



Growing in Christ, sharing God's love.

Community Connection

A Newsletter from **Church of the Redeemer Moravian Church**

December 2011

Rev. Jeff Van Orden, Pastor
www.redeemermoravian.org

Pastor's Corner:

I'm reading *11/22/63*, Stephen King's latest book. I say "reading," by the way, as an admission that I haven't finished it yet. It is, after all, a typical 900-page King novel, with all sorts of fascinating character portraits, plots and sub-plots. I'm sure it will fill the quiet moments that arise over the next few weeks.

What I can tell you, so far, is that the book is about time travel, about moments that alter the course of history, and about the consequences of changing the world. And, not surprisingly for King fans, that it takes place in Maine.

November 22, 1963, as many of us will vividly remember, is the day President John F. Kennedy was assassinated. Few would disagree that the course of history was forever changed, that day. In this engrossing novel, King explores the possibility that this event could be reversed – by traveling back in time and stopping Lee Harvey Oswald. "Save Kennedy, save his brother," King writes, "save Martin Luther King. Stop the race riots. Stop Vietnam, maybe ... Get rid of one wretched waif ... and you could save millions of lives."

I have often wondered what the world would be like today had John Kennedy, Bobby Kennedy and Martin King lived. A far better place, I suspect.

For people of faith, of course, all of this begs the question of where and when God lifts a hand to direct the course of history. Does God act to change things? Do things – both important things and trivial things – go as God plans? Or not?

We had a spirited discussion, in a recent adult Sunday School class, about what God knows. It was prompted by a statement I made, so I will make it again: I believe that God is surprised every day.

I know that the notion that God can be surprised is hard for some Christians to accept. But I am going to be bold and go even further: I believe that God wants to be surprised. I believe that God has given us the freedom to make life-changing, even world-changing decisions, and that God expects us to make them.

God, in this context, can be saddened by what we do, pleased by what we do, even angered by what we do. But what we do matters. The idea that God somehow wills – and thereby causes – me to make the choices I make each day takes me off the hook, and diminishes my role in bringing about the Kingdom of God.

And I believe, with my whole heart, that you and I are called by God to bring about God's Kingdom. And, of course, what follows from that belief is the unsettling thought that if we drop the ball, God's Kingdom will not come as God wills.

So, my friends, as another year comes to an end and we enjoy our annual celebration of the birth of Christ, may we be reminded that Emmanuel, "God with us," is just that. With us. And that by following him we can change the course of history – once again. No time travel required.

Have a blessed Advent and a merry Christmas.
Jeff Van Orden

Highlights from Church Council

Our 2011 Church Council took place, as planned, on Sunday, November 13th.

- The proposed revision to our By Laws was passed, reducing the size of each of our Boards from eight members to six, and Council approved the plan to phase this change in over two years.
- The slate of officers proposed by the Joint Board was elected. In 2012 our Boards will be comprised of the following individuals (plus the Pastor, who is Chair of the Board of Elders and a member of the Board of Trustees):
 - o Elders: Ron Albaugh, Joyce Garrett, Karen Jackson, Jim Jackson, Jean Kopp, Vicki Minard, John Williams
 - o Trustees: Joyce Albaugh, Laura Blum, Joan Daley, Phil Garrett, Jill McLoughlin, Trent Reynolds, Dee Stohr

These officers will be duly installed in early January. Please keep all of them in your prayers.

- A vote of thanks was unanimously affirmed for Zach Albaugh, Dave Carpenter, Gail Dufford, and Tom Hoffman for their service on the Boards during the past year.
- In addition, Three delegates and one alternate were elected to represent our congregation at the 2012 Synod of the Eastern District:
 - o Delegates: Ron Albaugh, Dee Stohr, John Williams
 - o Alternate: Jim Jackson

- The budget for 2012 was passed as presented by Treasurer Joyce Albaugh. At this point a deficit of \$15,500 is expected for the year.
- Phil Garrett presented the report of the Board of Trustees, highlighting all of the places where members of the congregation contributed their time and talents to the work of the congregation and the maintenance of the church building and the parsonage.
- Pastor Van Orden presented the report of the Board of Elders, highlighting the ups and downs which the congregation has experienced in the past year, and an outline of the work that the members will need to do in the months ahead in order to move forward into the future. Copies of his report were distributed and are available to anyone who is interested.

