

DEACONS' PAGE

Please keep in thought and prayer:

Dave Barrett recovering from minor surgery.

Arlene Tandy recovering from surgery.

David Bills in Unity Hospital

Mike and Norma Polizzi dealing with health and transition issues.

George Bilohlavek dealing with health issues.

Our sympathy to:

Bob and Kecia Binko and family on the recent death of Bob's mother.

Esther Weber on the recent death of her brother.

Congratulations to:

Lisa and Ian Bass on the birth of their daughter, **Mia Josephine Bass**. The proud grandparents are **Ann Marie and Osmond Simm**.

Bob and Cheryl Fehnel on the birth of their grandchild.

REMINDER TO DEACONS:

The next Deacon meeting is Monday, December 20th at 7:00 p.m. in Room 2.

THE PRAYER SHAWL GROUP will meet December 7 at 2:00 p.m. in Room 16.

TABITHA CIRCLE will meet on Tuesday, December 14 at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Jan Beutner, 8 Cottage Grove Circle, North Chili.

HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

December 24 – Office closed

December 27 – 30: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

December 31 – Office closed

Normal office hours resume on Monday, January 3, 2011 at 9:00 a.m.

REPEAT THE SOUNDING JOY!

Come early on Sunday, December 19th to enjoy Christmas carols played by our own GPC instrumentalists as they join together in the spirit of the season! Players will meet in the Worship Center at 9:20 and play until the service begins. If you have any questions, or would like to look at music ahead of time, please see Dennis or Debbie White.



FROM THE PASTOR

Have you not heard his silent steps?

He comes, comes, ever comes.

Every moment and every age,

every day and every night

he comes, comes, ever comes.

Many a song have I sung in many a mood of mind,

but all their notes have

always proclaimed,

"He comes, comes, ever comes."

In the fragrant days of sunny April

through the forest path

he comes, comes, ever comes.

In the rainy gloom of July nights

on the thundering chariot of clouds

he comes, comes, ever comes.

In sorrow after sorrow

it is his steps that press upon my heart,

and it is the golden touch of his feet

that makes my joy to shine.

— *“Silent Steps” by Rabindranath Tagore*

Dear Friends,

Are you hiding from Christmas? I can't say that I blame you. The decorations, music and commercials started before Halloween this year. It feels like Christmas is pushed on us, shoved down our throats and we don't get much of a choice in the matter.

But we do get a choice; it is called Advent. Advent means, literally, “drawing near.” It is a season where we can choose to draw near to God through waiting, preparation, and intentional spiritual practices.

Advent is a choice and it has to be intentional, because in our world today waiting and watching are seen as unproductive. We are caught in the trap of wanting everything 'now' yet feeling that we never really have the opportunity to experience anything fully. In so many arenas of our lives

we are hardly aware of finishing one thing before moving on to the next. And because we are hardly aware, we miss—"he comes, comes, ever comes."

What would it be like if we were to intentionally choose our attitude for a month and experiment with a tradition of waiting and preparation?

We might find that waiting for God's coming helped make it possible for us to wait more gracefully for other things in our lives—the order we placed on-line, standing in line at the grocery store behind someone with a full cart, the encounter with a friend that has been delayed. In other words, we might find that practicing waiting in Advent might help us be more patient the rest of the year.

Even more surprising, we might find that the practice of waiting helped us become more aware, more attentive to the presence of God that is always coming into our lives. Yes, practicing waiting might make us more aware, more attentive, more aware, more attentive, more aware, more attentive to the reality that—"He comes, comes, ever comes."

It might be hard to choose the season of Advent yet, what is not outmoded, ancient, or irrelevant is that God comes, comes, ever comes. When we take the time to wait, we become aware of that presence. Here are some ideas to help you develop your own path of Advent waiting.

