



# Pennington Presbyterian

FAITH + COMMUNITY + SERVICE

## PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

When folks in Mercer County are in crisis, many of them turn to the Crisis Ministry of Trenton and Princeton for help. This non-profit organization has a food pantry, job training, heating assistance fund, and programs to prevent homelessness. But what happens when the Crisis Ministry has a crisis? That is a very real question because the Crisis Ministry's location in Trenton caught fire in the early hours of morning on December 16. The portion of the building that burned housed the Crisis Ministry's food pantry. All the food that they had in storage to help hungry individuals and families was destroyed.

So, what happens now? What happens will very much depend on what you and I do. One church member yesterday told me that she was so touched by the need that she is considering returning a gift she had purchased for a family member and donating that money to Crisis Ministry. I will be talking with my family about what we can do to help.

The Crisis Ministry has set up donation sites to receive food as they begin to find alternative ways to get much needed food to hungry people. Donations can be dropped off at their Princeton location which is housed at Nassau Presbyterian Church on Nassau St. across from Palmer Square. The Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville is also receiving donations. They are located at 2688 Main St. in Lawrenceville. You may also bring items by to our church and put them in the red wagon near the church office. I will make a commitment to taking the red wagon donations and delivering them to one of those churches each day until Christmas. Financial donations are also a great blessing and they can be sent to: 123 East Hanover St., Trenton, NJ, 08608. Half of our Christmas Offering has already been designated for the heat assistance fund and we will support the Crisis Ministry in that way, too.

Peanut butter, green beans and apple sauce may not be gold, frankincense and myrrh, but they are loving and faithful gifts, perhaps the greatest Christmas gifts we will give this year.

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**Next issue: 1/4**  
**Deadline Monday 1/2**  
**9:00 AM**

*Focus is issued the first and third Wednesdays of each month, except July & August. During those two summer months, only one Focus newsletter is published per month.*



I hope to see all of you in worship on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Bring your family and your friends. This is a great time for folks who may not find their way to church on most Sundays to get a taste of what it means to be part of a church; a church that worships God, welcomes everyone, and cares for those in need. God's love in Christ is deep and wide and we get to be people who extend the invitation to this great celebration.

Merry Christmas!  
In Christ,  
*Nancy*  
Nancy Mikoski



Upcoming ...

- Dec. 24, 5 PM** – Christmas Eve Family Service
- Dec. 24, 10 PM** – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
- Dec. 25, 10:15 AM** – Christmas Morning Service

### CHURCH STAFF/CONTACT

*Pastor:*  
Nancy Mikoski

*Office Administrator & FOCUS Editor:* Mary Coleman

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## CALENDAR

### REGULAR WEEKLY SCHEDULE

#### Sunday

9:00 AM— Church School for all ages  
10:15 AM – Worship Service followed by coffee hour  
(Note: Cherub Choir for pre-k through grade 1 meets during part of the worship service)

7:00 PM—Jr./Sr. Highs

#### Wednesday

9:15 AM—Shalom Women's Bible Study  
4:30 PM—Genesis Choir (grades 2-5)  
5:15 PM—Gloria Deo Choir (grades 6 and up)

#### Thursday

7:00 PM—Bell Choir  
8:00 PM—Adult Choir

### LOOKING AHEAD...

**Dec. 24** – Christmas Eve Services  
5 PM & 10 PM

**Dec. 25** – Christmas Day Service  
10:15 AM

Jan. 2 – Personnel Committee

Jan 3 – Deacons

Jan. 6 – OAM Brown Bag Lunch

Jan. 8, 15, 22 & 29 – Inquirer's Class

Jan. 9 – Stephen Ministers

Jan. 9 – Mission Committee

Jan. 16 – Peace Vigil

Jan. 16 – Book Group

**NOTE:** No church school classes on Dec. 25 or Jan. 1

**Church Office:** The church office will be opened Dec. 27 – 30, 9 AM – 12 noon.



## WORSHIP SCHEDULE Sundays

- **Sunday, Dec. 25, 10:15 AM** – *Merry Christmas!* Sermon: Rev. Nancy Mikoski
- **Sunday, Jan. 1, 10:15 AM** – Epiphany Service Sermon: Rev. Jack McAnlis

## CHILDREN'S CHURCH SCHOOL Sunday 9 AM

- **J.A.M.I ("Jesus and Me!"); k-thru-5<sup>th</sup> grade** meets in Lower Titus Hall to be shepherded to weekly hands-on workshops. Through science, drama, music, art, cooking, and more kids gain insight into recurring Bible stories and themes. ■ **INFANTS THROUGH PRE-K** please see page 3 for room locations.

