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Paul's Place—December 2008

CHRISTMAS MEANS?

C.S. Lewis makes several points about the meaning of words that may offer some help in understanding the meaning of Christmas. In his *MERE CHRISTIANITY*, Lewis explains that the word “gentleman” originally described someone who was a landowner. To call one a “gentleman” had nothing to do with their character. Eventually, it became a word that was something “nice” to say about someone. In other words, it lost its real meaning and became almost meaningless.

The title “Christian” used to mean a person who was doing their best to imitate Jesus Christ. It was descriptive of a person who was in a personal relationship with the Son of God and lived to be just like him. Eventually the title became just something nice to say about someone. If you wanted to describe someone who was kind and helpful, one would say they were good Christian people. One might say, “That was such a Christian thing to do” to complement one’s behavior. If one wanted to criticize a person’s behavior, one might say, “that was certainly unchristian.” Eventually, the term Christian became just a nice thing to say about someone without any consideration for a relationship with Jesus or a commitment to His body on earth, the Church. It is this loss of meaning that led to the idea, “I can be just as good a Christian without going to church.” That is true if the title “Christian” just means that one is a nice person.

What about “CHRISTMAS”? The Christmas that I hear promoted is the one that says it is about giving and being nice to each other. Christmas is about loving and caring. Christmas is about home and family. Christmas is about all the simple things in life. Christmas is about attending church on Christmas Eve and Christmas Sunday. If that is all that Christmas means to you, then you have bought into the contemporary meaninglessness of the celebration. Christmas may mean those things, but it is most significantly about God’s sacrificial love in the birth of Jesus. It is the beginning of the salvation story that leads to a cross and Easter. **Christmas, like Christianity itself, is about God.**



I hope you have a Merry Christmas. That means a “mighty, meaningful” Christmas.

North Eaton Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
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Grafton, OH 44044
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Minister: Dr. Paul H. Durbin
Licensed Minister: Judy Ponting
Christian Ed. And Youth Director: Polly Tallos
Secretary: Londa Blaine
Pathways Counseling and Growth Center: Dr. Ralph Thompson

NECC Pulpit Committee

Your pulpit committee has been meeting and reviewing resumes supplied by our Region Of Ohio office. Our goal is to have an Intentional Interim minister ready for the job by the first of January. Once we have made a selection, that person will be brought before the Council and then the congregation for approval.

We ask that our congregation keep the committee in prayer, that they may follow God's plan for North Eaton Christian Church. Please keep Paul and Judy in your prayers during this time of transition.

Jeff Hensley-Chairman of Elders

THANK YOU

Dear Church Family,

I would like to thank everyone for your prayers, phone calls, cards, and flowers over the past few weeks. They have been a source of comfort for me.

Sincerely, Karen Vilevac

"I want to thank everyone for your prayers, visits, cards, and kind words of concern during my recent hospital stay. It is greatly appreciated by me and my family.

Dawn Schieferle

Thank you so very much for your cards of empathy and concern for my mishap.

While our tenure with you has been short, our choice of North Eaton Christian Church as our Faith Community has been a blessing to both Marlene and myself.

Thank you again and God's blessing to each and every one of you.

Vern Black

Dear Ladies of NECC,

Thank you so much for the wonderful desserts you prepared for the Teschner (Claire Kauf's son) funeral lunch. Your generosity was greatly appreciated. May God bless and keep you in His care.

Linda, Jen, Rob, Anthony, Jacob, Michelle, Chrissy,
Nick, Tristan, Alyssa, Stephanie, Olen, and Maddie

"Our thanks and appreciation to everyone for your many prayers, cards, flowers, food and phone calls after the death of our father, Marty Blaine. Your visits at the funeral home, your attendance at his funeral, and the wonderful meal provided afterwards gave us comfort and strength to get through this very sad time for our family. "

Dick & Londa Blaine, Carol & Doug Busche,

Jen & Paul Hayward & family, Doug & Kim Blaine & family

Mom's Group in December

SATURDAY, DEC. 13th @ 10:30 a.m.



