

# 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 Presbyterian Church ❖ The Presbyterian Church in America ❖ January 2008

## 2008 Is A New Year—Will It Be Just The Same Old Story Again?

**T**he sun rises, the sun goes down, and hurries back to the place where it rises. The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuit the wind returns. All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again." (Ecclesiastes 1:5-7) In his observation of the sun, the wind, and the streams, the writer of Ecclesiastes describes the seamless and repetitive nature of creation. In his musings he wonders if this merry-go-round life is useless? "Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity. What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun? A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever." (Ecclesiastes 1:2-4) Someone might say, "I've seen the crystal ball dropped in Times Square in New York City. All they do is crank it up and drop it down year after year after year. I've heard people blowing horns, rattling irritating noisemakers, and being covered in street-littering confetti. They act like something new is happening. It's all the same old tired celebration." It's almost as redundant as the theme in the movie "Groundhog Day," where Bill Murray wakes up each morning to live through the exact events of the previous day.

Cynicism or even realism taken alone is not an adequate analysis for what actually takes place during the course of time. When the sun rises, it provides heat for those who would otherwise die in cold darkness. It causes the crops to grow, which assuage the nagging hunger inside everyone's belly. When the wind blows, it provides refreshing currents of air to cool the brow of people while they work. It even produces a smile upon the face of a child whose first kite is propelled upward into the air, rising higher and higher as if it's bumping into the clouds. The moving streams prevent the stagnant algae-laden condition of a motionless pond and beckon men to renew their bodies with a cool drink or dive in for a playful swim. These are a few benefits of God's world, even if they occur on a stage that does not seem to change.

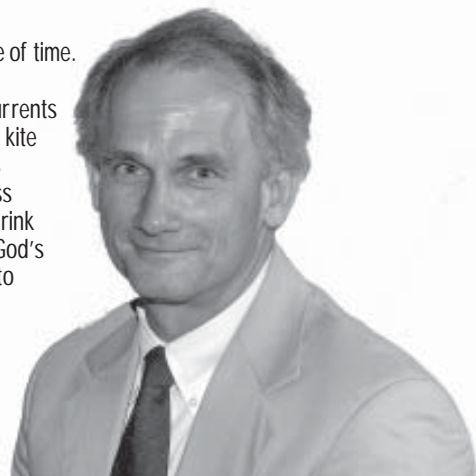
### *Winter Has Just Begun!*

In case of inclement weather to come on Sunday mornings this winter, please check the church website at [www.goodhopepca.com](http://www.goodhopepca.com) or call the church at (301)317-1398.

### *Join a Growth Group!*

The new year is a great time to incorporate a small group Bible study into your schedule. Growth groups meet in various homes on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings. Please contact **Jack Waller** with any questions.

But there is more. The world is God's theater. Time is God's movie. God's script. There is a plot. There is a climax, and there is a conclusion. The writer of Hebrews recognized this. He wrote, "You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of Your hands; they will perish, but You remain; they will all wear out like a garment, like a robe You will roll them up, like a garment they will be changed. But You are the same and Your years will have no end." (Hebrews 1:10-12) This world with its patterns, though never seeming to change, is the place where God works out His salvation through the death and resurrection of His Son. This is the place and the time where Paul says, "it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." (Philippians 2:13) One day the Lord will bring an end to His use of this present creation, and He will make it new again. May we avoid the conclusion that all is vanity or that it is unnecessary to be involved in the same old haggard New Year's celebration. Rather, let us as believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of the ages, rejoice in the Maker and Giver of time, the One who uses it for His glory and our good. Are you ready for what He is going to do in your life this year? ❖



## Focus on Our Missionaries: *The Showalter Family, Burkina Faso, West Africa*

**T**he Christmas celebrations were somewhat subdued in Obiré this year, due to the ongoing conflict about burials for Kaan royal family members who have become Christians. Stuart talked on the phone with Yao the week before Christmas and sensed an uneasiness and a fear cloaked by lighthearted joking about what the new year might bring. On December 14<sup>th</sup>, the Kaan Christians had another confrontation with members of the royal family over the body of an elderly Christian who had just died. The Christians claimed the right to bury the body with a Christian ceremony, marked by songs, prayers, and a short sermon. The royal family of the Kaan people wanted to ban singing, remove the body from the house with their accompanying rites, and take it to a special burial ground reserved for the royal family, where they would perform other rites over it before burial. By God's grace, there was no violence or bloodshed, though Yao reported they went to the brink. In the end, the Kaan pastors decided to allow the royal family to take the body without violence, but under protest. "Let the dead bury the dead" seemed to be the relevant counsel from Scripture. Even though the Christians legally have full rights to practice their faith in Burkina Faso, the local authorities in Loropéni do not seem willing to assure and defend those rights. Things are very tense now between the Kaan Christians and the royal family, and the Christians wonder if other persecution is in store for them. Stuart will be with them for most of the month of January. Pray for protection for all the Kaan Christians and great wisdom to know how to respond to this persecution in love and patience. Pray also for Gloria Scott, the other Wycliffe member on the Kaansa translation team, who has been out in the village through these most recent conflicts, and for Cathie, as she continues to work from Maryland and care for the family while Stuart is gone.



Thank you for your prayers and support.

*Stuart and Cathie*

Join us for Sunday School at 9:45am and Worship at 11:00am each Sunday.  
Evening Worship is held each Sunday at 6:30pm.

Good Hope Presbyterian Church  
12131 Route 216  
Fulton, MD 20759  
(301) 317-1398  
www.goodhopepca.com

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# January 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 Sunday School - 9:45am Worship Service - 11:00am Evening Worship - 6:30pm	31	1	2	3	4 January Deacons: Joseph Haber Matt Malanoski	5
6 Sunday School - 9:45am Worship Service - 11:00am <b>Communion To Be Served</b> Middle School at church - 5pm Evening Worship - 6:30pm High School Youth Group at the Higgins - 8:00-9:30pm	7 Session Meeting at the church - 7:30pm	8	9 James Growth Group 7:30pm	10 Macdonald Growth Group - 6:30pm	11	12
13 Sunday School - 9:45am Worship Service - 11:00am Middle School at church - 5pm Evening Worship - 6:30pm High School Youth Group at the Higgins - 8:00-9:30pm	14 Mt. Airy Growth Group - 6:30pm	15 Jim Haber Growth Group - 5:30pm	16 James Growth Group 7:30pm	17 Macdonald Growth Group - 6:30pm	18	19
20 Sunday School - 9:45am Worship Service - 11:00am Middle School at church - 5pm Evening Worship - 6:30pm High School Youth Group at the Higgins - 8:00-9:30pm	21 Mt. Airy Growth Group - 6:30pm	22 Jim Haber Growth Group - 5:30pm	23 James Growth Group 7:30pm	24 Macdonald Growth Group - 6:30pm	25 Info for February newsletter due to Kate Haber today!	26
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## *A Few Scenes and Stars From the 2007 Children's Christmas Play*



Praise God for the opportunity to share the good news of His Son's birth through our annual Christmas play in December. This year's play, "A Promise Kept," reminded us that we can always trust God to keep His promises, even when others' earthly promises fail, and we are eternally grateful that He kept His promise to send His Son. Thank you especially to Chris Waller and everyone else who worked so hard to make this year's play a success. More photos from the Christmas play will soon be added to the church website at [www.goodhopepca.com](http://www.goodhopepca.com).