



SONSHINE



The Monthly Newsletter of Palm Springs Presbyterian Church, December 2008

From Pastor Bill's "Powerbook"

DECEMBER

When you receive this we will be in the midst of Advent heading headlong toward Christmas, so...get ready for we are having wonderful celebrations. "And suddenly, there were with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom He favors." (John 3:16; Luke 2:13-14 NRSV)

REVISION: last month, I wrote that our dealing with the Unity Church of Palm Springs had come to an end...but NO! It seems as if we may be moving toward "A Place of Our Own." But, until we clear several hurdles, I cannot say for certain, without question, positively. As soon as your Session knows absolutely one way or the other we will let you know. In the meantime, keep this young men and women like those involved will not come to a church like ours?

It is wonderful to see many of our Winter Residents ("snowbirds") increasing our Sunday worship attendance and other ministries and programs we have. We are so delighted to have them in worship with us. Maybe some of them will join the Praise Singers (choir), which rehearses on Thursdays and again Sundays before worship. It's a wonderful way to serve our Lord and our church.

During December, as we celebrate Advent and prepare for Christmas, I believe this is a time to thank God for the gift He gave us in Jesus Christ. We get caught up in shopping or being a little extra possibility foremost in your prayers. So, what are the hurdles? 1. Obtaining a loan from the Presbyterian Loan and Investment Program (PILP); 2. Receiving permission to purchase from the Property and Finance Committee of the Presbytery of Riverside; 3. Having the permission of the Presbytery of Riverside since they and the Presbyterian Church (USA) become co-owners with us holding all Presbyterian Church properties in trust for the denomination; and, of course, 4. Clearing all the legal real estate laws and regulations. If all goes well, we should be moving into the new property by the middle to end of January 2009.

I am convinced that it is important for all of us to support prayerfully, financially, and physically, our move toward "*A Place of Our Own*" and help make this a reality for PSPC after 20 years of renting and wandering.

Many of you read about the shooting at the **Toys R Us** on "Black Friday" (Nov.28th) when people were crushing the stores for bargains. As some of you have heard by now, Joyce and I were there when the shots were fired, maybe 20 feet away. We heard the scream of "gang fight" as screeching voices of young women bounced all over that store and people were scattering. Then the shots. Now, that is an attention getting sound!! Bang, bang, bang and on and on. And then silence. What I do thank God for is that no innocent people were shot or injured; but every one there was a victim: victim of mindless, self-centered, "tribal mentality warfare" that has no place in a civilized world.

The question is: what is the Christian church doing to change such thinking and behavior since cautious about spending money for gifts, but sometimes forget to thank God for the greatest gift of all time: Jesus.

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May I suggest that during December, you make time to re-read the Christmas story as found in Matthew 2; in Luke 1-2:20; John 1:1-14; Isaiah 9:6-7, 40:1-11; and any others of your choice. And take advantage to use the Daily Family Devotions that you receive every Sunday in your Order for Worship ~ a wonderful, albeit brief, way to begin each day giving God an opportunity to speak to you.

I asked this last month, but let me ask you again: *what would you like to see us do on Sunday morning worship time or at the "5:59 Gathering" on Thursdays?* Email the church at pspresby@verizon.net or email me at drwnj57@aol.com or drop a note at the office or in the offering plates on Sundays. Just let us know.

Look elsewhere in the SONSHINE for announcements about the "5:59 Gathering", the Christmas Joy Offering, and the use of Poinsettias during Christmas.

During December, I will be leading us in an Advent sermon series I call, "The Art of God at Work." This will be an opportunity for us to celebrate Advent and grow stronger in our faith as we celebrate God's incredible love for His creation.

And, of course, the "**5:59 Gathering**" has begun in full force for this winter - *you will see more below.*

REMEMBER: Next Deadline for December 2008 Sonshine is December 23rd.

Thank you all and God bless you and your loved ones in 2008.

Yours, in Christ's Service,

Pastor Bill

William N. Johnson

Interim Pastor

Worship Schedule and Sermons for December 2008

God is an artist of the first degree; His handiwork is the greatest art we have ever seen. Thus, as we enter the Season of Advent and the Celebration of Christmas, Pastor Bill will bring us a sermon series he calls, "**The Art of God at Work**" as we grow in our understandings of the ways in which God works in our lives.

During the four Sundays of Advent (which began on Nov. 30th) we will be lighting the Advent Candles and singing many of our favorite songs and hymns. These are Sundays in which you can invite friends, neighbors, and loved ones to **Connect and re-Connect** with Church and faith in Jesus Christ. So, invite and bring someone new or almost new.

