musicians, workers, prayers and participants in the worship and work of this congregation. Thank you all – on behalf of all the rest of us! You build up the Body of Christ here.

Again, I hope your hearts are happy and feeling good for the ways you have given such good gifts. That's the way Spiritual gifts work, the sense of fulfillment and joy is the greatest when you are giving away or using your special gifts from a heart that loves the Lord.

May the Good Lord bless you with a very Happy New Year 2008!

Yours in Christ's Service,  
*Rev. CJE Haury*



### ***Presbytery News***

The churches of Washington Presbytery received notice from Rev. Dr. David Bleivik of his resignation as General Presbyter. He plans to return to parish ministry in Dearborn, Michigan. Rev. Bleivik will lead worship Saturday, January 19th during the Presbytery meeting at Faith Presbyterian Church.

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## *Jr. - Sr. High Happenings*

Our youth group welcomed in the Christmas season by decorating the sanctuary on Saturday, December 1. Once we got all the plugs in the right place on the tree, things went smoothly.

If you get the Observer-Reporter, you probably noticed our youth in the paper again! They were busy celebrating the Advent season with the "Living Nativity", which was held Sunday, December 2, the same time as Houston's Light-up Night. The weather cooperated which helped our kids portray that first holy night at the stable. Cookies were served as well as handing out books to the children who stopped by. Evie, the donkey, Marshmallow and Cocoa, the sheep, Austin and Beckley, the shepherds dogs, and even a few chickens made an appearance. Thanks again to Buddy Jeffers, who offered his chauffeur service!!

The weather wasn't very cheerful, but the singing was as we headed over to the Heritage House to do some Christmas caroling. We had a very warm welcome and enjoyed singing with the residents. We were deeply touched as one of the residents, Betty Dugan, shared a poem with us that she had written years ago. It was a great way to get into the spirit of the season.

Our youth from the confirmation class have been helping our advent worship services by doing the lighting of the advent candles each week. The messages have come in the form of angels at various points in the Nativity story. We hope the congregation has learned as much as the kids.

We will be starting the New Year with an Epiphany tree burning at the Wallaces on Sunday, January 6, 2008. If you had a cut tree that you'd like to contribute, there will be a trailer in the parking lot where you can leave it after Friday, January 4. Look for our further adventures in the new year.

### ***Nursery Volunteers***

We are in the process of making a schedule for the nursery volunteers and would welcome some new faces. It usually works out that you only serve once every three-four months. Please contact Sandy Wallace 724 745-3108, or Jami Craig 724 743-1993

### ***Offering Envelopes***

The offering envelopes are now available to pick up on the front pew in the sanctuary. They are in alphabetical order, so please take yours when you are in church.

**The 2007 Nominating Committee Report**  
***(read or sing to the tune of "Let It Snow!")***

The weather outside was frightful,  
And the calls were not delightful.  
As far as deacons and elders go,  
They said, "No." They said, "No." They said,  
"No!"

It showed no sign of stopping,  
And the vein in my head was popping.  
Meetings would come and go,  
They said, "No." they said, "No." They said,  
"No!"

"No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no...  
No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no...  
No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no...  
No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no!"

But the good Lord, He does bless,  
And soon some folks said, "Yes."  
"Nominating Committee, what do you know?  
All the terms have been filled, so, "Let's go!"

Submitted by David Fee, Chairperson

***Deacon News***

The deacons were busy over the holidays.  
They started by sending gift cards to the college  
students in our congregation for the holidays.  
Two gift boxes were sent to Kuwait, going to  
Justin Stager and Courtney Gilpin.

A luncheon was served for the Washington  
Presbyterian Council in Fellowship Hall.

The deacons would like to thank everyone who  
gave to the blanket collection. Thirty blankets  
were received and given to City Mission and  
"Off the Floor".

***Thanks for Serving***

On behalf of the entire congregation, we  
would like to extend thank-you's to our class  
of 2007 elders, deacons, auditor, and nomi-  
nating committee members:

**Elders**  
Carole Borda  
Cathy Cushey  
Gloria Schmalz  
Rob Smith  
Peggy Yost

**Deacons**  
Ruth Baxter  
Tonya Decker  
Alan Jester  
Mary Skirpan  
Amy Wizczar  
Joe Wizczar

**Nominating Members**  
Bill Speakman  
Don Morford  
Dottie Lesnock  
Ruth Baxter  
David Fee  
Rob Smith

**Auditor**  
Brian Jeffers

We appreciate all the time and service  
you've given!