Meet here at the church to decorate cookies (cookies & frosting provided). Bring sprinkles to share. FAMILY and FRIENDS are welcome to join us.

RSVP: church office, 748-2230 or
Jen Hayward, 365-1846 by Dec. 10th.

Dear Dr. Durbin and friends,

The Thanksgiving season gives us the opportunity to reflect on our blessings and reminds us of the many things we are especially thankful for. We are thankful for friends like you who faithfully support our programs. Your financial support of \$767 assists us in providing services and programs to those in need. We appreciate your thoughtful gift.

Please call us (216) 688-4140 if we may answer any questions you or your congregation might have.

Jim Runyon, Dir. Of Church Relations

Dear God,

I just don't understand. Why did you send Your son to be born in a manger? The King of Kings, the Son of God....in a dirty manger? Why?

I have been in many barns; cows, sheep, horses, and chickens. They are dirty. In fact, they smell and have all the "left-overs" of animal dinners. It is not a place that I would have liked to birth our three daughters. Still, that is where Mary and Joseph were. In came the shepherds after spending time in the fields with a bunch of sheep. We know they must have been very dirty.

When our babies were born, the hospital was sanitized along with every person that came in contact with us. And when we brought them home, everything had to be clean. I even washed all the new clothes before the babies could put them on. Nothing was ever dirty.

Into a dirty world, and a dirty manger our Lord was born. Why? Our Lord spent most of his life in dirt. A dirt floor in his home and father's carpenter shop as he was growing up and a land and time when clothes and bodies were not washed everyday. He was surrounded by dirt.

When it came time for his ministry to begin, he went to the sea shore and mingled with fishermen. I have been to the docks of the sea. It smells like dead fish and other creatures. It is not a place I would like to spend my days. Jesus surrounded himself with the lowest of humans and spent his days on earth walking in dust and living in strange places. He even washed the feet of his disciples after a long walk in dirt. Why?

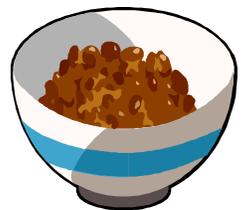
Are you trying to tell me it is time to get dirty. Is it time to get out of my comfort zone and meet people where they live. Jesus told them about believing in him and how to have eternal life. And they listened..... Lord forgive me when I judge someone with dirty clothes, or not smelling like I believe they should. I am going to get down and get dirty.

Romans 12:16a, "Live in harmony with one another;
do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly."

Love, Judy

3RD ANNUAL CHILI COOK-OFF

IT'S TIME ONCE AGAIN TO START GETTING YOUR CHILI APPETITE READY FOR ANOTHER FRIENDLY COMPETITION BETWEEN CHURCHES. THIS YEAR THE CHILI COOK-OFF WILL AGAIN TAKE PLACE AT THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN BRUNSWICK. THE DAY, OF COURSE, WILL BE 'FAT TUESDAY', FEBRUARY 24, 6:30-9 P.M. OTHER AREA CHURCHES WILL BE INVITED AS IN THE PAST TWO YEARS.



EACH CHURCH IS ASKED TO PROVIDE AT LEAST ONE POT OF CHILI PER 8 PEOPLE ATTENDING. DIG OUT YOUR FAVORITE RECIPE AND ENTER IT IN THE COMPETITION. A SIGN-UP SHEET WILL BE IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL IN JANUARY. PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED FOR THE WINNERS IN SEVERAL CATEGORIES. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO ENTER THE COMPETITION YOU CAN STILL COME FOR THE FOOD, FUN, AND ENTERTAINMENT.

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE OLMSTED FALLS HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ BAND. THEY ARE QUITE A TREAT TO LISTEN TO. WE HOPE TO SEE EVERYONE THERE!

PLEASE COME AND HELP NECC WIN THE COVETED "CHAMPION CHILI FOR CHRIST" TROPHY. IT WILL BE GIVEN TO THE CHURCH PROVIDING THE CHILI VOTED "THE BEST IN 2009."

IF YOU WOULD LIKE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT CAROL BOKMAN; BOKMANS@COX.NET.

