



*No matter who you are or
where you are on life's journey,
you are welcome at the
Glen Ridge Congregational Church*

Glen Ridge Congregational Church
United Church of Christ

Newsletter

December 2010

195 Ridgewood Avenue • Glen Ridge, New Jersey 07028 • (973) 743-5596

On the web at www.glenridgecong.org



From the Minister

The Rev. Dr. Joseph David Stinson

Welcome to the first edition of our new newsletter! I have been concerned for several months about how we are *not* communicating. Since we moved to the mostly e-mail distributed newsletter about eight months ago, I have seen more and more evidence of failure to communicate: people who didn't know the date and time of a program or event at the church and ask about it a week later. People who are active in the church but don't seem to know about special programs. I want to say, *didn't you read your newsletter?* But I know what happens: our lives and in-boxes are too full. It is so easy to hit delete and then you never know.

Communication only happens when someone *transmits* information and another *receives* it. So the church's strategy was not working as effectively as we need it to. Our new design is to mail you a monthly newsletter with announcements for what's happening that next month. You'll receive it around the 1st of each month. Then each week we'll send an email. This email will not contain an attachment you have to open as the previous ones did. It will be colorful

with information about what is happening at church the coming weekend.

It is quite expensive and time consuming to send out newsletters bulk rate so we may end up sending them 1st class. If that happens we'll probably have these monthlies available for pick-up at church the last Sunday of the month. Those that aren't retrieved we'll mail on Monday.

Cost is a big issue that is driving everyone's attempt to communicate electronically, but we want you to receive our communications, read them and be informed. We'll do whatever it takes to stay in touch. The reality is that it is difficult to be a community if members don't know what is happening and don't attend. We will make every effort to be spare in our communication, so you don't get more than you need. We will be grateful to hear your thoughts and ideas about the new strategy. Contact us and respond to the new format. Thanks.

Hey, it's December and it was Good News! the angels sang on the hillside. They had a communications strategy, too! Theirs was a little different from ours, but we still need to communicate it! Join us and hear that news again. I invite you to hear it in carols, scripture, sermons inside our house of faith.

From the Associate Minister
The Rev. Cynthia F. Reynolds



*The people who walked in darkness have
seen a great light; on those who lived in a
land of deep shadow a light has shown.
For the yoke that was weighing upon
them, and the burden upon their shoul-
ders, you have broken in pieces, O God.
~ Isaiah 9:2,4*



The Longest Night Service

For many people, Christmas is a bittersweet time of year. It is a time for remembering both persons who have been a part of our lives in the past, but who are now changed or gone. This is the time of year with the longest nights, so around this time we offer a quiet, meditative worship service that makes time for remembering, sharing our hurting places with God, and preparing our hearts for the coming of Christ.

The constant refrain in the media about the happiness of the Christmas season, about getting together with family and friends, reminds many people of who and what they have lost or perhaps never had. The anguish of broken relationships, the insecurity of employment, the wrenching loss of a child, the loneliness of losing a spouse, the loss of a dear family pet – these can contribute to a

feeling of being alone, of being profoundly sad, in the midst of the society around us which seems so focused on “being happy” and “celebrating”.

It’s at times such as these that we need to make the space and time to acknowledge our sadness and concern. It’s at times such as these that we need to be together, supporting one another in our common losses, as we worship with scripture, music, prayers and the sacrament of communion.

**Please join us Sunday, December 19th
at 5:00pm in the chapel for a time of
special music, scripture, stories, silent
reflection, healing prayer and com-
munion.**

*May we all be blessed
by our time together!*

~ Cindy



Wow!! There are a lot of special events happening in December for our Church School Students.

Beginning on the first Sunday in December, the 5th, students will go directly to their classrooms and have the morning to discuss the advent season and the birth of Jesus. Everyone will be asked to think about how they would answer the question, **“WHAT CAN I GIVE JESUS?”**

On December 12th, the last class of the year, small parties in honor of the **birthday of Jesus** will take place in the classrooms



Bring your bells to ring on December 19th when everyone will join together for worship in the sanctuary.

THE STAR OF WONDER, a program planned by the Ministry of Children and Youth ***for ALL children in the community** will begin at 1pm on Thursday, Dec. 23rd with a hot dog lunch served in Robinson Hall. Our children’s choirs will all participate and the Christmas Story with a live nativity scene will be presented in the sanctuary. A special story will be told in RH with a very special visitor going to the manger.

“WHAT CAN I GIVE JESUS?” Yes, it will be time to decide about your gift to the baby. Do you know what to give—

come and find out!! Birthday cake will be served and every child will go home with a special star to remember the meaning of Christmas. **This is a wonderful opportunity to invite a neighbor to come with you to the program. The story is always the same but the presentation changes each year.**

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW
THIS IS A MUST NOT MISS EVENT!**

*Any adult who would like to help in the planning or with the Star of Wonder is most welcome. Speak to Stephanie or Andy Song (chairpersons of the ministry) or Marty Lacey.

