

Good News from Good Hope!



Day after day... they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ. ❖ Acts 5:42
Good Hope Reformed Presbyterian Church ❖ The Presbyterian Church in America ❖ December 2003

Growing Closer to Our New Church Home as 2003 Ends

by Ian Macdonald, Building Committee Chairman

As we near the end of another year, we do it with optimism that 2004 will be our year for a new church home. Our Site Development Plan was re-filed (time number three) with Howard County on November 9th, and we should have a response from the county no later than December 22nd. If it is approved, then we will proceed with the steps to acquire grading and building permits, and then construction can begin.

The committee met with **Jim Palmer**, our architect, to review his plans, and subsequently **Matt Malanoski** and **Peter Haber** met with **Mike Weigand**, our mechanical engineer, to seek ways to reduce the costs of the HVAC system. With the information gathered at that meeting, Matt and Jim Palmer met with the county to present and discuss their ideas. Matt, using what he learned from the county, is estimating costs for two alternate methods of fire protection to satisfy code requirements.

A congregational meeting will be scheduled when more definite costs and details can be presented, but at this time we can say that: (1) costs are more than anticipated, especially those for site development; (2) we will have four classrooms instead of three; and (3) there will be a nursery that can be used very easily as a fellowship hall, adequate for small weddings and receptions. The committee remains optimistic about the project, but knows that prayer and commitment are essential elements for success. ❖

Men's Basketball

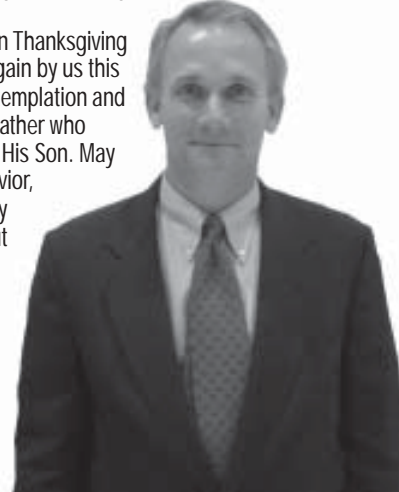
Burn off some of those extra holiday calories with Thursday night basketball for all men in high school or beyond. Mark your calendars now for Thursdays, December 4th and 18th from 8-10pm at Briggs Chaney Middle School. Bring a friend!

Thanks Be to God for the Indescribable Gift of His Son

As I write this brief article for the December newsletter, it occurs to me that we are providentially blessed to have the celebration of Thanksgiving and Christmas so close together. In II Corinthians 9:15, Paul wrote, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" Words of thanks cannot match the gift. Thoughts of appreciation cannot exceed the gift's worth. Emotions of affection towards God for His gift cannot rise high enough to surpass the gift's value.

How can we give adequate thanks for that which is indescribable? We cannot, but the quest to describe and ascribe thanks to God for His indescribable gift should be perpetually sought. In the study of systematic theology, God is regarded as incomprehensible. The term does not mean that you cannot know anything about God, but rather that you will never know everything in exacting detail about God. In like manner, giving thanks to God for His indescribable gift is not an effort that is ever completed, but a joyful continuing pursuit that deems the effort a token of the legitimate recognition that is due Him.

May the bridge that exists between Thanksgiving and Christmas be strolled once again by us this year. May we be caught up in contemplation and articulation of the glories of the Father who would give His indescribable gift, His Son. May we marvel anew at our humble Savior, born for us, His glories hidden by the rags around His tiny body, but His glory within never dimmed. I am glad that God has providentially placed Thanksgiving and Christmas so close together. May these celebrations ignite in us a response to the everlasting exhortation, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" ❖



Focus on Our Missionaries: Steve and Kelly Marusich, University of Maryland

Greetings from around the Beltway. It is a hectic time at home and on campus for the Marusich family. On the home front, like many of you, we have been traveling, and there is more traveling in the future. The holidays never prove to be as restful as I hope they will be. The family is healthy and happy though—Jackson is now 4½ and is really a joy to parent. He has become such a helper around the house. Eli is now 18 months and a talking machine—"no" and "iwann..." are two of his favorite words.

