



*Indian Creek Church of the Brethren*  
821 Main Street, Harleysville, PA 19438

### INSIDE...

“Ashley’s Angle”

Youth Group News

District Conference Summary

Sound System Update

Wee Folk Update

Birthdays, Poems and More!



### Sunday Schedule

9:00 am – Sunday School

10:00 am – Worship

### Office Hours

Monday-Friday

9:00 am – 1:00 pm

### Church Staff

Mark E. Baliles  
Pastor

Ashley Boyd  
Administrative Assistant

Don Ziegler  
Custodian

Kathy Moyer  
Wee Folk Director/Teacher

Heather Thomsen  
Wee Folk Assistant Teacher

## Advent Reflections on John 1:1-14

As we enter this Advent season, I invite you to join me in taking time to reflect anew on the miracle and meaning of Jesus’ coming into this world. This passage from John 1 is a great place to start.

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...*

*He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.*

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

I especially love the wording of verse 14 as paraphrased in The Message.

*The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish.*

Here are some questions I invite you to ponder with me this year. What does it mean for us that God in Christ came near to us, that he entered our world, and that he moved into our neighborhood? What does it mean to us that seeing Jesus helps us see and know the Father? How have our lives been changed by the grace and truth that are in Jesus?

Then ponder with me this question. How is God calling us to be like Jesus to our world—to move into other neighborhoods, to show what God is like, to be “generous inside and out, true from start to finish”?

Pastor Mark (Your partner in the journey)



## Christmas with You

This Christmas with You will be filled with joy  
and magic memories,  
as the smell of hot cocoa warms our hearts with  
the enchanting smells of lilies.

As snow falls and covers the ground,  
harmony and peace blows in and fills the air  
around.

Children's laughter is felt,  
warm embraces with love makes our hearts melt.

Cherishing relationships and friendships that  
consistently renew,  
receiving special presents and messages that  
reminds us how cherished we are by You.

Our hearts remain humble in remembrance of the  
beauty in the blessings that You have restored,  
and now Your blessings can flow to others because  
through all You are adored.

Melodies of holiday music fill our ears,  
gratitude fills our hearts allowing happiness to  
manifest into joyful tears.

Bellies are full because the food is delicious,  
let's remember this day forever merry Christmas.

Written by: Ashley Boyd

(Your favorite Admin Asst.)

## Wouldn't It Be Nice?

by Robert K. Phillips

(submitted for Ripples in 2009  
by the late Arlene Keener)



Wouldn't it be nice, on Christmas Day,  
If we would take the time,  
To just sit down, and close our eyes,  
And picture in our mind,

The Little Town of Bethlehem,  
Though far away it be,  
In a manger, in a stable,  
A new born Child we see.

This new born Child, is heaven sent,  
Christ Jesus is His Name,  
Born to redeem mankind from sin,  
And not to garner fame.

This Holy Son, of Holy God,  
Born here on planet earth,  
Has power to forgive our sins,  
And give us second birth.

So if it be, on Christmas Day,  
That we have found the time,  
Let us whisper..."Thank You, Father,  
For Jesus, Lord Divine,

And if it be Thy Will, we ask,  
(as we with closed eyes, pray)  
May more of mankind, by Thy Grace  
Turn to Jesus, every day."



# Youth Group News

Article and photos by Donna Parcell

Our November activity was the second annual Brethren Baking Contest. This is one of our favorite events! The first event was the Technical Challenge. Each youth had to bake 2 identical individual apple pies using a recipe that stated things like “add water until thicker than pudding” and “bake until done”. Although this was the wording from an actual recipe, the directions are purposely vague to challenge the baking knowledge and skills of the contestants.



Bakers Jadon Bateman, Joseph Grau, Claire Spigel and Nathan Stevens each tried slightly different variations. Jadon added sauce to the bottom of the pie as well as the top. Joseph opted for large apple slices while Claire cubed her apples. Nathan went with the adage that you can never have too much cinnamon sugar. After the pies were baked, the 3 guest judges had a difficult time deciding a winner.



