

# POMPTON REFORMED CHURCH NEWSLETTER

December 2013

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## **The Faces of Advent...and Even More!**

Dear Pompton Family,

Advent began early this year--the first day of December. All of December's services are enhanced through the gifts of our Chancel Choir, and also Adult Bells or Youth Bells.

You may already know these things, but just to be sure...

**On Sunday, December 1**, we lit the candle of *Hope*, and Pastor Debbie began our journey toward Bethlehem's manger, in her message highlighting the face of Mary. We celebrated Lord's Supper. Sunday afternoon was the lovely Vespers service: "Fear Ye Not," with readings, favorite carols and communion by candlelight.

**On Saturday, December 7**, Pompton Reformed is present to assist with the afternoon Toys for Tots Drive, and then serve hot chocolate to frozen shoppers for the evening Holiday Stroll in our town. Come visit PRC's table, as we let the community know that we are here to serve!

**On Sunday, December 8** we light the candle of *Peace*. Pastor Tom's message highlights the face of Joseph. We'll also be receiving two new members into our family--Christina and Billy Scholts, and baptizing their son William. Be ready to sing, "Welcome to the Family." Following worship is our annual Congregational Meeting, for which your presence and prayers are deeply desired. Many God moments to celebrate while looking ahead to seek how the Lord is leading us.

**Sunday, December 15's** candle is *Joy*, and Pastor Tom's message focuses upon the faces of the angels. Healing Service.

**On Sunday, December 22** we light the candle of *Love*, and view the faces of the shepherds as they learn of the Savior's birth. Anticipation has been building toward our **Christmas Eve services**. Pastor Debbie leads the 7:30 pm worship, with plenty in store for younger children. Pastor Tom leads the 10:30 p.m. service, a more reflective service, with communion. A host of opportunities to invite and welcome any who are currently without a faith community. May their heart find a home here, centered in the love of Jesus.

With prayers for a Christ-focused season,

Pastor Tom Bartha



***“Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before! What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!”***

~Dr. Seuss, How the Grinch Stole Christmas!

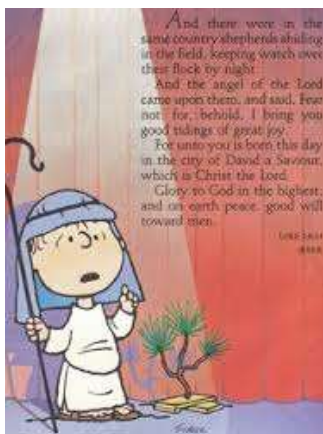
OK, I admit it, I wait for “How the Grinch Stole Christmas” to come on television every year, and for the Charlie Brown Christmas special too. There have been years when for one reason or another I missed them and I have say that those years seemed a little less Christmas-y for me. Probably not something a pastor should admit, right? But you know what? The more I wonder about my seasonal television viewing habits, the more I see why these shows have become so important to me.

Both of these shows help me to understand, at least a little bit, the transcendent nature of the incarnation. They use the familiar to tell the story of a God who is beyond my understanding but who came near that I might know him. These cartoons help me in some way know the God who stepped out of eternity into the human experience so our relationship with him could be restored. This is something that is hard to wrap my human mind around, the idea that beneath all the wrapping and tinsel and Christmas cookies lies a truth, a truth that once we understand it, changes our lives for now and all of eternity. God with us back then and God with us in the here and now – Emmanuel.

God often uses the familiar to make known a truth about what God is like or what the Kingdom of God is like. Jesus did it when he told parables. He used what was around him, what people understood to make a point about things that are harder to grasp. He talked about farming to an agrarian community, he talked about rulers and masters to a people subject to the rule of others. He used the familiar things in his culture to teach truth that is eternal.

This Advent we will look at four familiar stories that are part of the Christmas narrative to find the transcendent truth that comes in a baby born in a feeding trough over 2,000 years ago. In the story of Mary, we will look for hope amid the darkness; in Joseph, we will seek peace amid chaos and uncertainty; in the angels, we will seek real and lasting joy; and in the shepherds, we will look for the Love that keeps promises and comes to those of us who are least likely to expect it.

It is my hope and prayer that as we look together at these four stories this Advent that each of us will find ourselves in these stories, that we will experience the hope, peace, joy and love that comes with knowing Jesus as Emmanuel – God with us.



May God keep our eyes open to the ways he is speaking in the familiar things around us to tell the larger story of his love and faithfulness. Yes, maybe even in cartoons.

