

# Gladd Tidings . . .

## Pastor's Column . . .

***A word of caution:** Beware in your prayer, above everything, of limiting God, not only by unbelief, but by trying to figure out what He will do. Expect unexpected things, above all that we ask or think. Each time you intercede, be quiet first and worship God in His glory. Think of what He can do, of how He delights to hear the Christian pray, of your place in Christ; and expect great things.*

—Andrew Murray:

In the past few months, the Lord's Prayer has really grabbed my attention. Some of my attention was focused last summer as I prepared a sermon for Father's Day and focused in on the "Dear Father" address as we pray this prayer every week in our worship services. Another reason my attention was drawn came from a book written by Dr. Bill Carl, president of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. In addition, one of this year's best sellers has been Philip Yancey's book titled "Prayer: Does It Makes Any Difference?" Certainly, Yancey's question is one which nearly all of us has asked at one time or another in our lives.

Now as we finish with the Advent and Christmas season, my attention has gone full circle back to the Lord's Prayer as I contemplate what "thy will be done" means to Gladden UP as we begin

2007 together. All of this to say that we will begin a sermon series on "The Lord's Prayer" the last Sunday in January.

What does it really mean to pray this prayer each week? If we take each phrase and examine it truthfully and theologically, we might hesitate to so casually let the words roll off our tongues each Sunday. Yet, this prayer is universally the most often spoken prayer ... and, rightfully so because it is the prayer which Jesus taught us to pray.

I believe that prayer is the foundation of discipleship. J. Heinrich Arnold once said, "Christian discipleship is not a question of our own doing, it is a matter of making room for God so that he can live in us." It is my belief that taking time to pray is in fact making room for God to work in our lives. As we look at the life of Jesus, prayer was his source of strength—the source which equipped him to carry out a partnership with God the Father on earth.

We too are called to be in a partnership with God the Father. If we want to succeed in our common mission, we must take time to discern God's will for us in 2007. Taking time to pray is the best resolution I can think to ask you to make as we begin this New Year!

Pastor Beth

## Notes from Session ...

Budget discussions were initiated at the December 5 meeting with committees reporting needs and new ways to continue maintaining the church building and grounds plus programs for outreach and increasing our membership.

Actual expenditures from 2006 were used to determine a more realistic budget for our future and how to discern God's will for Gladden.

The 2007 Mission Pledge will be 5% of the total church budget as we work toward the 10 percent giving which is encouraged by the denomination. A pledge was also made that funds collected from the five denominational offerings thru the next year will be matched with funds from the mission savings account. Those offerings are: Pentecost, One Great Hour of Sharing, Peacemaking, Thanks offering and Christmas Joy offering.

Mission projects will be coordinated by the ICU committee with a small disbursement committee handling requests. The committee can disburse \$250 without requiring session approval. All other requests must be approved by session. Fundraising done by the ICU committee will be shared 50/50 between mission and outreach/

evangelism projects.

Goals and work projects from the Trustee committee were offered and asked to be included in the 2007 budget. These are the items currently planned:

Patch and repair with sealing of the parking lot, caulking and painting the windows, refurbishing the Sunday School rooms and painting. Suggestions were made to initiate help from the local and/or commercial educational schools as those students have community service obligations to fulfill for graduation.

\*With all consideration given to the reports and input from members of session, it was agreed we had to increase all the line items of the budget significantly to cover basic expenses and keep our church building and grounds in good condition to avoid additional expenses later.

Worship services for Christmas Eve were approved at 10:30 a.m. regular worship and 7 p.m. for the Candlelight Service with a carol singing to precede at 6:30 p.m. Communion was approved.

Approval for Pastor Beth's vacation (December 25 through January 1). Ray Lengvarski will preach December 31.

Approval was given to order welcome cards designed for the pews in Gladden Church to keep in touch with visitors. The invoice for the cards will be paid from ICU funds.

A planning/spiritual formation retreat was approved for January 20 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for all members of the congregation. Sharon Stewart from Pittsburgh Presbytery will be involved in the planning and implementation of this retreat ... mark your calendars as we seek God's will for 2007. The day includes a pancake breakfast.