- **WOMEN'S MISSIONS**
- **Cornerstone — small booties/socks**
- **Salvation Army—face clothes**

- **Reminder: Aluminum drink cans only**
- (our thanks to all who continue to drop off cans at the Blaine's @ 9700 Island Rd.)
- **Paper Recycle Bin— THANK YOU** for remembering to bring your papers to church with you and filling our bin.

Fair Grant forms are available in the church office or through e-mail.

If you would like it e-mailed to you please contact Chris Hensley at chenlsey@midviewk12.org. All grant forms must be returned to Chris Hensley by January 1, 2007. Grant recommendations are made at the February Council Meeting. Any questions feel free to contact Chris Hensley.

Serving in DECEMBER

- 8:00 Mel & Marie Ternes
- 9:30 Phyllis Chapman (TL), Floyd Chapman, Royce & Leslie Klein, Jeff & Brenda Koehler, Paula & Mike Krasnevich, James Purdy, Amy Stafford, Robin Galvin, JJ Haumschild,



ELDERS Ralph Thompson, Lee Daniels

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 3 Donna Burdick
- 4 Cindy Thompson
JJ Piper
- 5 Leslie Klein
- 7 Natalie Kramer
- 11 Gerry Piscola
Marty & Sally Belfi
- 12 Randy Kuhn
Diana Tyler
Buz Bokman
Robin Galvin
Brandy Burdick
- 13 Sandy & Jim Hales
- 14 Nicholas Rodak
Antonia Spector
- 15 Ralph Thompson
- 16 Judy Ponting
Lorraine Cragin
- 17 Glen Thompson
Helen Walkden
- 18 Jeff Brunger,
Doug Blaine
Bob Burdick
- 19 Tony Piscola
- 20 Holly Hill
- 21 Stephanie Szuch
- 23 Joseph Klein
- 24 Barry Daniels
- 25 Jan Brooks
Dillon Swanson
- 26 Kayla Zawoyski
- 29 Debbie Cihla
- 30 Pam Daniels



Fellowship Hour -- Dec. 14

The families of Maggie Carpenter and Paige Bokman will be hosting the fellowship hour in honor of the girls being baptized that Sunday. Both girls are currently in the 6th grade and are very active with their Girl Scout troops.

Paige and Maggie have also completed their requirements for the God and Church Program. The God and Church program is designed for Scouts (both girls and boys) to take a faith journey that will help them grow closer to Christ and be a stronger member of their church. They have worked very closely with Dr. Durbin over the past year. While working on their God and Church awards, Maggie and Paige decided that they would like to be baptized and officially join NECC.



Maggie and Paige will be pouring the beverages during the fellowship hour and will have some Girl Scout and God and Church items on display. Please feel free to stop and chat with them.

Children's Choir — If your child/grandchild loves to sing and would like to be a part of a fun group of singers (no experience or special training necessary), please bring them to our practice that meets each Sunday morning @ 10:30-11:00 in the CHOIR ROOM (except the second Sunday when we EAT DONUTS). This is for boys and girls of ALL ages.

JANUARY 2009 birthdays & anniversaries for the first week:

1-Holly Gross 4-Roberta Balogh, Sandy Gross 5-Dan Gross 6-Mike E. Carpenter, Erin Martin
7-Jen Wilson 9-James Purdy

Christmas Offering 2008

"God Has Done Great Things" Luke 1:47-55

**The Christian Church In Ohio is a vital part of the work of Christ in our world.
The REGIONAL CHURCH—**

Is a covenant network of congregations in mission.

Offers congregations resources for worship, education, evangelism & missions.

Offers camp & conference opportunities to strength spiritual life.

Offers training events and retreats to prepare leaders.

Helps start and support new congregations.

Nurtures candidates for licensed and ordained ministry.

Assists congregations in times of pastoral search.

Provides pastoral care for clergy and congregations.



Please give generously to the CHRISTMAS OFFERING for the benefit of our congregation, our sister congregations, and our common ministry through the CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OHIO.

Michaelene Durbin—World Outreach Chairperson

We Went A. P. E.

