

FIRST CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN  
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Rev. John B. Shaffer, Pastor

## THE BEACON

**January 2009**

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### WHAT IS AN EPIPHANY?



Or what is Epiphany? On the Christian calendar, Epiphany is January 6<sup>th</sup>. In the east, from about the 3<sup>rd</sup> century on, it was a celebration of the Lord's Baptism. In the western church, it was later (4<sup>th</sup> century) associated with the manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles, in the person of the Magi or wise men.

The less liturgical churches, like the Church of the Brethren, oftentimes do not emphasize this particular day on the Christian calendar. Why, I am not sure. Suffice it to say that at Jesus' baptism, as well as the visit to Him by the Magi shortly after His birth, one thing is clear - both events symbolized the importance and availability of the Gospel to all people, Jew and Gentile. Jesus' baptism was really the beginning of His public ministry and when the wise men visited Him shortly after His birth this revealed to non-Jews that the King of Kings and Lord of Lords was born.

Now 2000 years later, we know all of that - after all, most Christians today are not of Jewish ancestry. So why make a big deal about it? May I suggest that its strategic location on the calendar at the beginning of each new year has special significance. We should be reminded that 2000 years ago, Christ came to show all of us the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). We can be part of God's family. This was a Gift that was made manifest to Jew and Gentile alike and is our Gift today. It also reminds us that it takes "people" to make this Gift known. Whether we cling to the tradition of Jesus' baptism or the visit by the wise men, it was people to whom Jesus made known His availability to all, and it is "people" He entrusted to carry on the work of telling others the Good News.

So this new year, make it a point to be one of those "people" Jesus entrusted to tell others the Good News. If you do, the real joy of Christmas and the blessings of the new year will be yours, and with those with whom you shared the Good News. 2009 could be, and should be, the best year of your life.

Have an epiphany – an awakening, awareness, a manifestation - of the living Christ!

Happy New Year! Hope to see you each and every Sunday!

Pastor John

*"Commit your works to the Lord, and your thoughts will be established." Proverbs 16:3*

# Christian Education

## ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES ...

“Fruit of the Spirit”, led by Juli Thomas, meets in Pastor John’s office.

“The Book of Revelation”, a class for young adults (post senior high to about 35 years of age) is led by Keith in the chapel.

“Forgiveness – Making Peace With the Past” led by Helen, for senior adults, meets in the Library.

The Junior High Sunday School is led by Amanda.

## THERE ARE CLASSES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS OF ALL AGES

A LOVING PRE-NURSERY (UNDER 3 YEARS) IS LED BY MISS JOAN

MISS CONNIE TEACHES THE NURSERY CLASS (AGES 3 & 4)

MISS JUDY & MISS TINA LEAD THE BEGINNERS CLASS (KDG & GRADE 1)

LITTLE GLEANERS (GRADES 2 & 3) IS LED BY MISS SANDY & MISS SUSAN

SUNBEAM CLASS (GRADES 4 – 6) IS LED BY JEFF & WENDY

JUNIOR HIGH CLASS (GRADES 7 – 8) LED THIS QUARTER BY AMANDA

SENIOR HIGH CLASS (GRADES 9 – 12) LED BY BRIAN & HOLLY



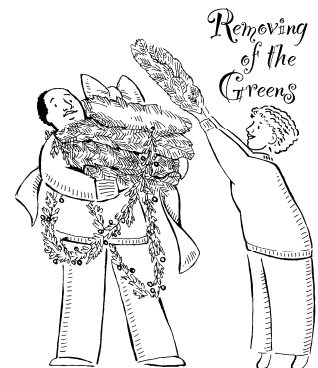
WEDNESDAY NIGHT HAPPENINGS – PIONEER CLUBS will start up again January 7th. Remember: There are classes for children kindergarten age through senior high. The adults meet for a time of prayer, followed by Bible Study. All of the “happenings” begin at 6:45pm. Plan to join us.