On campus, we are getting ready to wrap up the fall semester—this year is already flying by. We have been blessed to have **Melissa Carder** helping this year as a full-time intern. She works with the women in our group, and her presence is felt in wonderful ways. This fall, the women participated in a study of Galatians. In addition, she met regularly with the women in the group for discipleship and to develop relationships. On top of that, she is a rabid social planner. We are really blessed to have her—her contribution to the work has been immeasurable.

Our Tuesday night group has been studying the book of John. We have seen a few new faces this fall and lots of old faces. Growth at the University of Maryland continues to prove a challenge for RUF...

The biggest development in the group, not by design, has been a spurt of romantic relationships. It seems that everyone has a "dating problem." This has actually been a good thing, as these problems have opened doors for us through which to share the Bible's wisdom on relationships and to talk about some of our students' deeper issues of sin and idolatry.

In closing, I would ask you to pray for us. Pray that the Holy Spirit will empower all that we do here on the campus of the University of Maryland. Next semester, we will continue our study of John on Tuesday nights, the women will study 1 John in their small group, and I am unsure of what the men's small group will study—no matter what, we can use your prayers. Also, we need wisdom as we try to counsel students through the problems of their lives (relationships, calling, family, classes, etc.). Pray that God would give us wisdom in this. Lastly, we have been trying to expose our students to more mercy ministry opportunities on a monthly basis—please pray that these events will not be all for show with no effect. We very much appreciate your prayers and support. God bless!



Thank you for your prayers for RUF and for us.

Steve Marusich

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 Current Meeting Location:
 Briggs Chaney Middle School
 1901 Rainbow Drive
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Join us for Worship at 9:30am and Sunday School at 11:00am each Sunday.
www.goodhopepeca.com

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December 2003

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 Worship Service - 9:30am Congregational Meeting 11:00am	1	2	3	4 Men's Basketball at Briggs Chaney Middle School 8-10pm	5	6
7 Worship Service - 9:30am Sunday School - 11:00am	8	9	10	11 Session Meeting at Waller's House 7:30pm	12 Christmas Party at Macdonalds' House 7:00pm	13
14 Worship Service - 9:30am Communion to be served Sunday School - 11:00am Children's Christmas Play at Briggs Chaney 7:00pm	15	16	17	18 Men's Basketball at Briggs Chaney Middle School 8-10pm	19	20
21 Worship Service - 9:30am Sunday School - 11:00am	22 Info for December newsletter due to Kate Haber today!	23	24 Christmas Eve Service at Tim and Beth Rowan's House 5:00pm	25	26	27 Building Committee at the Macdonalds' House - 7:30am
28 Worship Service - 9:30am Sunday School - 11:00am	29	30	31	1	2	3

Christmas Party

The Macdonalds' home is a treat to visit during Christmastime. They will once again host our annual Christmas party on **Friday, December 12th at 7:00pm**. Please bring your favorite finger food and fork-free desserts to share. Coffee and punch will be provided, and come prepared to enjoy the fellowship and carol singing. Thank you, Macdonalds!

Communion Schedule

We will celebrate communion with our Lord on **Sunday, December 14th** during morning worship. Let us together be strengthened in Him.

Christmas Eve Service

Our candlelight Christmas Eve service will be held on **Wednesday, December 24th from 5-6pm** at the home of Tim and Beth Rowan. We will gather to sing carols and marvel as we listen to the Scriptural story of Christ's birth. Join us in this beautiful setting as we come together to worship Christ.

Celebrate the Gift in the Present!

Don't miss this year's children's Christmas play, "The Gift in the Present," featuring a Christian family that is reminded of the true meaning of Christmas as they have the opportunity to share materially and spiritually with their less fortunate neighbors.

Our children work hard on the play each year in order to share this message with our church family and with their family and friends who come to watch our play. Please pray that the children will learn their lines and music and that they will effectively communicate the Gospel through the means of this play.

We will be using the stage on December 7th and December 14th for practice during the Sunday School hour. Adults can help by quickly vacating the space for our use on those dates! Parents can be sure to help their children master their lines this week, since scripts are not to be used in the remaining rehearsals.

The play will be performed on **Sunday, December 14th at 7:00pm** at Briggs Chaney Middle School. Each family is asked to bring a plate of Christmas cookies or finger foods to share after the play. ❖