

Presbytery of Boston
E-Connection
December 20, 2011

Christmas Greetings

Dear friends,

Over two thousand years ago, the shepherds and, later, the magi did not have a GPS when they set out on their journey to find the newly born Christ child. But they had something infinitely better. The magi had a brilliant star, the shepherds had directions from not just one but a host of angels leading them directly to the stable where Jesus, God-With-Us, lay.

This king in a manger must have been a big surprise to them. The Bible is full of stories of journeys that have surprising endings. The overarching theme seems to be that God cares as much about what we learn on the way as God does the destination.

We are in one of those journeys as a church. Our travel seems to be focused on a horizon beyond our sight. What lies out there for us? Is there a surprising life-giving grace-filled gift? Will we have the open eyes and open hearts to receive this newness?

This is what I know on this journey. I can think of no better traveling companions than you. You are sisters and brothers committed to Christ and his church who give far more than gold, frankincense, and myrrh on a daily basis. Your imagination sees the possible every day.

I also know that God has much more mission for the PCUSA to do. So while we may get weary on our journey we have some additional road to travel.

May God bless you with a renewed spirit this Christmas.

Gradye

Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

Epiphany 2012

Colleagues in Ministry,

Epiphany continues to be my favorite holiday on the church's liturgical calendar. It avoids the frenzy and commercialism of Christmas, and enriches us with a variety of themes where a new reality is disclosed and we see things in a whole new way: a star of wonder; a voice from heaven as the adult Jesus is baptized; lots of new wine at the Cana wedding feast. The Eastern Church intertwined these stories in celebrating the birth of the messiah in order to help us remember the startling and amazing variety of ways that God appears in our world, and in our lives.

With all the glamour and adulation of contemporary rock stars, movie stars, TV stars, sports stars, etc., Epiphany offers us the challenge of being a different kind of star. We hope you'll be one of the many stars at our Annual Epiphany Party. Come join us for light refreshments and desserts, followed by a reading of the Epiphany Story, hymns, and sharing.

**Please join Wayne and Carole
in their new condo
for an Epiphany Open House
35 Maple Avenue
Maple Meadows # 203
Sudbury, MA 01776**

**7 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 6, 2012
Epiphany Story and Carols at 8 p.m.**

**Please R.S.V.P. by Wednesday, Jan. 4, 2012
Phone: 978.443.1931 wayneparrish@comcast.net**

Note: Directions to the Parrish's home are included in the invitation attachment that accompanies this E-Connection. Or, you may contact the Presbytery office (978-365-5200 or presbyteryofboston@verizon.net).

Prayer Celebrations

Alice Hageman writes that she and Aubrey will be traveling to Philadelphia to visit family and to celebrate the birth of Layla Melinda Rayme, the daughter of Aubrey's daughter, born on December 14!

Presbytery Meetings

JANUARY 2012

3 – Nominating Committee, 11:30 am, NPC

4 – CPM, 6:00 pm, NPC

5 – Council, 7:00 pm, NPC

9 – CEM, 1:30 pm, NPC

12 – COM, 7:00 pm, NPC

21 – (Saturday), Stated Meeting of the Presbytery of Boston, daytime, First Brookline

Holiday Preparations for Churches

With the holidays come celebrations, special services, food, and good cheer. For many churches, the holidays may also mean increased attendance, inclement weather, and the increased chances of slip, trip, and fall accidents. Advanced preparation in some key areas can decrease the chances of your holidays becoming dampened by injury or mishap.

Snow and Ice Removal

Snow, ice, sleet, and hail can pose a real threat of slip and fall injury. To help keep your church attendees safe, consider putting the following measures in place:

- Have a designated staff member monitor the weather daily during the winter months, and be prepared to coordinate snow and ice removal operations.
- Have a staff member periodically check the parking lot, sidewalks, outdoor stairs, and entryways during the day for possible danger areas that may need to be addressed.
- Remove snow after one inch or more has fallen or if there are icy conditions.
- Apply de-icing products to walkways.
- Isolate danger areas, such as large patches of ice, by closing them to the public or warning with cones or signs.
- Watch for icy spots that arise from water runoff from roofs and downspouts that have re-frozen.
- Give outdoor stairs particular attention and treatment.
- Monitor indoor mats in entryways for build up of snow and ice melt. When the mats become water logged, replace them with a dry mat.

