

# News from the Brick

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*Established in 1820*  
*Celebrating 190 Years*  
Sunday School: 9 a.m.  
Worship: 10 a.m.  
*Continuing the Work of Jesus.*  
*Peacefully. Simply. Together.*



## *January and February* *2012* *Newsletter*



### *Claire's Corner*

*In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be  
Unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.  
Taken from "Hymn of Promise" by Natalie A. Sleeth*

Last winter, some of my seminary friends and I were stunned by our first Midwestern winter! The snow began on December 1, and we had snow or ice on the ground through March. Although many of us had seen snow before, many of us never experienced it for such a long period of time. Around November this past year, we sun-loving students began to feel anxious about the impending grayness of winter

What a surprise this winter has turned out to be! As I write this in early January, it is 50 degrees outside and the sky is sunny and cloudless. While I have been reassured several times by locals that the snow is still coming, I am grateful for every week in which we get a reprieve from grey skies. It is one week closer to February, and I will gladly accept two snowy months over four.

I was recently in a conversation with a hospital chaplain who was sharing with me about a difficult experience he had with a patient he was visiting. The patient had just retired from his job. He had a successful career and was able to save a large sum of money – a large sum of money that he looked forward to enjoying in his retirement. Within a few weeks of his retirement, he was hospitalized with a stroke resulting in paralysis on one side of his body. This man was extremely angry that life did not go according to his plans.

If one sacrifices being present day-to-day in one's own life based on the notion that they will somehow have a more enjoyable life later on, or they will somehow get a return on their investment, they may be surprised by what they find. I wonder if this patient would be described by his family as present in home life, or if he would be described as a workaholic? Was his anger at all the time he missed in the past with his family, or that his season of retirement wasn't as he hoped? Was his anger perhaps a little at both?

When unexpected events catch us off guard, whether the event is welcome or unwelcome, the surprise forces us to be present in the here and now. We suddenly must ask ourselves if we are truly living in the present "season" of our lives. Often we find we are not – we are living either too much in the past or too much for the future, so much so that we are not enjoying our present life.

For everything there is a season. As the hymn so eloquently says, there is a spring following every winter, "unrevealed until its season." If you have found yourself in a spiritual winter season, it's ok to let yourself be present to it for a while. You may find that God is using the winter season to better prepare you for noticing, on a daily basis, how God blooms into your life.

May God reveal Earth's divine beauty to you throughout this winter season.

## BIRTHDAYS!

### JANUARY

- 8 Regan Klein
- 17 Ben Franklin (306)
- 22 Teresa Renaker



- 29 We begin THE STORY during Sunday School and Worship; Potluck and Church Council after Worship

### FEBRUARY

- 1 Willis Murray
- 12 Abraham Lincoln (203)
- 22 George Washington (280)

## FEBRUARY CALENDAR

- 5 Sunday School and Worship
- 6 Pastor Parish at 5:30
- 7 Church Board at 6:30
- 12 Sunday School and Worship
- 14 *Valentine's Day*
- 15 *National Gum Drop Day*
- 16 Ministerial at 9:30 am
- 19 Sunday School and Worship
- 20 *President's Day and Hoodie Hoo Day*
- 21 Deacons at 6:30
- 21 *Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday)*
- 22 LENT BEGINS
- 26 Sunday School and Worship; Light Lunch & LENTEN STUDY (TBA) after Worship
- 27 *International Polar Bear Day*
- 29 *Leap Day*

## JANUARY CALENDAR

- 1 Sunday School and Worship
- 3 Church Board meets at 6:30
- 8 Sunday School and Worship
- 9 Pastor Parish meets at 5:30
- 11 *Human Trafficking Awareness Day (modern day slavery)*
- 15 Sunday School and Worship
- 16 *Martin Luther King, Jr. Day*
- 17 Deacons meet at 6:30
- 18 *Winnie the Pooh Day*
- 21 *National Hugging Day*
- 22 Sunday School and Worship; Warm and Cozy Tea Party from 2–4
- 23 *Chinese New Year*
- 26 Ministerial meets at First UMC at 9:30 a.m.

