



### **From the Pastor...**

Ask a Child; what are you giving for Christmas?

*Matthew 2.11: 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 gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

It's the 19<sup>th</sup> of November and the stores have already introduced us to the Christmas season. They have had Christmas up on the shelves and commercials on the television for two weeks already. Black Friday sales started before Black Friday with our cultures Christmas gospel; let's go shopping for gifts. The offering of gifts to the Christ-child is a beautiful moment in our Christmas story and I was often told as a child that this is why we exchange gifts, to commemorate the generosity of the Wise Men to Jesus. This year, my family is going to practice this story in a unique but simply way that I hope you too will try. Actually, you probably already have without realizing it.

The wise men were obviously educated and therefore wealthy men. They traveled a long distance which took years. Most scholars think that Jesus was probably well past the stage of infancy by the time the Wise Men arrived, which illustrates not only the distance of their travel, but also their commitment to delivering these gifts. This was no mere convenience, but a mission of great faithfulness and passion. We should also remember that Joseph and Mary were by no means wealthy people. Jesus was born into poverty, so the Wise Men undertook a long and difficult mission so as to offer kindness and support to the Messiah born into poverty.

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### **From the Pastor (continued...)**

So often, after Christmas, people will ask Lance and Isaac; 'What did you get for Christmas?' or 'What did Santa bring you?' This year, I want to shift that question and encourage people to ask them, 'What did you give for Christmas this year?' There are a growing number of people, faithful Christian families, who, growing increasingly uncomfortable with the rampant consumer influence on one of our holiest of days, try to teach their children something more than the common lesson that Christmas is a time to be inundated with toys. Many families, have begun giving children 'presents' for them to give to others. Some of these are actual gifts; toys, food items, basic clothing. Some of these are gifts of money. But the point is to interrupt the cycle of 'What am I going to get?' with 'What am I going to give?'

This is going to become a regular part of our Christmas celebrations. Lance and Isaac never want for presents. I want them to start thinking about what they can give to others. Even if you don't have kids of your own, you could consider doing some of the giving you already do to and through the church, through the children of the church. A check for \$10.00 or a half-dozen cans of tuna, given as a gift to a child with the agreement that they can, with your support and their parents, give a gift to someone else at Christmas. I'm not saying give more on top of what you already give, I am suggesting that we involve the children of the church in considering who to give to and how to deliver it. Involving them in the process, teaches them the meaning of the story of the Wise Men, and the true meaning of Christmas. Consider it won't you?

*Pastor Dan*



## Worship & Fellowship News



October and November are now behind us and we look ahead to the Christmas season, and the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. Advent is upon us and we are working on our Christmas Eve service. We are anticipating an exciting holiday season with special readings and poems.

W&F will also continue working with Pastor Darin on our new membership program with our new members and mentors. We will have our Christmas caroling night at Overlook Nursing Home with the date TBA (watch Sunday's bulletins for the date). Also, the visitation of the church shut-ins continues to be a great success!



On a personal note...with so much going on in our lives today and the ways of the world, I would like to say thank you to my church family for all the wonderful things you do and all the heart felt things you do to help make Berean Baptist Church a wonderful place to be every day of the year. We get busy with things and we sometimes forget the true meaning of the holiday season. But as we reach out and help those who need us the most, we can really take a step back and see the important things we all do. So I would like to say thank you from all of us from Worship and Fellowship and I hope you all have a safe and healthy Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!!

God Bless you all...

Peacefully yours,  
Dee

*And the angel said unto them, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." -Luke 2:10-12*



## BEREAN BAPTIST BUSY BEES HOLIDAY CHEER



*Invites ALL Women & Girls OF BEREAN  
for eats & treats*

*at Linda Morgenstern's*

*ADDRESS : 7 Rainbow Rd, Chepachet, 568-5681*

*December 5 @ 10 a.m.*

*Candle Circle Ceremony*

*Christmas Carols*

*Christmas Devotional*

*Dive Designs Raffle  
(benefit Deacon's Fund)*

Directions: from Rte 44S turn right on Spring Grove, take right on Rainbow. From Rte 44N turn left on Douglas Hook, take left on Rainbow.

*R.S.V.P.*

## Outreach News



SNOW!! Okay, I said the "S" word.....I love snow, it is so beautiful and sparkly as it falls from the heavens above. I don't care about the dirty way our streets look as the snow begins to melt, I still see the center, the pretty crystal like flakes. It's like Jesus is there, in the middle, waiting for us to clean up our mess and then come to Him and say, alright, I'm done now with that part of life, I only want the clean and good part and only then the dirt around us disappears. The center part, the clean snow that eventually melts, is our spirit soaking up His goodness.