- * Take an evening and make an Advent wreath. Gather together some candles, flowers, greens, fabric of purple and some kind of a base for the wreath. Place the base on a table and creatively place the greens and fabric on it. Secure the candles and each day take a few moments to quiet yourself, light a candle, and ask for the eyes to see and the ears to hear the coming of God into your life.
- * Listen to some Advent hymns in the quiet of the morning or before you enter the night's slumber. Notice that the tones and rhythm of the music for this season are soothing and centering, inviting you inward to a deep and sacred place within yourself. (Christmas carols with their joyfulness and excitement are more likely to invite you outward.) As you listen to the Advent music, be aware of being aware.
- * Give yourself permission to prepare yourself for God's coming in your life by engaging in a quiet meditation of self-examination at the end of each day. Scan your day and note the times that you were aware of God's grace, aware that you were loved, aware that grace was occurring. Re-imagine those moments and thank God for showering you with these surprise gifts.
- * Refuse to be driven by the culture. Let yourself be still and quiet, rather than frenzied and frenetic. Out of your stillness consider how you might bring God into the lives of others.

Pastor Melissa

A SERVICE OF COMFORT AND HEALING

The constant refrain about the happiness of the Christmas Season, about getting together with family and friends, reminds many people of what they have lost. These feelings of being alone, of feeling sad in the midst of the society around us which seems bent on "being happy" and "celebrating" can be difficult. There are years when we hurt at Christmas time and can't get into the festivities others seem to be able to do.

It's at such times that we need to make the space and take the time to acknowledge our sadness and concern. We need to know that we are not alone. For these reasons we invite you on **Thursday, December 9th at 7pm** to come and join in sharing and hearing prayers, Scripture and music that acknowledge that God's presence is for those who mourn, for those who struggle - and that God's Word comes to shine light into our darkness.

Wednesday Night Bible Study will begin January 5th at 6:30pm. Everyone is welcome to join this weekly gathering for fellowship, study and prayer.

PUBLIC WORSHIP SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

<u>Date</u>	<u>Lay Reader</u>	<u>Communion</u>	<u>Usher Team</u>	<u>Front Door Greeter</u>
December 5	Peter Derry	*See below	4	Keith Hadley
December 12	Jim Meddaugh		5	Polly Moore
December 19	Carol Henchen		6	Irene Ward
Dec 24 – 4:30	Carrie Dykes		1	Cam Mossgraber
Dec 24 – 8:00	Lynn Schramel		2	Alison Steinmiller
December 26	Barb Snaith		3	James Lewis

Communion – December 5

Left:	Polly Moore	Right:	Nancy Hossenlopp
	Erica Strawbridge		Carol Howell
	Chuck Goodykoontz		Cathy Goodykoontz
	Carol Henchen		Carrie Dykes



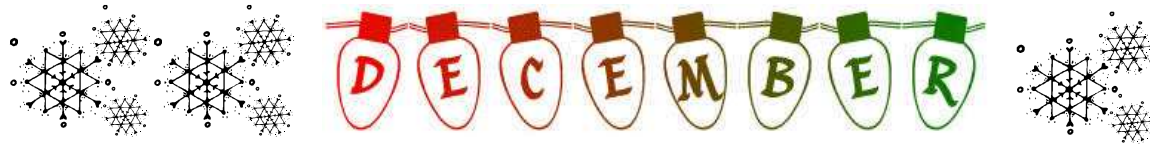
VALET SERVICE

Anyone needing assistance walking from their car to the Church this winter should first pull up to the parking attendants and advise them that you would like assistance. In addition, should you need assistance after worship is over, let the attendants know this as you walk into Church. Also, please look around you as you are getting out of your car and offer to help anyone looking as though they could use a little assistance to walk safely into the building. Let's all be part of this valuable valet service to those who need a little help.