## THE STORY

On **January 29**, our congregation will begin an exciting 31-week study called **THE STORY**. *(Note the change from Jan. 22: your pastor never has been good with numbers, and she*

*miscounted.*) We will be using it in the Upper Room and Faith Seekers Sunday School classes, and in both children's classes. Our worship services and sermons will focus on the same chapter that we've studied in Sunday School each morning, too.

The curriculum is designed for everyone in the congregation to be "on the same page." It's also designed to increase our familiarity and understanding of the Bible. And hopefully, we'll see our own stories in the larger scope of God's story.

The first session is set to begin on January 29 for nine weeks. It will begin with creation and go through the story of Ruth. Then, we will take a two-week break for Palm Sunday and Easter. The second session will begin on April 15 for twelve weeks. This session focuses on the Kingdom of Israel and its kings, prophets, exile, and return. After another brief break, the final session will begin on July 15 with the birth of Jesus. It will end sometime in September with the vision of John in Revelation.

For those who have ordered books, you may pick them up and reimburse Pastor Paula after they arrive. For those who ordered only *The Story NIV*, the cost will be \$12.57. For those who ordered both the NIV and *The Heart of the Story*, the cost will be \$23.98. The cost for *The Story for Children* is \$13.59 per book; and the cost for *The Story for Kids* is \$9.99 per book. If you didn't place an order, you may check out these books and other resources related to the study at an on-line book seller or Christian book store.

If you have any questions, please make sure to let Pastor Paula know. And – this would be a great time to invite others to join us! Bring your friends and family!

## LENTEN STUDY

As in the past, we will hold a six-week Lenten Study after worship on Sundays from February 26 through April 1. We will gather for a light lunch in the fellowship hall. Soup will be shared. If you would like to contribute a pot of soup, please sign up on the table in the east alcove. Each participant should bring your own bag-lunch to go with the soup. The study has not been chosen, yet; but Pastor Paula hopes to select a book on the story of Jesus, possibly focusing on the events of Holy Week and/or Love Feast. If you have a suggestion, please let her know.

**DID YOU KNOW** that Hoodie Hoo Day on February 20 is celebrated at high noon when everyone yells "hoodie hoo" to chase away winter and make way for spring? Sounds like a keeper-holiday to me!

## COTTAGE CONVERSATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

The Cottage Conversations Committee (Bill Stout, Joy Klein, Kathy Denney, Dennis Nicholson, and Pastor Paula) met for the last time on December 1 to process what we learned from the three conversations that were held in October and November. We also discussed the purchase of a small gift for Rev. Bob Fannin who facilitated the conversations, which has been done. While we could not cover everything that was discussed at these gatherings, the questions and suggestions that we took to the Church Board at the December meeting included:

1. How can business meetings be stream-lined?
2. Clearly, the congregation enjoyed and needs occasions for both fellowship and spiritual growth. The CCC recommends that the church offer periodic Cottage Conversations in someone's home as an occasion for conversation and fellowship. This could take place quarterly. It could have a focus question, include a particular activity, or

simply be a time of gathering for fellowship.

3. The CCC also recommends the formation of one or two (or more) small groups that would meet for spiritual growth in someone's home (perhaps using a particular book, a focus question, Bible Study, or devotional materials). This could include casual worship and conversation. It seems that members are hungry for spiritual growth. Each small group would determine when and how often they wish to meet.
4. That the congregation explore and support Joy in establishing the program *Run for God*.
5. And finally, that the church board deliberately and energetically pursue whether there are other groups, organizations, congregations, etc. that would be interested in sharing our building with us.

## IT'S AMAZING WHAT GOD CAN DO (AND WHAT WE CAN DO TOGETHER!) UPDATE ON HAITI



January 12 marks the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the devastating earthquake that took place in Haiti. While there still is much to do, the following list shows what the Church of the Brethren has done

the past two years. When we send money individually or as a congregation to our Mission and Ministry Board and to the Disaster Relief Fund, this is some of the work that we support:

- \*seed distribution in 20 areas of the country
- \*support for an agricultural program in Bombadopolis distributing goats
- \*water filters in more than 15 areas of the country to combat cholera
- \*distributions of food in Port-au-Prince during six months following the earthquake for around 300 families
- \*household kits to more than 500 beneficiaries**

