

The Taftsville Chapel Current

God calls us as followers of Jesus Christ and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to grow as a community of grace, joy and peace, so that God's healing and hope flow through us to our world.

Jan Collins, Editor; Carie Good, Janet North & Virginia Schlabach, Newsletter Staff

January 2008

"The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

John 3:8

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See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being, I announce them to you. Isaiah 42:9

Happy New Year! Here we are again at what we have unanimously agreed is a time to think about fresh starts and do-overs. We welcome the chance to break the momentum of some things, and try to begin new patterns of living in the year ahead. Resolutions are made, some out loud (the ones we know we can keep), and some stay unspoken because they spring from someplace deep inside us that can only hope.

The advertising world often uses the word "New" in marketing strategies. But is anything really that new? Rearranged, recombined, retooled or repackaged, yes, but is it really *new* in the sense that it will never need to be replaced with anything better? When Solomon observed the world and stated: "There is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9), he understood that anything generated by humans is not really new in the sense that only God can make things new. Only God can make something out of nothing, all we can do by ourselves is attempt to adjust what is already there.

Whether in relationship with God and others, behaviors or thought patterns, we know that there are some places within us that need more than mere adjustment. It's the part of us that there are no bootstraps attached to, so when we try in our own strength to change, we fall over backwards. In spite of what the world promotes otherwise, saying to God: "I can't do it, I don't have what it takes" is an act of faith and courage. What if all we could honestly resolve was to try and make friends with our helplessness and poverty of spirit?

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:17 - 18

The glorious promise we have been given is that, in Christ, we are indeed made New. All the efforting to renovate ourselves in areas only God can make new can be put to rest. Part of our job is to not settle for anything less than real *change*. We can surrender, pray, hope, and wait in expectant faith. We can refuse to fret or pretend. We can acknowledge our failures and move on in His priceless grace. We can refuse to indulge in the pride of self-contempt.

This year, what if we were to resolve to "labor to enter into His rest." (Hebrews 4:11a)? What if we were to believe that in doing that, we would open ourselves to be actually made new in areas that reliably evade our best efforts to fix, and that we would find ourselves unselfconsciously involved in new "ministries of reconciliation" for the sake of others and the glory of God? What if, this year we let Him be to us all that He is...

Because of the Lord's great love, we are not consumed, for His compassions (kindnesses) never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. I say to myself, 'The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for Him.' Lamentations 3:22-24

May your year be blessed and happily NEW. Randy

From The Book of Jesus

By Ethelebert Stauffer

Why the Magi Might Have Followed the Star

(E.S. would not claim that the planets in conjunction were the star of Bethlehem. He does offer the sort of logic that the Magi astronomers might have used in seeking Jesus.)

As long ago as the seventeenth century, Kepler ascribed the star of Bethlehem to the unique orbit of the planet Jupiter in the year of 7 B.C. In the spring of that year there was a conjunction of Jupiter and Venus. In the summer and autumn of that year Jupiter encountered the planet Saturn in the Sign of the Fishes – this being the extremely rare Great Conjunction that takes place in this form only once every 794 years. According to the account in Matthew, the Magi noted only the beginning of the conjunction, only the appearance of Jupiter “out of the east.” Upon this they based their astronomical and astrological forecast and thereupon set out for Palestine; when they reached Palestine they witness the crucial phenomenon in the heavens. The rarity of that conjunction of Jupiter could not have escaped the astronomers of antiquity. But was astronomical science in the days of Jesus sufficiently developed to forecast the orbits and conjunctions of the planets?

* * * * *

What opinions did contemporary astrologers hold concerning this phenomenon? Today we can answer this question also. Jupiter was regarded as the star of the ruler of the universe, and the constellation of the Fishes as the sign of the last days. In the East, Saturn was considered to be the planet of Palestine. If Jupiter encountered Saturn in the sign of the Fishes, it could only mean that the ruler of the last days would appear in Palestine. Such were the passages that prompted the Magi of Matthew 2:2, to go to Jerusalem.

Submitted by Monica Esch

Photos in this issue were taken by Virginia Schlabach, except for the Household feature (Hackmans), taken by Richard Glick.