This is a blind challenge, so the judges didn't know whose pies were whose. Pam Bateman liked the pie that tasted more “appley”, while Helen Spigel preferred the one that tasted like a traditional pie. Marge Landis has a real sweet tooth and liked the ones with the most sugar. In the end, Nathan was victorious in the technical challenge.

The second event is the Show Stopper. Here the bakers get to showcase their creativity. They each baked a fruit pizza and were given an array of fruit to decorate it with. Some chose designs that were geographic, some chose more random arrangements. Some thinly sliced their fruit while others put big old chunks of fruit on theirs. Some judges were partial to the fancy designs while others were heard to say “I want bigger strawberries.” It was a really tough decision and the judges deliberated and re-tasted many times. Finally, Nathan was crowned the overall winner because of his Show Stopper presentation and description, and the fact that he came in first in the Technical Challenge. Nathan was given the coveted trophy (a paper plate with “winner” written on it). We all had a great time! Special thanks to our judges for spending the afternoon with us.



## Deacon's Moment

(Written and submitted by CJ Anton)

### Why Do We Have Christmas?

The answer is simple – one word – **LOVE!**  
The Christmas Story is ancient and yet timeless! The Nativity scene conveys the essence of Christmas – God loved the world **SO** much that he was willing to send his Son to earth. Baby Jesus is not just a baby in a hay trough – He was the Son of God – who was with God at the creation. He gave up his throne and willingly became a human – to suffer indignity and humiliation at the hand of the **VERY** ones He came to save. Why – because he **loved** us!  
The nineteenth century poet Christina Rossetti captures the true spirit of Christmas:

“Love came down at Christmas,  
Love all lovely, love divine,  
Love was morn at Christmas,  
Star and angels gave the sign.”

God's very nature is LOVE (1John 4:4) Love is who God is – and Love is what God does. Christmas was not a last minute solution to the world's problems. It was **PLANNED** from the very beginning of time as humans know it. This is evidenced in all the predictions in the Old Testament that came to be in the life of Jesus. God's love for us compelled him to make a plan for us to be reconciled with him and someday live the life that he had always meant us to have.

My hope and prayer is that this Christmas you remember the **REAL** reason for the season and take time to again praise the Lord for loving us **SO** much that he would sacrifice his own Son so that we can have eternal life with him!  
Have Blessed Christmas!



### Ten Little Candles

(Submitted by Pat Bub)

**Ten little candles**, Jesus bade them shine,  
but selfishness just snuffed one out,  
and then there were nine.

**Nine little candles**, one without a mate;  
bad companions came along  
and then there were eight.

**Eight little candles**, doing work for heaven,  
“I forgot” sat down on one,  
and then there were seven.

**Seven little candles**, all with blazing wicks;  
someone cried out, “Goody Boy,”  
and then there were six.

**Six little candles**, all of them alive,  
but on was tired of playing,  
and then there were five.

**Five little candles**, once there were more;  
Sunday baseball fanned one out,  
and then there were four.

**Four little candles**, bright as bright could be;  
but one of them just didn't have time,  
and then there were three.

**Three little candles**, could one of them be you?  
That one gave up going to church,  
and then there were two.

**Two little candles**, our stories almost done.  
“I'm too small to use,” one cried,  
and then there were one.

**One little candle**, left all alone;  
it kept burning by itself,  
and oh how bright it shown.  
Brave and steady burned the flame,  
until the other nine,  
fired by its example,  
once again began to shine.

(From “Getting Ready for Christmas,” a collection of poems, song, and skits performed in Amish schools; prepared by Emma Lapp)



## Small Talk

by: Kathy Moyer

Excitement is mounting as we begin our December calendar ... everyone knows that Christmas is not far away! Our calendar song reminds us that Jesus is the reason for our celebration as we sing, "This month is December, Baby Jesus is born!" We extend our thanks to the church family for the gift of Advent calendars for our children to enjoy in anticipation of Jesus' birthday.