- Thank you from the Membership and Visitation Committee

TODDLER AND NURSERY ROOM SCHEDULES

<u>Date</u>	<u>On Duty</u>	<u>On Call</u>
Dec. 5	Brian Hart/Josh Binko/ Shawn Lewis	Andrea Unson/Ian Unson/ Connor MacKenzie
Dec. 12	Karen Salem/Alison Tuttle/ Dominique Salem	Diane Keiling/Laura Keiling/ Corrina Marconi
Dec. 19	Ginny Smith/Jenna Hossenlopp Jocelyn Pimm	Tracy Burkovich/Jessica Burkovich Katie Ohman
Dec. 26	Sue Birkbeck/Alyssa Birkbeck Nadia Endulovski	Brian Hart/Josh Binko/Shawn Lewis



Jr. Harbinger

Important Dates

3rd: Advent Fest (6:00-7:30) at GPC
5th: Communion Sunday
24th: Christmas Eve Service 4:30/8
25th: MERRY CHRISTMAS
26th: Family Sunday- Bring the whole family

December Contest: See what class can make the most Nativity scenes with materials from home. A flyer will be sent home.

A Note from Amanda...

December is my favorite month. Do you like December, too? This month I am challenging you to create your very own nativity scene. I will display them at the Christmas Eve service. Thank you to all those who brought canned goods in for those less fortunate than us. You continue to amaze me every day! I look forward to seeing you around church. Also don't forget to bring your families on Family Sundays.

TEDDY BEAR PROJECT 2010

The dressed teddy bears will be collected and displayed at church on Sunday, December 5th. The Teddy Bear Picnic at St. John's Meadows will also be on Dec. 5th. Time and place will be announced in Sunday bulletins or you may call Sally Christensen at 247-6095. The bears will be prepared for delivery while we share refreshments and fellowship with the ladies of the Meadows. Watch Sunday bulletins for days and times we will be delivering the bears.



THANK YOU

Thanks to everyone who

Helped in

Any way to make our

Naturally wonderful **CHURCH MOUSE BAZAAR** a

Knock out success!

You made it happen!!

Otherwise, there would be no **CHURCH MOUSE BAZAAR**

U are wonderful!!!

Kay Harder, Sue Mancini, and Brenda Thornton
 Co-chairpeople for the Church Mouse Bazaar



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS and/or GREEN ISLAND BASIC SCHOOL, JAMAICA



If you would like to order a plant for display in the Sanctuary for Christmas and/or make a donation toward the Green Island Basic School in Jamaica, in honor or memory of a loved one, please fill out the form below and leave it with the money (or check) in the offering plate or in the church office **NO LATER** than December 6th. Make checks payable to **Gates Presbyterian Church**. Mail the order to the church if it is more convenient. This year poinsettias will be available for \$10.00 a piece.

 NAME OF DONOR (S)

 ADDRESS

 IN HONOR OF or IN MEMORY OF (please circle appropriate phrase)

 Please check appropriate donation:

Poinsettias _____

Green Island Basic School _____

EXCITING NEW IDEA....

We have an idea for an exciting, new GPC fund-raising event: the **Clinker Bricks 5K Run/Walk**. We are planning this community event for Saturday, April 2, 2011, and are looking for people to help plan. The first task is start recruiting sponsors for the event, and then we will need help with registration, water stations, traffic flow (parking and runners), baked good sales, etc. Contact Keith Hadley (227-8922 or keithahadley@gmail.com) or Tracy Burkovich (527-0761 or tburkovich@yahoo.com).



Adult Education Programs

5th Alternative Fair
Start your Christmas shopping!

12th Make a Christmas Craft to be Shared with Residents of The Presbyterian Home
Spread some love and cheer by giving of yourself to others.

19th Christmas Carol Singing
Join us in singing those traditional beautiful melodies.

GPC Men's Invitation

Join the men this month for breakfast on **Thursday, December 2nd at 8:00 a.m.** (the first Thursday of each month). **Our regular location has changed!!!!!!** We will be gathering at **Mr. Beenz 1941 Buffalo Rd** (across from Wendy's).

For December we are changing our routine. Our dinner will still be at **6 p.m. Thursday, December 16th**. However, this month we will enjoy a dinner at Rick's Prime Rib. Rick's is asking for a final count of people by Thursday December 9th. For this reason please RSVP to Gary Dykes or Scott Blystone. Call Gary at 247-4872 or catch either of us in church.