A Most Blessed Advent you and  
Merry Christmas!

Pastor Debbie



## Advent Hope

Because Health Ministry is more than physical health and embraces the truth that we must minister to body, mind, and spirit, our Advent meditation has a more spiritual focus. It is the HOPE of all of the Health Ministry team (or Cabinet) that you will find these thoughts on HOPE to be enlightening and valuable in your journey through Advent.

### Hope: what is it really?

The thread that is woven through all of the Advent season is one of HOPE. The weeks of expectation are characterized by the hope that something good will come. The theme of hope is the center of many stories found in the Bible. Hope can be little more than a wish. It is used at times as if it is a fragile thing. "I hope you can come." "I hope so too, but it doesn't look promising." There was hope for the people of the Scriptures too, but it was much more robust. It's a hope worth risking for, hope that will bring change. It is hope with courage.

### Tamar's story

The hope and courage of Advent is expressed well in the Old Testament story of Tamar. She is the earliest of Jesus' foremothers mentioned in Matthew's Gospel in the long lineage list found in chapter 1. Tamar's name appears in verse 3. Tamar was the daughter-in-law of Judah. He was one of the sons of Jacob (the one who prevented the other brothers from killing Joseph but instead sold him to traders who eventually brought him as a slave to Egypt). Genesis Chapter 38 tells the story of Tamar – probably not one to be used as a bedtime story for the children. The important component here is the strong hope of this woman, one that required great courage. It is a little known, but well worth the read, saga.

### Scripture affirms our Hope

The thread of HOPE continues throughout the Bible. The Scriptures use the word HOPE over and over. Jeremiah writes to the people of Judah who were living in exile in Babylon. In Chapter 29, verse 11, the prophet speaks God's promise for "a future with hope." When we read these words during Advent we hear them addressed to us also. Life can contain times of captivity and exile of a form unique to each of us. The words of Jeremiah speak again, even in this time.

David writes in Psalm 65 "... O God of our salvation, who art the hope of all the ends of the Earth..." and again in Psalm 62 he says, "For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from Him." The New Testament also provides multiple references to hope. In Matthew 12:27 we read "...in His name the nations will put their hope," and Romans 15:46 speaks to the importance of God's Word "...that by the steadfastness and by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

### Hope as the "inseparable companion" of Faith

Calvin in his *Institutes* speaks to the connection of hope and faith. "Hope is nothing else than the expectation of those things which faith has believed to have been truly promised by God. This faith believes God to be true, hope awaits the time when this truth shall be manifested, faith believes the He is our Father, hope anticipates that He will ever show Himself to be a Father toward us; faith believes that eternal life has been given to us, hope anticipates that it will sometime be revealed; faith is the foundation on which hope rests, hope nourishes and sustains faith."

### What is your Advent hope?

As you reflect on this season of hope may your personal hope be realized in the celebration of the coming of the Christ child and in seeing the wonders that show us that God is still at work in our world and in us.

*Carol O'Neill is Parish Nurse at Old Paramus Reformed Church, and mother of Nancy Begin.*

Advent Worship Theme - Faces of Advent

**Sunday, December 8**

Second Sunday in Advent - *Peace*

"The Face of Joseph"

Sacrament of Baptism

\*\*Annual Congregational Meeting after worship



**Sunday, December 15**

Third Sunday in Advent - *Joy*

"Faces of the Angels"

Healing Service

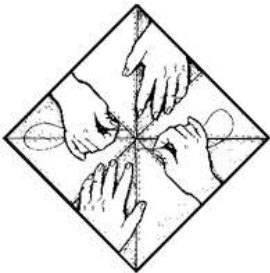
**Sunday, December 22**

Fourth Sunday in Advent - *Love*

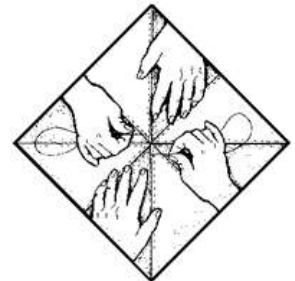
"Faces of the Shepherds"

**Tuesday, December 24**

Christmas Eve Worship at 7:30 and 10:30 pm



**PRAYER QUILT**  
**MINISTRY**



It has been over a year now since we began our prayer quilt ministry. It has truly been a blessing to so many who have received the quilts; whether they were received because of a medical issue or other type of trial, or to celebrate a baptism or a life transition, such as high school graduation.

