

December 31, 2009

Dear Friends in Christ,

What happened to this weekly newsletter during December???? Well, your pastor got snowed under – almost literally, although I wasn't the one who had to put the chains on the tires. To make up for it, here is an all-December newsletter covering....



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I'm going to sign this here, in case some of you don't make it to the end of page four.

With prayers for a blessed and happy New Year, and In Christ, Katherine



### THIS COMING WEEKEND – OPEN HOUSE AND EPIPHANY

Please join me at the manse Saturday afternoon between Christmas Carol Sing and Open House. See how the – and see if you can find the living room around it! It's chance to sing Christmas carols this season before we Days of Christmas, and a time for fellowship with one and friends.



3:00 and 5:00 for a tree finally turned out your next-to-the-last wind up the Twelve another, neighbors

Then, make sure you're in church on Sunday morning as we celebrate Epiphany and the coming of the wise men to Bethlehem. Our newly revived APC Handbell Choir will be playing – and hoping you'll want to join us

for future Sundays. As a very special treat, some members of the Adams State Chamber Choir will also be with us to sing

for our Introit. After worship we'll un-decorate the church, even though Epiphany itself doesn't come until Wednesday. PLEASE NOTE THE TABLE WITH NEW CHRISMONS ON IT. HOW ABOUT TAKING A FEW HOME – AND SUPPLIES WITH THEM – TO DECORATE FOR NEXT YEAR?



## GETTING READY FOR THE FUTURE – ADVENT REJOICING

In my newsletter at the end of November, I published your thanksgivings for this congregation. Then on the first Sunday of Advent, we interviewed one another about two questions. Here are the questions\* and brief summaries of your responses as you talked together. (\* from *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations* by Mark Lau Branson)

1. Remembering your entire experience at Alamosa Presbyterian Church and its two parent congregations, when were you most alive, most motivated and excited about your involvement? What made it exciting? Who else was involved? What happened? What was your part? Describe what you felt.

During the early 1990's when the church was very active. Large Sunday School. Halloween parties, Christmas programs.

I was raised as a Catholic in Fort Garland, came to Alamosa, met my husband who as a Presbyterian, and was married in 1958.

Church kept going until I joined the new Presbyterian Church and continued coming to this church. My kids were brought to this church till they grew up. I continue coming.

When I was married in the Emmanuel Church and joined my husband's family as Presbyterians.

When I was an active Sunday School teacher with an awesome teen group who were eager learners and participants.

Most motivated at the present. Doing what we do for the church. As for the past, having a choir was always a pleasure.

Having been raised a Baptist it was quite different to be a Presbyterian and I felt there was more involvement here. The Dimmitts were special to me. When my husband was living, it helped we were both more involved.

Having a church family is as important as your own family. It is a support group you can count on and interact with. Circle has been special and the bazaar has kept us as a family.

This was instrumental in us raising our children.

Pointing our family in the way and life of Jesus Christ.

Being a member of the building committee for the new church brought many prayers, insights, etc.

The involvement of the Emmanuel Church truly brought dedication, worship and involvement to our (First) church. Choir.

When I was younger.

The bazaar has continued and we all come together to work on it.

Working with the youth group (including other church youth) was most beneficial for us.

The ecumenical emphasis in the past was good, but it was discouraged by a past minister.

Serving on a Pastor Nominating Committee. The Committee looked forward to a bright future.

As a Sunday School teacher.

Working with young people.

Being responsible for future generation's education.

When the kids were going to young adult Sunday School classes.

I miss Joan Dimmitt's joyful voice in the choir!

When I took over leading Bible study. It was a calling to me to do it. Marcella, Noel, Betty, Sharon – we were able to continue Adult Bible study. I felt good about the experience to be able to share God's word.

Most alive now – so busy – involved. I am a part – all the music!

The choir – the music.

When we first moved here many years ago, we were welcomed with open arms. We had many young people. I taught Sunday school and led a youth group. The APW is a special group of women and great to work with, especially during the bazaar.