I don't even know where to begin as I reflect on these past six years with Outreach. From the moment I met Mary Kay and witnessed her kind and generous spirit I knew I had found a place where I could learn about Jesus and grow to understand what I might be able to offer to others in need. Her inspiration kept me focused on what the true intent of mission outreach is...love and compassion for your fellowman while offering comfort and dignity. New ministries began to be created with the support of the congregation and I am blessed to have been a part of these ministries. As I depart from Outreach, the Spirit will continue to fill me and guide me on my journey. Outreach will be under the capable guidance and direction of Kathy Roberts, who over this past year I have come to know as a friend. She is a joy to work with and very funny!! Please be sure to welcome her as the new chair of Outreach beginning in 2010.

Outreach has been busy with the Thanksgiving food baskets which were distributed on Sunday Nov 22nd to the 25 families. The Victorian Christmas in downtown Pascoag is now over and we thank all of you who supported Outreach with this fundraiser. Thank you to Dee & Missy for coordinating this. →

## Outreach News (continued...)

December you will see us scurrying around as we prepare for the Children's Christmas Party on Dec 19th and the distribution of food baskets, turkeys, personal hygiene products and gifts for the children (40) from the 25 families we have adopted. This huge undertaking is coordinated by Rhonda and she is assisted by many elves. Toys for Tots will provide toy gifts for the younger children (thank you Dee) and gifts for the teenagers have been purchased through your generous donations and others in the community who have helped.



All of this activity is wonderful and exciting, but we must remember to enjoy the Christmas Season for what it represents, the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. If we have Him in our hearts and minds, then we are filled with His Love. Decorations, gifts, and eggnog (spiked or not!) are fun to enjoy but if our relationship is true with Jesus then this Christmas will be one to embrace.

Merry Christmas to everyone and may your New Year be blessed with Peace and Happiness!

Sharon

*For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*-Isaiah 9:6*



## White Cross Appreciation



WOW! What a great display of caring for those you don't even know. As of October 30, 2009, the Berean family has collected the items listed below from the White Cross Giving Tree for South Providence Ministries. The SPNM after-school program, Santa's workshop, and baby layette program will all benefit from your gifts.

6 infant sleepers	1 package of diapers
12 hand knitted scarves	4 hand knitted hats
5 dolls	6 board games
3 books	6 jump ropes
3 pkgs. of paper plates, cups, napkins, etc.	
6 rolls of wrapping paper	1 kickball
2 footballs	2 basketballs
3 packages boy's socks	3 packages girl's socks
1 twin blanket	

I've calculated that it's approximately \$350.00 worth of items thus far!

I just want to say that the After-School Program encourages children to stay in school, work hard and get along with others. They found that children were "pocketing" their cookie snacks provided after school because they were saving them for later since it was the only dinner they would get. SPNM now serves dinner to all children participating in the program – 5 days a week! The program is limited to a certain number of children and their parents do have to pay a fee for the program, if able. Some of the children going through the program have received scholarships and gone on to college, so it's really a worthwhile program.

**THANK YOU for your generous giving!!**

## Canonicus 5K Walk/Run for Children in Poverty

Thanks to all those who supported the walkers (no runners this year); we all made it!

Walkers: Allison Cote (bad back and all)

Richard Potts-Cote

Colleen Wheeler

Kathy Roberts

Priscilla Maughn

Paula Valliere (Priscilla's sister)

Sue Maiocchi



Sue, Colleen and Allison brought up the rear with 3.1 miles in 1 hour, 5 minutes and 10 seconds. We had a good time; the weather was a little cool, but the sun was shining and it was a pretty time of year for a good, brisk walk.

Prizes were given out and Sue won first prize for raising the most money (\$ 305.00) thanks to her Autocrat Coffee and Berean Baptist families – thank you! First prize was one week at camp – too bad Sue is too old to participate, but some young person at SPNM will enjoy a week at camp next summer.

If you sponsored a walker and have not given them your donation, please do so soon. We are awaiting the total raised for Children in Poverty. ABCORI will be giving grants to programs here in RI that are working to eliminate childhood poverty in our state.

**THANKS SO MUCH FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**



## American Baptist Women

All New England States 2010 Spiritual Retreat  
at the Courtyard by Marriott in Billerica, MA  
Friday night – Sunday noon  
February 26-28, 2010



Imagine, 200+ women and girls worshipping God in vibrant song and with contemplative worship, 200+ women and girls meeting new friends in small groups, yes, 200+ women and girls!

Time for Bible Study, discussion, reflection, early morning Water Aerobic Class and more...

This year's theme is "Women Destined for God's Purpose"

Our retreat speaker is Dr. Trinette McCray.

(former President of ABC-USA, current president of the American Baptist Historical Society, and is an adjunct faculty with Central Baptist Seminary's Milwaukee Center, and in Urban Ministry at Cardinal Stritch University)



Worship Leaders: *Sweet Rain*

Room + Meals/woman: Single \$ 215/Double \$ 135/Triple \$ 110  
Registration Fee/woman: \$ 20. Girls: Lodging FREE with Mom/\$ 30 for 3 meals + \$ 10 Registration Fee.  
(Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner)

Make sure you get your registration in right away (once available) because space is limited! Contact Laura Ward, Personal Development Coordinator for ABWM of RI at

[layo624@yahoo.com](mailto:layo624@yahoo.com) or 339-7886 for more info.

