



*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 2011

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



John the Baptist is the enigmatic fire-breathing prophet of Advent. Things were so adrift, he set out to renew the people. It was as if Israel had to start all over, back to something old, yet something new for that time. John had no desire to start something brand new. He believed his generation lost its way because it had forgotten the wisdom and faith of Abraham and Moses. John knew the Messiah was around the corner, and the only way to receive him was as people of renewed faith, who lived the commandments and loved the Lord more than the world. It was a fool's errand, perhaps. "*No one believes in that old stuff anymore,*" he must have been told. Many must have advised him to tone down his strident rhetoric. Yet, he began to preach and the crowds flocked to him. Luke said, "They were on the tiptoe of expectation." Contra all Gallup polls and common wisdom, the people did turn their hearts to the Lord and believed again.

Why should we attend to John and his message this December? We are at an age in the church when we need again to be made ready, a people prepared. We are not. I cannot imagine that anyone could hold that our generation knows the way. We do

not. We know many ways but not the way. We drift from fad to fad with little understanding of why past generations rejected these same options. This is always the line, "*Here is the new way!*" But inevitably that same way was present in Ephesus in the 1st Century and at Shiloh in the 8th Century B.C.

It is not just that our sins are not original. Faith itself and the revelation to our ancestors is equally ancient in its wisdom. God's way is more antique than any of us. We believe in One who is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. The Christian way we walk is not an untried or uncharted road, but a road beaten by the footsteps of saints and prophets. I thank God for the signposts in the Bible with which our road is marked at every turning. We celebrate the coming of the Messiah. Are we prepared? Are we ready? John is still needed: a voice crying in the wilderness, "*Prepare the way of the Lord.*" Turn back to the faith of your ancestors, the old way always new. Clear the road of obstacles, for One is coming, and we must ready our hearts for him.

~J.D. Stinson

From the Associate Minister **The Rev. Cynthia F. Reynolds**



Happy Advent!

I share with you the UCC daily devotion for the first Sunday of Advent, written by Martin B. Copenhaver. The scripture passage is from the gospel of Mark 13:32-35: "About that day or hour no one knows... Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come."

In a way it is unfortunate that we always celebrate Christmas on the same day of the year, because that makes the coming of Christ seem almost predictable. But Christmas is more like a surprise party.

For centuries God's people awaited the coming of the Promised One. Then, when it happened, most people missed it. They were watching the ceremonial gates and he snuck in the servant's entrance. God is always slipping into town when we least expect it, and where we least expect, as well, even in the darkest time of year, in a forgotten corner, as a baby with milk on its breath. Although December 25 is fixed on the calendar, we never know when the Spirit of Christ will be born in our midst.

Our task is to live with an air of expectation because it could be any time, even today, and anywhere, even here.

A friend tells about asking a group what keeps them coming to church. Someone responded, "It's strange, I know, but I get the feeling here, like nowhere else, that something is about to happen." What a great description, particularly this time of year. We gather around the expectation that something is about to happen. And we may even be able to affirm that it's Jesus, the Spirit of Christ, that is about to happen. But we don't know when. We don't know where. We don't know how.

So we wait with baited breath, for the surprise party to begin.

Prayer

God, keep me awake, by whatever means necessary, so that I won't miss your surprise party when it begins. Amen.

See you in worship!

Peace and blessings,
Cindy



Thomas Mustachio
Minister of Music

Thanks to all who made Requiem contributions to enable the hiring of instrumentalists to accompany the Fauré *Requiem* on All Saints' Sunday. What a glorious morning. Thank you choir, musicians and music supporters!

It's never too late to join one of our choirs. We have singing and ringing choirs for most ages. A Music Ministry brochure, describing our choirs and rehearsal times, is available on the Clark Street Action Table. If you'd like to receive a copy electronically or by USPS, please let me know!

~ Tom M.

P.S. *Hope to see you there!* →

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

Thomas Mustachio
Music Director

welcome
christmas!
a holiday music celebration

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2011 • 3:00 P.M.

A free-will offering will be received

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

The poster features a blue background with a large, stylized illustration of a hand holding a heart, surrounded by stars and musical notes. The text is arranged in a clear, hierarchical layout, with the event details and contact information at the bottom.

