

Volume 56
Issue 1
THE TOWER

Message from the Pastor:

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

The arrival of the magi or kings is the beginning of a new season of the church year called EPIPHANY. This word comes from the Greek word “epiphania” meaning to make manifest or to appear, referring especially to a divine being. Christians began celebrating Epiphany Day before they celebrated Christmas Day. The season of Christmas lasts twelve days beginning December 25. Some celebrate TWELFTH NIGHT, January 5, as a “farewell” to Christmas and “hello” to this season of revelation and mission in the life of the church. On Twelfth Night, some celebrate by dismantling and storing the decorations for the next year. Some may burn the greenery and finish off the Christmas goodies and sing the last Christmas carols. Epiphany is also known for its fun and foolery which culminate in Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday), the night before the season of Lent begins.

Christians remember that God’s LIGHT has come to all the world. God’s LOVE for all people becomes visible in Jesus Christ. The light which led the magi to Jesus was in the form of a star. The five-pointed star is the symbol for Epiphany.

You may remember that last year, the Deacons served a “Kings’ Cake”. Hidden within the cake are three beans. The bean finders become the “three magi” the following year. So on January 3, we will be led in worship by the three magi who found the beans last year. (Actually we may have four magi since one of the beans got sliced in the serving of the cake.) And there will be another kings’ cake, cut and served. Keep watch for the beans! You too may be one of the magi next year.

CHRISTMAS EVE – I am writing this in advance of our worship. I can only imagine what this experience will be. But I trust that the Christ presence is among us and that we will be alive with the joy of Christ “coming again”. While THE STORY is certainly an old one, we count on its being new with each hearing. For we hear new things as we grow and mature in faith.

THANK YOU Tom Holzwarth, for helping us as congregation to experience the Christmas story in a fresh and engaging way. Tom wrote the script and composed the music for “the Magnificat” that the choir will have sung on Christmas Eve; the voices of Mary and Elizabeth sung by Ashley Bissell and Carol Zenisek. Tom also arranged the music for “Do You Hear What I Hear?” in that service.

BLESSINGS – Kay Krejci

THE DOMINO EFFECT...

- Benevolence Committee suggested October as Neighbor Awareness Month
- 6th, 7th, and 8th, grade Sunday School class taught by Tom Holzwarth offered their services to help members/friends of the church with fall yard work.
- Since the class would not accept money in payment, a recipient of the yard work made a contribution to Benevolence in honor of the class.
- Benevolence will match the donation with funds.
- The class has been given the names of several mission outreaches and were asked to choose where they would like to see the money donated. (not done at the time this article was submitted)
- Thus the mission/outreach of the church will help others because this class responded to the call to be good neighbors. THANK YOU!

THANKSGIVING/CHRISTMAS FOOD DONATION RESPONSE - Despite the challenging financial time for many, the congregation generously responded to the call for donations of food to help provide Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for the families serviced by the Northern Summit County Emergency Assistance Center. **Thank you!** A reminder that Twinsburg families are served by the center, which depends upon the donations of food from churches like ours as financial support from the business community has dwindled due to the economy.

AZIBANATO - As most people know, Azibanato is the Nigerian befriended by Ralph and Martha Weaver many years ago. Since that time, he has kept in touch with some members and friends of the church. Since early last summer, Benevolence has been trying to send some directed funds to help Azibanato with some medical expenses; finally in December, all the necessary information was in place and the funds were wired to him. Azibanato sends his love and thanks to his friends at First Congregational.

NEWS from DIACONATE

THE RITUAL OF FRIENDSHIP— Beginning January 24, the Deacons will bring friendship pads to the pews. You will be asked to sign your name and pass it through the pew, observing names of folk as the pad is returned to the end of the pew. Following worship, the ushers will collect the pads. This will help the Deacons in identifying visitors and helping members to get to know one another better.

CHANGE SUNDAYS will continue in the new year. Bring your pocket and purse change on the second Sunday of the month. This additional offering goes to the particular church ministry named for that month in the Children's sermon. January 10 is Fellowship designated. The Deacons hope that our children will learn more about the ministries that happen through this church.

From The Church Mouse

Thank you all for the wonderful things you left under the Angel Tree. I know the gifts will make many people happy and in the meantime I was able to curl up in the pile of little blankets to take a snooze or two. It was rather hard for me to wear the pin however.