It was a rewarding and successful meeting on November 22 as we gathered to plan the church year 2009.

Maureen Cromling will be leading the bible study classes this winter on "The Old Testament For Beginners" and "The New Testament For Beginners." More information will be coming as plans are finalized.

From our questionnaires that were submitted and those in attendance, many are interested in "life transitions." Paula Krasnevich will be researching different forms of transitions in our life.

Diana Tyler is excited about the CHILDREN'S CHOIR and has a lot of fun things planned for the boys and girls. They meet in the CHOIR ROOM on Sunday morning at 10:30. NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY—just come ready to sing and praise God with you voices!!

Habitat for Humanity has contacts in Lorain County and Melissa Folk is working with them for a focus on helping others in our area.

Prison Ministry—Amy Stafford will be using her first-hand knowledge in what the needs are and how the church can become a part of that ministry.

HUNGER — Darrell Wilford would like to teach people how to grow and preserve food.

Our theme at APE was Maintenance and Mission. Maintenance for our spiritual growth in study and learning. Mission in our community and the world. Thanks be to God for the dedication of our church family at North Eaton Christian Church.

Judy Ponting

Mike Weber (Larry & Eileen's son) had a serious heart attack just before Thanksgiving. He is home recuperating. Mike was raised in our church, went to college, and on to seminary to be ordained as a Disciples of Christ minister. Many have asked for his address: 5031 Glenmore Rd., Anderson, IN 46012

WHAT ABOUT THE DISCRETIONARY FUND DURING THE TIME OF INTERIM?

The Discretionary Fund will remain an important part of the church's ministry. The Interim minister will be given a copy of the guidelines for distributing the funds. The pastor, in consultation with two anonymous members, presently distributes the funds.

Please continue to support the Discretionary Fund with the same generosity as you have done in the past.

HOW MUCH TIME FOR THE INTERIM?

"How much time will the intentional interim spend at the church each week?" is a question asked of me. The answer depends on the agreement worked out by the Pulpit Committee. In all likelihood, the Intentional Interim will be a fulltime ordained minister. He or she will spend as much time on the job as the settled pastor you will call in the future.

"HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GET A SETTLED PASTOR?"

I tried to answer this question in an earlier article. North Eaton Christian Church is such a wonderfully desirable church that it will not have a difficult time in finding a settled pastor.

However, the fact that a new pastor will be following a 26 year pastorate, it might be wise to allow enough time for the intentional interim to assist the congregation in reaching some interim goals. Remember, **"Don't hurry the interim."**

So, how long will that take? I don't know, but do not get discouraged if it takes a little longer than you expect. The length of time will have nothing to do with the desirability of this congregation. This is a good church with a bright and exciting future. **The time of interim ministry is a valuable and exciting time. Enjoy the process.**

Christmas Eve Worship Service — 7:00 P.M.

Our Christmas Eve service is a time when we can celebrate the real meaning of Christmas by singing Christian carols, hearing God's word contained in scripture, and special music. The power point presentation will enhance the message that is so dear to us during this wonderful season.

Leave the secular Christmas at home for the evening and get in touch with the spiritual celebration of the birth of the Savior.



FINANCIAL SECRETARY — Laura Kuhn

2008 Giving Statements will be sent to everyone who had offering envelopes. If you do not receive one by the middle of January, please let the church office know. The 2009 Offering Envelopes will be available AT THE CHURCH on December 28th. If you do not see any with your name on them and you want envelopes, please let the church office or Laura Kuhn know.

United Nations Seminar w/ CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OHIO

Our very own JEN WILSON is working hard to attend the United Nations Seminar sponsored by the CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN OHIO. Jen will be traveling with youth and adults from other Ohio Disciple churches. They will go to Washington D.C. where they will meet with Senators and congressmen, as well as see many of our national monuments. In New York City they will go to the United Nations and have the opportunity to meet with representatives from other nations and get their perspective on the world situation. They'll also have time to see a Broadway play and try the native cuisine.

