Greetings in the Name of Emmanuel!

Everywhere you go these days, Christmas music is part of the landscape. In shopping malls, in elevators and even on the lips of those who are simply making a joyful noise (and I do mean “noise!”). All of us have our favorite Christmas Carols, but I did a little research online about what were the Top 10 Carols among Baptists, and here’s what I discovered:

1. Hark the Herald Angels Sing
2. O Come All Ye Faithful
3. Silent Night
4. O Little Town of Bethlehem
5. O once in Royal David’s City
6. While Shepherd’s Watched their Flocks by Night
7. Away in a Manger
8. In the Bleak Midwinter
9. The First Noel
10. Joy to the World
(as taken from the London Sunday Times, Dec. 7, 2007)

I don’t know how you feel about the list (I’d pull Joy to the World up out of the cellar, for instance), but one carol that didn’t make the list, and didn’t shock me by its absence was, “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen.” While the words to the verses are great, the chorus always tripped me up ... it always seemed like we were asking God to give a nap to a bunch of happy guys. It just didn’t make much sense to me. After reading Ace Collins’ book, Stories Behind the Best Loved Songs of Christmas, though, I want to advocate that we move this carol up to the top 10 ... the message and meaning are too powerful to let it rest in obscurity.

The carol finds its beginnings in an underground movement of the laity to put some life and meaning into the worship songs of the 15th century church, which were mainly somber in their tunes and written in Latin. The members of the churches wanted music they could relate to, and which adequately expressed the joy of the season, and so, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen was born. The problem with the carol is that it’s title loses something in the translation from old English to our modern parlance, causing us to think it’s about “napping” when nothing could be further from the truth! Let me redefine a few words for you, and you’ll see what I mean.

Merry: Today, when we hear the word “Merry” what is the first synonym that comes into your mind? Probably “happy” or “joyful,” but the meaning of the word merry when the song was written was vastly different. “Merry” really is better translated as “great” or “mighty.” (That definition makes more sense when you think of “Robin Hood’s Merry Men” ... they weren’t a bunch of comedians in tights, but rather a mighty group of warriors in allegiance to Robin Hood.)

Rest: In its original usage, the word “rest” didn’t mean to recline, relax or nap, but rather it meant, “to make” or “to keep.”

: they also dropped a comma out of the title, which, when added, brings the power of this carol home where it belongs ... “God make you mighty, gentlemen.”

I don’t know about you, but as I read that explanation, I began to appreciate the carol in a whole new way. The carol now becomes a call to arms for believers in Jesus Christ. A call to remember Christ our savior who was born on Christmas day as the One who has come to save us all from Satan’s Power when we were gone astray. To let nothing that confronts us frighten or “dismay” us, but rather to rest in the GOOD NEWS that Jesus is born and that He is victorious over even death itself!

The church needs to hear that message today. In the face of a culture that continually tries to marginalize the Gospel and call us to be silent about this newborn King, we need to remember once again that Christmas is not about snowflakes or mistletoe, reindeer or elves, but that it’s about a King who was born to save. That’s a message that the world needs to hear not only in the soft and gentle lyrics of Silent Night, sung by candlelight in the stillness of a service Christmas Eve, but also by lives lived in “shout-out-loud” obedience to this One who died for you and me.

In light of all of that, my prayer for you — my prayer for me — is that all of us will have a Merry (Mighty) Christmas, as we truly worship — by word and deed — our Newborn King!

In the Power of Emmanuel,

Frank
**Transitions for 2011**

As we make our shift to the new design for ministry in 2011, we will be providing you with a contact and communication guide to help you know who to contact with specific requests. Given the conclusions of the ministries of Revs. Richard McIntyre and Don Girdwood, please note the following:

Rev. McIntyre: Richard has some remaining vacation days, and is using them through the end of the year. If you have ministry needs during this time, please contact Carol Bicking at our ABCOPAD office at either 1-800-358-6999 or cab2644@aol.com.