## **across the country (two of these were from us!)**

- \*distributed cases of canned chicken in more than 12 areas of the country after the earthquake, approximately 5,000 cases
- \*built temporary homes for around 50 families
- \*built a community cistern and a water retention pond on the island of La Tortue (Tortuga) with support from the Global Food Crisis Fund
- \*built a security wall around land purchased for a Ministry Center
- \*supported the Paul Lochard School in the Delmas neighborhood of Port-au-Prince for one year by paying teachers, providing food, and temporary classrooms
- \*supported three other schools in Haiti
- \*supported mobile health clinics in six locations after the earthquake (now continuing in more than five areas of the country)
- \*purchased a Nissan Frontier pickup truck for transportation, etc.
- \*purchased land in Croix des Bouquets for a Ministry Center, guest house, and church offices
- \*built 50 45-square meter homes following anti-seismic standards
- \*built a guest house on the Ministry Center land to receive volunteers
- \*built 5 churches in cooperation with the Emerging Global Mission Fund
- \*built 5 church shelters (supported through the Emerging Global Mission Fund)
- \*supported financing for a micro-loan program for those families who could not find land upon which to build a permanent home, and paid rent for one year for those families
- \*supported other agricultural programs in 12 areas of the country
- \*created 500 jobs through all of these activities
- \*provided civic, social, and Christian education for over 500 children in Port au Prince (through Vacation Bible School)
- \*supported other organizations working in Haiti (including IMA World Health and Church World Service)
- \*sent groups of mission volunteers to work in

the country.

(List compiled by Klebert Exceus, from the Church of the Brethren Newline. To read personal reflections by Haitians on the devastating earthquake and the role of the Brethren there, please go to [www.brethre.org](http://www.brethre.org).)

## PRAYER FOR NIGERIA

Prayer is requested for Nigeria, where terrorist-type violence has prompted the government to declare a state of emergency in parts of four northern states. In recent weeks, attacks perpetrated in the name of the Islamist group Boko Haram have shifted from targeting government facilities to targeting people of the southern Igbo tribe who are living in the north, as well as Christian churches. Christians in the southeast have begun threatening and attacking Muslims from the north living in their areas. Many Igbo are fleeing the north and Muslims have been leaving the southeast. Unlike previous episodes of interfaith mob violence that have plagued northern cities like Maiduguri and Jos, church leaders report the new violence echoes Nigeria's civil war of the late 1960's and is rooted more in economics, ethnic and political struggles, and control of oil. The majority of Christians and Muslims in Nigeria condemn Boko Haram's activities, and the church leaders request that the violence not be treated as a conflict between Christians and Muslims. Prayer is requested for the Nigerian Brethren, their congregations, pastors, and denominational leaders, and for Church of the Brethren mission worker Carol Smith. (*From Church of the Brethren Newline. Photo by Wendy McFadden*)

**DID YOU KNOW** it's impossible to sneeze with your eyes open?



## NEW YEARS RESOLUTIONS

Looking ahead in 2012, it's hard to be that optimistic. Here and abroad many people are struggling, as is God's creation. And sometimes we don't know what we can do to make a difference. Fear not! Here are ten

things any of us can do that in the course of a year will have a BIG impact—on ourselves and on our world. Try 'em on, see which one(s) fits you, and let's make the New Year better than the Old Year!

Resolve to leave the car at home one day a week (takes planning, and maybe some walking, biking and ride-sharing, but the payoff is huge: 1000 pounds of CO2 in a year! And since you'll inevitably need to explain your choice to others, this will educate and maybe inspire them too!).

Resolve to make a long-term investment in God's world. Send a girl to school; preserve rainforest; help an illiterate mother learn a skill (see the [NCP Special Projects](#) page: \$60 keeps a girl in school for a year; \$10 plants 100 trees).

Resolve to dispense with disposables—steer clear of anything that comes in a one-time use cup, can, plate, container (the world produces 600 billion pounds of plastic a year, using 8 percent of all petroleum—and half of this plastic is for one-time use!).

Resolve to do something with the sun: God gave us this great resource—let's use it! Start hanging out your clothes, buy a solar cooker, put up a greenhouse, mobilize your church to put solar panels on its roof (“ancient sunlight” in the form of fossil fuels powers most of our life these days, and it's getting us in trouble—time to turn to current sunlight for...current!).