Working at the bazaar sacking.

2. What do you value most about the church? What activities or ingredients or ways of life are most important? What are the best features of this church?

The church family. Faithful members.

The feel of "family." People ask about how we are doing, how our children are doing, etc. There is definitely a feeling of support for one another.

Best features are the location and the facilities we have. Enjoy monthly breakfast. But need more involvement from members.

The friendliness and caring of the members.

We treasure the weekly message from the pulpit. The people as a church family. The dedication of the congregation to help and do the work in the church to keep it functional. Bless you all.

The messages delivered each week.

The prayers and concerns of everyone in the congregation.

Great facility.

The people, their faithfulness.

Multicultural (not highly emphasized, but there).

Mainline traditional worship – you know what the doctrine is.

Dedicated people who keep the church going.

The fellowship.

Family at church.

Eating at breakfasts together.

Praying and peacefulness.

Singing.

I enjoy the fellowship. The Sunday breakfasts are wonderful.

I appreciate the attempt made for inclusiveness – that I've not observed any Anglo/Hispanic conflict.

The people in the congregation.

The ability of the congregation to come together in times of need.

Sunday breakfasts.

Value the friendships.

Caring people! The ability to work together as a group. We really have a church family.

People.

The cross in front.

Decorating the church.

## GETTING READY FOR THE FUTURE – ADVENT WISHES

On the second Sunday in Advent, as we continued in our season of longing and expectation, we listed our wishes for the congregation's future (using the third question from Branson's book). Here is what you wrote:

### 3. Make three wishes for the future of the church.

I wish we could get to have more young persons into our church.

I wish things continue going as it has with our good pastor.

I wish more people / our members continue coming to church.

I wish for our church to be more "visible" in our community.; Possibly doing or serving something at community events.

I wish for more young families with children for Sunday School.

I wish for a permanent pastor as vibrant and energetic as Katherine and a pianist to accompany Nancy on the organ – and a choir or soloist for special music.

Church growth.

Return of the choir.

Hear babies cry during service.

A visionary pastor who is able to continue to nurture our congregation while also helping our congregation grow.

Many young families joining the church with an active youth group.

A choir with a strong director.

We wish to keep our interim minister.

We wish to keep our church family together and dedicated.

We wish to expand and increase our church family.

We have a permanent minister just like the one we have now.

Develop a choir.

Perhaps more face to face ministerial contacts.

Survival.

Growth – hopefully children.

Find a permanent pastor who understands ministering as well as Reverend Katherine and Reverend Dimmitt.

## COMING IN JANUARY -- REAFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM, ANNUAL MEETING / WORK ON MISSION STATEMENT, AND THOUGHTS OF SPRING

How do we move from thanksgiving and wishes to making the future a reality? January is always a month for concrete action, and this year we'll be focusing on how to discern Christ's future for our congregation and what we can do in 2010 to move toward it. Here is some of what will be happening:

**JANUARY 10 – BAPTISM OF THE LORD.** We will be installing our newly elected officers: Sharon Furukawa, to a second term on Session; Dorothy Ziegler, to a second term on the Deacons; and Noel Herrera, to a first term on the Trustees. As a congregation, we will also celebrate and reaffirm the promises made during our own baptisms as a way to remind ourselves that our future depends on Jesus Christ, to whom we belong.

**JANUARY 11 –** Session will be reviewing our proposed changes to the congregation's By-laws, to bring to the congregation at the Annual Meeting. We will also be agreeing on what all will happen at that meeting. Charlie Goff, our affable, approachable, affirming, and altogether admirable COM liaison, will be with us to help us reflect on some specific questions about our hopes and plans for the future.

**JANUARY 17 (I hope!!!!) -** Annual reports will be available.

**JANUARY 24 – OUR ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING.** Besides transacting routine business, we will begin work together on our CONGREGATIONAL MISSION STATEMENT and specific plans for 2010.