Women's Candlelight Dinner

On Monday evening, December 6th, at 6:00 p.m., the women of Gates Presbyterian Church are invited to join in a holiday tradition for over 30 years, the Candlelight Dinner. It will be held at Rick's Prime Rib House on Buffalo Road and to celebrate this year, we are kicking it up a notch and having prime rib on the menu as well as other choices! The tickets will be on sale after worship in the Fellowship Hall for \$18.00 per person.

We will also continue to support ABW ("Alternative Battered Women's Shelter) with personal items, such as shampoo, conditioner, body wash, soap, toothpaste, sanitary items etc. We hope you can join us for this wonderful and popular event. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Barb Snaith at 247-9066.



Grab the Family and Say CHEEEEEEEEEEESE!

Church Directory photos will be taken on Friday, January 7 (2:00-9:30) and Saturday, January 8 (9:30-5:00). Sign up now.

Individuals are needed for this short-term project. Please let Velta Rouchon (225-9737) or Lynn Schramel (lynn@gatespres.org) know if you can donate two hours at the photo desk or proofreading copy from home.

- Snowbirds and those who can't get to church will be able to submit photos or take them in their winter location.
- Anyone who regularly worships with us is invited to be included.
- Participants get a free 8 x 10 inch photo and a directory.

JR. CHOIR NEWS 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵 🎵

Christmas is coming! We probably don't need an email reminder about that. In Junior Choir we have been talking about what we notice as Christmas gets closer: holiday decorations, seasonal music, cards, newspaper ads, parties, Christmas cookies, TV specials... No, we probably don't need any more reminders that Christmas is coming- our minds are FULL of Christmas. But, are we mind-full that Christmas ITSELF is a reminder?

Is celebrating Christmas each year a way of reminding ourselves of God's love? Of what is really important in our lives? What would we want to remind ourselves this Christmas?

Sometimes the LIGHT of Christmas helps us to see things more clearly. This Christmas Eve we will be singing and dancing our way through our 4:30 early service as we celebrate together. Let us take the ending words of our last piece as a reminder of the Good News of Christmas: "The light of Christ is with us!"

FAMILY ADVENT FESTIVAL - DECEMBER 3 - 6:00-7:30

Pizza, crafts, and age appropriate worship service

This fun and meaningful event is designed for all generations. For families, it offers activities that focus upon Christmas, not the "Holidays." For older folks, it offers a fun way to meet the young families in our congregation. For all, it offers an evening of fun, food, and fellowship!

No cost - donations accepted.

HELP WANTED:

GPC is looking for a few good men, women, and teens for the winter/spring season. If you love kids and love to share your time with the church, then this is the job for you! We are looking to staff the nursery room, toddler room, Second Hour child care, Sunday School teachers, and subs for all areas. Please look for sign-up sheets on the Kiosk and in upcoming bulletins. Call Amanda Adams at 247-5292 ext. 29 or email her at amanda@gatespres.org if you would like to help.

St. Joseph's House of Hospitality – December 18 – GPC serves lunch.

Folks from GPC will serve lunch on December 18th at St. Joseph's House of Hospitality. The meal will be prepared at GPC on December 17th. There is a sign-up on the Kiosk for the following:

Donations: Bring to December 17th noon

Cooks: GPC kitchen, 6:30, December 17th

Servers: Meet at St. Joseph's at 10:30 on December 18th. Plan to stay until 2:00.

This mission site serves lunch to those in our city with limited financial resources.

Cameron Community Ministries Giving Tree – Several opportunities

The Cameron Community Ministries Giving Tree will be in the foyer on November 28th decked with multiple opportunities. The purple ornaments on the tree are for the children in the CCM After School Program. This year the Cameron staff has asked us to address a very specific need: school uniforms. The public school children in the Cameron neighborhood must go to school dressed in a specific color-coded "uniform" (example: 1st graders navy blue bottoms/white top, 2nd graders navy blue bottoms/yellow top, etc.). This has been a difficult requirement for some families and the staff at Cameron has asked us to help. Purple "ornaments" on the tree will give the child's name/size/sex/color of outfit needed. Place your gift in a Christmas gift bag with tissue paper – attach the purple ornament from the tree to the bag. AND/ORthe pink ornaments on the tree are for NEW household gifts. At the annual CCM Christmas luncheon, Cameron guests are given the chance to choose one unwrapped item from a table to give to a loved one for Christmas. Please bring this gift unwrapped and place under the tree. AND/ORyet another optionCCM needs new books for children. Bring those unwrapped, as well. ALL GIFTS NEED TO BE BROUGHT TO THE CAMERON COMMUNITY MINISTRIES GIVING TREE BY DECEMBER 12 - 10:00 AM.