Recently it has come to our attention that some may not remember or understand the process for the distribution of these quilts. The Prayer Quilt Ministry Team as a whole does not choose the recipients. So just to review:

First - when you; yes, YOU, identify a person you believe would benefit from receiving a quilt, ask them if they would be open to receiving one. Perhaps you might want to ask what they would like us to pray for, and it is important that you ask what information about their situation may be shared with others. It may seem strange that someone might not want a quilt, but some might not feel comfortable being a "prayer focus" for a congregation and there is also the issue of confidentiality. A quilt was declined this past year. You may also request a quilt for yourself.

Second - contact Nancy Begin and request the quilt. It is helpful to provide the name *in writing* and any specific prayer request (you can contact Nancy at nbjoyful@optonline.net). If there is one ready, it will be put out the following Sunday or as soon as one is completed.

Finally, - it is a gift of love and prayer that cannot be bought or sold, so we never accept any form of payment for a prayer quilt.

As a team, we have also been incredibly blessed to be part of the creation of these quilts. New members are welcome any time, no previous experience or skills needed.



## Fellowship Happenings for 2013



Advent and Christmas... Flip your calendar and mark it for the following events. More events and activities will be included with even more details as time moves on. We look forward to a fun end of 2013.

The Senior Christmas Luncheon is on Wednesday, **December 11 at 12:30 p.m.** The Luncheon will be hosted by the Fellowship Committee. All Seniors are invited, but the head count was due on Dec. 4. If you are coming, please bring a wrapped gift valued between \$5.00-\$10.00 for our gift exchange. Please come and join us for a festive Holiday Luncheon!

On **December 22**, the Fellowship Committee is sponsoring a Holiday Cookie Social immediately following the Service. We are asking our Church Family to bring a tray of their favorite Holiday Cookies to share. If you can't bring cookies please come anyway and join in on delicious cookies, fun, and Fellowship for the Holidays! We hope to see you all there!



### Remembering a Very Special Lady

By Elaine Peacock

A very special lady was called home on November 14: Nancy Carnes. Besides being a loving mother, grandmother and great (accent on great) grandmother to her family, she was the smiling face at the corner of Legion and Colfax for 25 years as she crossed "her children" mornings and afternoons on their way to and from school. During our many visits during her hospital and rehab stays in the past few months, Nancy's wonderful smile always got bigger when she mentioned how much she missed and loved being a crossing guard. Her fondest wish was to get better and be able to be at the corner again. Nancy will also be missed by the PRC office too. She was there every Friday to put together the Sunday bulletins. As ill as Nancy was, our visits would always be laced with laughter over some silly thing that happened; either in her current surroundings, or out in the world in general. We always ended our visits with a prayer and a hug. It is those prayers and hugs that we shared that will remain in my heart for many years to come.

Sending you hug in heaven, Nancy – did you get it?



**Help our wounded warriors have a brighter Christmas. Send a card that will be delivered to a wounded warrior at a major military hospitals and VA facilities across the country.**

**Mail your card to:  
Soldiers' Angels,**

**Cards for the Wounded, 4408 N. Pan Am Expressway, San Antonio, TX 78218.**

## Roundtable of Thanks

(From November's Consistory)

--The Legacy Garden project, with designer Lauren Venin and members of PRC Endowment Committee: Cas Stark, Gail Freeland, Al Kuebler and Sue Uhlendorf and Jack Tice. (See the next page for more info on the Legacy Garden)

--Gratitude and prayers for the Vision Team as they move forward.



**THANK YOU!**  
*THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!*  
**THANK YOU!**

Dear Friends,

To quote our friend the Apostle Paul, "I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus." Thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the cards and notes of blessing and appreciation you gave or sent me for Pastor Appreciation Sunday! I wasn't here to receive them personally because I was preaching at Vision Church in Warwick, NY, but I was pleasantly surprised when I came back and found them all on my desk, in my mailbox and even mailed to my home.

It is such a joy to serve our Lord together here at PRC that I think there should be a Congregation Appreciation Day too because that is where I often see God's grace alive and active in this world. You generously invite Tom and me into the stories of your faith, your struggles, your joys. There is no greater privilege than that of being your pastor and sharing all of this with you.

May God Bless you all as we continue this journey together and thank you for all your kindnesses along the way.

