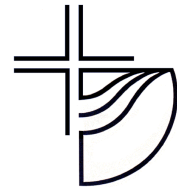


News from the Brick

Nettle Creek Church of the Brethren
5352 N. Brick Church Road
Hagerstown, IN 47346

Established 1820



Paula Ulrich, Pastor
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Office Hours:

Tuesday: 1:30 p.m. -- 4:30 p.m.
Wednesday: 1:30 a.m. -- 4:30 p.m.
Friday: 8:30 a.m. -- 12:30 p.m.



Sunday School: 9 a.m.
Worship: 10 a.m.

**December/January
2009**

***Continuing the Work of Jesus.
Peacefully. Simply. Together.***



From Paula's Desk – Advent Reflections

***The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it.***

John 1:5

Ah, the gray Indiana days can get to us sometimes, can't they? It seems we've had our fair share of them, lately, as I write this reflection. I much preferred the sunny days of October when the leaves were still brilliant red, orange, burgundy, green, and yellow. There's nothing like color to lift my spirits! I felt really disappointed when the leaves fell. But about two weeks ago, I happened to look out my bedroom window on the second floor of our house. For some reason, I wasn't needing to rush around that day. And the sun was rising. I hardly ever get to watch the sun rise, but that day, I stood still and watched for a long time. The horizon behind the bare, leafless trees of Richmond was full of brilliant, flaming, orange light. The feathery clouds in the sky took on a pink hue as the blue of day became visible. Brilliant, flaming orange. To me, that's the color of the Spirit. And I noticed how beautiful the trees are, even without their leaves. I saw the trees lifting their branches in praise to our Creator. Okay – so I'm a pastor and a poet, but I might not have thought of that had the leaves still been there. In fact, I might not have seen the sunrise so well because it would have been *blocked* by the leaves. I found deep peace that morning, though, as I stood still. I felt God's presence as the new day blossomed. “Pause awhile, and know that I am God,” we are told. (Ps. 46:10)

Most of us are pretty busy all the time. But this season – what the world calls Christmas and I call Advent -- can feel frenzied, stressful, and packed so full that we are unable to pause and reflect on the meaning of it all. We barely take a breath between one