Christmas Dinner Baskets for SWEM (Southwest Ecumenical Ministries)

Due December 12

Help provide a Christmas dinner for a family in need living in the Southwest quadrant of our city. The following requested list from SWEM is for a family of 3-4. The five dollars that goes with the meal is used to purchase a chicken, eggs, and margarine. If you feel creative, decorate the box that holds your dinner and add some small candies, mints, instant coffee, or tea bags. Please don't include gifts, toys, clothing, etc.

1 can of fruit cocktail or other canned fruit	2 cans of soup
1 large can of fruit juice	1 box of instant mashed potatoes
1 large canned sweet potato	1 can of cranberry sauce
3 cans of vegetables	1 bag of stuffing mix
1 or more relish/pickles/olives	\$5.00 in cash
1 cake mix and frosting or pie crust and filling	

Members of the Mission/Peacemaking Committee will be in the parking lot to receive your dinner on Sunday, December 12th. Please hand your money to them separately from your dinner.

GPC Advent Mission Opportunities

The Advent of Light reflected through GPC Advent Mission Projects

The GPC Mission/Peacemaking Committee has provided you and your family with many opportunities to shine the Light of Christ in our neighborhood, city, and world. We suggest that you talk with your family about the different options and choose, as a family, the ones in which you would like to participate.

Alternative Advent Market – Second Hour - December 5 - Fellowship Hall

Come and shop where the gift gives twice: to the loved ones for whom you are buying AND to the non-profit organization to which you are supporting.

You will be able to purchase the following:

- a. **SERRV** – gifts that give artists in developing countries a market.
- b. **Books from the Good Book Store**
A percentage of the profit is returned to our own library.
- c. **Entertainment Books**
The **Guatemala Group** is selling these to support projects in our Guatemala mission sites.
- d. **Gourmet coffee and tea from Equal Exchange**
Equal Exchange seeks to balance the inequities found in the conventional coffee trade. It is a worker-owned co-op that offers gourmet coffee directly from small-scale farmer co-ops in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.
- e. **Heifer Project gift donation cards**
Heifer Project gives animals to impoverished rural families around the world. You receive a handsome gift donation card for your loved one while a global neighbor receives a farm animal for their family's nutrient needs.
- f. **Socks for homeless guests of St. Joseph's House of Hospitality**
Buy a pair of socks for one dollar. The socks go to a guest at St. Joseph's and you receive a gift card of your donation.
- g. **Pencils for the Green Island Basic School**
Pencils sell for \$1.00 – perfect stocking stuffers. Money received for the pencils to support the building of the Green Island Basic School.

Poinsettia Alternative Gift

The Public Worship Committee invites us to remember our loved ones with gifts of poinsettias. These poinsettias will decorate our worship center for Advent. The Committee also provides a mission alternative for this purpose. If you would prefer, you may donate to the Green Island Basic School. Your loved one will be remembered in the bulletins on Christmas Eve.

The GPC Mitten Tree

The GPC Mitten Tree proudly stands in the hall shouting its long history as an Advent project of GPC. This year it invites you to fill its branches with gloves/mittens and hats/scarves for the men and women of DePaul Mental Health Services of Rochester and their families.

Christmas Joy Offering – Received in worship on December 19

This second mile giving opportunity has been a Presbyterian tradition for seventy years. It is one of the four special offerings designated by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to provide congregations direct ways of supporting specific causes that help those in need. Fifty percent of the receipts to the Christmas Joy Offering are distributed to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs that provide support to retired and active church workers and their spouses and families. The other fifty percent supports Presbyterian related racial ethnic education through the National Ministries Division of the General Assembly Council.