To the new class of 2010 coming on board,  
we thank you for offering your future time  
and service to our church:

**Elders**  
John Zanaglio  
Cathy Cushey  
Gloria Schmalz  
Grier Adamson  
Kristie Coppola

**Deacons**  
Virginia Johnston  
Cherie Kisla  
Dottie Lesnock  
Mary Skirpan  
Janice Niemiec

**Auditor**  
Brian Jeffers

**Nominating Members\***  
Bill Speakman  
Jackie Shoher

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*From the Treasurer:*

*As we end 2007, I would like to thank the Congregation for your continued stewardship.*

*For the new year of 2008, please keep in mind that I do not see the checks and cash that you deposit in your giving envelopes. Therefore it is very important that you write the designation of your offering on the envelope, as this is what I use to enter your offerings into the computer.*

*If you use the dove envelopes, please remember to include your full name and designation. Your cooperation is appreciated and will allow me to accurately record your giving. If you have any questions, please call me at 724-554-2433. Thank you.*

*Cherie L. Kisla*

### **New Member Classes**

For those wishing to explore becoming members of our church, new member classes will be held Wednesday evenings at 7:00 p.m. starting January 9th. These classes are for those who want to transfer their membership from another church, make re-affirmation of faith, or starting from the beginning if you have had no affiliation with any church. Please see Rev. CjE to sign up.

### **Preparation for Baptism**

A class will be held January 9, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. for anyone interested in having a baptism. Call Rev. CjE to sign up.

We have a relatively new group in our church that I would like to take the time to explain.

The group is called HopeKeepers®. It is a support group/Bible study group that is designed to meet the emotional and spiritual needs of those people who live with a chronic illness or chronic pain. We have partnered with Restministries to bring you this special group. Restministries is a non-denominational Christian organization online that brings support to these people in a Christian environment. You can go to [www.restministries.org](http://www.restministries.org) for more information and to sign up for daily devotions sent to your email address.

Through Hopekeepers, you will have the opportunity to grow spiritually, while surrounded by other Christians who share similar circumstances, unrevealed answers, and even joys, while living with a chronic illness or physical pain. If you have been living with a chronic illness or pain all of your life and think that it's useless to go to a support group at your age, think of the wisdom you could share with others. You could share how you have lived successfully with your illness and how you've held onto your faith during difficult times in your life. We try to keep to the bible study we are on, but we are flexible if there is another need in our group that particular day. We pray for each other during the meetings and throughout our days apart. It's nice to know that someone else understands what you are going through and that they are praying for you.

Our group is made up of people of all ages with different conditions. No one is excluded due to age or severity of the symptoms they live with day to day. If you think this is for you, or someone you know, come and check us out. We meet on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday evenings of each month in the church office at 7:00pm. If you can not drive, please let us know and we will try to arrange transportation for you. For more information please contact Kim Keenan 724-873-0833 or Rev. CJ at the church office.

## ***New Year's Eve Family Night***

Monday, December 31, from 6 -10:00 p. m., The Greater Canonsburg Chamber of Commerce is celebrating Family Night on New Year's Eve at the Iceoplex at Southpointe. This is the 6th year of this wonderful family event! With guards provided at the ice rink, volunteers commandeering pick up games, reasonably priced snack bar, activities for toddlers and a list of surprises, this is an event that is a safe and joyous venue for families.

Admission is \$5.00 (includes skate rental). For more information or to purchase Admission Tickets, please contact the Chamber Office at 724 745-1812. Check the bulletin board for more

## ***Recycle***

Please continue to save your newspaper, junk mail, and catalogs for our recycling bin located in the parking lot behind the church. We receive compensation for the collection, but more importantly, we are helping our environment. This year to date, we have saved 89 cubic yards of landfill space with our 13 tons recycled! Every little bit helps the Deacon's fund with their mission.

## ***Mission Opportunity***

A trip that will forever change your life! North Buffalo Presbyterian Church is sponsoring a mission trip to Mississippi from April 26th through May 3rd. If you or your church might be interested, please call Pastor Gary for additional information at 724 223-5694.

## ***Lunch and a Movie***

The Nurturing Committee will have a catered lunch after church on January 27, followed by the movie *Amazing Grace*. The cost is \$5 and reservations must be in by January 20th. Reservations can be made by calling the church office.

*Amazing Grace* is the heroic story of how one man's passion and perseverance changed the world. Based on the true story of William Wilberforce, *Amazing Grace* follows his courageous quest to pass a law to end the British slave trade and reform society. Wilberforce meets intense opposition but his minister, John Newton, a reformed slave ship captain who penned the beloved hymn "Amazing Grace" urges him to put his faith into action and see the cause through. The movie has a PG rating, a Family seal of approval and is recommended by Dr. James Dobson.