AND BEYOND.... Remember those geraniums I kept harping on all fall? It's not too soon to think about spring. Here is a rough idea of the plans for our church cloister come warm weather. Imagine red geraniums or other bright flowers in the urns. The urns are promised. We'll be looking for donors to contribute potting soil and plants when the time comes.

## WHAT HAPPENED IN DECEMBER

Well, it was a big month as always. Advent began on November 29 and continued week by week, with a new candle lit on our Advent wreath and additional Chrismons added to our sanctuary tree each week. John Halvorson came up with a new technique and cut a lovely collection of new Chrismons for us, just waiting to be decorated. On December 3 **Presbyterian Women** met in the church library for a festive teaparty, complete with newly polished silver. Thank you to those who contributed the elbow grease – and who helped the hapless hostess get the food out. There was another gathering December 14, when **Session** met for dinner and a marathon meeting at the manse.



On December 10 **Don and Marilyn's son David Montgomery** gave a great talk and slideshow at ASC for the Colorado Field Institute, using his paintings to illustrate the natural beauty of our area. He also demonstrated that a painter can move trees and lakes at will to improve a painting's composition! **Then on December 11 Jack Johnson trekked up to Pueblo and returned with TWELVE NEW MATTRESSES FOR OUR BUNK BEDS. They are in place, ready for our first work group arriving January 5.** We still need twelve more, including four extra-long twin mattresses, to complete the project. We'll get them as funds become available.

Also on December 11 **CROW-Cats** held a parents'-night-out fundraiser in our building to raise money for rescue cats. They'll be hosting a spaghetti dinner fundraiser in February. On December 15, **La Puente's Outreach** program hosted about thirty children and adults for a cookie baking night in our kitchen. Rumor has it there were some familiar faces in the crowd. On December 19 our **Strong People Strong Bones** class had a potluck brunch, and on December 23 we bade farewell to our fearless leader, Mary Ellen Fleming. She will be back to check on us as we continue on our own in the new year. (If you want to know who's been in the class all fall, look for the folks with the bulging muscles.)

Much of my own time outside of church work went to music activities. I played with the ASC Orchestra at Winterfest on December 6; with some of Joy Plesner's students for a Brown Bag Concert at the ASC Library on December 10; and, best of all, in the Messiah concert at Adams State on December 13, a tremendous privilege.

We had some very special music here in worship also. On Christmas Eve Tita, Carla, and Benito Martinez led our singing and Tita sang a beautiful solo. The Alamosa Presbyterian Church Handbell Choir made its first appearance (well, actually, they were hidden behind the Christmas tree) in several years, with a rendition of Silent Night while our candles were being lit. On December 27 we had a Christmas Carol service. Rainbow Saler of the UU congregation was our guest organist, and Robert Demko of the UUs sang a tenor solo. Anne Divine of Center (and former member here) joined Katherine for Christmas carols on the violin. And the doughty Handbell Choir chimed in once more. (That joke was intentional.)

I joined some of you at my first Alamosa blood drive and attended a Tissue Donor Requestor training at the hospital. I was able to be present for part of the Candlelight Vigil at the La Puente Shelter on December 21 and also attended a lunch-time lecture on human trafficking and the needs here in the Valley; both of those meetings helped shape my second sermon for the Valley Courier, attached with this newsletter. On a happier note, Eric and I went to the free viewing and talk at the ASC observatory and planetarium – what a great resource.

## JOYS AND CONCERNS

Our hearts go out during this festive time to all those who have lost loved ones to death this year, especially the Motzes and Russells, and more recently Marcella on the death of her sister and Phoebe on her brother's death. Please pray also for all who are ill, especially for Dorothy and Don as she recovers from a ruptured ear drum.

Christmas greetings and good wishes have come our way from Cris Russell, on a visit to the Philippines, and from Rusty and Sarah, doing well in Peru. Happy Birthday in December to Geri Martinez, Kathi Smith, Courtney Furukawa, Lynn Crowder, and Marcella Chacon, and Happy Anniversary to Mike and Janet Yohn.

**PS** The January calendar is attached with this newsletter.