Rev. Girdwood: Following the close of the year, concerns for the Northwest churches should be directed to Denise Veselicky in the Pittsburgh Office at 412-687-3940 or pghbaptist@aol.com.

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**Northeast Area**

Rev. David Erickson (United, Taylor) could be seen wearing his Yankee’s apron and cooking up a storm as the church family gathered together on Nov. 21 for a Thanksgiving Dinner. Both the food and the fellowship were wonderful as turkey, ham and all the fixin’s were served to friends and family in a full fellowship hall. Special recognition was given to a young man who had recently returned from work in the Peace Corp. As the congregation enjoyed a delicious feast, people spent time visiting and giving thanks for the many blessings God had bestowed upon them throughout the year.

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**Rev. Donald Girdwood – Northwest Area Minister**

814-398-8393

As I prepare my final contribution for Notes and News I am feeling a bit of isolation as a snow storm of over 30 inches has created a barrier of sorts to the familiar routines of an area minister. Perhaps this is a foretaste of the initial experience of my retirement about to begin. Certainly many of the familiar routines and relationships I’ve enjoyed for nearly 17 years will be entered into my book of remembrances, and an outpouring of God’s grace will enable a healthy perspective of what it was all about. A sense of loss will seem as chilling as the wind that causes the snow to encircle my view from the window today, but I am not left there, as our promise as Christians is that God’s Spirit will accompany the person of faith through such transitions. A financial planner recently advised me that I was very lucky because I could now think about only myself and my needs. He was trying to be kind and did not realize how foreign that thought was to me. In fact the thought is outright heretical. That is exactly what has been the base cause of all the awful things that go on in our world ... and in my world. I am convinced that the Almighty has some wonderful new things for me to learn about the Kingdom of God, and will continue to provide a mixture of satisfactions and challenges as I live into the Kingdom. May it not be all about me or mine! We have enjoyed some real achievements in these years to celebrate, and I turn over the disappointments and failings to God’s grace. My prayer is that our congregations will continue to seek out the guidance of the Lord of the Church and submit their individual lives to the Refiner’s fire. The God of transformations has a plan for the Church, and it is to prosper us and not to harm us.

Upon the resignation of Amy Mendicino as Church Leadership Institute –Western PA administrator, the CLI-West council has appointed a new administrator in the person of Rev. Steve Brotzman, pastor of FBC, Beaver Falls, as of December. Steve brings much experience to the role and will share this part-time position with his current part-time ministry at the church. The church leaders have encouraged Steve in this new role. A current class of about a dozen students is half way through their two-year cycle. Rev. Mark Mahserjian-Smith will teach the J-term course of Missions and Stewardship on the weekend of Jan. 7 – 8, and Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Johnson will teach the Evangelism course Jan. 21 – 22. Pastor JoAnne Pottle (Calvary, Franklin) will continue as Site Coordinator for this two-year cycle, and will assume more responsibility as the Registrar. Contact either Steve Brotzman (temporary: 724-843-8930, or, brotz@ hotmail.com) or JoAnne Pottle for information about the two Jan. courses. All are welcome to take those courses as they are excellent stand-alone courses and would benefit all church leaders.

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A plea was received from ABC-International Ministries for nurses to travel to Haiti for a volunteer mission effort with a medical team being sent to the Ebenezer Clinic. Sue Drohn of the Greenfield Baptist Church (David Waldo/Dan Cass) near North East PA responded, and left on Dec. 1 for a one-week assignment. The situation in Haiti after the earthquake has been worsened by the severe outbreak of Cholera. It will be interesting to hear from Sue upon her return from Haiti, and she may be willing to speak in your church of the challenges and the work of Christian responders. Perhaps there are potential volunteers in your church with a heart for the tragic circumstances of the people of Haiti.

The Lincolnville Baptist Church voted to call Rev. Gary Free of Imlay City, Mich. as their pastor. Gary and his family will move in time for the start of school in Jan. Pastor Sam Villers of Wesleyville Baptist Church has served admirably as interim pastor for over a year following the sudden death of Rev. Bill Cox. May God bless the new ministry of Rev. Free at Lincolnville.