My favorite day of the year is always the Birthday Party for Jesus. You went overboard with the food for the potluck. And there are always those people who forget and bring dessert even when they know we have that big cake. I was in heaven. But I didn't have too much time to eat because I had to go upstairs for the entertainment. I didn't know which group to work with so I worked with them all. Mary Lou's little people really didn't need me but I stood next to Oliver and sang out loud and clear. In Phil's group I sat between "Miss Know It All" and the sheep. Did you see me?

Mrs. Bissell's group was fun to be part of. I was an angel and got to sing out "Hallelujah" with the girls. The funniest time I had, though, was with Tom's group. I was the second day of Christmas and had some trouble with my lines. But Mark straightened me out. That whole group is a lot of fun. It was hard to say good bye to them.

I can't wait until the Christmas Eve service. I have already enjoyed watching Kayla, Melissa, Eleanor, and Tori come down the aisles carrying the Advent candles. I will be anxious to hear the choir sing during the program. I hear the whole congregation will be involved with the service.

Now I have to let you know that I will be taking my winter journey to visit my country cousin. I will be gone a long time. So in the meantime I hope all of you have the Happiest of Holiday. I will be thinking of you.

Prayer Shawl Ministry



416 is the current number of shawls that have been given out through this outreach. A special thank you to those who have directed donations to buy yarn to keep the crochet hooks and knitting needles busy. A reminder that shawls are available to anyone—persons do not have to be associated with the church. Just leave word in the church office or let a member of the ministry know when a need arises when a prayer shawl might offer needed comfort and warmth. As always, the ministry welcomes new attendees to the 2nd and 4th Monday evenings (7 pm) when the group meets for the one hour time of fellowship and prayer.

Don't forget the Annual Meeting on Sunday, January 31 after worship service.

Annual Reports will be available for review on Sunday, January 24.

Any questions, please call the office, 330-425-2181.

This is a long standing tradition in the Twinsburg community. Beginning Sunday evening, January 17 the area churches observe this time together. We will host the community on Thursday evening, January 21 and the Rev. Pam Kelly of Christ the King Lutheran Church will be preaching. Please check the January bulletins for the full week's schedule.

Sunday, January 17**Host:** Christ the King**Speaker:** Rev. Ed Brady**Monday, January 18****Host:** To Be Announced**Speaker:** To Be Announced**Tuesday, January 19****Host:** To Be Announced**Speaker:** Rev. Kay Krejci**Wednesday, January 20****Host:** Faith United Methodist Church**Speaker:** Bishop William B. Smith**Thursday, January 21****Host:** First Congregational Church**Speaker:** Pastor Pam Kelly**Friday, January 22****Host:** Sanctuary of Praise**Speaker:** To Be Announced

All services will begin at 7:00 p.m.
Please plan to join us for these services.

In Remembrance:

STANLEY L. COOK, JR., age 84 passed away on November 15, 2009. Beloved husband of Janet (nee Stebbins); loving father of Art (JoAnn), Doug (Jill), Gary (Linda Balcer) and the late Stanley, III; dear grandfather of Brian, Jennifer Stalzer (Mark), Nichole Wunderle (Tom), Michelle, Gary K., and Victoria; great grandfather of Alexandria and Zachary Stalzer and Lauren Wunderle; brother of the late Kenneth (the late Agnes) and Robert; brother-in-law of Joyce.

HAROLD E. MUNN, age 90, of Twinsburg, beloved husband of the late Marian (nee Dillon), dear father of Michael (Karen) Munn, Peggy Dan and Carol (James) Skolnik, loving grandfather of Kenn (Cara) Munn, Todd (Esther) Munn, Aimee (Matthew) Weaver, Christopher (Jodi) Munn, Kim South, Wesley (Bethany) Munn, Tiffany Dan, Shawn (Carolyn) Dan, Emily (Matthew) McClung and Matthew (Vanessa) Skolnik, great-grandfather of 17, dear brother of Ralph Munn (deceased), Mary Stone, Paul and David Munn, died Monday Nov. 30, 2009. Harold served his country in the U.S. Army during W.W.II.

JOSEPH L. SAKACH, of Twinsburg, passed away on December 6, 2009. Beloved husband of Muncie; loving father of Richard (Berdene), Lawrence (Rhonda), Kathy (April) and Frank (Missi); devoted grandfather of Cassandra, Michael, Justin and Kyle; dear brother of John, Albert and the late Frank, Julius and Alex.

