

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 ❖ February 2004

Celebrating the Gift in the Present

by *Chris Waller, Christmas Play Director Extraordinaire*

The children sang a song from an old poem which asks, "What can I give Him? Poor as I am, if I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb... yet what can I give Him? Give Him my heart." I used this sentiment to challenge the 30 children involved in this year's Christmas play to give 100% as their gift to Jesus. We all agreed that if we could see Jesus, we would wrap up the best present that we could manage. I encouraged the children to put their hearts into the play and give it as a gift to Jesus.

Despite bad weather, lack of practices, and no chance to polish our performance, I think this year's play was a success. I saw the children giving their hearts to Jesus as gift to Him and also to the congregation! I saw this in the earnest faces of the angels, shepherds, wise men, and our adorable Mary and Joseph. I saw the hearts of the children as they threw themselves into the characters in one of the "families." I saw middle schoolers overcome adolescent self-consciousness and give their hearts to the performance. Thank you, children, for giving such a wonderful gift to Jesus for His birthday and for delighting the Good Hope family and guests once again.

There were others who gave selflessly to help perform "The Gift in the Present." The set-up crew worked tirelessly to help. Moms and Dads drilled lines and baked cookies. Sunday School teachers aided in the bedlam of practices. **Tracy Young** sewed even more costumes. Our pastor spent hours building the wonderful sets! And young adults and high schoolers jumped in to help write commercials (**Becky Hadeed**), film commercials (**Nick Rowan**), assist with costume changes (**Kristen Malanoski** and **Rachel Waller**) and assist singing on stage (**Caleb Waller**, **Esther French**, and **Cindi Rowan**). Adults such as **Steve Gerwin** and **Gil Young** helped with lights and props. These were all gifts from the heart, and I thank you!

Most of all, I thank the Lord for His faithfulness and for the opportunity to serve Him through the children's Christmas play. ❖

A New Year for Building Progress

by *Ian Macdonald, Building Committee Chairman*

The biggest obstacles facing our building project, money (assuming continued generosity of the congregation) and county approval, are mostly behind us now as we begin the new year, but we are not yet ready to move into our new sanctuary. Much is happening, and there is an acceleration of approaching milestones and enthusiasm among building committee members and others.

As the new year begins, we are thankful that Howard County has pronounced our site plan "technically correct" and seems willing to accept our argument that we do not need to install a costly sprinkler system. The timetable of next steps includes:

- Completion of the site development process. This will require: cost estimates which **Steve Gerwin** hopes to have completed in February; estimation by the county of fees due, based on the information that Steve supplies; site plan adjustments and forest conservation plan to be supplied by **Rob Vogel**; and payment of necessary fees and purchase of Surety Bonds by **Bill Davis**.
- Completion of the architect's plans by the middle of February. These plans will not include a sprinkler system, but will use the HVAC model proposed by **Matt Malanoski** and **Peter Haber** after their meeting with Wiegand Associates, our mechanical engineering contractor.
- Estimation of construction price by Springbrook Home Improvements.
- Congregational meeting in late March to present plan.
- Grading permit approval by April 1, 2004, and building permit no later than May 1, 2004, so that construction may begin.
- Sanctuary ready for occupancy no later than May 1, 2005.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the project could be accelerated so that we could worship in our new home on March 27, 2005, Easter Sunday?

Continue to thank the Lord for our progress and to pray for His continued guidance and support. ❖

Focus on Our Missionaries: *Chris and Lisa Moore, Mission to the World*

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! We trust that your Christmas celebrations were full of joy in the knowledge that our God humbled Himself to be born in a manger. We enjoyed our first Christmas here in the Middle Eastern city which is our new home, as well as our first Christmas as a family of five. Lydia Faith was born in June, and she has been like sunshine to our family. Conor (5) and Emerson (3) adore their little sister, and she seems to know that big brother and big sister would do almost anything to make her smile! Truly we have been blessed.

Conor is attending a local preschool and is picking up the language at an incredible pace. We have been proud of his courage in the midst of a challenging situation (there are no other English speakers at the school). Emma and I are enjoying our time alone together in the mornings while Conor is at school. She is truly a tender heart and seems to believe that she cannot tell us enough that she loves us.