THE 2009 DIRECTORY has been completed and printed thanks to Jack Adams. (The cover color this year is bright yellow!) This project is a lot of work and takes a lot of patience as information is fed to him. Thanks to all who worked on planning the calendar for 2009 so it could go to print. If you have any changes, corrections, or additions, please see Jack. He can then have them placed in the bulletin insert.

## THE MUSIC & WORSHIP COMMISSION IS SPONSORING AN

“UNDECORATE SUNDAY” on January 11<sup>th</sup>. So many people helped to decorate the sanctuary for Christmas and it looked beautiful. We are blessed with such a lovely place to worship and praise the God who loves us so much. Now we all can roll-up our sleeves and help remove the greens and put everything away for next year. Plan to stay after the Worship Service on Sunday, the 11<sup>th</sup>, (bring some casual clothes) and help with this project. To entice you ... the Commission is providing pizza!! People of **ALL** ages are invited and encouraged to help with this project and enjoy the fun and fellowship. Many hands make the load light! Watch for the sign-up sheet in the narthex.



*“Those talents which God has bestowed upon us are not our own goods but the free gifts of God; and any persons who become proud of them show their ungratefulness.” John Calvin*



**PASTOR: Rev. John B. Shaffer**

Pastor John is available **any time** and can be reached at the numbers below, however, he has weekly office hours. His schedule is as follows:  
**Monday & Wednesday – 12:30pm – 3:30pm**  
**Tuesday & Thursday – 9:30am – 12:30pm**  
**Church: 215-536-7510 \* Home: 215-538-2032**  
**Cell: 610-413-1997**

**BIRTHDAYS**

- January 1 – Scott Adams
- January 2 – Ann Dieterly
- January 3 – James Grow / Margaret Rupert
- January 7 – Aaron Sassaman
- January 8 - Donna Clymer / Eric Klein
- January 10 – Cynthia Allen / Melanie Graham
- January 12 – Jacqueline Murphy
- January 14 – Paul Jacoby
- January 15 – Wendell Waddell
- January 17 – Luke Brandt
- January 18 – Stephanie Hunter
- January 21 – Bill Holsinger
- January 22 – Cary Bender
- January 23 – Mason Breiner
- January 24 – Kelly Stever
- January 26 – Matt Roth
- January 27 – Joanne Scott
- January 28 – Rosario Pistone (Son)
- January 30 – Tara Breiner / Don Bryant

**WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES**

- January 19 – Harry & Sylvia Schoellkopf



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**THE YEAR 2008:** What more appropriate way to observe the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Church of the Brethren than to have spent the entire year reading the Bible together. *“What characterized the eight men and women who boldly chose to be baptized that morning in 1708? A careful reading of the Scriptures and a commitment to obey the Word of God.”* **“FRESH FROM THE WORD” – Devotions for the 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Brethren.** was a year-long devotional book that many in our congregation purchased and read throughout 2008. The devotional book was “a simple but profound way to celebrate our common heritage – and our common commitment to search the Scriptures for God’s leading.” Many from our District and across the country and beyond wrote devotionals for the book that were inspiring and touching. A few devotionals from Brethren history

were also included. In the Introduction of the book we read, *“Finally, we celebrate the peculiar people known as the Brethren. What kind of anniversary gift does one give to a people celebrating 300 years? In a spirit of gratitude and love, we in Brethren Press offer this treasury of devotions to encourage us all as disciples of Jesus. As we spend the year together on this journey through the Bible, we pray that we will be reminded of our beginnings, when the Brethren were born out of courage and conviction; we will be strengthened for the present day; and we will be inspired with hope for the future. Thanks be to God.”* Wendy McFadden, Publisher.

If you didn’t purchase a copy last year, please see Pastor John. It would still be a blessing to begin reading it and the Scriptures in the 301<sup>st</sup> year of the Church of the Brethren!

