



Bright Horizons

Rev. Bruce Hitchcock, Executive Director

Angie Brown, Newsletter Editor

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Healthy Bingo

Unity Kitchen
December 12
1:00 p.m.



Healthy Bingo (sponsored by **Women In Action Against Cancer**) is a game designed to teach cancer education in a non-traditional way.

Members of the **WIAACC** will give health information between the bingo games and participants will have opportunities to win health and beauty prizes.

The Heart of the Matter

It is the time of year for celebration and festivals. Lights, trees and inflatable lawn decorations are everywhere. There is Christmas music in the stores, baking in homes and the Church to decorate. There are Sunday School Christmas Specials, Music Programs and Christmas Eve Worship to plan and execute. One wonders if there is any room left for us to ponder, wonder about or ruminate upon the birth of Jesus Christ in the Church and her people.

Who is this baby? Why was this child given to us? What are we supposed to do with Jesus? What kind of king is this? How does it honor Christ to spend ourselves into debt so we can give ourselves and our children far too much? Should we follow the stores in melding Advent, Christmas and Epiphany (active seasons of spiritual formation), into the holidays that start on Halloween and end January 3rd?

The Heart of the Matter is the birth of Jesus Christ in the hearts, minds and lives of people. Yes, we celebrate this birth every year. We do so because many of us are converted a little at a time. Some of us are slow to open our heart to Christ. We do so gradually. None fully comprehend the coming of Jesus Christ. Our understanding in the Spirit grows year by year. The beginning of each Christian year features the coming of Jesus Christ as Emmanuel. Advent begins with our longing for a Savior. Christmas introduces the Savior. Epiphany extols the wonders and richness of God in providing such a Savior.

For Christmas, Jesus Christ is the heart of the matter. Celebration of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany is the way we examine anew the coming of Christ and our response to the Savior. How can we not tell of the wonders of God? How can we not love and care for the poor in the light of Jesus Christ? How can we not regulate and plan our celebrations as spiritual formation and worship of God?




My Advent prayer is that God would reveal how much and in what areas of life I need a Savior. My Christmas prayer will be for Jesus Christ, the infant King to reign in new areas of my heart and mind. My Epiphany prayer is for the joy of giving thanks to such a generous and rich God. My public witness to Jesus includes worship, caroling and giving to the poor. As a family, we celebrate Holy Days together. In memory of a baby born in a manger, in poverty, we will love the least, the last and the lost.

It is ok to sit and think about Jesus. It is ok to fall in love with Him. It is ok to plan your holiday time to honor Jesus and serve others. It is ok to ignore the general abuse of Christian Holy Days and the poor practices of the culture. We do not have to go into debt or provide horrible displays of greed and waste to our children. It is more than ok; it is good and right to celebrate in the light and life of Jesus Christ.

Love, Pastor Bruce

Christmas Distributions

Distribution of:

-  Christmas Kids Gifts
-  Teen Stockings
-  Mitten Tree Items

Thursday, December 13, 2007
and
Friday, December 14, 2007
9-12 and 1-3 daily

Urban Mission Main Office
301 North 5th Street
Steubenville, OH 43952



All parents should pick up your food distribution bag at the Warehouse, 311 North 6th Street, **before** coming to pick up your Christmas Kid's and Teen Stockings.

Operation Teen Stocking!

We have over **200 teens ages 13 to 18 years old** who will be receiving a **stocking** filled with goodies. **We have a special need for male stockings.**



Items that can be included are toiletries, hair accessories, make-up, fast food restaurant gift certificates and any thing you think a teen would like. Please have stockings back by **December 7, 2007.**



Mitten Tree

Our Mitten Tree is filling up with socks, underwear, hats, scarves, gloves and mittens! Would you like to help some little ones with these items?

Donations of these items can be brought to the Mission by **December 7, 2007.**

Candlelight Mission Rejoice

Saturday, December 15, 2007
5:00-8:00 p.m.



You are invited to join us for a special children's puppet show at **5:00 p.m.** and a night full of worship, music, joy and fellowship as we celebrate the true meaning of Christmas – the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Dinner served following service.