The Rev. Scott Jones was installed as pastor of the Franklin Union Baptist Church of Worthington, Pa., in the Clarion Association, on Dec. 5. Pastors Steven Wilson and Don Toy were among several persons who participated in this happy occasion. Scott served about 12 years ago as pastor at nearby FBC, New Bethlehem.

Rev. Art and Kristy Barnes (FBC, Linesville) report that son Michael’s
nationally known Christian band, Red, will be part of the national Winter Jam Tour beginning in Jan., and sponsored by Holt International. The lineup will include the Newsboys, Kutless, David Crowder Band and Francesca Battistelli. The church has a new website www.fblinesville.com which chronicles the construction of their new fellowship hall. Recently they had 112 kids participating in the Awana program. That will certainly populate the new hall!

**Wayne Park, Erie (Bob Goldenschuh)** had an intensive weekend with the area minister in Nov., to seek a new vision for the church. They combined with Shiloh Baptist Church for a Thanksgiving worship and also combined with several other downtown churches to collect and distribute winter coats, mittens and boots to families needing such help.

**NW Area persons in the news, on our minds, and in our prayers:**

1. The mother of Rev. Jim Bennett (Franklin FBC) and John Bennett (Camp Judson staff) died in Massachusetts last month.

2. Two pastors had heart caths and stents implanted recently. Rev. Mary Lewis (ABCOPAD Board President) of FBC, Punxsutawney, and Rev. Leroy Weiss who just recently completed an assignment as interim pastor of Franklin Union, benefited from the cardiac procedures. Both Mary and Lee are progressing well with improved strength. Three men from the Franklin Union church traveled out to Bellvue, Ohio on two weekends to cut and split firewood for Pastor Weiss as he heats his house with wood. That is a testimony to a really satisfying relationship with an interim pastor.

3. Millie and Dwight Anderson, former pastor and wife in the Beaver Association, are in need of prayer support as dementia makes functioning difficult.

4. Bobbie Borger, wife of Rev. David Borger of FBC, Brookville, is recovering from successful surgery to correct a surgery done in Aug.

5. Pastor Gary Kinnear (Breedtown) reports that his wife Connie Kinnear’s shoulder surgery at Meadville has gone well and she has much better use of the joint and is responding well to therapy.

6. Janice Swope of the Zion Baptist Church of Slippery Rock and ABCOPAD Board Secretary had knee replacement surgery in the Butler Community Hospital just before Thanksgiving and is recuperating and gaining strength.

7. We were saddened to learn of Jim (Ken) Willison's death of cancer in Waynesburg after an extended illness. Jim was the father of Amy Mendicino and his life of dedication to his church, to ABCOPAD, and to the early years of CLI were celebrated in a funeral service at Waynesburg on Dec. 3.

Well, so long! It has been my great blessing to be called to serve among the American Baptist congregations of the Northwest Area of ABCOPAD. I served our Lord under three really special executive ministers — Rusbuldt, Woodbury, Frischkorn — and with several committed and talented region staff persons. What a blessing they are to me and to the churches. I wish for the current dedicated Region staff and the new staff minister to be named, the direction of the Spirit and the blessing of good health and satisfying relationships with God's special people. I'll close with my ministry career verse: (II Corinthians 1:20-22, NIV) "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God. Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. And God is faithful; we are confident he will confirm his promise because he has been faithful in every detail to what he said. Through Jesus Christ our Lord."