Journey to Christmas

The children of the church will bring their Journey to Christmas on November 26 during our Saturday Arts Program (SAP). For three weeks the children will learn about Mary, Joseph, the census, and the many that welcomed Baby Jesus. These lessons will also carry over to Children's Church, Sermon Church, Parents Moring Out and Friday Arts program classes. The programs will end with a play called the Journey to Christmas on December 10th at 1:00. A gift for a baby is the admission to this show (items will be donated to a women's shelter). Following the performance there will be a King's Party

Submissions for next month's newsletter are due by the 25th of each month. Please send to: redeemerdublin@yahoo.com

with treats for all. On Sunday Dec 11 the children will also sing in church. Please mark your calendars for Dec. 10th and 11th and come see and hear this holiday through the children of Redeemer.

The children will also be lighting the advent candles in church. Please check the list to confirm their participation. We will also be doing a Joyful Noise offering each week. The money collected will be used to purchase baby items for the women's shelter.

Advent and Christmas Events

Advent and Christmastide are the most festive seasons of the year – in Christian churches around the world and, particularly, at the Church of the Redeemer. Lots of special events are planned, and your spirit is sure to be uplifted if you participate fully.

Sunday, November 27th is the first Sunday in Advent. Our liturgy for Advent will include the festive singing of the *Hosanna!* and we will light the first of our Advent Candles to mark the occasion.

On **Sunday, December 4th**, the second Sunday in Advent, we will celebrate the season with a service of Holy Communion.

On **Sunday, December 11th**, the third Sunday in Advent, the children of the congregation will add to our worship experience with special music.

On **Sunday, December 18th**, the fourth Sunday in Advent, we will honor Mary and explore her unique role in the miracle of Jesus' birth.

Christmas Eve, December 24th, should provide a fitting climax to the Advent season for everyone as we celebrate in our traditional manner with a service of Candlelight, Lovefeast and Song at 7:30

PM. A children's ensemble will sing Morning Star, the Choir will present special music and you will be invited to join in all of the traditional songs and carols that make Christmas Eve a special Moravian experience.

Finally, on **Sunday, December 25th**, we will gather at 10:30 AM for an informal service of lessons and carols – plus a Christmas Story for adults and children alike.

And as if that were not enough, you are also invited to add to your seasonal enrichment by participating in an **Advent Bible Study**, where we will explore what the Gospels really teach about Jesus Birth. We will gather each Wednesday evening during Advent (November 30, December 7, 14, & 21) at 7:00 PM for this special study opportunity.

Call to the 2012 Synod of the Eastern District, Moravian Church

The Eastern District Synod will convene at Moravian College in Bethlehem from June 20 to 23, 2012. The vision of this synod is taken from the 84th Psalm, Blessed Are Those Who Dwell in Your House, Ever Singing Your Praise.

Acknowledging the commission of the 2010 Provincial Synod for each district to “establish time within the synod process for non-legislative, collaborative dialogue and prayerful discernment regarding the Christian service of homosexual persons,” the District Board realizes that this 2012 Synod will be extraordinary in nature. Given this, the District Board has decided to invest in this synod's delegate representation by subsidizing two lay delegates for each congregation.

Children's Ministries

The children of the church will begin their Journey to Christmas on November 26 during our Saturday Arts Program (SAP). For three weeks the children will learn about Mary, Joseph, the census, and the many that welcomed Baby Jesus. These lessons will also carry over to Children's Church, Sermon Church, Parents Morning Out and Friday Arts program classes.

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On Christmas Eve, the children of the congregation and their mothers will participate in the service, singing the traditional solo part of Morning Star. A fitting conclusion to the month's preparation.

Church of the
Redeemer
Moravian Church
Community Connection

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Change Service Requested

Sunday School 9:15 am

Worship 10:30 am

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