Santa's Recycle Shop

December 19 & 20, 2007
9:00-12:00; 1:00-3:00

Urban Mission Warehouse
311 North 6th Street
Steubenville, Ohio

Several families missed the sign-ups for our Christmas Kids Program. In order to help these families have gifts for their children, we will have **Santa's Recycle Shop** on **December 19 & 20.**



There is still time to donate items for this program. If you have any new or used toys, games, books and etc., please consider donating them. We ask that these items be in **very good condition** as they will be Christmas gifts. Please deliver donations to the Warehouse at 311 North 6th Street **by Friday, December 14.**

Holiday Closing

Urban Mission will be closed **December 24, 2007 - January 1, 2008** to allow our employees to spend time with their families. We will reopen on **Wednesday, January 2, 2008.**



*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year
from our family to yours!*

Turkey Meter Reaches Top!

We have reached our goal to provide **1,200 food baskets** with all the fixings for **Thanksgiving Dinner!** Many churches, families, individuals and businesses collected funds to help us reach our goal. Thank you to each of you!

Area children even took part in raising funds. Students from All Saints Catholic School in Steubenville worked hard and collected monies for 15 Baskets. Each day officers of the student council would count the monies from each grade and the grade with the highest total would then get to proudly display the "Turkey Flag" for the day. The 1st grade won the flag the most.



Ms. Neely and Student Council members of All Saints School in Steubenville, Ohio.



*Pictured with our "Turkey Meter":
John and Stephen Bolster and
Joseph and Bella Zinno.*

Three area young boys also helped by making and selling crafts and assisting with parking cars all football season for Big Red and Catholic Central games. They then donated the funds to help those less fortunate. What wonderful children (and parents)!

We also thank those of you who took part in this years Thanksgiving Challenge in collecting different food items over the past several months. Each item donated, both funds and food, helped us reach our goal. Thank you again and may God bless each of you abundantly!

Parish Nurse News: MRSA and Infection Control

There has been a lot of news lately about MRSA, which is methicillin-resistant staph aureus. Staph aureus is a common organism that is found on the skin and other areas of the body. Some strains of staph aureus have become resistant to most antibiotics and are called multi-drug resistant organisms or MRSA. The main problem with multi-drug resistant organisms is that there are few drugs to treat those infections. For that reason we must use other measures to help prevent the spread of those organisms. One very important prevention measure is handwashing.

Although there have been many advances in health care practices during the years, handwashing is still the most effective way of preventing the spread of infection. This simple practice that was taught to you by your parents is still your best protection from catching an infection. Let's take a few minutes to review handwashing practices.

Hands should be washed at the following times: when visibly soiled, after using the bathroom, before preparing and eating foods, after touching an unknown substance and whenever you think it would be a good idea. You can become infected by microorganisms from another person or contaminated surface. If you think that you touched anything infectious, wash your hands immediately.

Ideally hands should be washed with running water and liquid/foam soap. First wet your hands with water, then apply the appropriate amount of soap. Make a lot of suds and wash all parts of your hands including between the fingers. Rinse hands well to remove all of the soap. Wipe hands with a clean hand towel or a paper towel. If you are in a public restroom, turn off the water with a paper towel and open the door with a paper towel to keep from contaminating your clean hands.



If you are unable to wash your hands with soap and water, it is acceptable to use one of the antibacterial hand liquids or gels. Most of these cleaners contain alcohol, which is drying to the skin. Only use these cleaners when you cannot use soap and water.

MRSA and other multi-drug resistant microorganisms are difficult to treat, so we must do whatever we can to prevent the spread of these microorganisms. Handwashing is still the best method we have to prevent the spread of infections, so don't forget the wash your hands.

-Michalene A. King, PhD, RN

Soaking in God's Presence

Urban Mission has opened our doors for a community prayer program entitled, **"Soaking in God's Presence"**. Rev. Toni Hubbard and volunteer, Rev. Jimmy Clark oversee the prayer program in the Sanctuary at 6 p.m. each Thursday. Questions about the program are answered below.



What is soaking prayer?

Soaking prayer is a communal worship time that involves resting in the presence of the Lord and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in your heart. It is a time we set aside to quiet ourselves and devote our attention and our hearts to our Sovereign Lord. To "soak" in God's presence is to rest in His love rather than to "strive" in prayer.

How can soaking be of benefit to you?