**REV. MARK MAHSEERJAN-SMITH — CENTRAL AREA MINISTER 570-435-2001**

**SPOTLIGHT ON A MINISTRY TEAM POSSIBILITY:** In the last edition of Notes & News we had a special article from Pastor Gary Firster discussing how an emphasis on Outflow could be bolstered by contacting one of the region's Evangelism Associates to receive training in Got Style. This month we have a second opportunity for you and your church leadership to consider. This comes from another pastor in the Harrisburg Association, Roy Johnsen, pastor of the Westgate Baptist Church in Lancaster. Following a presentation of an overview of his Mentoring Ex-Offenders to the Harrisburg Association pastors, Roy wrote: I was pleased to share my training with the Harrisburg pastors. As you observed, although the primary thrust is prison ministry, the application is far broader. Mentoring and discipleship are synonymous, and this 8 hour training will enable participants to recapture the church’s birthright — the formation of disciples who grow into Christlikeness.

Included in the training is: an overview of Corrections in Pennsylvania Unpacking the mentoring relationship The addictive personality The criminal mind Co-dependency and enabling Applying the learning to custom design a vital and viable ministry.

My premise is straightforward: If every ex-offender can be yoked with a positive role model in a discipling/mentoring relationship, the revolving door pattern of recidivism can be reversed and society can become safer. Corrections can become corrective.

After more than 25 years of experience in Prison Ministry, I know that mentoring is a key component.

With the Region's emphasis on Outflow, there may be churches or associations that are led to consider reaching out to those who are in prison. I would be delighted to provide the training for them.

If you and your church leadership would be interested in speaking with Roy about prison ministry possibilities in your community, please contact him — he is ready and willing to share his learnings and passion with you! (wbcpastorroy@dejazzd.com / 1-717-394-1071).

**The Colonial Park Community (Gary Firster)** had a Pot-Luck Thanksgiving Supper followed by a concert by the group Seasons, a harp and hammered dulcimer trio from the greater Harrisburg area.

**FBC, York (Tim Munson)** will be closing out 2010 with a special service featuring...
hymn singing and testimonies of God’s Faithfulness. In January, the congregation
will start the year off on a positive note as they join together for their annual Adult
Retreat at Camp Hebron. Pastor Tim will be the speaker with an in-depth look at
the story of Ruth serving as the topic ... it is a reminder that even in the darkest of
times, God is in control. ■

FBC, Lancaster (Richard Hill) hosted
a Christmas event that featured a chili challenge! Following a chili cook-off
the congregation joined together for a program of music followed by Christmas
cookies and cocoa. Chili, cocoa and cookies ... what's not to like!? ■

White Hall Baptist (Bob Ayars) has
installed a wheel chair lift from the
sanctuary, which is already accessible, to the Fellowship Hall in the basement, so
that members or visitors will be able to enjoy dinners and times of fellowship, as
well as the opportunity to worship in the beautiful sanctuary. A dedication service
will be held during the Christmas season to celebrate this gift for the Lord’s service
from the White Hall congregation. All the funds were available before construction,
even though there were many details to be attended to before construction began. ■

An official welcome for their new pastor
was held on Nov. 21, as the Forest Baptist Church in Winburne, Pa., installed
Sue Pallo. The installation service was conducted during morning worship with
both church family and Sue’s family in attendance. Since Sue started her ministry
at the church in Sept. 2009, Forest has experienced growth, as community
members have renewed their interest in the small rural ministry. A luncheon
was held following the worship service to allow for a time of fellowship and
rejoicing. ■

Members of Watsontown (James Ritter)
goto Kramm’s Nursing Care Center in Watontown on Dec. 12, armed with
pens, stamps and Christmas cards to assist residents in sending Christmas
greetings to their loved ones. Lucky for them, their pianist is also a nurse there,
and can complete the addresses on the cards without breaking any confidentiality
rules! They are also continuing a tradition begun last Christmas by wearing a button
that says, “It’s OK to wish me a Merry
Christmas!” They feel this is a gentle way
to encourage people to use the traditional
greeting, and an opportunity to share
with folks about their church, and the
Lord, Jesus Christ! If they want it, they
also share their button with them. ■

Rev. Calvin Edmonds (Mt. Zion
Missionary, Altoona) requests continued
prayer for his wife, Verna, as she
recovers at home. She spent 21 days in
the hospital, and they now have visiting
nurses coming in three days a week. She is
making progress but is in for a long haul
to full recovery. They thank the prayer
saints for continued prayers. ■