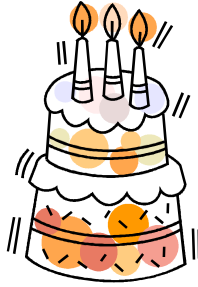
Betty Angelini, camp director at Camp Crestfield, will preach on Sunday, January 21 and share a presentation of a VBS program planned for 2007.

Approval was given for Pastor Beth to attend a Spiritual Formation Certificate-Immersion Week Feb. 11 through Feb. 16 at PTS.

## Happy Birthday ...

### January Birthdays

Jan. 4	Shannon Katruska
Jan. 7	Harriet Desmet Frank Saunoras Georgia Metsger
Jan. 18	Georgia Brown
Jan. 29	Linda Ross



**Happy Birthday—God bless you!**  
*If your birthday isn't here, notify Pastor Beth*

### February Birthdays

Feb. 2	Jack Lang
Feb. 7	Lil Etherington
Feb. 12	Dave Ross
Feb. 14	Pam Morgan
Feb. 20	Tom Jones
Feb. 24	Noelle Isiminger
Feb. 27	Kathy Carter Vuchinich

## A touch of humor ...

### Everything I need to know about life, I learned on Noah's Ark..

One : Don't miss the boat.

Two : Remember that we are all in the same boat.

Three : Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.

Four : Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.

Five : Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.

Six : Build your future on high ground.

Seven : For safety sake, travel in pairs.

Eight : Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.

Nine : When you're stressed, float a while.

Ten: Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.

Eleven : No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting.

## News You Can Use ... How to contact Pastor Beth

### Church Mailing Address:

747 Millers Run Road  
McDonald PA 15057

**Contact Information:** The church phone rings into the manse and an answering machine is available. Please call

412-221-5594

if you have a need or concern. Office

hours will be 2 to 6 p.m. on Tuesday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursdays—



pending emergencies—it might be a good idea to call. Pastor Beth is available at other times by appointment.

A good way to communicate is via email:

PgeMaker@hotmail.com.

# How to become a **STRONG** congregation ...

One of my goals as a pastor is to provide information in an effort to spark creative conversation about the strengths and weaknesses we find here at Gladden UP. This month I have been reading Philip Yancey's *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?*

As I said in my pastor's column, prayer is the foundation for discerning what God's will is for Gladden UP in 2007 and for each of us on a daily basis.

Yancey promotes some basic attitudes we must have if prayer is to take root in our lives:

- We must be willing to let the searing light of God's truth reveal who we are. God's diagnosis of our state is essential.
- We must be able to admit that "apart from God we can do nothing."
- We must acknowledge our doubt and be willing to bring our doubts and complaints—our very ignorance—and subject them to the blinding light of a reality we can't comprehend.
- We must be honest in our prayers, confident that beneath the layers of grime is a damaged work of art which God longs to repair.
- We need to understand that only we as humans can articulate lament or praise. Because of this, we have a very unique purpose in creation.
- We need to ask ourselves this question: "Is prayer a good luck charm, a transaction or barter for privilege and power or is it a relationship?"

Yancey urges us to ask these questions ...

- ◆ How can I slow down?
- ◆ How can I simplify things?
- ◆ How can I bring silence into my life?
- ◆ How can I savor this moment?
- ◆ How can I speak up? (Tell the truth)
- ◆ How can I settle in? (Establish roots/rituals)
- ◆ How can I shed my armor and masks?
- ◆ How can I soften my approach to life?
- ◆ How can I serve the community?

If we want to hear God's will for our lives, we must take time to do some "soul listening" and that requires time. This is true of any relationship and it is certainly true when we desire to know more about God.

In looking at the Lord's Prayer we see that we are in an "odd couple" alliance with God. Prayer is cooperation with God, a consent that opens the way for grace to work. From the very beginning God has relied on human partners to advance the process of creation. True prayer does not lead to passivity but provokes us to action. It is a subtle interplay of human and divine that accomplishes God's work on earth.

