

Mike's Musings

Here are some interesting observations from the internet:

- 1) A balanced diet is a cookie in each hand.
- 2) If it weren't for STRESS I'd have no energy at all.
- 3) Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.
- 4) I know God won't give me more than I can handle. I just wish He didn't trust me so much.
- 5) We cannot change the direction of the wind...but we can adjust our sails.
- 6) Experience is a wonderful thing. It enables you to recognize a mistake when you make it again.
- 7) Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.
- 8) Junk is something you've kept for years and throw away three weeks before you need it.
- 9) A conscience is what hurts when all your other parts feel so good.
- 10) Once over the hill you pick up speed.

These kinds of insights – whether meant as humor or not – are usually the result of not listening and learning from our mistakes. It seems that – for many – learning is more often by doing and failing than it is by application of instruction.

That idea humbles me because it means my preaching may not be doing all that much good.

It hardly seems possible that I've been preaching now for over 36 years. I guess I can only hope and pray that some vestige of that teaching has touched a few souls.

I am not foolish enough to believe that everybody will gain from my preaching, but I think some will. I keep doing it because, as Isaiah points out, God's Word "that goes out from (His) mouth. . . will not return . . . empty, but will accomplish what (He) desires and achieve the purpose for which He sent it." (Is 55:11) I'm so thankful that God is faithful (1 Cor. 1:9). People will fail, even the best of them, but He never will.

In light of all this, I have chosen for our 2009 theme a phrase from Philippians 3:14 – "Press on toward the goal". Here it is in context:

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, **I press on toward the goal** to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Phil 3:12-14

Paul speaks of an eternal purpose and goal. Its process consists of the "good works which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Eph 2:10) Its end is the reward that will be ours in eternity with Him – "the prize".

The Apostle makes clear that we pursue this goal as flawed people – those have not yet "taken hold." In 2 Cor. 4:7, he speaks of us as "jars of

clay". In other words, we are imperfect vessels so that we don't get arrogant and think we've done it all on our own. He says it this way, "we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."

Yet, in spite of our imperfections, we are challenged to forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead. Paul is reminding us that God has given us a divine purpose and it should be a consuming fire in the heart of every believer in Christ. It's a call to "lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily besets us and run with patience the race set before us; looking unto Jesus. . ." (Heb 12:2) or "pressing toward the "goal".

I'm sure the year ahead will be much like years past. We'll fall down and get up; fall down and get up; etc. We will wrestle with our resolves to serve Christ and the church. We'll fail at some of our relationships and struggle to find reconciliation. We will encounter dark valleys of doubt and discouragement. In the face of all this, I pray that we will be a people resolved to "press on" – to keep-on-keeping-on – toward the goal. To remember that we're not alone in the midst of the fray. God is with us, and His intentions for us are to be more than conquerors through Him that loves us and to "win the prize."

I can hardly wait to see what will be accomplished through our ministry here at Burry's in 2009. I pray it will all be for our good and God's glory. I'm glad we're going to be making the journey together. See You Sunday!
Pastor Mike



**Coming in 2009
CROSSROADS OF
BEAVER COUNTY**

Men's Shelter ~ Rochester, PA

A collaborative effort of concerned citizens, formerly homeless individuals, local congregations, social service providers, and supportive housing programs, along with the financial support of Supportive Services/Harbor Point Housing, Inc., this initiative addresses a demonstrated need for a drop-in emergency shelter for men that are currently homeless.

To support this mission, tax-deductible donations are being accepted. For more information call 724-847-8807 ext. 302

**Providing Men a Safe Haven
Through the Night**

March for Life

January 22, 2009



Gospel Fellowship PCA has booked a coach bus to join the thousands who will be attending this year's pro-life march in Washington DC. This is an issue around which we need to stand together to protect the lives of unborn children.

Gospel Fellowship is inviting our congregation to ride with them. Cost is \$20 per person; \$10 due at registration (non-refundable after 1/19/09) and \$10 on the day of the trip. Teens and younger children must be accompanied by an adult. Bring a packed lunch and money for dinner, metro and other personal expenses.

Registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Contact Jill Snyder at 724-898-3322 or 724-586-6025 or gfpc@nauticom.net to register.

Special Services



Our annual Memorial Service will be held on Sunday, January 4th.

Holy Communion will be observed during the worship service on Sunday, January 11th.

If you or someone you know is a shut-in and would like to receive Communion, please contact the office or one of the Elders, Michael Pflug and Wayne Harley.

Sunday School officers, workers, and teachers will be installed during our Dedication Service on Sunday, January 25th.

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Family music night is an opportunity to showcase all of the musical talent that we have here at Burry's.

Last years program ranged from soloists to small ensembles to full choirs; from beginners to established veteran performers, which allowed us to share not only what we have, but also what we will have in the future. We would love to have an even bigger and better show this year. We encourage you to pick out some music to sing/ play or to ask some friends to join you in performing a song.

