



POMPTON REFORMED CHURCH
59 Hamburg Tpk
Pompton Lakes, NJ 07442
(973) 835-0541
www.pomptonreformed.org



The Pastoral Search Committee

Dear PRC Family,

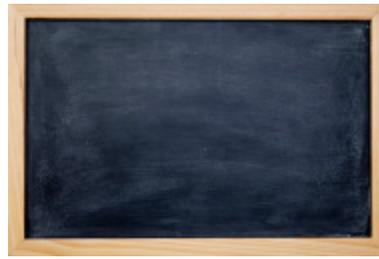
A top priority this month will be the formation of a Pastoral Search Committee. At December's consistory, deacons and elders received copies of our denominational Pastoral Search Handbook, which will help guide the process. We began discussing the formation of this team, which will be comprised of people representing various groups and points of view within the church. To quote from the handbook: "How many people do we need on the search committee?" is a question that quickly emerges. A rule of thumb regarding size is, "large enough to be representative and small enough to be effective. Too few people on the Team means it will not be representative. Too many people means it will not be able to function effectively." Fifteen may be too many, and eight would be too small. Somewhere in between...

Here is where you come in: We invite the submission of names of those whom you feel have appropriate gifts to serve on this committee. Think and pray over this. The consistory will review names suggested for the formation of this group. Pastor Bartha's responsibilities through April will remain largely with the worship leadership, preaching and teaching, prayer and visitation, and he will not be a part of the Search Committee process (other than the initial bringing of names). The ending of a pastoral relationship also signals a beginning. God has been so faithful in gifting this church with strong pastoral leadership over the past 200+ years. This truly can be an exciting time. Our ongoing prayer and full dependence upon God's leading is vital to this entire process.

So...submit names to any member of the 2016 consistory: Deacons Fran Bierwas, George Buckman, Barbara Chickey, Diane Goodell, Joe Apgar, Michael Earle or Cindi Petrides, or Elders Nancy Begin, Charles Quant, Ken Waibel, Gerry Mamalis, Jim Laux, Mark Warner or Eva Terhune...or to Pastor Tom. Please know that not every name suggested will make it to the final formation of the Committee. So much more to come....

All in Jesus' name, and to His glory,
Pastor Tom Bartha





A Clean Slate

By Elaine Peacock

As the New Year begins this is our chance to use the clean slate that GOD has given us for 2016. Every January 1st God gives us 365 days (this year it is 366 due to leap year) to make a difference in the lives of others and change the attitudes, behavior and habits we didn't particularly like about ourselves in 2015. This clean slate gives us the chance to give more smiles, more hugs, bite our tongues, write that note, make that telephone call and share a laugh and or a tear.

If we use God's clean slate well by the time 2017 rolls around we will have made a difference in our little corner of the world. Oh I'm not saying that we won't slip back into an old habit once in a while after all we are only human, but if we strive to do at least one positive act look at the domino effect we will create. Actually that is all that God asks of us to make a difference where we find ourselves. I wish you a Happy New Year and may 2016 bring you lots of opportunities fill your clean slate.

Thank You!

Round Table of Thanks (from December Consistory)

> Outgoing Elders Pat Gordon and Joanie Warner, and outgoing Deacons Vince Iraggi and Jo-Ann Sisco. Gratitude for your faithful service.

> Leslee Ferray, for her creative and lovely decorating of the hallway display cabinet.

> Sanctuary Advent & Christmas decorating team of Valerie Petrides, Cindi Petrides, Donna DeBlock, Joanie Warner, Elaine Peacock and Patti Kitchell.

> All who assisted in setup (and eventual takedown) of the outdoor nativity.

> All who participated in the recent PRC ministries of outreach: Family Promise, Toys for Tots, Holiday Stroll, Thanksgiving baskets, Angel Tree gift delivery, and Christmas dinner for food pantry guests.



Birthday - Betty Sisco

Memorials

Given By
Ellen & Paul Lockwood
and family

In Memory Of
Barbara Conklin

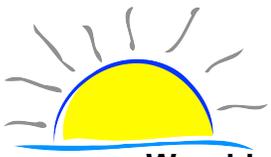
Designated
Media Fund

Given By
Shirley Montanari

In Honor Of
George Montanari's
25th Anniversary of
Ordination

Designated
Scholarship





Worship Design Team

In response to the appeal last fall, Elaine Peacock, Joanie and Mark Warner, and Eddie and Elena Van Schaack, gathered along with Pastor Bartha to bring new ideas to our Advent Worship. The candle lighting voices melded with images on the screen came from this Team, as well as the idea of Sunday School students sharing their reflections on Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

This team is planning to gather in upcoming weeks to begin brainstorming on the Lenten and Easter season. Songs, drama, fresh ideas, readings...creative voices are welcome and encouraged! We met last time on two Sunday evenings to bring ideas into formation, and will likely do the same thing again. Watch upcoming bulletins for scheduling, or mention your interest to any of the six mentioned above.



What's Ahead

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

For those who may not have had a chance to read this in the congregational meeting packet:

Over the next few months and throughout 2016 you'll be hearing much more about a small group ministry that God is launching in our midst. All of us will have opportunities to plug in and participate either as a member or host.

When Jesus wanted to change the world, he did not start with a political movement, a media campaign, a powerful army, or a global network. He started with a small group. It's hard to argue with the success of this apostolic model when the Christian population grew from approx 10,000 to 6 million between the 1st and 3rd centuries, despite widespread persecution. These early Christians met in small gatherings, typically in homes, long before any church buildings existed.