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"To pray is to walk in the full light of God and to say simply, without holding back, 'I am human and you are God.' At that moment, conversion occurs, the restoration of the true relationship. A human being is not someone who once in a while makes a mistake, and God is not someone who now and then forgives. No, human beings are sinners, and God is love."

Henri Nouwen

# Calendar of Events:

- January 3** Bible Study at 7 p.m. and Continues each Wednesday
- January 4** Choir Practice at 6:30 p.m. every week
- January 7** Communion  
Epiphany Sunday
- January 9** Session Mtg. at 7:15 p.m
- January 16** ICU Meeting at 7:30 p.m.
- January 20** All Church Retreat—9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- January 21** Betty Angelini from Camp Crestfield will deliver the message  
  
Congregational Meeting Follows worship.
- January 28** Sermon series begins on The Lord's Prayer
- February 4** Communion Served
- February 6** Session Meeting at 7:15
- February 8** Presbytery Meeting at Bower Hill Community Church
- February 10** Celebration of marriage Dana Tournay and Donald Bengede
- February 11-16** Pastor Beth will attend Immersion Week

## ***Congregational Meeting***

***Sunday, January 21***

### ***Immediately following worship***

The members of Gladden United Presbyterian Church will meet to vote on the following:

#### **Election of Officers**

##### **Slate of Elders:**

Ray Stevens—2nd consecutive term of office  
Bill Morgan—New Term of Office  
Jean Beyer—New Term of Office

These three join: Florine Rolin (Clerk of Session), Georgia Metsger, Toots Kelley, Grace Coleman, Ray Lengvarsky and Dave Ross.

##### **Slate of Trustees:**

Jim Metsger—2nd consecutive term of office  
Edgar Shaffer—New Term of Office  
Dave Adams—New Term of Office  
Carol Cain—New Term of Office

These four join: Frank Saunoras and Alan Desmet

##### **2007 Nominating Committee:**

Grace Coleman  
Linda Ross  
Harriet Desmet  
Alys Mehok  
Edgar Shaffer

In addition, the congregation will vote on the pastor's salary portion of the 2007 budget as presented by session.

**Treasurer:** Jane Mitchell

**Financial Secretary:** Lil Etherington

## A commitment to mission . . .

Session has made a commitment to increase our mission giving in 2007. One way of doing that of course is to simply give funds from our mission endowment. However, missional thinking—thinking of people beyond our doors—is an essential ingredient of Christian discipleship. We would not want our congregation to miss out on the many blessings found in caring for others. As a result, session will match your giving in 2007 in an effort to increase our mission giving from approximately 1 percent of our budget to 5 percent of our budget as a step toward meeting the 10 percent pledge which is encouraged by the denomination.

Too often, mission is reduced to simply giving dollars to faceless organizations who then disperse the funds to people we know nothing about. My goal is to introduce you to some people so that you can get to know them on a better basis. One of those people is Pittsburgh Presbytery's own Kay Day, pastor of Mt. Pisgah Presbyterian Church. Kay left in December for a year-long stay in Malawi as a resident theologian and teacher preparing students for the ministry. I am enclosing her departing note as well as a picture of her. She will be keeping a blog site and diary of her experiences, and some of you may want to keep track of her by going to:

<http://www.pghpresbytery.org/default.htm> and then clicking on the Kay's diary icon.

A commitment to mission ... "The stockings were all hung by the chimney with care, in hopes that Saint Nicholas soon would be there."



Remember that anticipation as a child? There is a great deal of that that I am feeling as I prepare to leave in just 8 days for Malawi and the adventure of a lifetime. Christmas and then Malawi! But just as with Christmas, we make all the preparations but there are always surprises, the unexpected that comes in the midst of the best of preparations. That has certainly been the case in my preparations. Just when we think we have things under control, God says, "Wait a minute. You need to trust me."

The day before Thanksgiving, I got an email from Rev. Daniel Gunya, the General Secretary of the Blantyre Synod, informing me that a few things had changed in the plans for my coming and that, while all the details had not yet been worked out, I would not be teaching in the Parallel Theological program, but at Zomba Theological College. I would be living there as well. All of this had come about because of Zomba's financial difficulty.