May the joy of the angels,  
the eagerness of the shepherds,  
the perseverance of the wise men,  
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,  
and the peace of the Christ child  
be yours at Christmas.  
And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be upon you and remain with you  
always.

--The Promise of His Glory



Inspired by the Scripture verse, "...at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord..." (Philippians 2:10-1), the Kneeling Santa beautifully blends the religious and secular aspects of Christmas. It refocuses our celebrations on the manger and God's greatest gift to us - His Son, Jesus. In the presence of such love we are all brought to our knees. The Kneeling Santa also reminds us of the original St. Nicholas and his mission to live Christ's love by sharing his gifts with those in need.

### Santa's Christmas Prayer

On Christmas Eve the other night I saw the most amazing sight,  
for there beneath the Christmas tree was Santa kneeling on his knee.  
His countenance was different than that all-familiar, jolly grin;  
his head was bowed, with hand to breast, and slightly tucked into his vest.  
For there in a nativity was Jesus and His family,  
and as I heard him start to pray, I listened close to what he'd say.

"Lord, You know that You're the reason  
I take pleasure in this season.  
I don't want to take Your place,  
but just reflect Your wondrous grace.  
I hope you'll help them understand  
I'm just an ordinary man,  
who found a way to do Your will  
by finding kids with needs to fill.  
But all those centuries ago,  
there was no way for me to know  
that they would make so much of me,  
and all the gifts beneath the tree.  
They think I have some hidden power  
granted at the midnight hour,  
but it is my love for You  
inspiring the things I do.  
And so when they begin to open  
gifts for which they have been hoping,  
may they give You all the glory,  
for You're the One True Christmas story."



## Merry Christmas from the Secretary!



Most of you don't know that I am a dancer...have been since I could walk. I continued to dance right through grad school, but when I returned home, the dancing stopped. Trying to find a place to dance and fit it in between 3 jobs is a tricky task. However, this past year, I was led to a Christian based dance school in Smithfield. Over the year, it was as if a light in me had been turned back on. A light, joy and sparkle that came from one of the gifts God blessed me with.

So it does not surprise me that the favorite dance I have choreographed over the years is *Breath of Heaven*. It is sung from Mary's viewpoint as she is pregnant with Jesus. She questions why she was chosen to carry His son, admits to being frightened, and wonders if someone else should have her place. But Mary does realize that this is His master plan and she will give it her all. When I dance to this song, I often feel as though I take on the role of Mary; feel what she was feeling. And I think that is why this dance is so powerful for me to perform.

But I also think we all have a little Mary in us. God has chosen each of us and given us talents to fulfill some part of His master plan. We may not know what it is or how things will play out, but He does. We must be patient. And while being patient, take a moment out of our busy lives, especially now during the holidays, and just be quiet. Listen as God speaks...and if not to you, through others. It was after all, my own pastor who kept nudging me to get back into dance. And look how wonderful that turned out to be! I now take a worship dance class and praise Him with dance, flags, streamers and tambourines...something I never thought I would do.

This is my second Christmas with Berean...how quickly time flies! I am forever grateful to God who led me here. I have met wonderful people and made great friendships. I have enjoyed meeting more and more of you and hope you have enjoyed learning more about me. I wish everyone and their families a beautiful holiday season filled with peace, love and memories. May God always be in your heart. And remember the true meaning of Christmas...a little babe was born in a lowly manger and went on to change the world. Jesus is the reason for the season and the reason Santa kneels in admiration at his cradle.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year! Peace & Love,

*Bonnie*



## CHRISTMAS FLOWER NOTICE



*(Sunday before Christmas 2009)*

*We are looking forward to the Poinsettia Flower Display for our worship service on **Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>**. If you wish to present flowers for this occasion, Please fill out this form and do one of the following:*

*Place in the Offering plate on Sunday,  
Place in the basket in the foyer,  
or mail to the church before December 13<sup>th</sup>  
**December 13<sup>th</sup> is the deadline!!***

*Plants are to be delivered to the church on  
Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup> between 10:00 a.m. and Noon  
Or please make other arrangements.*

I wish to present \_\_\_\_ (number) memorial plants  
\_\_\_\_ in Memory of - or- \_\_\_\_ in Honor of

Given by

## December Birthdays

December 15 - Joyce Davis  
December 17 - Debbie Ferland  
December 25 - Jesus

**\*\*If I forgot your birthday,  
please let me know so I can add it\*\***



### REMINDERS

Flowers help beautify our Sanctuary  
and can be given  
“In Honor of” or “In Memory of”  
a special someone or event or “Just Because”.

**Next newsletter:** January 2010

*Committee Chairpersons:*  
Please submit your report to the  
Church Secretary on or before  
the **16th of December.**