Resolve to become an expert: find something that's God's not happy about in our world and that angers, interests or perturbs you and learn all you can about it—and then share this with your friends/church/school—and together take action (there about 100,000 nonprofit organizations in the world—they all started with someone being so bothered by something that they did something about it).

Resolve to go meat-free one day a week—or add another day if you're already not eating meat daily (when it comes to saving CO2 emissions, they say skipping meat a day a week is like switching from a regular car to a Prius—and a lot cheaper!). See NCP's [recipe page](#) for tasty options!

Resolve to research a product you commonly purchase—coffee, chocolate, I-gadget, shoes—to find out what went into producing it (a typical desktop computer requires 14 tons of nature to produce, and of the 13 percent of our electronics we recycle, most are shipped abroad, where the toxic components are disassembled by unprotected workers). Share your findings with your friends.

Resolve to get to know a local natural area. “You won’t care about a stream you don’t know,” says John Jones of Camp Myrtlewood in Oregon; maybe that’s why nearly all streams in the US are polluted in some way. With the average child spending under five minutes a day outside playing, and adults even less, we need to get reacquainted with God’s creation.

Resolve to welcome strangers. Jesus did it; God commanded the Israelites to do it. After worship, make it your first priority to seek out visitors; at the store, greet the harried mom; on the sidewalk, say hi to the kid on the skateboard.

Resolve to go somewhere or do something that makes you uncomfortable, but may lead to a new perspective or new relationships. NCP Learning Tours can do that for you; so can a walk across town or joining the local stream preservation group. (From *New Community Project* (and David Radcliff) at [www.communityproject.org](http://www.communityproject.org))

**THIS YEAR CAMP MACK’S ANNUAL DINNER HAS MOVED TO MARCH 2**



Hopefully weather will be better than at the end of January. Mark your calendars now and plan to enjoy an evening of great food, fellowship and entertainment and learn what is happening at Camp. Hear firsthand about financial needs related to the Becker reconstruction. Hors d’ oeuvres are at 6:15 p.m. with the banquet at 7 p.m. Barbie Stenancker will be the guest speaker sharing about the Dear Camp’s partnership with Camp Mack. Piano and Violin dinner music will be provided by Pastor Ruth Yoder and her son, Ben.

**LEARN ABOUT BECKER RETREAT CENTER PLANS.**

See drawings of the planned new Becker at [www.campmack.org](http://www.campmack.org) or at the Camp Mack Facebook site. Becker Retreat Center will be built as funding becomes available. Your generous donations will hasten its construction.

**CAMP MACK FESTIVAL—2011 REPORT**

After all income and expenses are accounted for, the 2011 CMF raised \$15,100 for camper scholarships and camp signage. Many thanks to all who helped make the Festival a success. Plan to be at the 2012 Festival scheduled for October 6.

**THE FEBRUARY QUILT RETREAT**

The retreat is Feb. 16-19 for beginning and experienced quilters. Enjoy the peace of winter at Camp Mack.

**PRAYER REQUEST**

Please pray for committed summer staff and camp counselors.

# KID’S KORNER

**FUN INDOOR ACTIVITES FOR KIDS**



**WHILE YOU WAIT OUT THE SNOWSTORM**  
**SPECIAL MEAL** – Go through the pantry and fridge to see what kind of yummy,

creative meal you can all come up with. Everyone should have a hand in the Preparation and cleanup, as well as the eating.

**PICNIC LUNCH** – Pretend it’s summer and have a picnic lunch on a blanket in the middle of the living room. Bring out all the stuffed animals for a touch of the outdoors.

**PUZZLE** – Take out that 1000 piece puzzle, spread it out on the kitchen table and dig in!

**BOARD GAMES** – Dust off Candyland, Monopoly, Scrabble and whatever other board games you’ve forgotten in the closet.

**MOVIE** – Push “PLAY” on a movie and snuggle up together on the sofa. Push “PAUSE” every twenty minutes for a snowstorm update.

**PHOTO ALBUMS** – Pull out the old photo albums, sit around the table and show the kids what you looked like at your high school prom. They’ll love the old photos of Grandma, Grandpa and the rest of the family too.

## WINTER ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

Children love to play outside, and keeping them entertained indoors during winter sometimes can be difficult. The good news is that cold and snowy weather often can make for a whole new variety of games and activities. When the weather permits, outdoor winter activities such as games and projects can keep children occupied.

