

THE MESSENGER

The Newsletter of

MEYERSVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

223 Hickory Tavern Road at the Circle in Meyersville

Gillette, NJ 07933-1038

The Rev. Barbara F. Aspinall, Pastor

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Epiphany Sunday, January 8, 2017



Our Epiphany Pageant will be on January 8th. This will be a no-rehearsal, fun, noisy, everyone participating, re-telling of the Christmas story. Children will especially enjoy the

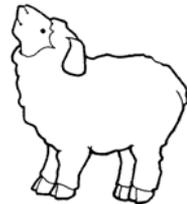
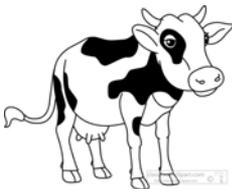


opportunity to “baa” like a sheep, ring a bell, and otherwise join in. Be sure to join us for worship on Sunday, January 8th.



The word, “epiphany” comes from a Greek word meaning appearance, or manifestation.

Capitalized, it refers to the church festival on January 6th commemorating the arrival of the Magi at Bethlehem. As both a capitalized word and its use in the secular world, epiphany means a moment, an instance when something essential or key or illuminating is discovered or realized or disclosed. Those Magi, traveling from so far, following a star, represent in the gospel of Matthew, the manifestation of something essential to the world: the arrival of the Christ child. Not only was Jesus born in a stable in Bethlehem, and not only born to the Jews as the Messiah, a descendent of David, but shown to be the Savior of the whole world.





email: baspinall223@aol.com
January 2017



Dear Church Family,

In a sermon on Christmas Eve, Martin Luther said, “In this manner Christ takes to himself our birth and absorbs it in his birth; he presents us with his birth so that we become pure and new in it, as if it were our own, so that every Christian might rejoice in this birth of Christ and glory in it no less than if he, too, like Christ, had been born bodily of Mary.”

The theological term for what Luther is talking about is “the divine exchange.” The term comes from an ancient Roman law about marriage in which there were two ways of recognizing property rights. One right recognized that a person owned a thing; and the other recognized that a person was entitled to full use of a thing. When a couple got married, each partner retained ownership of whatever each had previously owned before the marriage but also now gained the full rights to use whatever the other owned as if it were truly theirs.

A Lutheran pastor illustrated this concept this way. “Let’s say when I was married, I drove a base model VW Jetta, old enough to be on its last legs, and my wife owned a BMW as new as it was luxurious. While my wife still owned her BMW, I now had full use of that car whenever I needed it as if it were truly mine, and whereas I still owned my Jetta, she – lucky girl! – had full right to use it anytime she wanted.”

According to Martin Luther, that’s what happens in the Incarnation. God comes to us fully and completely in the flesh in the birth of the Christ child and thus takes on our life – all the things that make us human – our hopes, our faults, sins, ups and downs – and, at the same time, gives us Christ’s righteousness. The sins are our own but Christ takes them on as if there were his; and while the righteousness is Christ’s, we can now make full use of it. And this means that when God looks at us, God sees us as righteous as Christ. And though it is a bit of a stretch, it is as if God sees the BMW and not the Jetta.

And this is what makes Christmas so important; it is the celebration of God’s act of joining with us completely – totally taking on our lot in life – in order to give us all grace and goodness, and to

promise always to see us and treat us as if we are Christ himself. Or, as one of the Church Fathers, Athanasius, said 1200 years before Luther, "Christ became like us so that we might become like Christ."

I guess I still haven't had enough Christmas! May all be blessed with a happy and healthy New Year!

Yours in Christ,

Barbara

Annual Reports

It's that time of year again!



Reminder to all committee chairs: please begin working on your annual reports! All reports are due in the church office by Sunday, January 22nd, so that the Annual Report book can be produced. Please get all your information into the office as soon as you can. We thank you in advance for being prompt. You can email your report to secretaryMPC@aol.com.

If you serve in one of the positions listed below, the office is looking for a report from you!

Pastor	Bazaar Committee
Clerk of Session	Board of Deacons
Nominating Committee	Property Committee
Stewardship Committee	Community Relations Committee
Personnel Committee	Christian Education Committee
Music Department	Missions
Audit Committee	Memorial Committee
Worship Committee	Christian Youth Fund
Congregational Life	Treasurer

Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, February 12th

The Annual Congregational Meeting and Soup Lunch will be on Sunday, February 12, 2017. It's important for all active members to attend as you will hear reports from all the committees and boards, and it is the time to elect new church officers for 2017. You will have an opportunity to vote on recommendations of Session for terms of the Pastor's call. This is also your chance to make suggestions regarding the life and ministry of our church.

After the meeting, we will enjoy a Soup Lunch.

Advent Workshop Day!