If you are spiritually dry, soaking can revitalize your spirit. If you are looking for a fresh vision and direction in life, soaking can bring it. If you simply want to have more intimacy with your Heavenly Father, soaking will take you deeper.

How do you prepare?

Wear comfortable clothes, bring a pillow, blanket or mat. Come with your mind set on Jesus, ready to give your cares to the Lord. Some people lie down and soak in the meeting, while others choose to sit in the pew or kneel at the altar.

Is this a program of Urban Mission?

No, the Mission has opened the doors of the Sanctuary as a meeting place for prayer.

Urban Mission IS Your Mission

Do you ever wonder how your dollars are spent in the very vital mission projects we support worldwide? Would you like to see some of those dollars work to meet the needs right here in our hometowns? The Urban Mission *IS* your local mission. The volunteers and staff are your local missionaries. Your contributions provide Christian love, food, shelter and to those in need.

Last year, the Mission served 1,250 families. This year to date, we have served the needs of 2,215 families with several important weeks to go. Please join in this vital effort to bring the work of Jesus to the streets of our communities. **Save the date of Tuesday, February 19, 2008 at 5:30 PM at St. Florian Hall** to hear the Urban Mission story and meet many of its special disciples as we host our Urban Mission Scholarship Dinner.

Warehouse Elevator Repaired!

Several weeks ago, the 100-year-old elevator at the Warehouse refused to move any further. The motor, which drives the wrench mechanism, was terminal. After much searching, it became evident that another motor that old could not be found to replace the current one and new options had to be explored.



L-to-R: Sharon Kirtdoll, of UM and Bonnie and Tom Wilson, Nancy Lewis and Rev. Bongard of First Presbyterian Church in Toronto, OH who donated \$2,000 toward the elevator repairs from the McClelland Outreach Fund.

After further inspection into the problem, we found that in order get the elevator up and running, we would need to purchase a three-phase motor. We contacted two local electric companies to provide our three-phase motor electrical installation. We then purchased the motor and hired a local machine shop to manufacture a plate to adapt our new motor.

During this time, food distributions, stocking and restocking of the food shelves, the coat giveaway and other programs still had to go on, elevator or no elevator! We put a call in to Toronto High School, which provided us with forty (40) students two months in a row to help with bag packing and distributions. The students formed a chain down the flights of stairs and passed the food bags down from the second floor, to the first floor and finally down into the dock area. We also had Steve Johnson, a minister from the Nazarene church in Empire coordinate and bring down a crew for the last two months to help with bag packing. The Eastern Ohio Correctional Center community service program also sent volunteers to help with daily tasks at the Warehouse. All of these groups coordinated with our local group of faithful volunteers to "get the job done".

Without the financial contributions of donors in the community and those who lent a helping hand during this time, our programs would have surely suffered. Our thanks go out to everyone who prayed for the Mission, volunteered or sent in a donation to cover the repair costs. We are blessed to have such a caring and compassionate community!

-Urban Mission Staff and Hunger Committee

The Relationship Between Santa & Christmas and God & Children

It is that time of year once again. The television commercials and the ads in the Sunday newspapers remind of this fact. The Christmas Season is upon us! Little boys and girls everywhere are putting together their Santa wish lists. Those newspaper ads and television commercials let the children know Santa is the one person who can help those wishes become real.

But, just who is this person known to everyone as Santa Claus? I did some research and found lots of information. The number one piece of information I discovered is that Santa is celebrated all over the world. It might not be on the same date. And depending on where you are in the world, he won't even have the same name. And the traditions that go along with the celebrations will not be exactly the same:

- Throughout many countries in Europe, St. Nicholas/Santa distributes gifts to the children on Dec. 5, the eve of his feast day. In some countries, the gifts come at another time during Advent or on Christmas Eve.
- In Germany, Weihnachtsmann (Christmas man) is a helper of the Christkind (Christ Child)
- In France, Pere Noel distributes the gifts.
- In England, Father Christmas delivers the presents.
- In North America, Santa Claus rules, thanks to a certain brand of soda.

We have all grown up with the man who had the round belly that shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly. The man who came down the chimney (even when there wasn't one) and left presents with our names on them. He filled our stockings with goodies. And ate the goodies we left for him beside the Christmas tree. And when he completed his task, only he could lay his finger aside his nose to exit back up the chimney to his gift-filled sleigh and reindeer.