**HELP THE WISE MEN
FOLLOW THE STAR**



Maze submitted by Carie Good



Karen and children singing “The Little Drummer Boy” with their instruments

Advent Photos



- 1 - Lena and Mabel planting wheat seeds
- 2 - Lena, Micah and Addison filling many pots
- 3 - Mabel, Calvin and Josiah hanging ornaments
- 4 - Mabel, Josiah and Calvin posing in front of Jesse Tree surrounded with baby layettes going to MCC
- 5 - Monica talking with children about the Jesse Tree

Covenant Sunday

Coming up on January 13th we will be having our annual Covenant Sunday. This is a chance for everyone who considers themselves a part of the Taftsville Chapel Fellowship to renew (or affirm for the first time among us) our statement of faith and our membership covenant. Here's what we'll be confessing together:

STATEMENT OF FAITH

- We believe God is the Creator and Master of all things.
- We believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and displayed all the fullness of God in human form.
- We believe that Christ's coming announced the Kingdom of God; His death on the cross paid the penalty for our sin; and His resurrection makes sure both our present freedom and our future hope.
- We believe each individual must personally accept the salvation offered by Christ, and show that decision by repentance and baptism.
- We believe God's Holy Spirit gives life, direction and wholeness to everyone who receives salvation.
- We believe the life of the Lord Jesus and the Word of God (the Bible) reveal the truth of God, and are our guides for daily living.
- We believe that the Church is the Family of God with Christ as the head, where all members are called to share their love, time, possessions and spiritual gifts.
- We believe Christ will come again to fulfill the Kingdom and bring his people into eternal joy in the world to come.

MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

As members of
Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Fellowship,
We covenant to:

- Live a life of simple obedience to the will of God.
- Open ourselves to the guidance, direction, instruction and encouragement of the Holy Spirit to conform us to the image of Jesus Christ.
- Be willing to be used for the strengthening of the Body of Christ, including the willingness to boldly tell others of salvation in Christ.
- Labor together in understanding and meeting human needs in our local community and in our world.
- Refrain from the use of violence, and be peacemakers in our time.
- Regularly meet together for worship, study, prayer and encouragement.
- Give systematically and generously of our financial resources, our time and our spiritual gifts.
- Annually renew our commitment to Jesus Christ and affirm our covenant with one another.

Cabin Fever Series

Wintertime in Vermont can seem long, dark & lonely. What a perfect time to come together for meaningful fellowship and stimulating Bible study! For ten weeks, beginning on Friday, January 11, we will gather for another Cabin Fever Series. This year, our study is based on the book of Psalms.

We might recognize Psalms as the longest book in the Bible. For many of us, it is also the most mysterious. Sometimes, reading a Psalm leaves us confused by apparent random images, or scratching our heads over seeming contradictions. We can feel pulled in every direction by the extremes – from devastating despair to delirious praise. Just what is this book all about?

If you have ever been enthralled, intrigued, or even disdainful of the Psalms, this year's Cabin Fever Series might be for you. Our study guide has something for everyone: fascinating information for those who like to read; and simple, engaging questions for those who look forward to meaningful discussions each week, but don't have time to read ahead. We want to encourage everyone to consider joining us for this time of Bible study and fellowship together. Our first gathering will be at Randy & Carie's house at 7 p.m. If you think you might like to join us, please let Randy or Carie know so that we will have enough books for everyone. Even if you decide at the last minute, however, you are welcome! If you would like to come, but have child-care needs, please let us know. We are looking forward to seeing you there.



Advent Banner made by Monica Esch

Schedule for January

Each Sunday morning: 9:30 am – Worship Service

10:45 am – Coffee and Fellowship

11:00 am – Second Hour / Sunday School

- January**
- 6 Ekklesia
 - 11 7:00 pm – Cabin Fever Bible Study Series / *Good's home*
 - 12 8:00 am – Women's Breakfast / *Farmer's Diner*
9:30 pm – Candlelighters / *Ruth Ann's home*
 - 13 9:30 am – Covenant Sunday & Communion
12 Noon – Fellowship Meal - *Baked potatoes & toppings*
 - 23 7:00 pm – Church Council
 - 29 Deadline for February issue of *The Taftsville Chapel Current*

Taftsville Tally		
	Attendance	Offering
Dec. 2	58	\$1,965.00
9	62	1,305.00
16	Snow Day – No Church	
23	58	1,802.38
30	52	2,450.00
	Special	2,500.00

Please note that these totals do not always reflect the final tally.

January Birthdays

- 3rd Ruth Ann Glick
- 7th Amena MacShea-Reess
- 10th Carmeleta Beidler
- 10th Karyn Belknap
- 12th Kirsten Aloisio
- 15th Hannah Cox
- 21st Denver Beck
- 21st Omar Zook
- 22nd Josiah Esch
- 23rd Carl Andreas
- 24th Erin Beidler

January Anniversaries

- 5th Deb & Lee David duPlessis
- 22nd Nancy & Russell Pejouhy

January Childcare Schedule

- 6th Laura Beidler
- 13th Emily Glick
- 20th Carie Good
- 27th Nancy Pejouhy

January Coffee Schedule

- 6th Ken Glick
- 13th Nancy Pejouhy
- 20th Janet North
- 27th Karen Cox

January Cleaning Schedule

- 6th Guntz
- 13th Hackman
- 20th Hackman
- 27th Reess/Fullerton

January Song Leaders

- 6th Richard Glick
- 13th Janice Zook
- 20th Virginia Schlabach
- 27th Allison Fletcher

Household of the Month for January

Each month we will feature a family/person along with some of their favorite Bible verses/passages or stories. Richard Glick is the photographer and is collecting these photos to compile into a pictorial directory – coming in the future.