If you would like to perform in the show please contact Charlie O'Donnell (724-869-3399) for details.

We want to thank the Adult Bible Class for the Christmas cookies and to Merrill and Hilda Pflug for bringing them.



We enjoyed their visit very much.

~ Art & Roberta Teets

November Box Score Averages

Sunday School	155	General.....	\$3,565.05
Worship	205	Benevolence ..	\$1,754.13



Memorial Service**January 4, 2009**

We will be remembering the following dear saints who went on to eternal life in 2008 at our Memorial Service on January 4th.

Raymond E. Wahl

Thomas Roger DeRosia

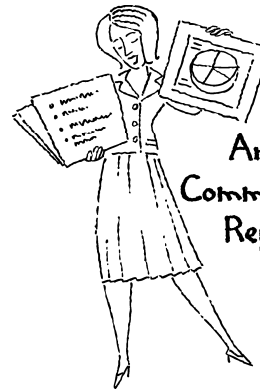
Anna Mae Wahl

Russell Zahn

Arthur G. Goehring

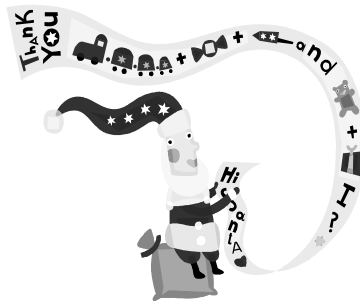
The memory of a good person is a blessing.

Proverbs 10:7



Annual Reports are due to Christa Harley no later than January 11th.

Copies of the 2009 Proposed General Budget and the 2009 Proposed Missionary and Benevolent Budget will be available on January 4, 2009



Pastor Tom, Ana, Evelyn, Katherine and Kristina wish to express their thanks for the many cards, gifts and treats received this Christmas.

**Recipe Corner****Fruit Dip** *by Joanne Weil*

16 oz. pkg. cream cheese
13 oz. marshmallow creme
2 tbsp. fruit juice (apple, orange, grape, lemon, etc.)



Cream the cream cheese; add juice then the marshmallow creme.

Enjoy and Have a blessed New Year!

**Family Fun Weekend
February 27 - 28, 2009**

Erie, PA

\$169.00 includes cost of hotel at Splash Lagoon and 4 pack of passes to the water park.

\$30.00 for each additional water park pass.

Please contact Bryan Yeck (724) 770-0462 for more information or to make reservations.

People In the Pew: Diane Calderone by Pastor Tom

What is a Golden Lion doing in Zelenople? Diane Calderone, a Greensburg-Salem high school grad took a job in Cranberry, moved from Westmoreland County and bought a house in Timberbrook. She shares the house with two “golden lion” cats named Ed and Balki, who are always on the prowl for “Spartans” (the arch-enemies of Golden Lions). Fans of WPIAL high school football know about Lions and Spartans.

After high school, Diane went to Duquesne University Pharmacy School. As a pharmacist, she worked in a hospital and then took a job with a home health care company which brought her here.

Now Diane works for UPMC’s Diversified Services out of an office/lab in Crafton. She visits patients in their homes, administering medicine through IV’s. Ecclesiastes 3 says that there is nothing better than for a person to enjoy their work, and Diane admits that she is blessed to have a job she really likes. Her job is a mixture of medicine prep in the lab, interacting with doctors and directly helping patients.

Diane was introduced to Burry’s Church a couple of years ago through her dear friends and neighbors, Jay & Gaye Lansberry. Growing up in a Christian home, she heard the Gospel often, but it did not sink in until about ten years ago. During a conversation with a friend in the backyard, watching the sun set, their conversation on “life” took a spiritual turn and Diane was confronted with the reality that God loved her so much that he sent his Son to die on Calvary to reconcile her unto himself. Afterwards, she began reading the Bible and the Holy Spirit revealed her need of a Savior and she put her trust in the Lord. As she says, she went from being a religious person to a spiritual person.

One of her favorite verses is Romans 5:8, “*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*”. Diane has changed from being just a good person to being a child of God, and the good she now does is to honor Him. We thank the Lord that she is a part of our grace-driven family here at Burry’s Church.



How to keep warm in church

1. Rush to the front of the sanctuary. That will warm you up, and you’ll avoid the draft in the back of the church.
2. Invite your neighbors and friends, and sit 12 people to a pew.
3. Seat yourself near the pulpit. Much hot air is emitted from that area.
4. Wear thermal underwear (in the appropriate liturgical colors, of course).
5. Wait for an unfamiliar hymn - and then watch the sparks fly! — Selected

Dear Burry’s Church,

Thank you for taking part in our 2008 Holiday Parade. Support from groups like yours help to make the parade a successful event. Enclosed, please find a check in the amount of \$50.00 which represents first place in the float category.