December 24th: There are three Christmas Eve services

The Family Service is at 4:30pm with the children’s choirs, singing of Christmas carols, a live nativity and a children’s story.

Children are invited to come forward and bring a new, unwrapped baby gift to place by the manger during the children’s story. The gifts will go to M.E.N.D. (Meeting Emergency Needs with Dignity)



MUSIC NOTES



Our choirs are all hard at work preparing music for the Advent and Christmas seasons, especially for our Community Christmas celebration, *Welcome Christmas!*

It was a joy to have our children's choirs each minister in Worship during the month of November. New children are welcome to join our choirs at any time.

Our Chancel Choir and section leaders formed the core of the Community Thanksgiving Interfaith Choir on Sunday afternoon, November 21. They offered a wide variety of chants, multi-cultural and interfaith music selections, joined by violin and African drums.

Welcome Christmas!

postcards are available on the Action table. What a great way to invite a friend, neighbor or colleague to our church Christmas celebration!

~ Tom Mustachio



GLEN RIDGE CHORAL SOCIETY
INSTRUMENTALISTS
CHILDREN'S CHOIR
HANDBELLS
PERCUSSION
PIANO & ORGAN

Thomas Mustachio
Music Director

welcome
christmas!
a holiday music celebration

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2010 • 3 PM

A free-will offering will be received

GLEN RIDGE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
195 Ridgewood Avenue • Glen Ridge NJ 07028
973.743.5596 • www.glenridgecong.org

CHRISTMAS EVE

SERVICES



We offer several different choices for Christmas Eve
Worship:

★ The largest is the 4:30pm service with children's choirs. It lasts about 45-50 minutes and is family/child-friendly. The format is to sing carols, tell the Christmas story and have a live nativity.

★ The 8pm service highlights include music of our choir and instrumentalists, a Christmas sermon and Holy Communion. It follows the format of Lessons and Carols. It lasts a little more than one hour.

★ The 11pm service is led by our high school Young Peoples Society. The Christmas story is read from Luke and Matthew. The YPS Choir and Cantorei Ensemble provide choral and instrumental music. There are many carols and the format changes from year to year. It is popular with college students, affording them the opportunity to reconnect with one another at Christmas.

We hope you will attend one or more of our services this Christmas Eve

CONFIRMATION *and* YOUTH ACTIVITIES

DECEMBER

- 5 & 19.....Coffee & Candy Sales
- 18-19.....YPS 30-hour Fast
- 23.....Star of Wonder
- 26.....No Class Session



To date, our congregation has collected over **\$378,046** in pledges for 2011.

Please send in your pledge cards as soon as you are able.

Thank you to all who donated to our Endowment Fund in the memory of Midge Bourne. We are pleased to announce that, with the generosity of many of our members, we have successfully completed the Midge Bourne Challenge of raising \$25,000. As a result, the Fund will receive an additional gift of \$50,000 from an anonymous donor. Midge was a lifelong member and leader of our church as well as the town of Glen Ridge. These funds, for which we are extremely thankful, will benefit the church in her name for decades to come.



The ministers will preach a series of sermons this season from *Isaiah*. It is often said the argument about whether Jesus is

the Messiah is more in Isaiah than in the New Testament! Join us as we explore Isaiah's prophecies: swords, plowshares, lions, lambs, the lame walking, the blind seeing, and a virgin who conceives.

Worship in December

CHAPEL COMMUNION SERVICES
at 8:15 a.m. on December 5, 12 & 19

DECEMBER 5

Advent 2

Worship/Communion	Isaiah 11:1-10	10:15 a.m.
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Mr. Stinson: "Isaiah's Messianic Prophecies: The Lion and the Lamb"
Music by the Chancel Choir and Soloist

DECEMBER 12

Advent 3

Worship	Isaiah 35:1-10	10:15 a.m.
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Mr. Stinson: "Isaiah's Messianic Prophecies: The Signs of the Messiah's Presence"
Music by the Chancel Choir, Carol Choir

DECEMBER 19

Advent 4: Bell Sunday

Worship	Isaiah 7:10-16	10:15 a.m.
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Mr. Stinson: "Isaiah's Messianic Prophecies: The Immanuel Sign"
Music by the Chancel Choir, Cherub Choir, Carillon Bellringers, Chapel Bellringers

Longest Night Service		5:00 p.m.
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The Rev. Cindy Reynolds

Music by Tom Mustachio, Michael Brown and the Brown Family Singers

DECEMBER 24

Christmas Eve

Family Service	Children's Choirs	4:30 p.m.
Candlelight Service	Chancel, Instrumentalists	8:00 p.m.
Midnight Service	Cantorei, YPS Choir	11:00 p.m.