On the Journey,  
Pastor Debbie

### CLASSIS ASSESSMENT

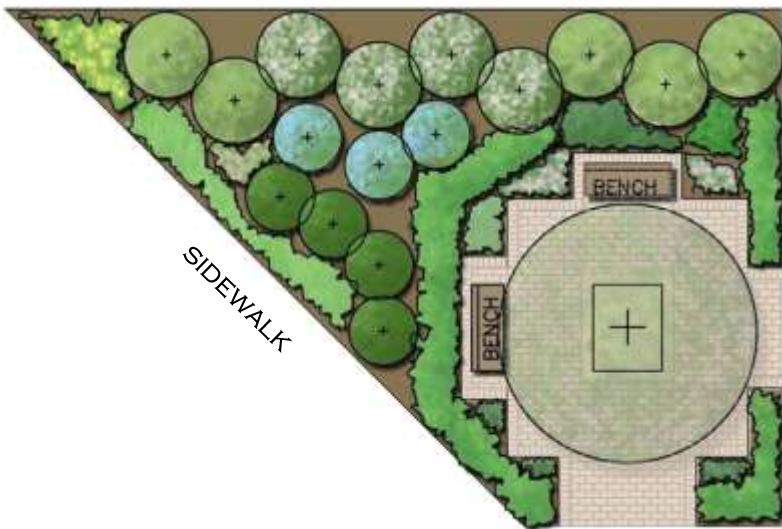
In your offering box, you will find a Classis Assessment envelope. As was mentioned in the recent funds appeal letter, PRC is assessed **\$80 per active member**. This fee covers new church starts, mission support, assistance to struggling churches, denominational staff and programs and much more. If you are able to cover all or a portion of this assessment, it will go a long way to aiding OUR budget.

# Pompton Reformed Church

## Legacy Garden

The Endowment Committee is proposing a long-term program directed to the beautification of the grounds surrounding the Church and the Gerrit Heemstra Memorial Building (Friendship Hall). The first phase in this program is the creation of the Legacy Garden prominently located in the roughly triangular area next to the playground and to the right of the west side entrance of the Heemstra Building. Within the Garden will be an area consisting of engraved commemorative bricks that will be surrounded by bushes, shrubs, two benches and a central tree planting. The inscriptions on these bricks may, for example, commemorate a deceased loved one, or celebrate a family or a special event such as an anniversary, wedding, birth of a child, or honor a living person. Your purchase of a commemorative brick will not only make a special remembrance for you but also will make you a participant in the creation of the Legacy Garden and in the long term improvement program of the Pompton Reformed Church grounds. Please use the order form below for your inscription.

PLAYGROUND



SAMPLE OF BRICKS



Each 4" by 8" brick costs \$100.00 and may contain two lines of up to 14 characters per line. Print your inscription in the boxes below. Punctuation, such as commas, periods, and hyphens, as well as spaces is counted as one character. Copy this form to order additional bricks.


Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to: PRC Endowment Fund - Legacy Garden and mail to Pompton Reformed Church, 59 Hamburg Turnpike, Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442

This  
**Month's Schedule**



Apple Juice  
donations are needed for after  
worship service. Please drop them  
off in the kitchen.  
Thanks.



1st Wed., Dec. 4:	6:30 pm Operations Committee
2nd Sat., Dec. 14:	7:30 pm Worship Committee
2nd Sun., Dec. 15:	Quilting Ministry
2nd Mon., Dec. 9:	11:30 am Youth Team
2nd Wed., Dec. 11:	7 pm Finance Committee
3rd Mon., Dec. 16:	7:30 pm Missions Team
3rd Wed., Dec. 18:	7:15 pm Christian Education Committee
4th Wed., Dec. 25:	7:00 pm Consistory
Every Tuesday:	MERRY CHRISTMAS!
	1:30 pm Knitters & Crocheters



~Bell Choir Meets on Tues. nights at 6:30. Be a part of our music ministry.~



Pasta sauce, canned fruit, mac & cheese, peanut butter, jelly, Parmalat milk, canned veggies (corn, carrots, peas and beans), shampoo, deodorant, toilet paper, toothpaste, detergent, Jell-o, pudding and baked beans. Low-fat, low-sodium products are always accepted.

***Thank you for supporting this important mission needed by so many.***

**DEADLINE FOR  
NEWSLETTER ARTICLES**

The Deadline for *Newsletter Articles* is the last Sunday of each month. Please send submissions to [prcletter@gmail.com](mailto:prcletter@gmail.com) or feel free to drop it in the mail slot in the church office.

The deadline for January 2014's  
newsletter is  
Sunday, December 29, 2013.