**“TAKING DOWN THE CHRISTMAS TREE”**

Oh, to trim a Christmas tree,  
Is such a pleasant chore  
On December twenty-fourth,  
Or a day or so before!



But when New Year’s Day is past,  
And carols cease to ring,  
The disrobing of the tree  
Is quite another thing.

Still we pack each shining bit  
Of loveliness away,  
All marked and tied securely  
To use some future day.

And suddenly our hearts grow warm,  
The task not half so drab,  
As we pause to ponder o’er  
The joyous times we’ve had;

The beauty that the season brought,  
The happiness we shared,  
The cheery greetings warm and true,  
That showed how many cared.

The rich reward in reaching out  
To help a brother’s need,  
The voices singing of His birth,  
Who brought us peace indeed.

The ones we love around the hearth,  
The Christ Child very near;  
Oh, blessed, priceless memories,  
To carry through the year!

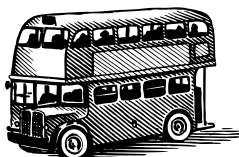
By: Alice Hansche Mortenson  
(Submitted by: Linda Fawcett)

**ANSWER Magazine** – For a number of years, many of you have been receiving the bi-monthly publication of Promise Network, entitled **ANSWER**. We learned in early December that the publication will no longer be produced. Since we are unsure as to what, if anything, will be offered in its place, we wanted you to be aware of this development. I trust you have enjoyed receiving **ANSWER** and that the articles have been helpful to you in your faith walk. - Pastor John

**“A HAPPY NEAR YEAR!”**

With smiling faces and hearts full of cheer  
Let’s enter into a grace-filled year –  
Four precious seasons that promise to bring  
Chances to love God, our Father the King,  
Twelve glorious months to serve mankind’s needs,  
Fifty-two weeks to do loving deeds,  
Hundreds of fresh days our lives to fulfill  
By doing with love God’s unerring will.  
So, enter with joy for rich blessings are there,  
Enter as a child in God’s royal care,  
Enter with great love for “Love casts out fear,”  
Enter expecting a good year is here.  
Then trade time wisely for graces that last,  
Moments are fleeting a year is soon past.

By: Sr. M. G. Brunke  
(Submitted by: Linda Fawcett)



**ATTN: SENIOR ADULTS:  
REV. EARL ZIEGLER** is

planning several trips for Senior Adults in the Atlantic Northeast District of the Church of the Brethren (that’s us!). May 4 – 7 **The Creation Museum Tour and More**, includes the Longaberger Basket complex, Cincinnati City Hall, and more. May 15 – 16 the **Shenandoah District (Virginia) Church of the Brethren Tour** which includes a visit to the Antietam Battlefield, and the John Kline home. **Lancaster County Amish Tour** is on May 23. This tour includes a visit to an Amish bakery, a broom and rug shop and more. June 18<sup>th</sup> enjoy a **luncheon cruise aboard the “Spirit of Philadelphia” with a Historic Trolley Tour**. Check out the District Newsletter page on the bulletin board outside Pastor John’s office. (See Judy or Karen if you want enthusiastic testimonies about Rev. Ziegler’s trips!)

**ALL ABOARD!**

**JOIN US TO “UNDECORATE” THE TREE AND SANCTUARY ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 11<sup>TH</sup>. SEE THE SIGN-UP SHEET. HAVE SOME PIZZA WHILE YOU WORK!**

(Sponsored by: Music & Worship)



**AT OUR CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**, we received an offering of \$778. These donations will be shared evenly with Heaven’s Bounty Food Pantry and the Milford Square Women’s Shelter. Thank you to all who gave so generously.