What it means for me is that where I will be living, what I will be teaching, who I will be teaching and with whom I will be teaching all changed with that email. And the details were yet to be worked out. God's grace is great. There is great peace with all of this because I am certain that God wants me in Malawi for this year. He already has a plan and has the details worked out, even if we don't. There are some of the details coming into place. I have been asked to teach New Testament and Greek (instead of Old Testament and Theology), so I have an idea of what I will be teaching, although that could change, too. Instead of living in a two room house on the Parallel Program property, I will be in a house on ZTC's campus, amid the other staff housing at Zomba. Silas Ncozana has emailed me that my house is nice, roomy and secure.

I may not know the reasons for all these changes at this time, but I am certain that our God is in control and He has a purpose for my being at Zomba at this time. It will be exciting to see what unfolds in the next weeks as my adventure begins and as this new phase for Zomba begins. God is up to his usual. He is full of surprises and adventure for us, if we will just trust Him. Flexibility in Malawi is a given. I'm not so sure that isn't the way God would invite us to live all of life. At least, that is the way I am approaching life as I finish preparations to leave. The adventure has begun

## Women's Association . . .

*Kitchen remodeling is nearly complete, except for the flooring and plumbing .*

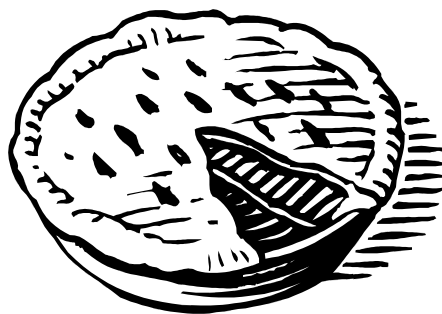
*A range and stainless steel back splash have been installed along with 2 stainless steel work tables put into place.*

*Kitchen walls repaired and painted. Flooring is not complete. Corrections are being made by the contractor.*

*Baskets for homebound individuals were assembled and delivered to 22 people.*

*The women of Gladden were invited to participate in Bridgeville's Ministerial "Thanksgiving Feast" dinner*

*on November 19<sup>th</sup>. Our women delivered 15 pies and volunteered to serve and participate in the clean up afterwards. Approximately 150 were served with another 200 dinners delivered.*



*The women of the church organized a potluck dinner on November 25 at the church as we gave thanks for our many blessings of the year and looked forward to what God has in store for us in 2007.*

*Christmas dinner was held at Peters Place this year and well attended. In lieu of exchanging gifts the women took donations for Nikki Lipinski's family as she continues to battle leukemia. The collection was over \$300.*

### **Special Offerings:**

**Thank Offering:** A total of \$554 was forwarded to Pittsburgh Presbytery

**Christmas Joy Offering:** A total of \$970 was presented to Pittsburgh Presbytery.

God bless all of you who gave with generous hearts!

## Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

Words can't express the gratitude our family feels as a result of your generosity and outpouring of love to us during our first Christmas season here at Gladden UP. The attendance at our open house was remarkable—particularly

because it included a surprise visit from Santa and our own resident clown.

All of us have enjoyed the many presents of food, the daily arrival of Christmas cards as well as the gift of money which was given to

our family!

One of the highlights of the year as a pastor is the Christmas Eve service and this year was no exception!

Thanks for all that you did to make it a joyous celebration of our Savior's birth!

## Upcoming Events ...

### Church-Wide Retreat

**January 20, 2007**

Join us Saturday, Jan. 20 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. for a church-wide retreat day. Pastor Beth and her family will serve a pancake/sausage breakfast. There will be time for worship, spiritual formation and a time to discern God's will for Gladden UP in 2007.



### The promise of spiritual blessing!

Join us on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. for the beginning of a Bible Study on the Book of Acts! Learn how the Holy Spirit empowers us to live as a church community and to have an abundant life! No, we aren't promising you material blessings for 2007—but we are promising you spiritual blessings!

**Gladden United Presbyterian**

747 Millers Run Road  
McDonald PA 15057  
Phone: 412-221-5594  
Rev. Elizabeth Broschart