The Art of God at Work

DEC. 07 - "The Art of a New Beginning" ~ 2nd Sunday in Advent
Celebrating the Lord's Supper
Isaiah 40:1-11; II Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8

DEC. 14 - "The Art of Hope" ~ 3rd. Sunday in Advent
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Luke 1:47-55; John 1:6-8, 19-28

DEC. 21 - "The Art of New Life" ~ 4th. Sunday in Advent
Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-3

DEC. 28 - "The Art of Presentation" ~ 1st. Sunday of Christmas
Psalm 148; Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Luke 2:22-40



**Christmas
Worship Schedule
and Sermons**

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**JAN. 04 - "The Art of Beginning Again" ~ 2n Sunday of Christmas
Celebrating the Lord's Supper
Psalm 147; Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:10-18**

A Time to Take Stock:

What is Your Prayer for PSPC? How willing are you to Help Make That Happen? God Has and is Blessing Us; Will you and I Bring God's Love and Grace to Our Community and World? In What Ways Will God Honor Our Efforts and Will We Grow?

Militant Sunnis Murdering Christians in Iraq

LOUISVILLE-Religious leaders around the world, including those in the Presbyterian Church (USA), are asking their members to pray for the Christian community in Iraq and particularly the northern city of Mosul, where more than two dozen Christians have been murdered recently by militant Sunnis.

Mosul, the second most populous city in Iraq, is the site of the ancient biblical city of Nineveh and home to one of Iraq's five Presbyterian-Reformed congregations.

Hundreds of Christians have fled Mosul since the spate of killings began.

The Rev. Duncan Hanson, area co-coordinator for Europe and the Middle East for the Reformed Church in America and former area coordinator in Europe for the PC(USA), met in Damascus recently with the PC(USA)'s area coordinator for the Middle East Victor Makari, and an elder from the Mosul church.

Hanson told the Presbyterian News Service that the elder said, "The Mosul church is the oldest in Iraq, having been established in 1840. Our congregation has had a long and glorious succession of pastors. Over the years these pastors also ministered to the Muslim community. It was out of the Mosul church that God sent missionaries to Baghdad, Basra and elsewhere to plant new congregations. We Iraqi Reformed and Presbyterian people call Mosul our "mother church."

Many PC(USA) missionaries have served the Mosul church over the years. When Saddam Hussein seized power in 1979, the Mosul church fell on hard times and nearly closed. Only pastoral home visits by the minister of the Kirkuk church preserved the Christian community in Mosul.

With the loosening of restrictions on church activity in 1990, the Mosul congregation began to rebuild itself, the elder told Hanson and Makari. Pastoral duties were provided by the Rev. Haitham Jazrawi of the Kirkuk church and the congregation elected three elders "who carried out the majority of the ministry of our congregation," the elder said.

In 2001-2002, two successive Egyptian pastors served the Mosul church, which grew to about 75 families and conducted extensive outreach to villages around Mosul.

"Missionaries and evangelists from Korea, the U.S. and elsewhere flocked to Iraq and particularly Mosul after the American invasion in 2003. But the newfound religious enthusiasm and activity was short-lived " due to a radically new phenomenon: Terrorism," the elder said.

Internationals - including the Egyptian pastor - fled Iraq and by the end of 2004 the ministry of the Mosul Presbyterian-Reformed church was back in the hands of the three elders.

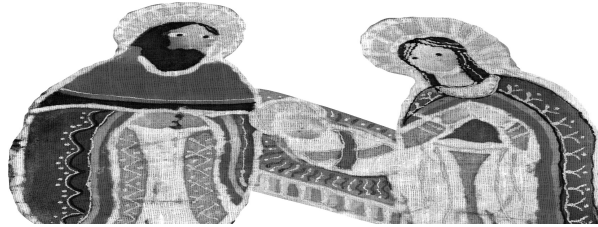
The situation has steadily deteriorated since then, the elder told Hanson and Makari. Death threats - face-to-face and by telephone - became a steady occurrence and in 2006 one of the three Mosul Presbyterian elders was kidnapped and killed.

"That was a big shock to the church," the elder said. "Many of our faithful began to withdraw and not come to church anymore. The church was closed for several months."

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While church members continued quiet outreach to members and the community, they debated the wisdom of reopening the church building for public worship and activities. "Those who wanted to reopen the church prevailed," the elder said. "Now the church is open again."