*Happy New Year* ♪ *Happy New Year* ♪ *Happy New Year*

## **JANUARY 2009 CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Thursday	January 1	<b>HAPPY NEW YEAR!</b>
Friday	January 2	
Saturday	January 3	
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>January 4</b>	<b>Sunday School – 9:00am (Classes for ALL ages) * Worship &amp; Observance of Bread and Cup Communion – 10:00am * Nursing Home Services: 1:30pm Quakertown Manor / 2:15pm Belle Haven</b>
Monday	January 5	Deacon Meeting – 7:00pm * Girl Scout Troop Meeting – 7:00pm
Tuesday	January 6	Heaven’s Bounty Food Pantry – Hours: 9:30am – 2:00pm
Wednesday	January 7	Bible Study – 11:00am * Wednesday Night Happenings: 6:45pm – 8:00pm – PIONEER CLUBS for children kindergarten – grade 12 & TIME OF PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY for adults (Studying the Book of Proverbs)
Thursday	January 8	Heaven’s Bounty Food Pantry – Hours: 9:30am – 2:00pm
Friday	January 9	
Saturday	January 10	Women’s Bible Study – 9:30am
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>January 11</b>	<b>Sunday School – 9:00am (Classes for ALL ages) * Worship – 10:00am * Music &amp; Worship Sponsored “Undecorate” Activity – With Pizza @ 12 noon – Everyone is invited * Nursing Home Service: 2:00pm Life Quest * Youth Fellowship Mtg. – 4pm</b>
Monday	January 12	Women’s Fellowship Meeting – 7:00pm * Girl Scout Troop Meeting – 7:00pm
Tuesday	January 13	Heaven’s Bounty Food Pantry – Hours: 9:30am – 2:00pm
Wednesday	January 14	Bible Study – 11:00am * Wednesday Night Happenings: 6:45pm – 8:00pm – PIONEER CLUBS for children kindergarten – grade 12 & TIME OF PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY for adults (Studying the Book of Proverbs)
Thursday	January 15	Heaven’s Bounty Food Pantry – Hours: 9:30am – 2:00pm
Friday	January 16	Salisbury Behavioral Health Management Meeting – 9:00am-3:00pm
Saturday	January 17	Men’s & Boy’s Prayer Breakfast – 9:00am at John’s Plain & Fancy, Quakertown * Women’s Bible Study – 9:30am
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>January 18</b>	<b>Sunday School – 9:00am (Classes for ALL ages) * Worship – 10:00am * Nursing Home Service: 2:30pm Phoebe/Richlandtown</b>
Monday	January 19	Commission Meetings: Christian Education, Music & Worship, Stewardship, Witness Commissions * Girl Scout Troop Meeting – 7:00pm
Tuesday	January 20	Heaven’s Bounty Food Pantry – Hours: 9:30am – 2:00pm * Sunshine Stitchers – 7:00pm
Wednesday	January 21	Bible Study – 11:00am * Wednesday Night Happenings: 6:45pm – 8:00pm – PIONEER CLUBS for children kindergarten – grade 12 & TIME OF PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY for adults (Studying the Book of Proverbs)
Thursday	January 22	Heaven’s Bounty Food Pantry – Hours: 9:30am – 2:00pm
Friday	January 23	
Saturday	January 24	Women’s Bible Study – 9:30am
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>January 25</b>	<b>Sunday School – 9:00am (Classes for ALL ages) * Worship – 10:00am</b>
Monday	January 26	Church Board Meeting – 7:00pm * Girl Scout Troop Meeting – 7:00pm
Tuesday	January 27	Heaven’s Bounty Food Pantry – Hours: 9:30am – 2:00pm
Wednesday	January 28	Bible Study – 11:00am * Wednesday Night Happenings: 6:45pm – 8:00pm – PIONEER CLUBS for children kindergarten – grade 12 & TIME OF PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY for adults (Studying the Book of Proverbs)
Thursday	January 29	Heaven’s Bounty Food Pantry – Hours: 9:30am – 2:00pm
Friday	January 30	
Saturday	January 31	Youth “Super Bowl” Hoagie Sale * Women’s Bible Study – 9:30am

**FEBRUARY 1 – “SOUPER BOWL” OFFERING**