After worship on December 11th, we got into the Christmas spirit! We rang handbells, made tree ornaments, constructed wreaths and centerpieces, exchanged cookies and delivered some to our homebound members, wrote



Christmas Eve service invitations to new folks in our neighborhood, and ate delicious soup. As you can tell from these pictures, it was both serious business and great fun!



Delicious soup!

*Inviting
our
neighbors
was a
group
effort!*



Meyersville Tree Lighting on December 4th

On December 4th, as part of the annual Meyersville Circle Christmas Tree lighting, we invited the community into our sanctuary to sing Christmas carols. As a special treat, members of Watchung Hills



Regional High School chorus and band joined us to play and sing for us and with us, both outside in the frosty air and inside our warm sanctuary.

Almost Spring Rummage Sale Planned



Although it feels like our Annual Bazaar was just last week, we are planning already for Almost Spring Rummage Sale and Pancake Breakfast Buffet on Saturday, **March 18th**. “Granny’s Attic” has always been so successful at not only raising money for the church’s ministries, but forwarding unwanted household items to new homes. You may bring your gifts to the church starting February 19th. **Start checking your attic, garage, basement and closets for treasures!**

Nominating Committee Will Begin Work

Our Congregational Nominating Committee will soon begin working on the slate of new church officers to be presented for approval at our Annual Congregational Meeting on February 12. The committee members will be two members of Session, a representative from the Board of Deacons, with Marcie Skrobacz, Gayle Skrobacz, James Thorn and Lynne Hilf as Members at Large elected last February at the Congregational Meeting. This Committee will be considering candidates to serve on Session, the Board of Deacons, for Financial Secretary or Audit Committee. If you would like to suggest yourself or another person as a candidate for these offices in our church, please speak with a committee member.



Multiple Choice!

Taught by skilled members of our own congregation, our church offers three continuing and very different learning experiences. **Gentle Yoga** is taught by a certified yoga instructor, Rosanne McGraw; **Rug Braiding** is taught by Peg Arnold who has been making braided wool rugs for many years; and the **computer classes** are taught by the very knowledgeable Ruud Zijdel. Members and friends are most welcome to participate in any (or all!) of these free classes.



Gentle Yoga: Tuesday mornings at 9:00

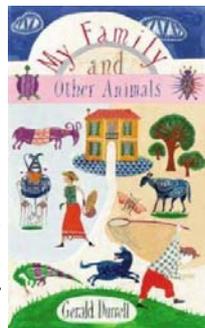
Rug Braiding: Tuesday mornings at 10:00

Computer Basics: Saturdays at 9:00



Meyersville Church Book Club

January 10, 2017, 7:30 p.m.



On Tuesday, January 10th, the Meyersville Church Book Club will be getting together to discuss *My Family and Other Animals* by Gerald Durrell, first published in 1955. Masterpiece Classics has made a TV series based on Durrell's trilogy. *My Family and Other Animals* is the first book in the trilogy. More information about the TV program can be found at these links: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/programs/episode/durrells-corfu-s1-e1/>

From reviews of the book:

When the unconventional Durrell family can no longer endure the damp, gray English climate, they do what any sensible family would do: sell their house and relocate to the sunny Greek isle of Corfu. My Family and Other Animals was intended to embrace the natural history of the island but ended up as a delightful account of Durrell's family's experiences, from the many eccentric hangers-on to the ceaseless procession of puppies, toads, scorpions, geckoes, ladybugs, glowworms, octopuses, bats, and butterflies into their home.

My Family & Other Animals is a humorous, mostly autobiographical account of the author's early years, which were spent in Corfu in the 1930s with his mother and three older siblings. Not only do we become acquainted with his eccentric, very English family, we are also introduced to plenty of the locals: a mix of humans, animals, birds, insects and plant life.

Durrell's family moved to Corfu when he was 8 years old. Before this they had lived in India and England, so his was not exactly your average upbringing. Gerald Durrell was in his time a leading naturalist and conservationist, as well as an author and TV presenter, and he led many expeditions all over the world to study wildlife.

It's not simply a catalogue of wildlife though. His family are also examined and their individual foibles picked apart. As the youngest child by a good eight years, Durrell's boyish perspective on life makes for a witty account of human nature.

The author's light-hearted tone made for easy and pleasurable reading. He doesn't take himself too seriously and is not embarrassed by pointing out his own childhood weaknesses, or those of his relatives.





January Mission: Community Soup Kitchen of Morristown

January's mission is to help the **Community Soup Kitchen of Morristown, Inc.**, an ecumenical effort supported and run by 33 congregations from the greater Morristown area. This important cause that includes providing healthy meals in a clean, warm, safe and friendly environment and to treat their guests with dignity while giving them hope. It also gives the community a chance to truly offer help where it is desperately needed, doing something as a step toward alleviating hunger and homelessness, a golden opportunity for our church to share with those in need.