Rev. Cory Hartman shares: “These are
exciting times at FBC, Hollidaysburg.
For most of 2010 the church has been
developing a statement of its vision called
care along the way, inspired by the parable
of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).”
Around the time of the ABCOPAD
Biennial Meeting, First Baptist explored
Outflow in a small group and then as
a whole church and found it remarkably
complementary to the new vision. As the
church’s mindset began to shift toward
care along the way for people outside the
church, God started to revive the body.
New people started coming to worship.
New people started coming to worship.
The church launched some innovative
initiatives to show God’s love to the
community such as giving out gloves at
the town Christmas tree lighting and
offering free prayer on the courthouse
terrace with participants from other
churches. Most importantly, care along
the way/Outflow is becoming a part of
how individuals live their lives — looking
for opportunities to bless others and bear
witness to Christ. This renewal is still in
the early stages of the life of the church,
but the body is hopeful that this is just
the beginning.” ■

The men of FBC, Milton (Jamie Dries)
are holding a retreat in Jan. 2011.
“Outflow!” “Outflow is about outreach
for everyday people. It is not another
formula or evangelism technique, but
simply about sharing the love of Jesus
authentically out of the abundant
overflow of a God-filled life. Outflow is
learning to embrace God’s love deeply and
allowing that love to flow out to
bless others.” (From Equipping Ministries
International’s website: equippingministries.
org) The guest speaker will be Rev. Frank
Frischkorn.

Who: Men 18 and older from
Northumberland Baptist Association
churches.
When: Friday night, Jan. 7, 5:15 p.m.,
until Saturday, Jan 8, 5 p.m.
Where: The Glory Barn Cabin at East
Canton, Pa.

They plan on leaving FBC, Milton at
5:30 p.m. and arriving back at 5 p.m.,
Saturday. Some plan on staying
Saturday night. Bring a sleeping bag
and warm clothes. There are mattresses,
but bathrooms are not equipped with
showers.

Cost: $25.00 – Includes Friday night
pizza, and Saturday’s breakfast and lunch.
If you want to attend but money is a
problem, please let Eric Roberts know. If
you plan on attending, please contact Eric
Roberts at (217) 222-5025
at 570-524-7084 or EJRoberts@

Rev. Kevin
Walden –
Southeast
Area Minister
610-955-1253

As we prepare for the new year and our new
staff job descriptions, I encourage pastors to
be prayerful about two things: 1)
Being involved in our new Leadership
Learning Communities and 2) Consider
attending one of the two Spring Pastoral
Conferences that we will have. The first
conference will be at Camp Judson, April
26 – 28. The second conference will be
May 3 – 5. The costs of these conferences
will be free to currently serving
ABCOPAD pastors! Be watching for
more information. Space will be limited. ■

Middletown, Media (Jeff Evans)
would like to share another testimony of healing
from their outreach ministry, The Healing
Rooms of Del. Co.: “A lady came in
with extreme soreness and pain from
an accident. She testified, ‘my body
relaxed during the prayer, the pain lifted
completely from my shoulders and was
gradually going from my hip area. I had
come in with a TENS unit on (electro
stimulus) and was able to take that off
and not have to use it anymore.’ As the Bible says, ‘Surely He hath borne our grief, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed.’” (Isaiah 53:4 – 5)

Middletown Baptist would also like to share that they have begun their Advent series “Is it Really a Wonderful Life?” based upon the film “It’s a Wonderful Life.”

The Central Union Association has been working with Encuentro Latino Church in Coatesville for several years now. In an effort to welcome this exciting new congregation into our fellowship, Rev. Kevin Walden and Rev. Doug Stratton (Hatboro) have been working with Pastors Carlos Peralta, Jr. and Sr. Part of the process for welcoming congregations is the assembling of a number of documents. These have now come together and are being reviewed. That is the technical stuff. Having received it, we will be able to plan a celebration of embrace and welcome.