But only 27 families remain in the Mosul church. "Ministry in Mosul is now extremely difficult. Every Sunday morning, I have to call the custodian, who lives near the church, to ask if it is safe in the neighborhood to come to church. If the custodian says it is not safe, I call all 27 families to tell them we will be meeting in different private homes," the elder said



CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING

DECEMBER 21ST.

One of our "special offerings" every year is the **CHRISTMAS JOY OFFERING** received on the last Sunday of Advent, December 21st. The **JOY OFFERING** provides much needed assistance to pastors and missionaries and their families who served much of their time in the Presbyterian Church before the PC(USA) pension plan was fully developed and able to help as it now does. It goes to those who are facing serious financial crises because of challenging health, age or other unavoidable needs.

The other half of the **JOY OFFERING** goes to help support racial-ethnic colleges as they prepare young people for leaders and servants of the church.

You will be receiving a letter from Pastor Bill and the Session with additional information and a special offering in the next week or two.

Please plan on giving generously and gratefully to help those in need who have given selflessly to Christ's service through the Presbyterian Church (USA) and for those preparing to serve and provide leadership. Plan on joining others throughout this nation to bring the light of God's love and presence on Sunday, December 21, 2008 or, if unable to attend worship that morning, please send your gift to the church office.



What's so Amazing About Christmas?

Consider this: God loved the world so much that He came visiting. God slipped into the world as a helpless baby, without fanfare or heraldry.

Think of it: The baby, born of humble parents, the man a carpenter, the woman still in her teens, scholars say, Jesus was born in a backwater town called Bethlehem, in a stable reeking with animal smells.

It took years before people fully comprehended God's self-revelation. Even

John the Baptist, sitting in Herod's prison, sent a message to Jesus asking, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" (Matthew 11:3, NRSV). Jesus then explained that He was working miracles and bringing good news to the poor.

That became even more clear when Peter concluded that Jesus was "the Messiah, the Son of the Living God" (Matthew 16:16, NRSV).

What's amazing about Christmas is that it began in a manger. And today, more than 2 billion people around the world celebrate Jesus' birth.

ADVENT WREATH

The Advent wreath is a symbol of watchfulness and increasing joy as we anticipate Jesus' birth. The wreath's circular shape symbolizes eternity, or life without end. The candles remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World - He brought light and life to a dark world (see John 1:4-5). On each of the four Sundays of Advent, we light a new candle. As the light grows, so do our hope and joy.

For many denominations, each of the four weekly candles is purple, the traditional color of royalty. For the third Sunday, some denominations use a pink candle to symbolize joy. The other three candles are purple and represent hope, peace and love, respectively. In the center of the wreath is a large white candle - the Christ candle -which we light on Christmas Eve. White represents the purity of Jesus.

At home, many families observe regular devotional times around the wreath. The practice builds family memories and develops Christmas customs that are likely to pass from generation to generation.

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WISE WOMEN

If there had been three wise women instead of three wise men, the story would've been a bit different.

- The women would have asked for directions instead of trying to follow a light in the sky.
- The three women would have arrived in time for the birth, assisted Mary and congratulated Joseph.

- They would have found a bed for whatever food and cried, they would hold, sing, and talk to the baby born to be a king



able, hopped, prepared, the Baby, so lovingly

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A PLACE OF OUR OWN

As most of us know by now, we have reinstated our Building Program, "**A Place of Our Own**" to help raise money to purchase our own home—hopefully, the former *Unity Church of Palm Springs* at 815 S. Camino Real at S. Riverside in Palm Springs between Sunrise and Indian Canyon.

The Session and your Interim Pastor urge all of us to prayerfully consider re-making or making a pledge to help bring this about: a gift, a 1 to 3 year pledge, stock, property, or whatever may be used to help make this happen early in 2009.

Pledges and/or gifts can be placed in the Sunday morning offering or sent to the church office or given to one of the elders who will give it to the proper people.

As a Christmas gift to your church, or church away from home, give generously and gratefully for the ongoing work of our God in this community and throughout this valley, nation, and world.

Thank you for your gracious response.

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MUSIC AND WORSHIP

Geri is nursing Eddie back to health after his back surgery and is not a contributing editor this month.

We are all praying for a speeding recovery for Eddie and strength for Geri as she cares for him.



Watch the Order of Worship over the next several weeks to order POINSETTIAS to fill the sanctuary with beautiful red flowers in anticipation of Christmas. Or, call the church office and speak to Jackie about your order and the cost.



**SAVE YOUR CAMPBELL'S SOUP LABELS,
POSTAGE STAMPS & POP-TABS**

These items benefit worthy charitable organizations and would otherwise just be thrown away. Please take the time to save these items to help people in need. Thanks
The Mission Committee



THE HEIFER PROJECT

This annual opportunity for giving has begun. It is a wonderful gift to give to your loved ones or to give to yourself.