The **Community Soup Kitchen of Morristown** has been serving nourishment since it provided soup and sandwiches to 4 people in 1984. It has grown to include 30 congregations and over 2,000 volunteers who serve from 80 to 180 guests every day, 365 days a year. About a third of these are homeless and some have mental illnesses or suffer from substance abuse. But most comprise the ever growing group of working poor, elderly and disabled who cannot afford the food to stay healthy. They also make arrangements for a myriad of other services such as Visiting Nurse services, Mental Health facilities and guidance in finding homes, employment and education. Please be generous now as you reflect on the blessings in your life. For more information about the **Community Soup Kitchen of Morristown**, please call (973) 267-0709 or check their website www.cskmorristown.org.

Local Food Bank:

Take Advantage of January Grocery Can-Can Sale!

Our commitment to our local Long Hill Township food bank continues. It serves local families and some out-of-town clients. The food bank is located at St. Vincent's Church and is supplied with food from several different sources including First Presbyterian Stirling, a Post Office drive in May, and the Boy Scouts. Our church is committed to supplying a specific "in demand" food item every month. Therefore, we are collecting canned mixed fruit, and the January Can-Can sale is a perfect opportunity to pick up several cans at a good price. This will be very much appreciated by those who cannot feed their families without a little help. There will be a box at the church where you can drop your contributions.



We Keep in Our Prayers

George Barker, Marion Barker's brother
Marilyn Barker, Marion Barker's sister-in-law
Edith Belansky, friend of Steve Boyle
Clark Carson, husband of Claudia
Lynne Combs, community friend
Ellen Dreyer, sister-in-law of Barbara Grillo
Ellen Eastty, community friend
Yme Eelkema, Loura Zijdel's father
Maggie Givens, friend of Doris Mertz
Diane Goberis, Carol Skidmore's sister
Eleanor Gormley, relative of Barbara Grillo
Paul Hilf, father-in-law of Lynne Hilf
Jinouos Kalbousa, sister-in law of Matt Minaian
Tyler McGuire, cousin of Michele Urbanski
Parvine and Mustafa Minaian, parents of Matt Minaian
Quaid Mobus, friend of Roberta Keller
Suzanne Moran, Sandy Seymour's sister
Lou Pizzigoni, friend of Sue Hahn
Reinhardt Family, Lynne Hilf's friend
Riser Family, Lynne Hilf's sister's family
Schmitt Family, at the loss of Deborah's mother, Adrienne Schmitt
Garland Smith, Joanne Smith's brother
Mary Stapperfenne, Jean's daughter-in-law
Robert Wenz, Jean Stapperfenne's brother-in-law



We extend our **CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY** to the Carson family. Claudia Carson, former member and choir member, passed into the Church Triumphant on December 6. A service of witness to the resurrection is being planned by her family in Texas.

We extend our **CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY** to the Schmitt family. Adrienne Schmitt, Deborah's mother, passed into the Church Triumphant on December 24th.

January 2017

Lectionary Readings



January 1 - *1st Sunday after Christmas*

Isa. 63:7-9; Ps. 148; Heb. 2:10-18; Matt. 2:13-23

January 8 - *Epiphany Sunday*

Isa. 42:1-9; Ps. 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matt. 3:15-17

January 15- *Second Sunday After Epiphany*

Isa. 49:1-7; Ps. 40:1-11; 1 Cor. 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

January 22- *Third Sunday After Epiphany*

Isa. 9:1-4; Ps. 27:1, 4-9; 1 cor. 1:10-18; Matt. 4:12-23

January 29- *Fourth Sunday After Epiphany*

Micah 4:1-8; Ps. 15; 1 Cor. 1:18-31; Matt. 5:1-12

January 1, 2017 COMMUNION

Preparing Elements: Carol Boyle, Karen Leski, Lisa Kielblock

Elders Serving Communion: Class of 2018: Barbara Grillo,
Rosanne McGraw, Robert Kielblock

Call to Worship:

Jan 1 Art England

Jan 22 Laura Minaian

Jan 8 Barbara Grillo

Jan 29 James Thorn

Jan 15 Doris Mertz

Jan 3 Diana Kantor

Kim Sadowski

Jan 6 Wanda Kielblock

Jan 9 Laura Minaian

Jan 13 Douglas Smith

Jan 23 Carol Skidmore

Jan 25 Russell Boyle

Jan 30 Gladys Dilkes

Karen Leski,

Michelle Urbanski



MESSENGER MAILING LIST

We are updating our Messenger mailing list for 2017. If you would like to have your name removed from the list, please email secretaryMPC@aol.com or call the church office (908) 647-0390. If you would like to have the Messenger emailed rather than mailed, please let us know in the same way!