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

Marty Lacey

Church School Coordinator



Some of my treasured moments:

- ❖ Great memories of fun at the Advent Workshop
- ❖ Lighting of the Advent Wreath each Sunday
- ❖ Bell Sunday and the wonderful sound of a dropped bell rolling down the aisle
- ❖ The awesome feeling when the candles are lit and everyone sings “Silent Night” at *Welcome Christmas*
- ❖ Children gathered around the manger on Christmas Eve.

What memories do you and your family have of *Advent at Glen Ridge Congregational Church*?

What new ones will you make this year?

Well, here are some ideas:

Attend **Church School Classes**

Dec. 4th Children’s Chapel

Dec. 11th Class Christmas Celebrations

Come to the “Star of Wonder”

Dec. 23rd. After school (half day)

Come for hot dogs (or bring a bag lunch).

Come and participate in hearing the CHRISTMAS STORY. This program is for **ALL** children so invite your friends.

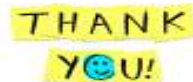
Children’s choirs sing and ring! Older students help with the live nativity scene.

Enjoy a craft and hear a story. Visit with our special animal friends! Be a part of a birthday celebration for Jesus!

Worship at the Family Christmas Eve Service Dec. 24th 4:30 p.m.

Child friendly service with scripture, children’s choirs, a special story and a live manger scene. Children are invited to come forward to the manger and to bring an unwrapped baby gift that will be distributed by MEND (Meeting Emergency Needs With Dignity) and/or they are asked to bring a dollar for the “snuggly” blanket fund. Every IHN guest will receive their own warm blanket to use while they are here and to take with them to the next shelter. (Robinson Hall gets cold)!

Make a special memory for yourself and your family this Christmas season.



Dear Church Family:

I cannot express enough my thanks again for allowing me to rent the Pilgrim classrooms. Summer Treasure Camp was very successful this year and we look forward to the next with hope of providing enrichment lessons for young children during the summer. This year we added two science and recreation teachers who brought their energy and enthusiasm! It was a wonderful team of dedicated teachers. Please accept this gift (\$500) from all of us toward the church. Wishing all of you a very blessed Thanksgiving!! With much love, Maira Hernandez Kinloch

Bethel Love Soup Kitchen

The December dates are the 1st and the 15th. Please call Emily Kopec at egroverkopec@gmail.com to volunteer. It is a great experience.

Operation Mustard Seed Year-End Update

With the approach of December 31, Operation Mustard Seed nears its official completion date. As discussed below, we continue to accomplish much, but we still have work that cannot be undertaken without the completion of outstanding pledges. Our receipts have slowed as the economy continues to affect most of us. **Our hope is that you will be able to**

honor all unpaid pledge as soon as possible (preferably by year-end!).

Our church family was recently blessed with a dedicated gift of kitchen equipment – a new 10 burner, double oven stove; a new very efficient dishwasher; and a new convection oven. All the appliances were inaugurated at the Pasta and Pops event in early October. Many cooks and all the recipients of good food have since enjoyed the new equipment.

Financial support from Operation Mustard Seed has in recent months provided AP&P with the funds to complete the widening of our south driveway and install spaces for car turnaround. This will allow easier access for our disabled members who attend church services.

Additional façade work was also completed as part of our Capital Campaign Phase One projects. The refurbishing of our exterior façade will be an ongoing long-term project for several more years.

One major Phase One project still remains – the air conditioning of the sanctuary. While we do have funds pledged to Operation Mustard Seed to pay for this improvement, we cannot embark upon the work until we have sufficient funds to complete the work. The sooner our pledges are in hand, the sooner we will have cool summer services!

We have accomplished much in our refurbishing efforts and we can be proud of our church family and our commitment to our aging building. Thank you for your support.



Pilgrim Nursery School will have a 'Giving Tree' where children and their families can bring a small item of clothing (especially mittens, hats & “fun” socks) for a child their age. These items will be donated to the Bethel Love Church.



LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE

For some people, the Advent/Christmas season can be a bittersweet time of year. Losses we've experienced, whether through death, divorce or separation, the moving away of a child, loss of a job, loss of mobility, even the loss of a dream: all these feelings are in such contrast to the joy of the season.

Advent is also a time of profound hope and rebirth: so we gather around the longest night of the year to worship: to give to God our hurting places and to look forward in hope as we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ.

Please join us Sunday, December 18th at 5:00pm in the candlelit chapel for a quiet, reflective worship including special music, scripture, stories, silent

reflection and healing prayer. It will be a time of giving over your anxieties, fears, and hurts to God and opening yourself to God's peace and grace as we also celebrate the Sacrament of Communion. Please join us!



We offer several different choices for Christmas Eve Worship:

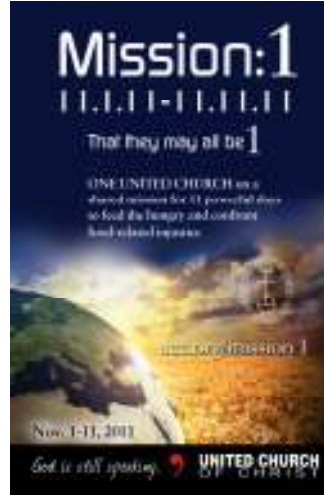
★ The largest is the 4:30pm service with children's choirs. It lasts about 45-50 minutes and is family/child-friendly. The format is to sing carols, tell the Christmas story and have a live nativity.

★ 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.

From the Ministry of Outreach and Mission



Mission 1 Accomplished!!

UCC churches nationwide contributed **1,298,279** items of non perishable food to food pantries and soup kitchens. In addition **37,116** letters were mailed to congress asking for reform of U.S. foreign assistance in a way that more effectively benefits hungry and poor people worldwide. **Neighbors in Need offering** totals **\$113,398!** Thank you to all who contributed to this effort through GRCC! You are a blessing!

On Friday, November 18, the volunteers at Bethel Love assembled over 300 bags of groceries to be given out at the Thanksgiving distribution. Thanks to Wendy and Martin Crowther and daughters Julia and Cecelia for volunteering to help!

Then on Saturday, November 19 a delegation from GRCC served our neighbors at the **Thanksgiving food distribution at Bethel Love.** Thanks to: Bob Griffith, Richard Decepoli, Francie Starnes, Jim Long (special thanks to Jim for the donation of 25 dozen eggs!), Harlan Schade, Lottie Peppers, Beth Ege, and Ryanne Ege.

The clients receiving grocery bags on Saturday were also the beneficiaries of lunches prepared for them, including **171 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches** provided by Livingston Brownie Troop #20384 led by Beth Downey. Thank you!

We were able at GRCC to make three Thanksgiving Baskets for families in special need this holiday: thanks to a very generous anonymous donor, these families had a festive dinner together on Thanksgiving Day. Many thanks to Tom and Joanne Meeker for delivering one of these baskets to one family living nearby.

Our Christmas offerings this year will be received on Bell Sunday and Christmas Eve. They will be divided among the UCC Ministers' Fund, Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN), and Meeting Emergency Needs with Dignity (MEND).

Thank you for your generosity!

MOM COMING EVENTS:



The Star Tree came to the sanctuary the first Sunday of Advent. Please take a star representing a gift request and return your WRAPPED gift WITH THE STAR ATTACHED by December 15 for timely delivery to the families. Thank you!

MINISTRY OF OUTREACH AND MISSION will host our coffee/ fellowship hours during December. Join us after worship for food and fellowship and learn about our ministry in the wider community. **Our IHN** guests will arrive on January 8 – you may sign up to volunteer to greet, prepare meals, or stay overnight. Check out the display to see how you can help.

On December 11 our former member, Karen Rutigliano of CASA will be here to describe their needs. **Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)** promotes the welfare of foster children in Essex County who have been removed from homes due to parental abuse, neglect, or abandonment. There is always a need for volunteers – ask Linda Seyffarth or Pam Flippin about this! Check out the display for more information on CASA.

In The Life of the Church

John McFadden, who was the minister from 1974 to 1983, and his wife Susan

have a new book out titled *Aging Together, Dementia, Friendship and Flourishing Communities*. A copy is available in the church library underneath his picture.



