

*The Second Congregational Church
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Congregational Chatter

December 2011

Volume 39, Issue 12

A Note from our Pastor

Hello everyone and Merry Christmas. This year, on Christmas morning, we are going to try something a little different at Second Congregational Church. We are going to hand each family (that will participate) a baby bottle. Why you may ask? January 22 is right to life day. If you have not noticed, in our country, the value of human life is eroding every day. Two of the grim prophecies of the passing of Roe v. Wade in 1972 was that abortion would be morally legitimized and used as a form of birth control and that it would open the flood gates on other 'value of life' questions. Consider that physician assisted suicide is growing in popularity, legal in certain areas, and considered amoral. Consider that the debate today is whether doctors, rather than family, should be given authority to determine when to stop medical treatment (check out the Netherlands). Consider, that in 2007 the New York Times wrote an article stating, "about 90 percent of pregnant women who are given a Down syndrome diagnosis have chosen to have an abortion." Have you ever known a Down syndrome child? Everyone, I have known is happy and happy to be alive. In addition, the families I know say the child made the family stronger. However, society especially many in the medical community somehow have defined the Downs child as not valuable. Who says? When the death of the "Image of God" is equivalent to a dead squirrel on the side of the road society is in trouble. However, this is not to create anger at the world but maybe some pity. My relationship with Jesus Christ insures that I will value the life of my family and your family. It insures that I will teach my children and yours that life is a gift from God and we need to shape it for God. While I have breath in my lungs I will know I still have purpose from my God in this world. However, those that can't see this don't understand that the life they don't value in this generation is their life that won't be valued in the next. It is not the people of faith that look into the abyss and see purposelessness it are those without it. They can choose to live this way before God but I pity them and the world they create for themselves. I know that God will change some and they will find a peace they never knew existed.

However, there does not seem much that we can do about this other than to continue to value lives in our community. So we are going to have baby bottle and a baby clothes drive. Here is how it works. The baby bottle would be left in a prominent place in the house for one month. Each day those who participate would put their loose change in the bottle. At the end of the month we would collect the bottles and give all the money to the Crisis Pregnancy Center in Shrewsbury. In addition, we will be collecting baby cloths (under 2T), diapers, and all things "baby" that new mothers may need. These items would be given to our pantry for all of the struggling parents in this community. We may not be able to stop the devaluing of life but we can help some new moms find some help or others that may have made a psychologically life altering decision find some real love. Would you participate with my family?

May you have a Christmas full of the grace of Christ,

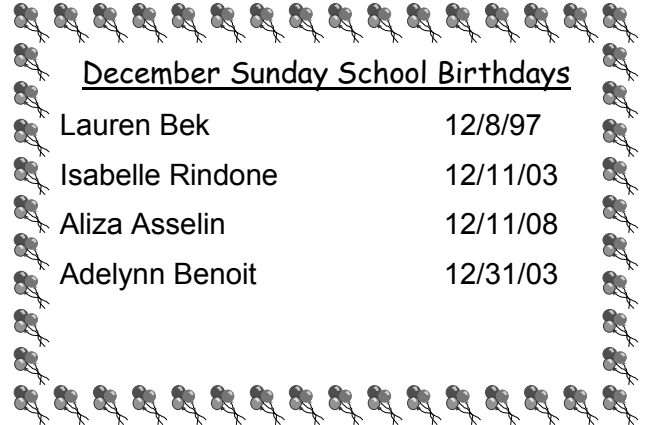
Pastor Bill

Prayer for November (from TODAY, The Family Altar, Nov./Dec., 2011)

Lord, I want to reflect your holy Word in my attitudes and character, as you have done. I want more than to have knowledge about you; I want to know you and walk with you. In your name, Amen.

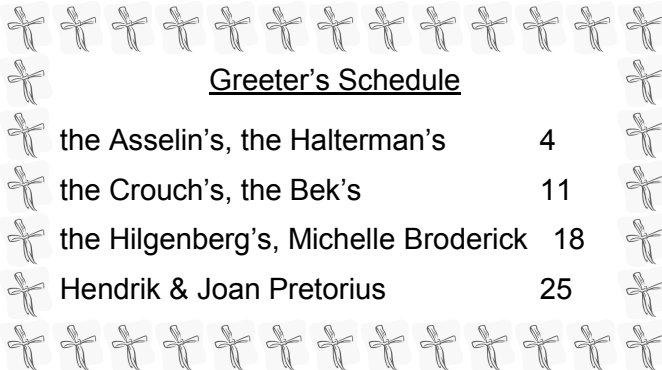
Important Dates and Events

- December 3** - 9:00am - Fall Church cleanup
- December 6** - 7:00pm - Elder's meeting
- December 10** - 9:00am - Hanging of the Greens
- December 13** - 7:00pm - Deacon's meeting
- December 16** - 6-7:30pm - Parenting Seminar
TGIF Christmas Party
- December 17** - 9am-12pm - Parenting Seminar
- December 24** - 7:00pm - Christmas Eve Service
- December 25** - No Sunday School
Christmas Service