In addition, with the help of Rev. Walden, Hatboro has secured a Legacy Grant from the Region to create an introductory video of Encuentro Latino Church. The video will be produced by Hatboro members Emilia and Craig Andrews of Beholder Productions. This project will introduce the ministry and the needs of Encuentro Latino to the Association, the Region and the Denomination. We are also developing a Ministry Team to work alongside Pastor Peralta Sr. Continue to pray for this vital ministry in the Coatesville area.

Springfield Baptist (Wylie Johnson) presented a “Living Nativity” on Saturday night, Dec. 11, from 6 – 8:30 p.m. It featured both live animals and actors. Club members from the 4-H Delaware County Sheep Club brought their prize Tunis breed sheep to the event. The congregation hosted the event with hot cocoa and cookies for all attendees. The entire community was invited to witness this recreation of the Christmas drama portraying the Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. There was no charge for the event.

The Baptist Church of West Chester (Dan MacDonald, interim) put Christ in Christmas with a nativity float in the 14th Annual Old Fashioned Christmas Parade in West Chester on Dec. 3. Theirs was the only religious float in the parade. The more than two-hour parade was enjoyed by thousands. On Saturday, Dec. 18, the children of the church will be having a “Birthday Party for Jesus” with the community’s homeless, and will provide hats, scarves and gloves to those in need. The Saturday morning breakfast for homeless men and women has been provided to the community for more than 34 years.

Pastor Brad Lacey shares: “FBC, Conshohocken is delighted to report that our small fellowship is increasingly more multi-cultural in its texture. We have (just within the last four months) received into our fellowship a lovely couple from Jamaica, a family from San Salvador, an African-American couple, one Philippino child who was finally allowed by the U.S. Consulate to join her mother, and one Caucasian gentleman who has been on the receiving end of his wife’s prayers for years! We are overjoyed that God would entrust us with these dear brethren!”

FBC, Reading (Mike Hall) rejoices in their coming one-year anniversary of a facility sharing arrangement with two downtown Reading Hispanic congregations. Since Jan. of 2010, Casa Del Alfarrera (House of the Potter) and Iglesia de Jesus Cristo (Church of Jesus Christ) have made their homes in FBC’s worship, fellowship and education sections of the 108-year-old building. First’s members cleaned, organized and retrofitted historic spaces to make room for the much newer Hispanic Pentecostal Churches, both of which have seen growth during their first year there. The congregations cooperated to host a VBS this past Summer and to worship together for a Thanksgiving Eve service.

Pittsburgh and Southwest
412-687-3940
Laurel Baptist Association: Mr. Bill Shutt, Moderator; Rev. Dr. David Skinner, Barnabas Care Pastor

The Laurel Baptist Association has voted to pay 1/3 of the cost for Charles Bowser (FBC, Jeannette) to participate in a mission trip to the Dominican Republic led by Mike Hall, (FBC, Reading) from Jan. 29 to Feb. 12, 2011.

FBC, Glen Campbell (Allan Campbell) had a very successful “Friends & Family Harvest Home Celebration” Nov. 21, with outstanding music, worship and attendance. The church hosted a banquet and the Fellowship Hall was full of happily eating members, friends and family. The church established an annual fund donations goal of $12,109, and failed to meet it. Donations, so far, are $7,389, or just 61% of goal. The effect of this funding shortfall will mean that it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to pay bills and small salaries on time during the expensive winter and spring seasons.

The entire congregation was involved in the “Annual Hanging of the Green” Nov. 27, and after worship on Nov. 28. The “green” includes a live 15-foot decorated tree in the chancel, an Advent wreath surrounded by fresh holly, wreaths, candles surrounded by greens in each of the tall windows, and fresh candles in all the brass wall sconces. Advent banners featuring John the Baptist and Advent themes are hung with the blue liturgical paraments with embroidered Advent candles. The newly-repainted and restored Sanctuary looks wonderful and ready to greet the coming of the Prince of Peace. The church strictly observes the important season of Advent in music, lectionary texts and liturgy, before changing to Christmas White and lectionary texts concerning the actual birth of Jesus.