I look forward to seeing you again at future parades.

Sincerely,

Neal H. Jackson
Parade Chairman

CHRISTMAS STOLEN?



Christmas is a wonderful time of the year where we, “Burrians”, along with millions of other Christians celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We have the story memorized to the point that we can recite it backwards, while patting our heads, rubbing our tummies, hopping on one foot, and with our eyes closed. (Please, please, please...if you try this– do it in front of someone so that we can have a witness of your great ability! Actually, a video

recording would even be better! All videos can be put in Chuck’s mailbox in the church office.) Now back to what I was writing about. Isn’t so easy to get distracted, especially at this great time of the year?

I’m afraid that it happens every year. The Grinch steals our Christmas, as we get distracted by the glitter and the glitz, the presents and the food, and the busyness of the season! We get so focused on getting ready for the big day, but lose our focus on what the day is all about. The sad thing is that we know better.

Though, I am a firm believer that we can learn from our mistakes, just as the Grinch did in the book. He took away the trees, the presents, and the food, yet the people still had joy and love in their hearts. They knew that Christmas was about more than “stuff,” and the witness of the Whoville residents changed the heart of the Grinch.

We have friends, family members, and acquaintances that believe Christmas is just about the “stuff.” Are you reinforcing their belief by your actions this holiday, or is your witness to miracle of Christmas speaking to their hearts? Please take time this holiday season to share the true message of Christmas. You can throw a birthday party for Jesus, if you have children or grandchildren. You can reach out to one of the “non-Burrian” E.T.C. members that are just starting to learn about Jesus. Look around and be creative...there are many opportunities to share the truth about Christmas!

NINJA PENGUIN



SNOW CAMP `09

When: February 6-8, 2009

Where: Seneca Hills

Cost: \$75.00

All Money Due by January 11, 2009

**** Register by December 28 and receive a \$25.00 Scholarship ****



St. John's "Burry's" Church Youth Ministry

ETC EVENTS CALENDAR

**E.T.C. Youth Meeting
January 4
@ 6:00 pm**

**SUPER BOWL
PARTY
February 1**

**SNOW CAMP `09
February 6-8**

**ACQUIRE THE FIRE
"HERE COMES TROUBLE"
May 8-9**

**SSB `09
June 28-July 2**

You Light Up My Life!



For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

~ John 3:16-18

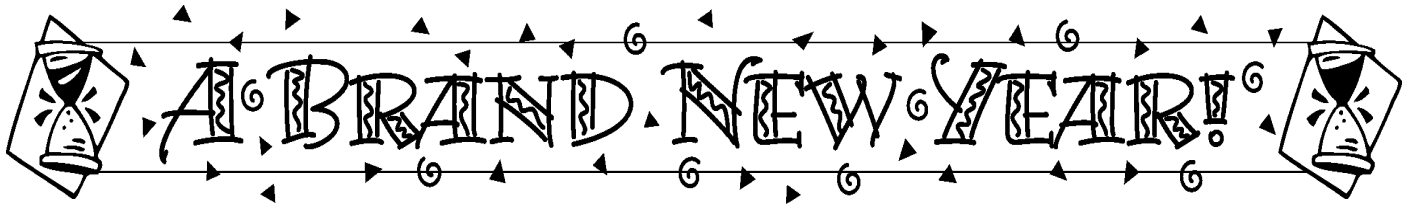
January 2009

Josh Maley	1
Donna Tallon	2
Jay Steinbach	4
David Gold	7
David Allen	8
Kayla Lind	9
Lori Baker	10
Heath Landfair	11
Barbara Tuma	11
Shannon Merriman	13
Darla Ward	14
Bryan Yeck	14
Boe Bonzo	15



Sam & Bertha Schaub 22

Joyce Brenner	15
Lillian Poland	15
John Gerwig	17
Brittany Landfair	17
Ella Metheny	18
Twila Young	20
Riley Tokar	21
Matt Weil	21
Doug Foeks	26
Mel Sheets	27
Emily Bonzo	30
Rob Kaufman	30
Judy Gerwig	31



To our Burry's Family,

Linda and I wish to thank you for your warm fellowship, kind holiday wishes and generous support throughout this 2008. We are so thankful that God has given us such a loving and loyal church family. We look forward to serving with you in 2009.

Your Pastor and friend,
Mike Van Arsdale

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To St. John's (Burry's) Church,

Thank you for remembering me on the occasion of my 80th birthday with the beautiful flowers.



Fondly,

Sella Shaffer

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I want to thank the Guiding Light Class for giving a donation in my name to the Book of Hope for reaching children in South Africa.

Also, many thanks to the group of carolers who came to sing on such a cold night. It was greatly appreciated.

Love to my Church Family, Miriam Cable