The youth who attend this seminar are required to do a list of researched projects before they are accepted. Many of our youth have attended over the years. This trip is not offered every year and is for Junior and Seniors only. Some of our church family who have qualified and found the experience valuable and exciting were: Julie Carpenter McDaniel, Mark Carpenter, Polly Carpenter Tallos, Jennifer Blaine Hayward, Lauren Cihla, Kelly Carpenter Rose, Nanci Ickes, Jeff Ickes, and Stephanie Tyler. Paul Durbin attended as an adult supervisor.

The youth are required to pay their own way. North Eaton Christian Church has always been very supportive of our youth. Jen needs our help with this project. She has made the down payment but still needs \$625.00 to finish paying for the trip. (This is not personal spending money.)

Jen will be in the fellowship hall after worship to answer any questions you might have about the trip, including her research on hot political issues. She is asking for donations from her church family to help make this trip possible.

SUNDAY, DEC. 28, 3 P.M.

Everyone is invited to a reception in the church's fellowship hall for Paul Durbin as he retires after 26 years at North Eaton Christian Church.

We are sad to lose our minister, but we are happy for our friend who is able to retire at an early age, enjoy spending more time with his grandson and pursue new ventures.

(If you have any questions about the reception or would like to help, please contact LONDA BLAINE, 748-2230 or 748-2686.)

NEWS AMONG THE PEWS

Our sympathy is extended to:

Bob and Clair Kauf on the sudden death of Claire's son, Bob Teschner.

Marilyn Berg on the sudden death of her husband Tim. Tim was also Mel and Marie Ternes' son-in-law.

The family and friends of Marty Blaine. Marty was an active member of our church since 1934.

OUR PRAYERS SURROUND THESE FAMILIES IN THE DEATHS OF THEIR LOVED ONES.

"I want to say thank you to all the MANY, MANY, MEN & WOMEN who helped to make the bazaar another successful project here at NECC. All the volunteers that helped to put it all together, those who purchased gift items, bakery, lunch, bought raffle tickets, gave blood, and to those who stayed around to put it all away—THANK YOU. Our thanks also to the community who came and shared in our special day.

LAURA KUHN

REMINDERS FROM OUR TRUSTEES:

T A P E (of any kind).....is NOT to be used to hang anything. Please DO NOT use it on the walls or the glass doors. (Office supply stores carry all kinds of things that can be used to temporarily hang things—it just takes planning ahead.)

S P E E D L I M I T.....The speed coming into the church drive is 5 MPH. Please use extreme caution even at 5 MPH. We have children running to the playground, leaving the building and getting out of cars. It is up to us as adults to be aware of what is going on around us.

“Passion Play” in Germany. Want to go with us????

This play is only performed every ten years. The next date is JUNE-SEPTEMBER 2010. Please see VERN & MARLENE BLACK or ROBIN GALVIN by the end of THIS December if you are SERIOUSLY considering going with us on this trip. If we have group, we will need a commitment by putting down a payment by SPRING 2009. (And that is just around the corner.)

A PLAY OF LIFE AND DEATH—Promised in a moment of mortal threat, so began the history of the Oberammergau Passion Play in 1633. In the middle of the Thirty Years War, after months of suffering and death from the Plague, the Oberammergauers swore an oath that they would perform the “Play of the Suffering, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ” every ten years. At Pentecost 1634, they fulfilled their pledge for the first time on a stage they put up in the cemetery above the fresh graves of the plague victims. In the year 2010, the Community of Oberammergau will for the 41st time be performing the play they have preserved throughout the centuries.

A MAN OF “FLESH AND BLOOD”—Today, the churches appreciate the possibility of telling of Jesus as a man “of flesh and blood” in a way that helps all mankind to relate to him, as is the case in the play.

THE PASSION PLAY TODAY—In this spirit, during a work period of several years, the text and music were fundamentally revised, new settings and costumes designed and a new production created in countless rehearsals. Now, more than 2,000 Oberammergauers, actors, singers, instrumentalists and stage technicians, in approximately six hours of playing time, bring to the stage those events Christianity regards as its central source of life and hope

Retirement Reception for Paul Durbin is Sunday, Dec. 28th @ 3:00 P.M. Mark your calendar so you do not miss this event.