Starting the First Monday in Advent the Church, working with a small committee of members, is opening the main floor of the sanctuary nave and chancel from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, for prayer and meditation. The altar will be equipped with candles which a person
may light as they pray. The church has Bibles available in the pews and kneelers and other materials about prayer will be added. This program will go on through the winter and then a study based on use will be done to determine continuance. The members and Pastor of the church believe that God’s house should be open for use as much as possible.

On Sunday, Dec. 19, the Fourth Sunday in Advent, the church will have a pre-Christmas baptism, adding to the 13 new members who joined the church in Nov. Following the service the congregation will hold their Annual Christmas Church Family Dinner. In the final two months of the year this small church has been blessed in adding 16 new members to the rolls.

On Christmas Eve, the public is invited to attend an 8 p.m. Candlelight traditional worship service with pipe organ titled “Twelve Lessons and Twelve Carols.” Dr. and Mrs. Campbell have rewritten and reformatted this beautiful program for many years. It takes about 18 lay persons to do all the readings, prayers and other liturgical parts of this Christmas Eve favorite.

FBC has been the major spring board, working with the local Roman Catholic and United Methodist congregations for many years, in raising food and funds for a “Christmas Love Basket” for local needy families. This year’s needs are greater than ever in Glen Campbell, statistically Pa.’s poorest municipality. Tons of food, and food gift certificates will help approximately 35 families and 78 people, have everything they need to eat for Christmas week and beyond.

Monongahela Baptist Association: Pastor
Kathy Griffith, Acting Moderator and Barnabas Care Pastor

Throughout the year, the youth group at Olive Branch, Belle Vernon (Ken Sommerfeldt) has been collecting toys and various items which they used to pack and wrap over 90 boxes for the shoe box ministry during a pizza party.

The church has started a new quilting class under the watchful eye of Diane Fox. Over 12 woman, young ladies and one fellow are learning to sew and make quilts. They meet every Monday night. This project has created a new opportunity for people to get together and enjoy each other in fellowship and fun.

Mt. Moriah, Smithfield (Jay Hurley) extend congratulations to Darrell and Joyce Edgar who are the proud parents of a brand new baby boy. Tasso J. Edgar (the J. stands for the first initial of both Joyce’s dad, Jack, and Darrell’s dad, James,) was born on Nov. 17, weighing 8 lbs. 1 oz., and reaching 20 ¼ inches long.

Congratulations are extended to the members of Great Bethel, Uniontown who have called a new pastor. Rev. Scott C. Hoppe began his duties the last Sunday of Oct. Scott is the son of former pastor, Dr. Neil W. Hoppe. His wife, Jackie, is the music director and organist at Great Bethel and the two are certainly a team since his arrival as pastor. Eight new people have joined the church, three by first time decision and baptism, and five by transfer of letter.

Pittsburgh Baptist Association: Mr. Charles Brown, President and Rev. Dr. Mark Egli and Rev. Dr. Tim Spring, Barnabas Care Pastors

Save the Date! The Pittsburgh Baptist Association is thrilled to announce that Dr. Gary McIntosh, President of Church Growth Network and author of Growth Points newsletter (included will be the guest speaker at the Fall Continuing Education Event on Saturday, Sept. 24, 2011. Everyone is welcome!

Emanual Donora (Beverly Frank) held a Free Soup and Sandwich Supper which was a GREAT success! A local taxi company provided free shuttle service to the church and 45 people attended. The church members were excited and eager to serve their community. Plans are already underway for the next supper. One of the volunteers said, “I didn’t realize how tired I was till I got home and sat down. Then it hit me. But seeing the smiles on the faces of all those people made it totally worth it. I think we really need to do more for other people and worry less about doing for ourselves.” Amen!