DECEMBER 26

First Sunday After Christmas

Breakfast	in Robinson Hall	9:00 a.m.
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Worship	Service of Christmas Carols, Poems and Stories	10:15 a.m.
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Music by Tom Mustachio and soloist

Happening this Month

DECEMBER 2010

- 1 All Ministry Meeting night
7:00 supper hosted by the
Worship Ministry; 7:30 Worship;
8:00 Committee Meetings
- 5 Dedicate the Roof; 10:15 service
- 9 Bread for the Journey
- 10 Pilgrim Celebration
- 16 SCEEP Party! at the Stinsons
- 27 OFFICE CLOSED

Looking ahead...

JANUARY

- 9 Epiphany/Three Kings
IHN Arrives
- 22 Women's Association
Epiphany Brunch
- 30 *Fabulous Fifth Worship*

FEBRUARY

- 4-5 Antiques Show
- 6 Annual Meeting
- 13 Church Music Sunday

Starry Night Update

Thanks to all who came to "A Starry Night" on Friday, November 19. Do hope you had a good time. Your being there made it a very wonderful evening! Wasn't it fun being together? This coming year has the potential of being a good one for the Church, if we all likewise join together in support of all the many endeavors that are undertaken. Friday night proved that together we can be great!

~ Joan Hayes and
The Stewardship Committee

Mr. Stinson leads two classes learning about the Gospel of John.



Sundays (9:00am)

- Dec. 5 – John 9 “Blindness”
- Dec. 12 – John 10 “The Good Shepherd”
- Dec. 19 – John 11 “Lazarus Raised from the Dead”

Wednesdays (10:00am)

- Dec. 8 – John 6 “Bread”
- Dec. 15 – John 7 “Who Is Jesus?”
- Dec. 22 – John 8 “The Woman Caught in Adultery”

WORSHIP MINISTRY

The Worship Ministry supports and helps extend the opportunities for meditation and worship in our faith community. The first Wednesday of each month a short Taizé service is held at 7:30 p.m. where members and friends can join in a time of prayer, singing, scripture reading, and personal faith development. We hope you will join in this ministry. Each Sunday morning the worship service offers a variety of meditation and faith development resources. The service starts with a musical prelude, which sets the tone for worship and provides time for personal thought and prayer. Music, scripture, congregational readings, an offering, and a sermon provide opportunities for individual and corporate faith growth. During Advent, the circle of love widens through the ►

Welcome Christmas! Concert and Bell Sunday as well as the special Christmas services. We are truly blessed to have so many opportunities. Come...embrace Advent and Christmas through worship at GRCC.
~ Jan Spoerl

Outreach Opportunities

THE STAR TREE is located in the narthex with Christmas wishes from 5 families served by the Bethel Love Food Pantry. There is a variety of ages of children and wishes - you'll see that the gifts are practical, basic items. If you choose an item of clothing for a child, and wish to include a small toy or book with your gift, you are welcome to do that. Gift certificates to Shop Rite, CVS, or K-Mart may be in any denomination you choose. Please return your wrapped gifts with the star attached to the outside of the package no later than December 15 so the gifts may be delivered to the families in time for Christmas. If you have questions, please contact Cindy Reynolds. You will perhaps be providing the only Christmas gifts these families will receive. Thank you so much for your generosity!

IHN (Interfaith Hospitality Network) will come to stay at the church from January 9 to the 16th. We will need volunteers to help feed, play and stay overnight.

CHRISTMAS AT BETHEL LOVE
Volunteers needed to help serve dinner at the Soup Kitchen on December 2 and

December 16. Please contact Emily Grover-Kopec if you can help at egroverkopec@gmail.com. The first four to sign up win! The meal on December 16 will be a very special one: this is the evening of the Bethel Christmas party for their clients. Again, we'll need volunteers to help this evening in the dining room. In addition, we are soliciting NEW warm socks, hats, mittens, gloves, and underwear for the guests.

Please remember these simple needs of our neighbors as you go about your Christmas shopping - please bring your donations to the church by December 15 (along with any Star Tree gifts you've chosen) and we will see that they are delivered on time. As always, our hungry neighbors appreciate your donations to the shopping cart in the narthex each week. Needed especially now: soups, rice, and cereal. Thank you for your generous sharing!

TURKEY DRIVE

The Town reported that we received 90 turkeys, \$600, and an abundance of non perishable food on November 21. Congratulations and thank you to all who donated.