Dennis & Marie Hackman

Favorite Verses:

Denny—Romans 8:35-39

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Marie—Psalm 111:3-4

“Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever. He had caused his wonders to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and compassionate.”

Bits 'n Pieces

Candlelighters and Ladies Breakfast

Saturday, January 12 at 8am we will meet at the Farmers Diner in Quechee for ladies breakfast. Then at 9:30 you are invited to Ruth Ann's house. Our own Heather Wolfe, a dietician, will share ideas with us on the topic "Three Resolutions for a Healthier 2008". You won't want to miss Heather's presentation. Please let me know if you plan to come so I can get back to you if the weather is questionable. *Ruth Ann*

Congratulations to Tara and Aaron Kishbaugh on the birth of their son, Willem Silverthorn, born on Wednesday,

November 28th, weighing 6 lbs. 6 oz.

Their address is:

9751 Singers Glen Rd
Singers Glen VA 22850

Beck's new snail & email addresses

kmbeck@embarqmail.com
401 W. Holland St.
Archbold, OH 43502

"Best wishes for the new year"

MaryBeth, Kerry, Mara, Miriam and Denver

Ted & Elinor Shattuck's AZ Address:

c/o Mennonite Voluntary Service
6046 E. 30th St.
Tucson, AZ 85711

Calendar Keeper Needed

I will be unable to continue calendar keeping. If there is anyone who is able/willing to take this up I'll be happy to give them the dates that I have for birthdays and anniversaries. *Karyn Belknap*

Taftsville Tidbit Trivia

Do you remember when...

35 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

January 12, 1973

A discussion of our singing revealed a need to learn more new songs both from our hymnal and from newer gospel songbooks.

30 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

January 6, 1978

Let us remember to pray for Omar and Janice Zook the first Sunday of each month, as they minister at the jail.

25 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

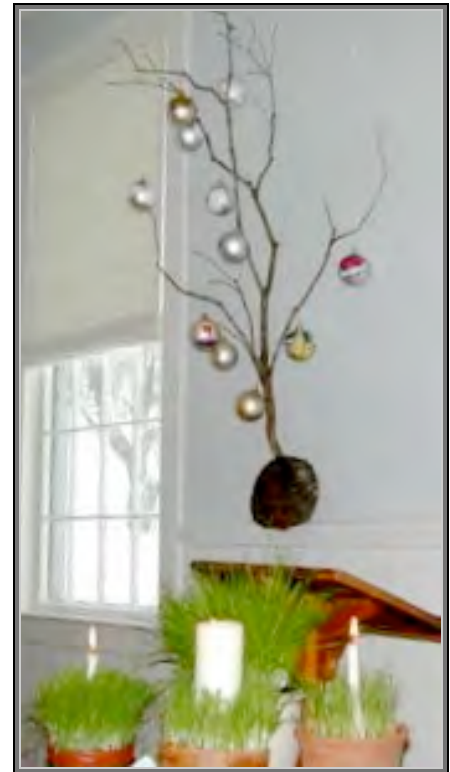
January 6, 1983

A motion was made to offer a reward for anyone providing information leading to the identification of the irregular cookie lady. After a brief discussion the motion was defeated and the irregular cookies were enjoyed by all.

15 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

January 19, 1993

The Zoning Board has granted the church permission to build a ramp on the front of the building. Our first request to build a ramp into the Millen Room was denied due to a neighbor's objection.



Send your contributions for

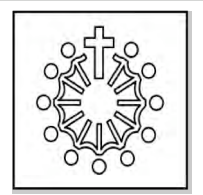
"The Taftsville Chapel Current" to:

janice.g.collins@valley.net

OR slip a note in my church mailbox

OR contact a Newsletter Staff Member:

Carie Good, Janet North, and Virginia Schlabach



Taftsville Chapel Mennonite Fellowship

Located in the village of Taftsville,

one block south of Rte. 4 on Happy Valley Rd.

Randy Good, Pastor (802) 457-1516

<http://www.taftsvillechapel.org/>