Lighting

With the colder weather, churchgoers will be wearing bulky coats and heavy boots. Their movement may be slightly restrained, and their footing may be different from what they are used to. Together with shorter days, it becomes more important to ensure building pathways are well-lit so attendees have an easily navigable path to their destination. Consider the following items as you review the lighting in and around your facility:

- Lighting is measured in foot candles. At a minimum, 10 foot candles should be mandatory for all lighting. Higher levels of illumination may be needed in high use areas.
- Lighting should be provided for walkways, parking lots, stairways, hallways and basements. Look for shadows that may be created and adjust lighting accordingly.
- In stairwells, provide a light switch at the top and the bottom of the stairs whenever feasible.
- Inspect all lighting on a weekly basis, and replace light fixtures or bulbs that do not work.

Exits

Lastly, in the event of an emergency, it is important exits be properly marked with exit signs that are properly illuminated. Emergency lighting should be installed so that a power failure during an emergency will not prevent a quick and orderly egress from the building. Pathways to emergency exits should remain free from any obstacles or clutter. Also, ushers and children’s ministry workers should be trained on evacuating the building in the event of an emergency, with particular attention paid to the evacuation of the elderly, disabled, and young children and infants.

Happy Holidays

The holidays are a time of gathering and celebration. As churches enjoy their increase in number, preparation in key areas will help keep the holidays peaceful and injury-free at your facility.

Ordination Anniversaries

Phillip Lin	12/66	45 years
Allison Moore	12/5/99	12 years
Nancy Kilgore	12/9/84	27 years
Bob Ferguson	12/21/64	47 years
Pat Kepler	12/27/64	47 years
William Newman	12/30/79	32 years
Kevin Ford	1/6/91	21 years
Ara Heghinian	1/16/94	18 years

Congratulations and thank you!

It's time to order your "Presbyterians Today" 2012 Lenten Devotional Guide

A Lenten Pilgrimage

Come on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land during the season of Lent with this year's edition of *Presbyterians Today's* popular devotional guide. Scripture comes alive as daily meditations and color photographs take you to the places where Jesus lived and ministered and where followers of three major religions find their spiritual home.

Ruth Huizenga Everhart, a Presbyterian minister and author living in Sterling, Va., wrote these Lenten prayers and reflections following her own recent pilgrimage to Israel/Palestine.

She writes: "The gift of pilgrimage changed my faith. As a pilgrim, I felt Scripture seeping further down into my being. I came to realize that being a pilgrim is not about traveling to a particular place as much as immersing oneself in the Spirit-filled past so it can infuse our present."

This Lenten guide, perfect for congregations, families or personal devotional use, contains Scripture readings, meditations and prayers for each day of Lent, concluding with Easter Sunday. Full-color photos of Holy Land sites enhance the readings.

Order copies for your congregation now while supplies last and to ensure delivery before Lent.

TO ORDER: Call [\(800\) 524-2612](tel:8005242612) and request PDS 12116-11-012 or order online.

PRICE: Single copy, \$4 (plus shipping and handling). Substantial discounts for bulk orders.

New Issues of the Parish Paper

Two new issues of the Parish Paper are now available on the presbytery's website. The January 2012 edition concerns "How to Perfect Your Leadership Triangle" and the February issue focuses on "How to Manage Change Resistance." You may access these and earlier issues by going to www.presbyteryofboston.org and selecting "Newsletters" from the top menu bar on the home page. A drop-down menu will appear and "Parish Paper" is listed among your options.