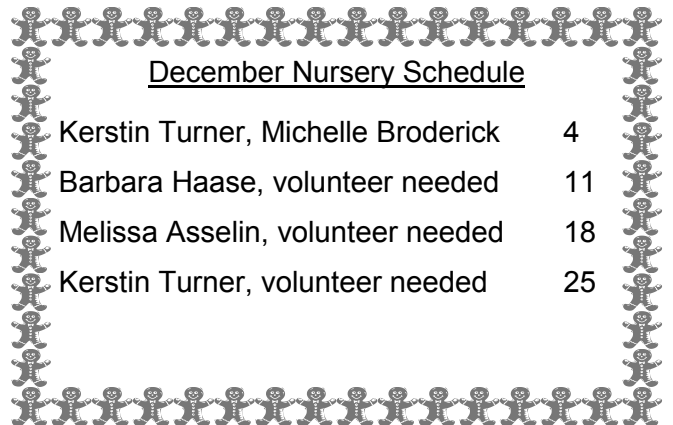
December Sunday School Birthdays

Lauren Bek	12/8/97
Isabelle Rindone	12/11/03
Aliza Asselin	12/11/08
Adelynn Benoit	12/31/03



Greeter's Schedule

the Asselin's, the Halterman's	4
the Crouch's, the Bek's	11
the Hilgenberg's, Michelle Broderick	18
Hendrik & Joan Pretorius	25



December Nursery Schedule

Kerstin Turner, Michelle Broderick	4
Barbara Haase, volunteer needed	11
Melissa Asselin, volunteer needed	18
Kerstin Turner, volunteer needed	25

Daily Wisdom/Daily Quote (from heartlight.org)

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

— Ephesians 4:29, NIV

“God builds his kingdom primarily through ordinary people who are willing to use daily encounters to tell others about the salvation that is available in Jesus Christ.”

— Anthony Campolo

December 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 6:30am - Men's prayer group	2 6-7:30pm - TGIF	3 9:00am - Church Cleanup
4 9:00am - Sunday School 10:00am - Morning Worship	5 7:00pm - AA Meeting	6 9:15-10:30am-Women's Study/Little Lambs 3:00-6:00pm - People's pantry 7:00pm - Elder's meeting	7 7:00pm - Choir rehearsal 8:00pm - Praise band rehearsal	8 6:30am - Men's prayer group	9 6-7:30pm - TGIF	10 9:00am - Hanging of the greens
11 9:00am - Sunday School 10:00am - Morning Worship	12 7:00pm - AA Meeting	13 9:15-10:30am-Women's Study/Little Lambs 3:00-6:00pm - People's pantry 7:00pm - Deacon's meeting	14 3:30pm - After school program 7:00pm - Choir rehearsal 8:00pm - Praise band rehearsal	15 6:30am - Men's prayer group	16 6-7:30pm - TGIF Christmas party 6-7:30pm - Parenting Seminar	17 9am-12pm - Parenting Seminar
18 9:00am - Sunday School 10:00am - Morning Worship	19 7:00pm - AA Meeting	20 3:00-6:00pm - People's pantry	21 3:30pm - After school program 7:00pm - Choir rehearsal 8:00pm - Praise band rehearsal	22 6:30am - Men's prayer group	23	24 7:00pm - Christmas Eve service
25 10:00am - Morning Worship	26 7:00pm - AA Meeting	27 3:00-6:00pm - People's pantry 7:00pm - Deacon's Bible study	28 7:00pm - Choir rehearsal 8:00pm - Praise band rehearsal	29 6:30am - Men's prayer group	30	31

Peoples Pantry

PANTRY NEWS

People's Pantry Hours: The pantry is now open Tuesdays from 3:00 - 6:00. The pantry is open to anyone living within the Blackstone Valley or its surrounding communities. If you know of someone who could use a hand during these hard economic times please tell them about the pantry. If you need more information please speak with Brenda Roy or call her at 508-476-1880.

Volunteers: The Pantry is looking for volunteers to help on Tuesdays. Volunteers are needed any time between 1:00 - 6:00 pm. If you would like to help and would like more information please speak with Brenda Roy or call her at 476-1880.



GIVING TREE PROGRAM: Once again this year the Pantry will be running the Giving Tree Program to help pantry families provide Christmas gifts for children under the age of 14. All gifts will cost less \$20.00. The gift requests will be available from Katie Malo. All gifts need to be in by December 18th.

Thank you for your continued support.