## ADULT CHURCH SCHOOL Sunday 9 AM

- **FORUM** (topics include current events, community concerns, theology, the Bible and Mission) ■ **MAKING FAITH REAL** (group-led open discussion of faith and Spirit in our daily lives). ■ **BIBLICAL LITERATURE AND FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH** (two tracks – one focusing Biblical books, themes and questions and another focusing on core beliefs and practices of the Christian faith)

See website for current offerings

*Sunday School's not just for kids!*

## KIDS, FAMILY, AND SEASONAL DOINGS

- **SR. HIGHS (9-12 GRADE) & JR. HIGHS (6-8 GRADE)**  
SUNDAY, 7 – 8:30 P.M. (*unless stated otherwise*)  
DEC. 25 & JAN. 1 - No meeting during the Christmas Break  
Jr. & Sr. Highs will meet next on **January 8<sup>th</sup>**

### ■ SUNDAY AM CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENTS:

Infants – 2yr. olds: Room 209  
3 yr olds - Pre-School: Room 102  
6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>: Balcony classroom  
Sr. Highs: The Pit  
Interpreting the Bible: The Upper Room  
Forum: Heritage Hall  
Making Faith Real: Room 206

Rotations for K-5<sup>th</sup> grade: Start in Lower Titus Hall then rotate to different locations.

### ■ REMINDER: NO CHURCH SCHOOL CLASSES DEC. 25 OR JAN. 1

- **MISSION COMMITTEE STAR TREE** We again provided much-needed food this Christmas for the children and families served by the Children's Day School in Ewing Township. The need is especially great this year; we thank you for your generosity. Special thanks to Hope Anderson and the Mission Committee for organizing the food baskets and delivering them to the homes! It was a huge undertaking. ■ **ANGEL TREE** The Deacons once again sponsored the Angel Tree for underprivileged children from the Children's Day School. Many thanks to all who participated, helping to make Christmas memorable for these children! A huge thanks to Karen Schmutz and Karen Kelly, who organized this project. ■ **PROGRESSIVE DINNER** PPC's Annual Progressive Christmas dinner was held Saturday, December 10. Everyone had a great time – and the residents at Brandywine at Pennington Assisted Living thoroughly enjoyed the carol singing! Many thanks to Cindy Carothers, Carol Meyer and Sarah Gregg, the Deacons who organized this event. ■ **FAMILY ADVENT CRAFT AND CAROLING EVENT** Thanks to Shannon Smythe, Family Ministry Committee and to those who attended this holiday event. People at Pennington Point loved hearing the Christmas carols! ■ **PPC INQUIRERS CLASS** Are you looking for a church home? If so, come to our Inquirers Class to learn more about Pennington Presbyterian Church. On January 8, January 15, January 22 and January 29 during the education hour (9:00 - 10:00 am) the group will meet to learn more about our worship, our goals and vision, our many internal and outreach programs and our church building itself. Child care is available. Please contact Rev. Nancy Mikoski or Joe Tully if you are interested. (nancy@pennpres.org or call 737-1221 x 14 or jmp.tully@verizon.net) ■ **THANK YOU.** Many thanks to Bill Alford, Michele Alford, Don Dolan, the adult choir and the children's choirs for the special musical offering on Dec. 18. "*Sing Noel!*" was wonderful! ■ **SAVE THE DATE** Frank Runyeon, television, screen and stage actor, translator and performer of Biblical texts will be performing "Afraid!: The Gospel of Mark" during the 10:15 am worship service on January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012. Look for more information on this exciting event in January. ■ **DO YOU LIKE TO COOK AND/OR BAKE?** We are always looking for some help as we reach out to those in need. Whether it is to provide a meal to someone after surgery or to bake cookies for a Memorial Service luncheon, many hands make the load light. If you want to be added to our list of volunteers, please contact Maude Tatar at thetatars@yahoo.com or 818-0711.



### CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Eternal God, this joyful day is radiant with the brilliance of your one true light. May that light illuminate our hearts and shine in our words and deeds. May the hope, the peace, the joy, and the love represented by the birth in Bethlehem fill our lives and become part of all that we say and do.



## OUR CHURCH FAMILY

- Please keep Kevin Swaim in your prayers.
- We extend our sympathy to Andrea & David McDonough and family on the recent death of David's mother.
- We extend our sympathy to Dusty Mulder and family on the recent death of Dusty's husband, Bud. A Memorial Service will be held in our sanctuary on Thursday, December 29, 10 AM.



The Mission, Peacemaking and Justice Committee is holding its 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Peace Vigil for World Peace on Monday, January 16. The Peace Vigil is in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This is an opportunity for members of the community to gather and enjoy quiet contemplation and prayers for peace from 7 am to 7 pm. You may come and go at any time – stay for 15 minutes or 2 hours, whatever fits in your schedule. There will be brief opening and closing services at 7 am and 6:30 pm. The Prayer Vigil will be held in our sanctuary.



## GROUP EFFORTS



### DID YOU KNOW?

You can support the church with attentive giving at the end of the year. The end of the year is traditionally a time for review of financial matters, including your philanthropic plans. Cash is the most popular way to give and these gifts increase tax deductions when they are itemized on income tax returns. Giving investment securities that are worth more than they cost can result in additional savings at tax time. Capital gains taxes on securities that have appreciated in value may be able to be avoided legally when shares of stock are given to the church. Only gifts completed by December 31 can generate income tax deductions. Contact Eric Shields ([ericshields12@gmail.com](mailto:ericshields12@gmail.com)) for more information.

■ **CHRISTMAS OFFERING** Please consider participating in our special offering at Christmas. The Christmas Offering will be collected in special marked envelopes that will be provided in the pews. Gifts designated for the special offering will be directed to two important needs. One half will be directed to Crisis Ministry of Princeton and Trenton for their fund to help people heat their homes during the winter months. Our gift to Crisis Ministry will help local families get through the cold winter. Each month, more than 150 families in our community are threatened with shut-off from their utilities and energy providers. Those in need can seek emergency assistance from the Crisis Ministry. The balance of our offering, one half, will be directed to the Presbyterian Pension Relief Fund. This portion of our offering will support those who served our church in ministry and have insufficient financial support through their pension income and who, without this help, must struggle with poverty. ■ **HOME-FRONT MEALS PREP & DELIVERY—THUR., JAN. 19** If you can provide cookies, please call Dee Wilson at 737-7675. (Please note: The cookies can be store bought.) Have questions about HomeFront? Call Dee at the phone number listed above. ■ **BOOK GROUP** The PPC Book Group will meet on Mon, Jan. 16, 7:30 PM, at Jane Simpson's house to discuss Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston. Newcomers are always welcome! Call Jane (466-4075) with any questions. ■ **OAM BROWN BAG LUNCH** All are welcome to attend the next OAM Brown Bag Luncheon, which is scheduled for Friday, Jan. 6, 2012. Guitarist Karl Dentino will provide entertainment. His performance, which will center on minstrel-style blues and Tin Pan Alley tunes from the 1920s and 1930s, will be equal parts history, humor, stories and songs. Lunch is at 12:30 p.m., program at 1:00 p.m. Bring your sandwich, beverages and light desserts will be provided. ■ **STEPHEN MINISTRY** One of the best ways to tell that our congregation cares is by our commitment to Stephen Ministry. This is an important way that we express God's love to those around us. Stephen Ministers share the warmth of God's love with those who need it most: the lonely, the depressed, the grieving to name a few. If you, or someone you know, needs some help please contact Karin McAnlis (737-0536), Andrea McDonough (737-6981) or Bob Fletcher (393-7610) for more information.

### PENNINGTON PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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Return Service Requested