Chris has begun classes at the university. His experience there has already provided insight into the worldview and culture of the people here. I continue in my responsibilities as wife and mother at home. I have also been blessed with some interesting and exciting friendships in our neighborhood.

The Presbyterian church with which we are working rejoiced in its first official Christmas Eve service. It was truly a treat to worship alongside brothers and sisters in a land of such rich Christian history, but so little current belief. The church has been worshipping publicly for three months now, and the pastors have recently been told by the police that if they do not obtain official zoning approval as a place of worship within 30 days, they will be forbidden to worship there any longer. Our country provides for freedom of religion, but often bureaucracy and red tape are used to close down any attempts to make use of that right.

Please pray for God's will to be accomplished in the church's situation and that He would glorify His name in this country. Please also pray for Chris and me as parents, that we would love our children well and lead them faithfully in the ways of God. Pray that God would grow and develop our marriage and family and that we would be a light and encouragement in this land.

Thank you for your faithful prayers on behalf of the work of God in this place. May you be blessed richly as you seek Him and submit to His work in your hearts.

Your fellow servants in Christ,

Chris, Lisa, Conor, Emerson, and Lydia



Good Hope Reformed Presbyterian Church
 Post Office Box 164
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 (301) 236-4151
 Current Meeting Location:
 Briggs Chaney Middle School
 1901 Rainbow Drive
 Silver Spring, MD 20905
 Join us for Worship at 9:30am and Sunday School at 11:00am each Sunday
 www.goodhopepeca.com

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February 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Worship Service - 9:30am Sunday School - 11:00am Ron Higgins GG - 6:00pm Youth Group GG - 6:00pm	2	3	4	5 Men's Basketball at Briggs Chaney Middle School 8-10pm	6	7
8 Worship Service - 9:30am Sunday School - 11:00am Ron Higgins GG - 6:00pm	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 Worship Service - 9:30am Communion to be served Sunday School - 11:00am Ron Higgins GG - 6:00pm Youth Group GG - 6:00pm	16	17	18	19 Session Meeting 7:30pm Men's Basketball 8-10pm	20 Missions Conference Dinner at the Macdonalds' House 6:30pm	21 Building Committee 7:30am Missions Conference 5:30-8:00pm
22 Missions Conference 9:30am-12noon	23	24 Info for March newsletter due to Kate Haber today!	25	26	27	28
29 Worship Service - 9:30am Sunday School - 11:00am Ron Higgins GG - 6:00pm Youth Group GG - 6:00pm	1	2	3	4	5	6

Get Ready for February—The Month of Love!

When February rolls around, many in our society focus their thoughts on love. Valentine's Day is February 14th, and with that comes gifts, cards, candy, and flowers. Red hearts and red roses are the order of the day. Poetic language crafted by surrogate writers is purchased and disseminated by the less articulate. Most feel a duty to express their affection to the ones they love and especially to their "special someone." While this orchestrated celebration may be artificial and contrived, in other ways it is fine and, to a degree, mirrors a goal that is standard operating procedure for the Christian.

The Christian has been loved by God, is loved now, and will be loved forever. Long before the words of Valentines were uttered, these words were written:

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called the children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1)

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

"I have loved you with an everlasting love." (Jeremiah 31:3)

The Christian is loved by God and is also supposed to love others. Our culture's annual reminder to love, although appreciated, is already the Christian's daily mandate. When I was a child in elementary school, we as students exchanged Valentine's cards. That practice still occurs, even while the main object of Valentine's Day is one's sweetheart. The Scriptures acknowledge that God has made different types of love which are exhibited in different types of human relationships and, in particular, His "agape" love which exceeds by degree and kind all other loves. The Christian is exhorted, encouraged, and commanded to exhibit the appropriate type of love that corresponds to the relationship for which it calls. Consider these examples:

"Husbands, love your wives." (Colossians 3:19)

"Younger women, love your husbands and children." (Titus 2:4)

"Love your enemies." (Matthew 5:44)

"Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." (Ephesians 5:1,2)

February is upon us. The love focus will be trotted out, yet Valentine's day is not a "catch up" day. It is a routine day that the Christian does not mind being caught up in. ❖