Christmas Eve Offering – Green Island Basic School

This year the Christmas Eve worship service offerings are designated again for the Jamaica Basic School construction project. This five year long range mission project began in 2007. We are currently in the third year of our long range goal – to build a Basic School in Green Island, Jamaica. The “basic school” system of Jamaica is supported by the United Churches of Jamaica, providing preschool children with a strong educational foundation. Our congregation has a long-standing partnership with the United Church of Jamaica/Negril Charge. The Green Island United Church is one of the three congregations in that charge. The current Basic School in this impoverished village is vastly undersized – approximately 86 children in two small rooms. A new school will open new opportunities to this village. In addition, due to a changing economic environment in Jamaica, a neighboring village school has recently closed making the need for a strong school in Green Island all the more important.

Basic School Update: In 2010, the building plans for the Green Island Basic School were approved by the Educational Department of Jamaica. We now await “official” approval by the national United Church of Jamaica. This five year project is moving forward slowly but moving forward. This has given us the luxury of collecting our financial commitment to this project slowly. After an extensive conversation with Rev. Fowler during her visit in October, the Mission/Peacemaking Committee believes that an adult work project to Jamaica for the purpose of working on this school, may become a reality in 2012.

FRIENDS –

NEED HELP WITH CHRISTMAS PREPARATION??

We have a solution for you just call in the elves that is the Senior High “elves”!

On December 5, we are eager to help you and will do anything you would like for us to do to make your Advent less stressful – wrap gifts, set up your tree, hang your lights, decorate your tree, bring in your decorations from the basement/attic, address your cards, or anything else – just call Carol Anne and we will bring a team of elves to your home.

GPC – 247-5292 ext. 23

Cell 455-5292 or strawheels@aol.com. (elf service is free)

YOUTH CALENDAR

- December 1 - Jamaica payment due - \$250.00
- December 2 - 7:00 - Youth Advisors Meeting
- December 5 - 9:00 - Youth Choir
10:00 - Worship
11:15 - Jr. and Sr. High Church School
12:15 - 4:00 - Junior Highs go to Episcopal Home
6:00 - 8:00 - Senior High Youth Group - Elf service!
- December 12 - 9:00 - Youth Choir
10:00 - Worship
11:15 - Jr. and Sr. High Church School
- December 19 - 9:00 - Youth Choir
9:20 - Christmas Band
10:00 - Worship
11:15 - Sr. and Jr. High Church School
12:15 - 3:00 - Jr. Highs go to Eastman House
6:00 - 8:00 - Sr. High Christmas party
- December 21 - 7:00 - Youth Committee
- December 24 - Youth Choir sings at 8:00 service
- December 25 - 10:00 Worship - no Youth Choir, Church School

Attention Junior High Youth Group!!!

December is full of exciting activities but note that the times are different.

December 5 - We are going to the Episcopal Home to bring Advent joy to the residents. We will swing by Wendy's for lunch on our way.
Times: 12:15-4:00 (no money needed)

December 19 - We are going to the Eastman House to see an awesome display of Gingerbread Houses! Bring your lunch and \$6.00.
Times: 12:15-3:00

Jamaica Mission Trip Participants:

December 1 - payment due - \$250.00

Get your: Passport and your Hepatitis A shot

I have had multiple people ask me to print the charge that I gave to the congregation of GPC during Melissa's installation in the Harbinger. "Charges/sermons" rarely read like they speak so please take that into consideration.

The charge to Gates Presbyterian Church

Rev. Melissa Derosia's Installation - November 14, 2010

What a wonderful celebration this is! Welcome Melissa! I am truly excited at the adventure in front of us. It is a privilege to be colleagues in ministry with you, here at Gates Presbyterian. This is a great congregation in which to serve God!