Hat trick combines the constructive fun of building snowmen and the game of ring toss to create an activity that can be enjoyed by kids of all ages. Have kids build a snowman in an open snowy area. Firmly pack the snow to ensure that the snowman is sturdy. Have children stand about 10 feet away from the sculpture and take turns tossing a hat toward the snowman while attempting to land it on the head. The player to achieve the goal with the least tosses wins.

## **KIDS IN THE KITCHEN**

### CRISPY RICE SNOWMAN

- 3 Tbls. Butter or Margarine
- 4 cups Miniature Marshmallows
- 1 tsp. Vanilla Extract
- 4 cups Crispy Rice Cereal
- Frosting
- Decorating Items (listed below)

Melt butter or margarine over low heat in a large saucepan or in the microwave in a large bowl. Add vanilla and marshmallows. Pop back in the microwave for 30 second intervals until marshmallow are melted, stir between each interval. Or, if making it on the stove, keep over low heat, stirring constantly until marshmallows are melted. Blend well. Add the crispy rice cereal and stir until the cereal is coated.

Line a large cookie sheet with wax paper. As soon as the marshmallow is cool enough to touch, rub a little margarine or butter on your hands and form the cereal mixture into balls. Work quickly so your rice cereal mixture stays warm.

You will need 2 balls for each snowman. Use about 1 cup of the mixture for the body and 3/4 cup for the head balls. Set your larger ball on the wax paper lined cookie sheet. Place the small ball on top of the larger ball. If necessary, use a dab of frosting to help the 2 balls stick together.

Now you are ready to decorate your snowman! Use frosting to help some items stick to the rice cereal balls better. Here are some suggestions for items to use to give your snowman facial features and more:

- Raisins (eyes, nose, mouth, buttons)
- Red Hots (eyes, nose, mouth, buttons)
- M and M's (eyes, nose, mouth, buttons)

- Chocolate Chips (eyes, nose, mouth, buttons)
- Tiny Jelly Beans (eyes, nose, mouth, buttons)
- Large Gum Drops (hat)
- Pretzel Sticks (Arms)

Let the snowmen set for a few hours and enjoy!

## FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



### SNOW GLOBE

Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow! This darling little craft is made from recycled baby food jars, or any other type of jar you have sitting around collecting dust.

#### What you'll need:

- Baby food jars (medium or large) or any other type of jar with a lid
- Florist clay (can be found at any craft supply store)
- Small figurine (see “Choosing your figurine” under “Helpful Hints”)
- White and/or silver glitter or fake snow
- Hot glue gun or aquarium sealing glue (hot glue is less expensive)
- Ribbon or felt (optional)
- Garland plastic greenery (see “Getting your greenery” under “Helpful hints”)

#### How to make it:

1. Wash and dry your jar completely, including the lid.
2. Attach figurine to inside of jar lid using florist clay. If you are using a small

object, it's a good idea to build up the clay so the object will appear taller. To preview, simply place empty jar over the top of your figurine to see if you have the height where you want it. Attach any optional items with the clay (greenery, berries, etc.). **Important:** Use your imagination, but make sure whatever you use is waterproof and won't dissolve.

3. Fill jar with water to within 1/2 inch (1 cm) of top. Use cold water, warm water tends to cloud. Sprinkle 1/2 teaspoon of glitter, or “snow” into water. This measurement is based on a medium to large baby food jar. Adjust glitter amount according to your size jar.
4. Using hot glue gun, line inside of lid with glue. Insert figurine in water and screw on lid.
5. Dab lid dry if any water dripped or spilled. Apply a layer of hot glue around the rim of the lid to seal shut.
6. Let stand and dry overnight -- lid side up.
7. Decorating the lid rim is optional, and there are several ways to do it. Attach decorative ribbon with glue, use plastic holly berries for a holiday feel, or use colored felt as we have. This can be as simple or as elaborate as you like. Use white or craft glue to run a squiggly line around the felt then sprinkle with glitter and let dry. Glue on buttons, use stickers, or personalize your globe by writing your name in glue and sprinkling with glitter. You may also paint the lid rather than use ribbon or other embellishments. The possibilities are endless so have fun!

**DON'T FORGET ABOUT VALENTINE'S DAY ON FEBRUARY 14**