Ministry of Worship

“Thanks Giving” continues! Every Sunday is an opportunity to give thanks during worship. Opportunities abound in daily life, too.

“Thanks Giving” is followed by **“Advent Giving.”** Prepare your way, again, for the joy that comes with Christmas. Prepare by joining us for worship each Sunday. Look at the church calendar for traditional ways to *prepare*.

The **First Wednesday** worship opportunity on Wednesday, December 7, at 7:30 p.m. will be special ~ in the Sanctuary, near the glorious Nativity window, singing hymns and carols of preparation. Set aside this special half-hour for quiet meditation and preparation with your church family at GRCC.

~ Janet Spoerl

Worship Ministry Chair

Our Senior Member

With the death of Robert Runge, Mr. Stinson did some research on who is our next senior member. The honor falls to Katherine “Kitty” Schumaker who will be 100 on April 4, 2012. Mrs. Schumaker lives in Lake Forest, Illinois. She moved there eight years ago after the death of her

husband George. Prior to that she and her husband lived on Bay Ave. in Glen Ridge. In a letter to me she wrote on Oct 30th, she reported that she still plays bridge three afternoons a week. She has a great sense of humor; speaking of her upcoming April birthday, she wrote, "I came up just before the Titanic went down!" If you'd like to send Mrs. Schumaker a card, her address is 1100 Pembridge Dr., Apt. 253; Lake Forest, IL 60045. According to our records the next three in seniority are Cliff Stevens, b. Sept 24, 1915; Bill Luddecke, b. March 27, 1916; and Jim Waters, b. Oct 8, 1918.



**WEDNESDAY
BIBLE CLASS**

The 10am class will begin to read and study the *Gospel of Mark*, starting Dec.

14th. We are seeking new members for this study. You don't need an advanced knowledge of the Bible to join. Seekers are welcome! The class is one hour each week, meeting in the church library. For more information, please speak to Mr. Stinson.

Happening this Month

DECEMBER 2011

- 7 All Ministry Meeting night
6:30 supper hosted by the
Worship Ministry; 7:30 Worship;
8:00 Committee Meetings
- 8 Bread for the Journey
- 15 Pilgrim Celebration
- 15 SCEEP Party! at the Stinsons
- 26-27 **OFFICE CLOSED**

Looking ahead...

JANUARY

- 1st **Brunch after Church /Chef Jesse**
- 8 Epiphany/Three Kings
IHN Arrives
- 21 Women's Association
Epiphany Brunch
- 29 *Fabulous Fifth Worship*

FEBRUARY

- 3-4 Antiques Show
- 12 Annual Meeting

*EDGE OF EMPIRES
PAGANS, JEWS, AND
CHRISTIANS AT ROMAN
DURA-EUROPOS*

At the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World at New York University, 15 East 84th Street in Manhattan. A Trip and Tour is planned for Friday, January 6 at 6:00pm. Sponsored by Adult Education, contact Holly Eastman at hollyeastman@hotmail.com for more information.

The ISAW website is isaw.nyu.edu

Pledge Payment Reminder

Please be sure to complete your 2011 pledge payments by December 31. If you are unsure of where you stand in your payments, please contact the church office to receive an update. Thanks!

MINISTRY OF STEWARDSHIP


Favorite Things Luncheon

Many thanks to everyone who worked on the Favorite Things Luncheon put on by the Women's Association for the benefit of this year's church budget shortfall. We are happy to report that we were able to raise approximately \$2,500.00. Special thanks to the efforts of the great committee of Linda Potter, Linda Seyffarth, Caroline Bartlett, Susan Griffith, JoAnn Borden, Linda Woodbury, Lynn Ritchkoff, Barbara Duym, Barbara Stevens, Iryna Carey, Mackenzie and Sydney Carey, Linda Kerr, Phyllis Connolly, Kara Travia and Beth Ege, Lynne Palmer and Bookclub members, Susan Callaghan and Samantha Finneran, Sherry Brabham, Theresa Messineo, Tom Mustachio, Cyndi Stinson, Marty Lacey, Stephanie Song, Cindy Reynolds and Joan Hayes. Thanks for a great party and boost to our budget.