Announcements

- We need everyone to be aware that when they bring in food for the coffee hour, for snacks for their children or for any other event at the church everything needs to be peanut free. We need to make sure that there are no peanuts or peanut butter in any food at the church because there are some people who are very allergic. We need to keep this a safe environment for all. In addition food / monetary donations are needed throughout the year. Please see Joyce Martinsen with any questions. Thank you for your cooperation.
- We are looking for volunteers to help staff the nursery during worship service on Sunday mornings. We need two adult volunteers for each Sunday. All volunteers need to fill out a Cori form and return it to the church office with a copy of their picture I.D. The sign up sheet is on the nursery door. The speaker is working so all nursery volunteers will be able to listen to the worship service. Thank You.
- We are looking for donations of poinsettia plants to decorate our church during the Christmas season.
- The hanging of the greens will be on Saturday, December 10th at 9:00am.
- There will be no Coffee hour or Sunday School on Sunday, December 25th.
- There will be a new Bible study on Wednesday nights at 6:30 pm starting on December 7th. The study will be on Jesus' ministry and mission. See Pastor TJ with any questions.
- There will be a Christmas Open House at the Turners on Saturday, December 17th from 5:00 - 8:00 pm. Save the date on your calendar. More information to follow.



Parenting Seminar

There will be a parenting seminar on Friday, December 16th from 6-7:30pm (TGIF for the kids) and on Saturday, December 17th from 9am - 12pm (Jeanie will be making Christmas cookies with the kids whose parents are attending during this time). The seminar will be led by Pastor Bill on Friday evening and on Saturday morning. The topics will include: The goal of parenting or what is the purpose, the principles that apply to all universally, applying individual rules for our context that support biblical principles, what is love...i.e. to our children.

There is a sign up sheet on the back table.

TODAY™ Daily Devotional

JESUS, THE WATER OF LIFE

December 11, 2011

Scripture Reading: John 4:1-26

“Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 4:14

Jesus was passing through a village in Samaria. In the agenda of heaven, he had an appointment with the woman he met at the well there. She had had five husbands. After going through five divorces, she was now living with a lover.

Jesus knew her background, and he asked her for some water from the well of Sychar. She answered bluntly, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?”

Jesus said to her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.” He went on, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

In this picture, physical water symbolizes the material things of this world that seem appealing but really don't satisfy. We may sip it to the last drop, but the thirst of our soul is not quenched.

But Jesus fully satisfies. He is the water of life. If you drink this water, a fountain of eternal life will flow within you. If you are willing, come and drink, and your soul will be quenched and revived by his Spirit.

Prayer

Dear Lord, may I always drink from the water of life. Keep me away from spiritual pollution and its temptations offered to me every day. Only you can fully satisfy my thirst. In Christ, Amen.

Hernandes Lopes

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TGIF

T.G.I.F.

Thank God It's Friday



T.G.I.F. is held every Friday night from 6:00 - 7:30 pm (except during school vacations). This program is for kids from ages 5 - 12 and includes games, crafts, prizes, Bible time and snacks. It is free and open to the public. Hope to see you there.

If you have any questions please contact Jeanie Haggstrom. In addition, we are looking for volunteers to help out during TGIF this year, please contact Jeanie if you are able to donate some time to helping out.



The schedule for the month of December is as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Dec. 2nd - Guest teacher, Carolyn | Dec. 9th - Movie night |
| Dec. 16th - Christmas Party | Dec. 23rd - No TGIF |
| Dec. 30th - No TGIF | |

Heartlight Article by Russ Lawson

Beyond Fixing Bicycles

I recently read a little story about a little girl that touched my heart. It seems that this little girl was late coming home for supper one evening. When she got home her parents were understandably upset. He questioned her about why she had been so late, after all they had worried about her!

The little girl said, "I stopped to help Marcie, she had a wreck on her bicycle and it was broken." Her father said, "But you don't know anything about fixing bicycles!" To which the little girls replied, "I know, but I stopped to help her cry."

Now you may or may not know anything about fixing bicycles, or cars, or washing machines, or refrigerators or much of anything else. But when friends have broken things in their lives and are in despair, we can help them with that! The truth is that you are rarely in the position of being able to fix the brokenness of someone's life, but you can help them cry about it. You can encourage them and help them through the hard times in life!

So count your blessings and do what you can!

The apostle Paul wrote:

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep ([Romans 12:15](#) KJV).

I kind of like a modern version of that verse:

Laugh with your happy friends when they're happy: share tears when they're down ([Romans 12:15](#) MSG).

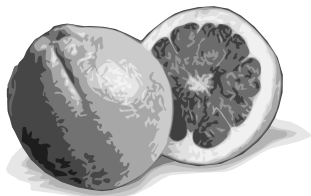
We are entering into that time of the year when you are more apt to notice the sorrow or rejoicing of those around you. You may take more notice of people (or groups) trying to relieve the difficulties of those who are struggling to make it in our world. People take up collections of money or of food and clothing to help those who might be less fortunate than we. They try to help folks who are struggling just to make ends meet. So count your blessings and do what you can, but if you have nothing to help them with physically, then share their sorrow or suffering: cry with them! And if they are happy: laugh with them!