**Donated to the Metro
Health NICU:**

YTD Item
338 Hats
383 Blankets
180 Pairs of Booties
48 Sweaters
24 Toys
12 Receiving Blankets
4 Full size Blankets
4 Tied Quilts

**Donated to the Hospice of
The Western Reserve:**

YTD Item
101 Lap Robes
39 Pairs of Bed socks

**Donated to USO Service Center
For Soldier's Families:**

YTD Item
140 Scarves

**Valerie Walkers class
at Head Start:**

YTD Item
26 Children's Mittens

**Donated to Dr. Shaw for
Akron Children's Hospital:**

YTD Item
94 Blankets
50 Hats

**Donated to Blessings of
Summit & Portage Counties:**

YTD Item
20 Crocheted Blankets
13 Tied Quilts
5 Baby sweaters
20 Children's hats
12 Scarves
3 Head bands

Bissell School:

YTD Item
20 Hats
12 Scarves
3 Head bands

St. Vincent DePaul:

YTD Item
20 Hats
12 Scarves
3 Head bands

These ladies have been busy! Thanks to all of their hard work many people have been blessed with their handiwork.

The Knitwitters meet at 10:00 a.m. until noon on the first and third Wednesdays of every month. Anyone interested in learning to knit or crochet can attend. Anyone wanting to join in the fellowship is invited to attend.

Servers—January 2010

Bonnie Williams Stan Jewell
 Dan Richner Dave Schilling
 Aaron Mayer
 Lynn Schmidt - Bread

**Communion will be
 Sunday, January 4th this month
 Communion will be served in the
 Sanctuary and the library**

Lay Reader's Schedule**January 2010**

January 3— Rick Sheehan
 January 10—Phil Weiss
 January 17—Dottie Oliver
 January 24—Dan Richner
 January 31—Chrissy Sterling

Children's Sermon Schedule**January 2010**

January 3— Will Adams
 January 10—Fellowship Committee
 January 17—Gayle Davet
 January 24—Tom Holzwarth
 January 31—Terri Bissell

Flower Schedule**January 2010**

January 3—
 January 10— The Lessman family
 January 17— Paul S. Munn
 January 24—Dave & Liz Murch
 January 31—

Acolyte Schedule - January 2010

January 3— **Bryan Bensie**
 & Walter Sterling

January 10—**Kyla Sokolowski**
 & Seth Richner

January 17—**Brooke Dolfi**
 & Jared Doe

January 24— **Bradley Verbic**
 & Gordon Weiss

January 31—**Jason Powell**
 & David Schilling

The families of the names in **bold** have Acolyte Coordinator Duty and should light the sticks and assist the acolytes. Please see the instruction sheet posted on the wall next to the sticks.

***If you are unable to serve as
 Lay Reader, Children's Sermon,
 or Acolyte on
 your assigned week,
 please find a replacement and
 notify the church office of the
 change. Thank you!***

Coffee Hour Schedule**January 2010**

January 3—Mary Lou Sheller
 January 10—
 January 17—
 January 24—
 January 31—

Happy Birthday to:



Mike Geither

01/02

Andrea Bennett

01/02

Katie Delgado

01/05

Brandon Miller

01/06

Peter Weiss

01/07

Bonnie Williams

01/08

Irwin Turnbull

01/09

Jared Verbic

01/11

Terri Bissell

01/11

Will Sheehan

01/15

Gail Herrilko

01/15

Gordon Weiss

01/16

Stewart Lessman

01/17

Jane Gant

01/19

Donna Miller

01/20

Ashley Pratt

01/21

Kalem Sokolowski

01/23

Janet Hanzel

01/24

Chloe Wentz

01/26

Audrey Turner

01/26

Rich Bissell

01/28

Joel Pietrantozzi

01/29

Happy Anniversary

to:

Doris & Irwin Turnbull

01/10/1953



If we missed your birthday or anniversary,
please call the church office so
we can update our records.



Scrap Booking Friday January 15, 2010

6:00 p.m.—midnight
in the Fellowship Hall

ATTENDANCE

Sunday School Worship Service

Nov. 29 th	52	100
Dec. 6 th	50	90
Dec. 13 th	34	96
Dec. 20 rd	52	107

Evening Women's Fellowship

Monday, January 4, 2010

7:00 p.m.—Fellowship Hall

Denice Sheehan will be giving a
baking demonstration!

It doesn't just seem like months since last I sat down to write this page, it has been months. The end of 2009 is still a blur that I'm working on getting through. So much has happened in my personal and professional life that I haven't had any time for church work. Luckily we have a constitution which plans for such an event. I knew that choosing Carol as co-moderator was a good idea. She has literally stepped in and taken care of all the end of the year stuff, which is a lot of stuff.

Since I haven't been involved in any of the church affairs lately I'm not going to try to tell you about any of them, I'll leave that to all the capable folks who have remained steadfast and faithful to the tasks they have undertaken.