FBC, McKees Rocks (David McFarland) has begun to “Outflow.” Having attended the ABCOPAD Biennial, First Baptist began to put that learning experience into action this past Thanksgiving in a variety of ways. The church adopted a local family with 10 children and provided all the fixings for their Thanksgiving dinner. They also baked pies and delivered them to the local police, fire department and hospital in gratitude for their service and dedication to the community. In addition, they invited the Narcotics Anonymous group that meets at the church to their annual Thanksgiving dinner. A total of 55 people attended. They experienced the joy of giving to others and sharing the simple truth that God loves us all.

Penn Hills, Verona (Ralph Prinkey) just completed a couple of exciting weeks of worship and music. On Nov. 23, the church was proud to host the annual Penn Hills Community Thanksgiving service for the 4th year in a row. This service sees participation from nearly a dozen clergy from other churches within the Penn Hills community. Pastor Ralph was the featured speaker this year, talking about The Grace of Gratitude. The service was well attended, and the Thanksgiving love offering will be used to assist the work of the Penn Hills Association of Christian Clergy with community projects.

On Dec. 5, the church hosted their annual Christmas Cantata, entitled, “O Holy Night” under the direction of Mrs. Amy McDaniel. This cantata featured the Penn Hills Baptist Church choir, along with folks from other churches in the Penn Hills community and surrounding areas. There were students and adults in this mixed choir. More than 150 people enjoyed the beautiful music which was lifted to the praise of our Lord and Savior. Following the program, everyone adjourned to the church fellowship hall for some light refreshments.

Riverview, New Eagle (Bruce Mose) will hold its annual Christmas Cantata on Friday, Dec. 24 at 8 p.m., entitled “Voices of Christmas.” On Dec. 12, the youth presented their Christmas play entitled “Back to the Manger.”

Sixth Mt. Zion, Pittsburgh (Eugene Downing) sponsored a Women’s Prayer Breakfast on Dec. 11. The ladies collect donations for women in need. On Wednesday, Dec. 22, they will enjoy a Christmas Concert at 7 p.m., and will
end the month by bringing the New Year in with a 10 p.m. worship service on Friday, Dec. 31.

Ten Mile Baptist Association: Rev. Frank Vucic, Moderator; Rev. Dr. Stewart Johnson, Barnabus Care Pastor

Blacksville Baptist Church has called Art Malcolm to serve as their interim minister. Art was the former pastor of the Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Flemington, W.Va. He is a West Virginia CLI graduate and a long-time member of the First Baptist Church of Clarksburg. Please pray for them as they begin this new ministry together.

Other Items of Interest

Don’t forget to check out our website often at www.abcopad.org!

2011 Mileage Rates

WASHINGTON — The Internal Revenue Service today issued the 2011 optional standard mileage rates used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes. Beginning on Jan. 1, 2011, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be:

- 51 cents per mile for business miles driven
- 19 cents per mile driven for medical or moving purposes
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations

How Are We Doing?

This single month compared to the same single month last year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Mission Basics</td>
<td>$45,491</td>
<td>$59,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love Gift</td>
<td>$3,697</td>
<td>$4,095</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners in Ministry*</td>
<td>$9,472</td>
<td>$8,742</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Offerings:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.F.C.</td>
<td>$1,050</td>
<td>$433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O.G.H.S.</td>
<td>$4,297</td>
<td>$1,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.M.M.O.</td>
<td>$3,318</td>
<td>$2,978</td>
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<tr>
<td>W.M.O.</td>
<td>$36,165</td>
<td>$41,970</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To view your own church’s current giving amounts, visit our website and on the home page click on World Mission Reports.

The cumulative comparison figures (“cumulative” being January through this month, compared to the same time period last year):

- United Mission Basics is behind in 2010 by $14,750. The decrease in United Missions (includes UMB, Love Gift and Designations) amounts to $6,880 less in actual dollars that ABCOPAD received this year.
- A.F.C. is behind by $14,676. The decrease amounts to $4,305 less in actual dollars that ABCOPAD received this year.
- Partners in Ministry is ahead by $40,754.