***The family of June Holsey on their loss.***

***The Chastel family on the loss of Alice.***

***The John Lesjak family on the recent loss of Frank Lesjak.***

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## JANUARY 2008 CHURCH CALENDAR

Tuesday, January 1	Office Closed, Happy New Year
Friday, January 4	Drop off cut Christmas trees in parking lot
Sunday, January 6	5:00 p.m. Youth Group, Epiphany tree burning at the Wallaces
Monday, January 7	7:00-9:00 p.m. Officer Training
Tuesday, January 8	7:00 p.m. Deacons meeting
Wednesday, January 9	6:45 p.m. Bells 7:00 p.m. New Member Class and Preparation for Baptism in the Family Room
Sunday, January 13	8:00 p.m. Choir 6:30-8:00 p.m. Confirmation Class
Tuesday, January 15	7:00 p.m. Session meeting in Fellowship Hall
Wednesday, January 16	6:45 p.m. Bells 7:00 p.m. New Member Class in the Family Room
Friday, January 18	8:00 p.m. Choir February newsletter articles due in office.
Sunday, January 20	12:00 p.m. Music & Worship meeting. Family room. 6:30-8:00 p.m. Confirmation Class
Sunday, January 27	12:00 p.m. Lunch and a movie - "Amazing Grace" 6:30-8:00 p.m. Confirmation Class
Wednesday, January 23	6:45 p.m. Bells 7:00 p.m. New Member Class in the Family Room
Wednesday, January 30	8:00 p.m. Choir 6:45 p.m. Bells 8:00 p.m. Choir

### ***DEADLINE***



The deadline for articles for the February 2008 newsletter is Friday, January 18. Please leave any articles you may have on the secretary's desk or you may email them to the church. Thank you for your cooperation.

# SERVING THE CHURCH IN JANUARY 2008



## GREETERS

## Adult Ushers:

### Deacon Greeters:

January 6	Jeff Paxton Nancy Ward
January 13	Ruth Baxter Adelyn Schussler
January 20	Isabelle Alderson Virginia Rockwell
January 27	Lala Patsch Inez Patsch

January 6	Margaret Strimel Renee Poland
January 13	Rob Smith Cathy Cushey
January 20	Cyndi Powell Elaine Bigler
January 27	Bernadette Stager Mike Stager

### Elder Greeters:

January 6	Rev. CjE (GH) Peg Yost (GV) David Fee (MH) Thelma Mitchell (MV)
January 13	Susan Stonebraker (GH) Rev. CjE (GV) Sandy Wallace (MH) Thurman Yost (MV)
January 20	Kathie Putorti (GH) Carole Borda (GV) Rev. CjE (MH) Cathy Cushey (MV)
January 27	Gloria Schmalz (GH) Rob Smith (GV) Buddy Jeffers (MH) Rev. CjE (MV)

## Nursery Workers:

January 6	Sandy Wallace Haley Wallace
January 13	Carrie Cochran Tonya Decker
January 20	Jackie Orbich James Orbich
January 27	Jami Craig Conner Craig

### Money Counters:

John Jones  
Jonnie Swarow

### Liturgist:

Cathy Cushey  
Kate Cushey



Frances Wylie	1
Kylee Moninger	
Tamra Jeffers	2
Denise Spinnenweber	3
Jalyn Shober	
Jillian Strimel	4
Jessica Young	5
Ron Marcase	6
Fred Andy	11
Amy Wiszczor	
Debra Askew	12
Jami Craig	
Joy Bell	
Caleb Naugle	
Dorothy Kotyk	13
Linda Young	14
Emily Johnston	
Blake Molinaro	15
Robert Myers	16
Tiffany Campbell	
Michael Amos	
Dolores Grimes	18
Nancy Lewis	20
Thomas Whitfield IV	21
Tony Marra	23
Cathy Cushey	
Pam Rose	
Karen Jones	24
Robert Arnold III	27
Adam Johnston	
Robert Culp III	
Kimberly Fredericks	30
Ashley Culp	
Mackenzi Marshall	
Bayleigh Comer	31

To contact us: 102 North Main Street, Houston, PA 15342

Phone: 724 746-3040 —

Church Office 310; Open Door Nursery 311; Rev. CjE 313; Meals on Wheels 314

Fax number: 724 746-3041

Website: [www.houstonpresbyterian.org](http://www.houstonpresbyterian.org)

Email: [fupchouston@hky.com](mailto:fupchouston@hky.com); [secretary@houstonpresbyterian.org](mailto:secretary@houstonpresbyterian.org) (for Debbie)

[revcje@houstonpresbyterian.org](mailto:revcje@houstonpresbyterian.org) (for Rev. CjE)

[fupc@houstonpresbyterian.org](mailto:fupc@houstonpresbyterian.org) (for both Debbie and Rev. CjE)

[treasurer@houstonpresbyterian.org](mailto:treasurer@houstonpresbyterian.org) (for Cherie)

**SEE PAGE 9  
FOR DETAILED  
CONTACT  
INFORMATION**

**Nonprofit organization  
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Permit #4**

First United Presbyterian Church  
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Houston, PA 15342



### **Christmas Eve Service Schedule**

4:30 p.m. Family service, Fellowship Hall  
7:00 p.m. Cantata/Bell/Candlelight service  
11:00 p.m. Communion service

**"THE LOVE OF THE LORD IS THE HEARTBEAT OF OUR MISSION!"**