As for me, well, it has been quite a ride for the last couple of months. After the October council meeting, Marge and I took a week off to visit the kids and grand-kids along the gulf coast. Kelly and her family are doing quite well, and we hadn't been to visit in about twenty months. We had a great time and were able to join the kids for the NASCAR race in Talladega. On the way home we swung through New Orleans to see the National World War II museum. I won't pretend we didn't also see Bourbon Street and the French Quarter, after all we were in New Orleans.

We returned home and almost immediately came down with our doses of the flu, hopefully for the year, and began working unbelievable hours.

We took the weekend after Thanksgiving to visit Emily in her new home in Roanoke, Va. The Monday evening after we got home, Em called with the news that she was in the hospital with a blood clot. Her pregnancy was in its 34th week, and Dad got scared and left for Roanoke again. It turned out that Mike had to return to Tampa to tend to business matters which left Gramps alone with Ava, who had just turned one. There is a definite reason why 55 year old men don't normally raise one year olds. Ava and I had lots of fun. I'm glad she naps twice a day, because I sure needed it. Emily's physician was able to dissolve the clot and she was able to return home before I left. I returned to working more unbelievable hours.

This will be the last time I sit at a keyboard as your moderator, and I have just a couple of final thoughts before I step aside. Primarily, it is always a privilege to serve God by serving this little congregation in this little corner of God's kingdom. Being moderator gives a person a unique view of how each committee works, and how they all work together to do the work of the church. We also get a unique view of how we stand among our sister churches in the area.

I have enjoyed the last two years, and owe each of you a debt of thanks for allowing me to be part of one of the most exciting periods in the long and storied history of our church. I will now take a position on the music committee and, hopefully be an asset to the music department.

(Continued on page 9)

I will leave you in the very capable hands of Terri Sheller Bissell. When I asked Terri to consider the position, I told her that we were ready for some one who was young and energetic. Someone that had a real life view of who we are, where we've been, and where we want to go. Terri has been wonderfully involved in the many aspects of the church her entire life. I have always found her to be faithful and forthright. She shows her love for God and for those around her by her actions daily, and she is a person I have been fortunate enough to call my friend for more than a few years. Terri will do a great job for us. I am sure you will all support her as you always have me.

Once again thank you for the chance to serve, I'll see you all at the annual meeting.

God Bless 126
God's love to you
clousseau

To our Church Friends:

Thank you for your concern, prayers and cards, and the many acts of kindness for Harold. Thank you too, for the concern and many acts of kindness for Reggie and I. Your thought fullness is sincerely appreciated.

Paul Munn
for Reggie & I and the Munn family

To Pastor Kay, her family, and the congregation:

Thank you for the many gifts that I received from you during the holiday season. I am blessed to have so many thoughtful people looking out for me and my family. Your generosity and support is very much appreciated.

Kathy Lessman

Congratulations!!

The following people graduated this semester:

Bobby Davet - Associate Degree in Fire Technology from the University of Akron

Kenny Prentice - Auto Diesel Technician for Ohio Technical College

Stewart Lessman - Twinsburg High School

Congratulations to these fine gentlemen for all their hard work and accomplishments! We are proud of you.

YOUTH GROUP – JANUARY 10, 2010

6:00-8:00 p.m. – Church Fellowship Hall

At the next meeting, Wallie Burnett from the Twinsburg LIONS Club will be present to describe the youth organization, LEO Club. LEO is an acronym for Leadership, Experience, Opportunity. Parents of youth also are invited to attend. This is a short presentation (25 minutes).

The annual youth group sub sale will start on January 10 after worship. The sale will continue through January 31 during Coffee Hour. The youth group will be "locked in" February 6-7, when they will make the subs and have them ready to be picked up after service on February 7. The sub price will be \$5.00 each. Plan to pay for your sandwiches at the time of ordering. This will make record keeping much easier. Please help support the youth. This is one of their big fund raisers for the year.

Dated: December 16, 2009
From: Dick Sheller, Financial Secretary
To: Congregation
Subject: Electronic Funds Transfer Option for Contributions

Anyone interested in having their bank transfer your church contributions directly from your checking or savings account to the church's account may do so by doing the following. Go to your bank and request that you would like funds transferred as shown below. Being that you are making the request directly to *your* bank will give you full control of when, how often and the amount of the transfer.

We will get the information from Charter One Bank and will post it to your quarterly church statement as evidence of your contributions, if needed, for tax purposes. This process will be the same as is presently the procedure.