Little Pilgrim's Progress

Pilgrim feasting was the highlight for November at Pilgrim Nursery School. The vegetable soup and yummy oatmeal cookies are a long-standing tradition. The children are now preparing for the ►

annual holiday program filled with festive songs and decorations. Happy Holiday season from all of us at Pilgrim Nursery School!

ADVENT WORKSHOP

Seventy-five children and adults attended the Annual Advent Workshop on Sunday, November 28th. "Friendly Beast" animal crafts were made by the children upstairs while Advent wreaths with candles and evergreen door wreaths were made in Robinson Hall. In the kitchen, Christmas cookies were baked for our shut-ins and outreach programs. After lighting the first Advent candle of HOPE, a delicious potluck dinner was enjoyed by all followed by the popular carol sing. Thank you to Jill Simmons for playing the piano and the Ministry of Children and Youth for organizing the great event.

~ Cyndi Stinson

CONFIRMAND'S INTERPRETATION

Willem Jorgensen read Romans 13:10-14 "To me, this passage mostly means that if we all have love, we will not sin. Since the Light, Jesus Christ, is coming, we should do things **of** the light: good things. When they stated 'Let us take up weapons for fighting in the light,' that weapon is love. Now is the time to stop doing bad things, things of the dark, and love others because, Jesus, the Light of the World, is coming."

December Birthdays

5.....Arlene Kansky
6.....Stefanie Augis
6.....Walt Williams
7.....Barbara Duym
7.....Jim O'Brien
18.....Rob Brandell
18.....Alex Sheppard
28.....Tom Duym
30.....Louis Augis
31.....Aidan Curtin
31.....Claire Curtin
31.....Jesse Stinson

Would you like us to
remember your birthday?

In the Life of the Church

Our sympathies to Sarge Gardiner and his family on the death of his mother on November 16.

Our sympathies to Fred Wong and his family on the recent death of his mother, Elizabeth.

Our sympathies to Lizanne Coleman and her family on the death of her mother, Elizabeth Reynolds, on Thursday 11/25.

Our sympathies to Norma Batastini on the recent death of her step-father Carl Savage. ▶

In the Life of the Church (cont'd)

Congratulations to Russell and Barbara Prince on the marriage of their son, Michael, to Holly Weckstein on November 6 at the Wayfayers Chapel in Rancho Palos Verdes, California.



◇ **At home:** Joan Donnelly, Karen Augis, Al Brown, Bob Kansky, James Hollander, Lorraine Rieder, Bob Runge, Susan Booth, Karen Augis, Phyllis Domenic, Madeline Edgar, Scott Spoerl, Sandra Lefkovits, Mary Keller, Jim O'Brien, Bill Wood, Fred Worth, Frank Watson, Sid Metro.

◇ **In extended care facilities:** Irene Stevens Heun (Renaissance Gardens), Barbara Underwood (Van Dyk), Bill Luddecke (Van Dyk), Ed Warren (Stuart FL), Marilea Schlobohm (Beaufort, SC), Betty Bishop (King James Care Center), Don Olson (Job Haines), Robert Martin Schaeberle (Ridge at River Woods, Exeter, NH), Lucy Force (Sunrise,

Woodcliff Lake), Dale Oliver (St. Luke's Hosp, New Bedford, MA), Sally Burkatt (Kessler, Chester NJ)

◇ **Friends & family of our church:** Jeanne LaPorta, Barbara Hollander-Eddig, Marie O'Grady, Roger Keller, Cheryl Vivona, Becky Bodnar, Courtney Connolly, Maureen Wetzel, Barbara Martindale, Grace Uliano, Eloy & Ofelia Hernandez, Andrei Padlowski, JC Egbert, Alison Krien, Stephen Strickland, Len Calvin, Andrea Row, Bob Sherman, Helen Brabham, George Boltnew, Agnes Joy Busk, Anna Withington, Jill Reintjes, Dan Glitzer, Sue Potter, Merrill Roberts, Joan and Frank Lytle, Barbara Acosta, Thomas Bright, Jim O'Brien, Sr., Amanda Oliver, Jean and Barry Frere, Jim Marturano, Elizabeth Knox, Pat and Betty Vigliotti, Paula Newman, Frank Pescatore, Mary Embree, Jeff Glock, Bill Phillips, and UCC Missionaries Jon and Dawn Barnes now back in the US and also our friends at Back Bay Mission in Biloxi. The service men and women in harm's way, particularly E4-Specialist Alex Tallmadge in Afghanistan.



CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL FLOWERS

We invite you to make a donation for Christmas poinsettias for the sanctuary in memory of loved ones. Any amount is welcomed. Deadline is December 13th. Please send your check and this form to Joanne Meeker, 38 Chestnut Hill Place, Glen Ridge or call 748-9581. Please make your checks payable to the GRCC Flower Fund.

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

Flowers in memory of: _____