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Healthy Hearts

Cranberry Orange Scones

This is such a yummy recipe. I like to put a platter of these and a plate of bagels out on Christmas morning with a couple of different butters and jams....sooo good! They go great with hot coffee and hot apple cider for the kids.



- 2-1/3 C. Pamela baking and pancake mix
- 1/3 C. + 1 TB sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 C. cranberries
- 4 TB butter
- 1 egg beaten
- 2/3 C. rice milk
- 1 TB orange zest



Pre-heat the oven to 375'. Mix the dry ingredients together. Cut in the butter using two knives. Add the milk and egg. Mix all ingredients together with a fork - dough will be thick. Drop by large tall dollops onto a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake a 375' for 15-17 mins. Top them with quick and easy cranberry butter.

Cranberry Butter:

If you have any leftover fresh cranberry sauce try this easy cranberry butter. Mix 1 stick of softened butter or dairy free alternative into a 1/2 cup of fresh cranberry sauce. It not only tastes delicious but it looks so pretty too.

Around the Conference Change!

by Rev. Jim Bertoti, CCCC Area Representative for Western Pennsylvania

Change is inevitable! As I look out my office window, evidence of change is happening. In Western Pennsylvania, the beauty of fall is the changing of green to brilliant gold, orange and red. God’s artistry is once again at work and His faithfulness continues to amaze and captivate us all. As a pastor, I’m perplexed at how we accept, and even embrace, change in the seasons, change in fashion, change in technology, yet we resist change in the church. Much of our Reformed heritage is a result of change, and still we seem quite happy staying “stuck” in the traditions of yesteryear.

Being the Area Representative for Western Pennsylvania affords me the opportunity to visit and talk with pastors and churches with rich histories and traditions. Currently, our region is going through a transition, a BIG change. Three of our churches have been tossed into the arena of vacant pulpits, and change must happen for these small rural, yet spiritually on-fire churches to survive and flourish. Avoiding change hurts the church. Clinging to old traditions and the “We’ve always done it that way!” mentality deteriorates the church’s influence and effectiveness in reaching our culture. So as the Area Rep, I had to ask myself, as well as pose the question to you: “How can we encourage healthy change? How can we, as the body of Christ, promote unity for change that will inspire our churches to grow and feel alive again?” Here are a few suggestions:

1. Pray, Pray, Pray! Pray for guidance by the Holy Spirit to move you in the right direction without compromising who you are or your identity as a church. Pray for vision to move forward in reaching all people with the Gospel message, and pray for courage to change hearts.
2. Stay Focused! Stay focused on what the church will gain by making necessary changes instead of what may be lost. Be like God in the fall season and paint a beautiful picture of what positive change can bring to His people and community.
3. Inspire Hope! We have a new generation of worshipers coming; so are we giving them a hope — not only for the future, but also for the here and now? Are we showing them that we love and care for them? And as a result of that love, are we willing to change?
4. Slow and Steady! Change doesn’t have to be quick and abrupt. In fact, effective change is thoughtful and prayerful and oftentimes more meaningful when done in small increments. Fall leaves don’t turn overnight. They gradually change, bringing forth their beauty and radiance, allowing all to accept the change with glorious anticipation.
5. Have Faith! God is in control. He wants us to grow with Him and experience Him in new, fresh and exciting ways. And maybe, just maybe — through change, you will see Him in a whole new light and watch as He does some wonderful, amazing things in the church.

After School Program

There will be a kids afterschool activity, ‘create a nativity’, on Wednesday, December 14th & 21st from 3:30 - 5 pm for ages 10 and up. This will involve painting. There is a class size on 10. Sign up sheet on back table. Please see Jeanie Haggstrom with any questions.

Greeters Needed

We need your smile! We are looking for a few greeters each week for Sunday morning to smile and hand out bulletins. For visitors this will be the first impression they have of 2nd Congo and it is incredibly important! It's only a few extra minutes on Sunday mornings. Interested? Talk to Kerstin Turner (774-285-0670) or kerstinturner@gmail.com.



Organized in 1834

*The Second Congregational Church
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P.O. Box 492
Douglas, Massachusetts 01516*

*Pastor William Broderick
Associate Pastor T.J. Turner*

December 2011

Congregational Chatter

To:



Note:

Items for the church bulletin should be in to the office by Wednesday.

All items for the January Parish Visitor are due by December 26th. Items may be dropped off at the office or emailed to 2ndcongregationalchurch@verizon.net. We encourage your articles, thoughts, book reviews, etc.

Please visit our website at www.2ndcongo.com