Your bank will ask for the church's bank's (**Charter One Bank**) **routing and transit number which is 241070417** (same as shown below)

They will then need to know the **Church's Account # with Charter One Bank which is 4514387834** (same as shown below)

Again, here are the 3 steps involved in setting up this service up with your bank . Most banks do not charge for this service.

1. Transfer your contribution electronically from your checking or savings account to Charter One Bank whose routing and transit number is 241070417.
2. Your transfer is then for further credit to: First Congregational Church of Twinsburg, whose Charter One Bank account number is 4514387834.
3. Inform your bank of the amount, frequency (weekly or monthly) and day of the month you desire for your contributions

We would be happy to assist you in this process. If help is needed please contact Dick Sheller at 330-425-4517, (email) hrsheller@gmail.com or Rick Sheehan at 330-405-6676, (email) ricksheehan@roadrunner.com.

Thank you for your continued support of the First Congregational Church of Twinsburg.

Sincerely,

Dick Sheller, Financial Secretary

Rick Sheehan, Treasurer

There will be a special Council meeting on January 10 following worship. We will meet in the library. The meeting will be brief. We will be voting on the budget for 2010. All council members should plan on attending. Your vote is needed.

Thank You!!

Thank you to everyone who was involved in the Christmas Eve service.

PARTICIPANTS

Narrator - David Murch

Characters

Joseph - Dan Richner

Rabbi - Larry Schmidt

Mary - Ashley Bissell

Elizabeth - Carol Zenisek

Roman Official - Bob Hewett

Simeon - Ken Prentice

Herod - Aaron Mayer

Priest - Russ Griffin

Shepherds - Judy Eisenberger and David Schilling

Magi - Marge Roberts, Jim Mansfield, Phil Weiss

Angels - Walter Sterling and Kayla Bensie

The People - Ken Roddie, Mark Holzwarth, Rich Bissell, Yvette Schilling

The Nativity

Jesus - Alexis Adams

Sheep - Kala Mansfield

Donkey - Rick Mansfield

Star - Oliver Mayer

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pastor

Rev. Kay Krejci

Script and "Magnificat" composition

Tom Holzwarth

"Magnificat" duet

Ashley Bissell & Carol Zenisek

Arrangement - "Do You Hear What I Hear"

Tom Holzwarth

Piano - "Do You Hear What I Hear"

Kathy Lessman

Guitar - "Away in a Manger"

Justin Doe

"Joy To The World"

Acolytes

David Schilling & Seth Richner

Introit - Solo - "O Holy Night"

Mikki Pietrantozzi

Advent Candle Bearers

Kayla Bensie, Eleanor Sterling,
Melissa Schilling, & Victoria Holzwarth

Lighting the Advent Candle

The Russ Roberts Family

Bearing Christ Light

Judy Richner

Organ and Piano

Daniel Barber

Adult Choir Director

Chrissy Sterling

Children's Choir Director

Lori Bensie

Sound

Bob Hewett & Bruce Krejci

Gordon Weiss, assistant

Lights

Ken Roddie & Rusty Roberts

Costumes

Missy Mansfield & Dottie Oliver

Planning Team

Tom Holzwarth, Chrissy Sterling,
Claudia Lillibridge, Dottie Oliver, Kay Krejci

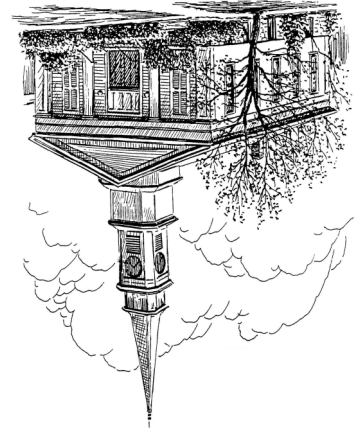
Manger; Poinsettia Arrangement

Chrissy Sterling & Jane Weiss

The Creche

The Sheller family

On the square in Twinsburg
since 1848



Dated Material—
Please Rush!



e-mail: firstcongregational.church@windstream.net

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Office Hours:
Monday through Friday
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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Come worship with us
and bring a friend!
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
Worship Service 10:30 a.m.

Tower Submissions

Articles for the *Tower* may be e-mailed directly to the church at firstcongregational.church@windstream.net. Hard copies, CD's, or diskettes may be dropped off at the office.

Tower deadlines are posted on the monthly calendar and in the Sunday worship bulletin. For questions, or to be added to or taken off the mailing list, please send an e-mail or call the church office at 330-425-2181.