You are helping people worldwide toward self-sufficiency. Information is available in the Social Hall or contact Susan McGuire, Margaret Pace or Jackie Morgan



NEW CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Beginning December 1st, the new office hours are:

Monday & Wednesday
8:00 AM – 12:00 NOON
Tuesday & Thursday



Board of Session

SESSION NOTES HIGHLIGHTS

Session met for a special session meeting on Wednesday, November 12th to continue our discussion of the possible purchase of the Unity Church of Palm Springs. Our guest was Mr. Scott Lyle, a local realtor, who will be representing us in negotiating. Other visitors included Sue Cooper, Susan McGuire, and Morella Larsen. The Session was unanimous in moving ahead on the possible purchase.

Session opened and closed with prayer.

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Session met for their regular Session meeting on Wednesday, November 19th to follow up on the actions of the congregation at their meeting on Sunday, November 16th. Again, realtor Scott Lyle, was present to discuss our options. Session voted unanimously to make an offer on the Unity Church of Palm Springs which was then reported to the congregation meeting on Sunday, November 23rd and was accepted pending a number of conditions placed on the transaction by the session and accepted by the seller.

Other business was conducted: approving the Deacon's bake sale, the Women's Retreat and other items of business that needed transaction.

Also attending were Sue Cooper, Susan McGuire, Morella Larsen and Parish Associate Dr. Ken McCullen. (Any member or affiliate member is welcome to attend Session meetings but without voice or vote.)

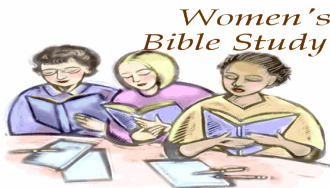
Session opened and closed with prayer.



**PRAYER COMMITMENT**

Every single one of us can do this! To commit some time every week or day, praying for PSPC and God's guidance in the future. How much time? That's between you and God. But, prayer does make a difference! To sign up on the Prayer

Calendar, call Jan Perrier at 346-7790 or call the church office, 320-2769 and give day and time



Women's Bible Study on the Gospel According to Luke lead by Elder Joyce Johnson

9:30 am to 11:00 am on Tuesdays

Joyce Johnson, our Pastor's wife, has begun the Women's Bible Study meeting on Tuesday mornings from 9:30 am to 11:00 am in the Fellowship Hall of the church. This year's study on the Gospel According to Luke began on Tuesday, Sept. 23rd, but if you missed the beginning, come anyway—each session basically stands on its own.

A great opportunity to study a book written by one of Jesus' disciples (who also wrote the Acts of the Apostles) and see its relation to our lives today.

Believe it or not, decaf coffee and/or tea and/or water will be made available, thanks to Pastor Bill! Anyone for cookies or brownies or ???



CALLING ALL MEN  
Wednesday @ 7:00 AM

The Men's Bible Study, under the insightful and dedicated leadership of Allen Perrier, continues on Wednesday mornings at the church in the Lounge, meeting at 7:00 am with a study of the book of Luke. This is a great way for men to gather together in the middle of the week to renew our spiritual batteries as we study the Bible. Then at 8:00 am, for those who wish, we go to breakfast and continue our fellowship.

All men of the church and any other men are welcome. Just show up on Wednesday mornings about 7:00 am. BYOB (Bring Your Own Bible) and GTBT (Go To Breakfast Together)

ARE YOU LOOKING?  
CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE & EMAIL

REMEMBER: Our email address is:

**pspresby@verizon.net**

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Our Website is:  
**palmspringspresbyterian.com**

Please USE them; tell others!



CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEA

PSPC SHOPPING BAGS AVAILABLE

As most of us know, **the shopping bags are here with our PSPC Logo for a \$5.00 donation for the larger bag and \$3.00 for the small one!** What a great Christmas Gift for loved ones or friends and good for the environment. **These bags help and some grocery stores give credit for using them rather than their plastic or paper bags!!**



WELCOME BACK BAR-B-QUE

Thank YOU! Thank You! Thank You!

Sunday, November 9th, was a full-house Bar- B-Q with all the goodies, a touch of rain, and marvelous fellowship.

THANK YOU to Harvey Stephens and his helpers for making this a grand and wonderful day. Must have been close to 95—100 people eating and fellowshiping.