.... "a great congregation in which to serve God" . . . confession time . . . as I was writing this charge, I stumbled on that last sentence, "This is a great congregation in which to serve God!" The misstep was not about content, but was about grammar. Should it be "in which to serve God", or "with which to serve God" or "within which to serve God", or "through which to serve God"? Where is my high school grammar teacher when I need her? Choosing the correct connecting preposition just wasn't so easy. To be honest, I never quite resolved that grammatical befuddlement. Perhaps the reason for the confusion is that all of the above are appropriate. I think we all want to serve in, through, within, and with. In their humbleness, these small words declare that Christ has connected us one to another for the purpose of doing God's work here at Gates Presbyterian Church.

You and I have walked through an interim period. During that time, we learned a lot about ourselves and about our ministry. And truly there is now a temptation to wipe our brows, step back, and hand it over to Melissa. Well, not just hand it over to Melissa but to hand it over with the expectation that Melissa will fill the pews, increase the budget, expand the membership, develop new programs, and oh by the way, keep the old ones. I have heard many statements such as: "Melissa will attract young people," "Melissa will bring back members who have drifted away," "Melissa will energize people to give money," "Melissa will _____". You fill in the blank at the end of the sentence. I have heard these statements and I have said these statementsand my guess is that you have, as well.

It's interesting to me that, on the one hand, the list of expectations for Melissa are quite impressive while, on the other hand, the fact that this fall the Nominating Committee has **really** struggled finding people willing to serve on leadership boards. There is a bit of an inconsistency here.

Folks, Melissa said "yes" to you, because she believed that God was calling her to be your Head of Staff not your magician. She didn't use words like illusions, trickery, and magic in her Personal Information Form. She did, however, use words like vision, collaborative, community, and prayerfulness. Melissa has only been here five weeks. You and I have already discovered that these words are a true reflection of her commitment, her energy, her faithfulness. Again.....Melissa is not a magician, she's a minister. It is not her role to magically fix the problems that threaten to undermine the mission and ministry of this congregation.

And that brings us to back to those little but mighty connectational words because it **is** her role to serve God in, within, through, and with the people of Gates Presbyterian Church. **We are all in ministry together.**

I sincerely believe that we are entering a very exciting time in the life of this congregation. One can feel God's Spirit energizing us and empowering us for something new. But, my friends, it is a group activity! Your willingness to share your time, your gifts and your resources will determine whether or not this sacred adventure unfolds.

You are a bold congregation with a strong foundation. You have called two women to serve as your pastors. That's a bold move and quite uncommon in our denomination. You have called one of the youngest Head-of-Staff in our denomination – if not the youngest. That's a bold move. Boldness is part of who you are. Therefore, I charge you to leave here today and commit yourselves to prayerfully discover where God wants you to serve in this new time in the life of Gates Presbyterian. For I am convinced that God is calling all of us – together - to a bold new and exciting journey. Amen

From the Associate Pastor.....

BANGOUCHfor twenty years I have safely walked from my office to the restroom at night without turning on the foyer lightbutnot this time.....suddenly a wall was sharing space with my nose. I have no idea who mysteriously constructed that wall on my familiar path. However, the result was pain that lasted for days! I learned, that dark night, that the millisecond it takes to flip on the light switch is a wise use of time.

Indeed, we all experience life events that feel as if we are walking into a cinderblock wall – a lost job, a college rejection, a strained relationship, a family health issue, etc. Sometimes the list seems endless with both big and small stumbling blocks. We experience the unseen barriers of dark days and we yearn for light again. It is in this darkness that the season of Advent gently reminds us that Christ comes into our world bringing hope, love, joy, and peace. Gradually the prophecy of Zechariah is alive in our lives again:

"By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." Luke 1: 78-79

I invite you to intentionally engage in the sacred process of Advent. The Mission/Peacemaking Committee offers you a variety of mission opportunities in which to begin your exploration. Worship services will reveal the story of the "Advent of Light" through music, word, and drama. With time spent purposely unfolding Advent, I am certain that on Christmas Eve, we will hold our brightly burning candles with the confidence that God sent the Christ Child to be the Light of the world. I pray for you the "Advent of Light" this holy season.