But, did you know there is a theology of Santa? Santa, as taught to most children, has most of the attributes of God:

- He virtually omnipresent. He can visit hundreds of millions of homes in one night.
- He is omniscient. He monitors each child; he is all-seeing and all-knowing; he knows when they are bad and good.
- Although not omnipotent, he does have great powers. He can manufacture gifts for hundreds of millions of children, and deliver them in one night—each to the correct child.
- He is all-good and all-just. He judges which children have shown good behavior and rewards them appropriately. Bad children are by passed or receive a lump of coal.

- He is eternal.

- He rewards good and punishes bad behavior.

However, there are negative aspects to Santa's behavior that can damage a child's self-esteem:

- In reality, children are not rewarded with gifts according to their behavior; they receive presents according to the amount of money their parents are willing or able to spend on them at Christmas time. A child may receive little or nothing from Santa because his/her parents are poor. Unfortunately, the child has probably absorbed from the media and their friends only bad children get nothing from Santa. He/she might begin to look upon themselves as a bad person. This may well damage their self esteem.

There are many opinions on what we should teach children about Santa Claus. There are those who believe Santa Claus is an important part of childhood. And there are those who feel belief in Santa Claus is dangerous.

Gary Grassl believes that children can grasp the concept of Santa Claus much more easily than they can comprehend God. At a young age, they can understand someone who can make presents, and deliver them under magical circumstances to all of the children of the world. Santa is a type of simplified God. Once children understand how Santa works, it is a relatively simple step to abandon him and accept an omnipotent, omniscient, all-loving and all-just God.

Parents can teach the historical legends associated with St. Nicholas. They are great stories which discuss the importance of generosity and sharing. And isn't that what the Christmas Season is all about... the importance of generosity and sharing?

This Christmas Season Urban Mission is helping Santa Claus with 697 children under the age of 12! At the time of this printing, there are 222 children waiting to be adopted. I know there are some of you still waiting to get in touch with me to help just as you have done in years past.

This year I am going to offer a challenge to all of the businesses in our area. I am challenging ALL of you, along with your staff, to adopt the children of one or more families. I have as few as one child in a family and up to five or more children per family. If you would like to accept this challenge, please call me at 282-2911. I have all the info your staff will need.

Don't let the children in our neighborhoods and communities wake up on Christmas morning with no presents. Allow them to experience the enchantment of Christmas morning.

Linda L. Smith, Program Director

DECEMBER 2007
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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Upcoming Events in December 2007

1 & 8	Mission Rejoice Service (Saturday's)	6:00 p.m.
3, 10 & 17	Parish Nurse (Monday's)	11:00 a.m.
4	God's Pantry Hunger Committee Meeting	10:00 a.m.
5	No Program/Evaluation Committee Meeting	No Meeting
6	Urban Mission Board of Directors Meeting NCDC and Greater Steubenville CDC Christmas Celebration	4:30 p.m. 5:00 p.m.
7	Lupus Support Group Outing: Steubenville High School Orchestra Concert	7:00 p.m.
11	Packing for Food Distribution	9:00 a.m.
12	Healthy Bingo: Unity Kitchen (Immediately following Lunch)	1:00 p.m.
13	God's Pantry Food Distribution (Warehouse, 311 North 6th St.) Christmas Kid's Distributions (Main Office, 301 North 5th St.)	9-12 & 1-3 9-12 & 1-3
14	Christmas Kid's Distributions (Main Office, 301 North 5th St.)	9-12 & 1-3
15	Mission Rejoice Candlelight Service (see page 2)	5:00 p.m.
17	Lupus Support Group Meeting: MLK Center	6:00 p.m.
18	CSFP Senior Food Program	1:00 p.m.
19 & 20	Santa's Recycle Shop (Warehouse, 311 North 6th St.)	9-12 & 1-3
24-31	Offices Closed for Christmas and New Year's Holidays No Mission Rejoice on December 22 or 29, 2007.	Closed

HOPE BOX

Hutton House Homeless Shelter is in need of the following items:

- Towels and Washcloths
- Cleaning Items
- Alarm Clocks
- Pots and Pans
- Stoves
- Refrigerators
- Personal Care Items