**"That was great! Let's do it again, soon!"**

**Oh, yes, guess who won the special door prizes?**



5:59 Gathering: Dec. 11th

December 11th at 5:59 p.m. will see us gathering for another delightful meal (Christmas-like) and a program of music, fun, and a touch of *"The Church at the Crossroads"* brought by Pastor Bill. Sign up for dinner on Sunday, Dec. 7th, or call the

church office, and plan on participating. You will not be sorry!!

Our last 5:50 Gathering featured a fabulous turkey dinner and all the trimmings plus singing *a la* Alex Danson and all 45-50 of us, and a fun quiz about Thanksgiving! *A la* Pastor Bill. So, sign up, and come.

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### UNITED STATES MAP

A father wanted to read a magazine but was being bothered by his little girl, Shelby. She wanted to know what the United States looked like.

Finally, he tore a sheet out of his new magazine on which was printed the map of the country. Tearing it into small pieces, he gave it to Shelby and said, "Go into the other room and see if you can put this together,. This will show you our whole country today."

After a few minutes, Shelby returned and handed him the map, correctly fitted and taped together. The father was surprised and asked how she had finished so quickly. "Oh," she said, "on the other side of the paper is a picture of Jesus. When I got all of Jesus back where He belonged, then our country just came together."

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Donations for the

### Well in the Desert

People are Hungry and Cold:

The Well in the Desert

Food & Clothing Needed

The ***Well in the Desert***, one of our Mission outreaches, continues to need **food & clothing, blankets, etc.** This is so evident as more and more people are homeless or nearly so, as people loose jobs and children are hungry. **Food is always needed.** So, please, as you come to worship on Sundays bring *canned or boxed food supplies or carefully used clothing* for those in need. They are usually picked up first thing Monday morning. Thank you.



### DEACON'S CORNER

From Margaret Pace's Kitchen

#### Christmas Dessert

Ingredients:

1 c graham cracker crumbs 3 oz cream cheese  
2 tbs sugar 1/4 c melted butter  
1/2 c powdered sugar 1 tsp vanilla  
1 can cherry pie filling 8 oz Cool Whip

Mix together the graham cracker crumbs, sugar and butter and pat into an 8x8 pan or 12 cupcake liners (use at least 2 tbs. in cupcake liners).

Beat together cream cheese, powdered sugar and vanilla. Fold in 2 cups of cool whip and pour over crust.

Spoon cherry pie filling over top and chill.



### BAKE SALE & BAZAAR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14TH Bakers & Buyers are Needed

We need all kinds of goodies, breads, cakes, candy, cookies and pies. Please bring your baked goods donations fresh with you on that Sunday morning (December 14th) to place on the Deacon's table in the Social Hall.

### Donations of New Items Needed

Please bring your NEW or ALMOST NEW items to the church office or give them to any deacon. We ask that all donated items for the bazaar be new or almost new so that they can be purchased and used for gifts.

**PLEASE FEEL FREE:** to call our **Interim Pastor, Dr. Bill Johnson**, anytime you have an emergency (like going to the hospital) or with questions, concerns, ideas, etc.

Home phone (760) 345-2993

E-mail drwnj57@aol.com

Cell phone (818) 314-5104





|                    |    |
|--------------------|----|
| Dr. Bill Johnson   | 2  |
| Dorothy Hollerback | 4  |
| Jean Fettig        | 11 |
| Ruth Ash           | 12 |
| Margaret Norton    | 15 |
| Dr. Harry Summers  | 20 |
| JoAnn Walker       | 20 |
| David DeVries      | 21 |
| Tom Kieley         | 21 |

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## The Deadline for the Sonshine is Dec. 23rd

Please send articles to my home  
by

Fax: 329-8084 or e-mail:  
maggie1952@roadrunner.com

Thank you



If you have received this issue of the SONSHINE in error or wish to be removed from our mailing list, please fill in your name and address below and send it back to us. Thank you.



Palm Springs  
Presbyterian Church  
P.O. Box 582  
Palm Springs, CA 92263  
(760) 320-2769

### OUR PURPOSE

The purpose of the Palm Springs Presbyterian Church is to proclaim the Good News of God by reaching out to others and inviting them into a new relationship with Jesus Christ. We commit ourselves, therefore, to be a center for spiritual growth and friendship, where the teachings of Jesus Christ are faithfully received and God's grace is celebrated joyfully with Christian friends!

Interim Pastor:  
Dr. Bill Johnson

Pastor Emeritus:  
Dr. Harry Summers

Parish Associate  
Dr. Ken McCullen

Music Director:  
Alex Danson

Church Secretary:  
Jackie Morgan

Sonshine Editor:  
Margaret Pace