As we celebrate the many joys of the Christmas season, we will experience the many sweet sights, sounds, smells, and tastes of Christmas. Our fine-motor skills will be challenged as we make a variety of Christmas arts and crafts, as well as enjoy Christmas manipulative games and puzzles.

This week, we are busy making table favors for the Women's Fellowship Christmas Breakfast! With the theme, "Behold the Star," we are painting and decorating wooden star ornaments as a surprise for all those who attend, including some of our Wee Folk mummies! What a nice way to put us all in the spirit of the season!

Sweet smells of Christmas will abound when we bake gingerbread cookies to enjoy at snack time, after reading Jan Brett's book, *The Gingerbread Baby*. This updated version retells the story with a surprising new twist!

Our indoor climber has been transformed into a Gingerbread House this month, welcoming friends for tea and visiting. It also provides a quiet place to look at Christmas books, which we borrowed from the church library. And our puppet theater has become a stable this month, complete with a wide assortment of Nativity puppets.

In order to encourage an awareness of sharing with those in need, we will be collecting children's mittens and healthy snacks to be distributed by the Keystone Opportunity Center.

We hope to share these things from our joy-filled hearts, as a tangible way to demonstrate, "God loves a cheerful giver!"

As a special gift of ourselves, we look forward to playing our bells and singing our Christmas songs for our families just before Christmas break. Both of our classes will share our traditional "Mary Had a Baby" Christmas program together on Friday, December 15, in the church sanctuary. Only a few of our children are coming from homes which include church involvement. We pray that the songs we sing about Christ's birth will touch the hearts of the parents and grandparents who come to hear them.

Merry Christmas



- 7 Debbie Houck
- 10 Arlin Freed, Chris Spigel
- 13 Rob Kishbaugh
- 15 Tori Detweiler
- 16 Morgan Pedersen (nee Bechtel)
- 17 Caris Williams, Levi Clemmer
- 19 Isaac Houck
- 21 Natasha Edwards
- 24 Janet Detweiler
- 31 Kadlin Grau, Dana Landis

If we are missing *your* birthday, please let the Church Office know! We want to include everybody in our monthly birthday noticed.



Our event schedule for the **Christmas season** will be a little different this year.

Our Annual **Carol Sing at Klein Meetinghouse** will take place on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, at 4:00 pm.

**Christmas caroling** will take place Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup>. We will gather at the church at 3:00 pm and be back at the church for soup and holiday snacks around 5 or 5:30 pm.

Our annual **choir cantata** will *not* take place on Christmas Eve, as normal. Instead, we will be joining with friends from Montco Bible Fellowship to share a **Christmas Choir and Music** program here at Indian Creek Church on Sunday evening, December 17<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 pm. Please mark your calendar accordingly, and help spread the word.

We will still be having a **Christmas Eve Service** on Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>. It will begin at 6:30 pm this year. It will include music, a Christmas skit, a short message, and a "Silent Night" candlelight finish.



## Faithfully

Song by TobyMac

(Submitted by Ashley Boyd)

It's been a long year, it almost took me down, I swear

Life was so good

I'm not so sure we knew what we had

I'll never be the same man

I'll never feel like I felt before (felt before)

It's been a hard year, it almost took me down

### Chorus

But when my world broke into pieces

You were there faithfully

When I cried out to You, Jesus

You made a way for me

I may never be the same man

But I'm a man who still believes

When I cried out to You, Jesus

You were there faithfully

I've had a hard time

Findin' the blue in the skies above me

And if I'm keepin' it real

I've been half-faking the happy they see

I may look like the same man

But I'm half the man I was (half the man I was)

It's been a hard year, it almost took me down

### Chorus

In my darkest hour, You met me

So quietly, so gently

You said you'd never leave

And You stood

by Your word

So quietly, so gently

In all my pain, You met me

You said You'd never leave

And You stood by Your word

### Chorus

'Cause when my world broke into pieces

You were there faithfully

When I cried out to You, Jesus

You made a way for me

I may never be the same man

But I'm a man who still believes

When I cried out to You, Jesus

You were there faithfully

When I cried out to You, Jesus

You were there faithfully