

Third Word News & Notes



DECEMBER 2013

Pastor's Message

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

The Christmas season has inspired some of the very best hymns ever written. One of my personal favorites through the years has been, O Little Town of Bethlehem. Its beautiful words and music capture the sights, sounds and spiritual significance of Christmas in a very special way. It evokes in me a sense of the awe and wonder that the shepherds must have felt as they watched their sheep in the fields near the little village of Bethlehem that first Christmas night. Not long ago I read the story behind this Christmas hymn. The writer's name was Phillips Brooks who was for twenty two years the rector of the famous and beautiful Trinity Church located in Boston's Copley Square. On the night of December 24, 1865 while on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, he and a few others journeyed on horseback from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. Traveling through the very fields where the shepherds heard the angel chorus announcing Jesus' birth proved to be a deeply moving experience. It was that special moment near Bethlehem that inspired him to write O Little Town of Bethlehem two years later. Phillips Brooks was also one of the most eloquent preachers of his day, and as such he was also able, in his lyrics, to apply the true meaning of the Christmas story to each of us personally. The final verse reads, *O holy child of Bethlehem, Descend on us we pray. Cast out our sin, and enter in; be born in us today.* The words of this immortal Christmas hymn are a powerful reminder that our own hearts and minds are the real Bethlehem where the Christ must dwell and rule. May it be so for all of us on planet earth which God loves so much.

Christmas Blessings,

Pastor Norm

**THE LIGHT IS WHAT GUIDES YOU HOME, THE WARMTH IS
WHAT KEEPS YOU THERE. ~ELLIE RODRIGUEZ**

Breakfast With Santa

Our first event of the holiday season was the Breakfast with Santa. A delicious breakfast was served and then a visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus. The children received a small gift and could buy a picture sitting with the honored guests. Jeff Yardis once again set up his photography studio for the event. Thanks to the many elves who came out to make a successful event. We want to thank the Girl Scout Troop and our PF members who helped out at the event as well as our wonderful adult volunteers.



Missions Gifts



There were many families who were given a happier holiday due to the generosity of our congregation. A huge thanks to Jackie Clark who planned and delivered the wonderful gifts to the families. Four families were helped by our church. There are many small items to give to the Eddy Shelter and Amazing Grace to those who are homeless and in need during this season. Items such as hats, gloves, toiletries, gift cards and chocolates. Thanks to all for their generous support of our Missions.

Sunday School also had a mission project. We are making welcome baskets for those moving out to a new home for the first time. We are loading ten baskets with items to start off their household such as: can openers, silverware, knives, measuring cups, detergents and more. The children also worked on making pot holders and door hangers to go with the baskets.



Pilgrim Fellowship

We celebrated Christmas this year with our fellow churches in Portland and East Hampton. We had 21 teens come out and fill our bags with soup mix and cookie mix. We played a few games and participated in a fun filled, Yankee Swap. Thanks to Ann and Jill from our other churches and Ellie Hojda and Janice Drescher, a fun time was had by all. The next event for our group is to help at the Special Olympics in March.

Advent Candle Lighting



We celebrate Advent Season by lighting a candle each week to symbolize hope, peace, joy, love and Christ. We ask a different family each week to light the candle together. We have been blessed to have the Augner Family [Hannah, Ethan, Luke, Mark and Molly] and the LaValley Family [Emily, Christopher, Olivia, Tim and Kim]. We look forward to the next lightings through Christmas Eve.





Caroling At Heritage Commons

Choir members: John & Becky Starrett, Lina Vior and her granddaughter, Victoria, Leslie Coutsouridis, Brian Y., Barbara & Norm Erlendson sang Christmas carols for the residents of Heritage Commons. They sang carols such as: Winter Wonderland, Silver Bells and Deck the Halls. There was much holiday cheer and many sang along with us.



Fellowship Holiday Party

The Fellowship group is hosting a second year of a Christmas Celebration for our members. The guests bring a pot luck item for dinner which is then followed by a Yankee Swap and some Christmas Carols. The group also has games for the children to play. Jennifer Smith and Elizabeth Joy have volunteered to babysit for our families with younger children so they can enjoy the party. The Fellowship group: Lori Albert, Grace Fiderio, Corrine

Sternberg, Betty Shaw and Barbara DiMauro have a great evening planned. We extend a warm thanks to the committee who planned and decorated for the evening.

Missions At St. Vincent DePaul

The Missions group once again served a delicious meal to those that come to St. Vincent DePaul. Jackie and Ben Clark along with Barbara and Norm Erlendson. The meal consisted of penne past with marinara sauce, green salad, rolls and cookies for dessert. The group served about 60 people during the evening. We are scheduled to serve dinner again in March. If you are interested in serving or cooking, please talk to Jackie Clark.



Thanksgiving Celebration At Third Church

What a great celebration for the annual Thanksgiving Dinner. The Deacons put on a dinner that served over 200 people on November 24th. Jeff Meehl was once again at the helm to roast the eight turkeys, there were many different side dishes, mashed potatoes, gravy and a variety of desserts. The PF group made some desserts and table decorations for the event. Thank you to all who cooked, served, cleaned and stayed for the family dinner.