There are just a few cookbooks left if you would like to purchase one. The last few are in the Church office and cost \$15.00 each.

Pledge Followup

As of this past Sunday, November 27, the church has received 107 pledges for \$346,047 towards our projected budget. Thank you to all who have pledged.



December

1.....	Ross Stevens, III
5.....	June Bourne
5.....	Arlene Kansky
6.....	Walt Williams
6.....	Adam Ely
6.....	Stefanie Augis
7.....	Barbara Duym
11.....	Angel Schade
11.....	Pete Krien
12.....	Lucy Force
12.....	Danny Harris
13.....	Jack Cotrone
14.....	Pat Currie
14.....	Francie Starnes
15.....	Dave Kerr
16.....	Charlie Macdonnell
17.....	Archie Palmer
18.....	Kevin Johns
18.....	Teddy Oliver
18.....	Robert Brandel
18.....	Sydney Carey
20.....	Rex Lord
21.....	Cole Ellertson
24.....	Aubrey Ellertson
27.....	Phyllis Domenic
28.....	Tom Duym
30.....	Louis Augis
31.....	Jesse Stinson

Worship in December

CHAPEL COMMUNION SERVICES at 8:15 a.m. on December 4, 11, 18

DECEMBER 4	Second Sunday of Advent	
Worship/Communion		10:15 A.M.
	Ms Reynolds preaching	
	Music by the Chancel Choir	
	Robert Hodgson, soloist	
DECEMBER 11	Third Sunday in Advent	
Worship	Isaiah 61:1-4	10:15 A.M.
	Mr. Stinson: <i>“Rebuilding the Devastation of Many Generations”</i>	
	Music by the Chancel Choir, Cherub Choir	
DECEMBER 18	Fourth Sunday in Advent: <i>BELL SUNDAY</i>	
Worship	Luke 1:26-38	10:15 A.M.
	Mr. Stinson: <i>“Do Not Be Afraid”</i>	
	Music by the Chancel Choir, Chapel Bellringers and Carillon Bellringers	
Longest Night Service	Ms Reynolds	5:00 P.M.
	Music by Tom Mustachio	
DECEMBER 24	Christmas Eve	
Family Service	Children’s Choirs	4:30 P.M.
Candlelight Service	Chancel Choir, Instrumentalists	8:00 P.M.
Midnight Service	Cantorei, YPS Choir	11:00 P.M.
DECEMBER 25	Christmas Day	
Worship	Service of Christmas Carols, Poems and Stories	9:30 A.M.



At home

Joan Hayes, Bob Kansky, Bruce Ferguson, Irene Stevens Heun, Karen Augis, James Hollander, Susan Booth, Phyllis Domenic, Madeline Edgar, Scott Spoerl, Sandra Lefkovits, Mary Keller, Jim O'Brien, Barbara Underwood, Bill Wood, Fred Worth.

In extended care facilities

Bill Luddecke (Van Dyk), Ed Warren (Stuart FL), Marilea Schlobohm (Beaufort, SC), Don Olson (Job Haines), Lucy Force (Sunrise, Woodcliff Lake).

Friends & family of our church

Meghann Marturano, Patti (Arlene Baldino's sister in law), Kady Zumwalt, Jeff

Domenic, Freeman Reynolds, Jean Sparks, Theodora Wilcox, Ginnie Moriarty, Lynn Scott, Jon Adler, Xavier Ross, and his parents Jackie and Nathan Ross, Marie O'Grady, Roger Keller, Cheryl Vivona, Becky Bodnar, Courtney Connolly, Barbara Martindale, Grace Uliano, Eloy & Ofelia Hernandez, Andrei Padlowski, JC Egbert, Stephen Strickland, Len Calvin, Andrea Row, Bob Sherman, Helen Brabham, George Boltnew, 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 Vigliotti, Paula Newman, Frank Pescatore, Mary Embree, Jeff Glock, Bill Phillips, and UCC Missionaries Jon and Dawn Barnes now in Mozambique. Our friends at Back Bay Mission in Biloxi. The service men and women in harm's way.



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 16th. 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: _____