Community focus was one of the keys to this dramatic growth. These early groups were small enough to allow members to minister to one another, use their spiritual gifts, and mature in their faith. They were also vibrant and life-giving communities where evangelism and service could take place as outsiders watched a loving and compassionate community in action. Small groups created then and can create today a sense of oneness while also reaching a lost world for Christ

Our prayerful expectation is to gradually see more and more of our membership start or connect with a group because this setting if properly structured provides tremendous opportunity for spiritual growth and vitality as we share the ups and downs of our Christian journeys in ways that are just not possible in larger worship or fellowship settings.

Continued on next page

Our small group ministry model at PRC will largely follow that of the Saddleback Church in California pastored by Rick Warren of “Purpose Driven Life” fame. We do this not because we desire or expect to ever be a “mega-church,” but because their structure obviously works well.

Scripture tells us that small groups in New Testament times pursued the biblical purposes of fellowship, discipleship, ministry, evangelism, and worship. That formula which proved to be very successful in the early church, continues to be so today in healthy small group ministries where these five critical purposes are balanced. These are loosely defined as follows:

Fellowship - having and enjoying authentic relationships with other Christians.

Discipleship - learning and living biblical principles.

Ministry - using your gifts and abilities to serve others.

Evangelism - reaching out to others and introducing them to the love and grace of God.

Worship - praising God and surrendering our lives to him.

Many wonder just exactly what is the difference between a small group and bible study. Most bible studies consist of discipleship and fellowship. The Saddleback model works very deliberately at maintaining a balance of all five of these biblical purposes. Meeting in smaller groups allows each member to discover and use their spiritual gifts to serve other members in the group, the larger body of Christ and the community. Groups encourage and built up one another so that the Body Of Christ can be cared for and the world can be influenced through their good deeds.

No matter what the size of a given congregation, it is impossible for a pastor or pastors or board of elders to meet these needs in all of the members!

Just imagine what God might accomplish here at PRC if we had 50%, or dare we dream, 75% or even 90% of our membership meeting in small groups in homes throughout our communities living out our common faith and growing together as Christ’s disciples and ambassadors. Stay tuned –

-- The Education/Discipleship Team



The Mood of Christmas
By Howard Thurman



"When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among people,
To make music in the heart."

Dear PRC---As you may or may not realize, Mary & I send very few Christmas letters to our church family, as precious as you are to us. We do manage to send cards to out-of-state relatives and friends. This year, for the second time in 15 years, we actually put together a Christmas letter...which we now share with you.

Advent/Christmas 2015

Dear Family and Friends,

Here is a rare and wonderful occasion--that instead of a mid-January letter, we actually have our act together enough to send you this pre-Christmas greeting. It comes at the close of an eventful year.

First of all, family updates. The entire brood will be in New Jersey, and we shall all awaken under the same roof on Christmas morning. Katy and Trevor fly in from Fargo, ND, with grandsons Soren (5) and Thomas (2). We saw them last in June, when our whole family gathered for a week in South Haven, Michigan, renting a cottage just a block from Lake Michigan for our 4th season. We hope to repeat this good tradition during the summer ahead.

Daughter Jean is doing very well in her Graphic Design world, living in Kentwood, Michigan with her cat Marley.. Over the past year she has become quite close with a fine fellow, Andy, whom we are getting to know better and better. Sarah and Jared moved to Pittsburgh this summer, where Jared continues his ministry with Coalition for Christian Outreach, while Sarah works as a physical trainer, and in membership services at a health spa. Molly and Andrew have rented a lovely cottage in Mahwah, NJ, and are both pursuing advanced degrees at St. John's University in New York City. Andrew makes the commute each day, as he also works at St. John's while attending classes, while Molly studies online, and continues nannying with a family in Nyack, NY. They have just added a new dog to their fold, joining two cats.

Mary continues to exercise and run most days, and has another half-marathon under her belt this year. She still plans to run at least one half-marathon with each daughter (while her husband observes with donuts and coffee). Mary was recently recognized by the Pompton Reformed Church for 35 years of teaching Sunday School, the last 14 in Pompton. She also sings in the choir and serves on several committees. In spare time she continues to knit and does her retail work at Macy's, where she recently received an eight-year recognition pin.

Tom and Mary shared with the church in October of our plan to conclude our time as Senior Pastor at the end of April, 2016. It has been a wonderful 15 year stretch, and it is time for a new pastor to take the helm. The church is healthy and ready to move into the next phase. Tom received training this fall at Princeton Theological Seminary, and will eventually move into the field of transitional ministry--serving churches who are between pastors. He still finds great joy in preaching and the tasks of pastoral ministry. We were clueless as to where in the world we would live, until some God-ordained circumstances opened the way for us to purchase a home in the Pocono Mountains from a friend. Come May, our address will be 204 Sunrise Drive in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania 18301.

We've vacationed at Cape May, NJ, and with friends in Florida, and celebrated time with Mary's sisters in Michigan and North Carolina, and her brother in Maryland, and their families. The year got off to a rough start with the loss of Tom's youngest brother, Bob,

Continued on next page

on January 3, following an extended illness. Family gathered for a celebration of Bob's life in Ohio in February, and stayed with middle brother Jim, and his wife Nancy.

So...that is a snapshot of a memorable 2015. The accompanying photo was taken last Christmas, so age us a year, and this is how we look. Here is hoping that our paths will cross with many of you reading this letter...dear friends and family whom we love so much. God is so good. Here is wishing all of you a most blessed Christmas and a wonderful year ahead.

With loving thoughts, in the name of the Savior whom we love and serve,
Mary and Tom



Parish Health Ministry Page



HOLIDAY STRESS: fact or fiction??

Charles Dickens' beloved *A Christmas Carol* stirs the feelings of the ultimate sharing of the holiday spirit but, the opening lines from *A Tale of Two Cities* may have even more relevance:

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of time
It was the season of light, it was the season of darkness. . . .
It was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair."

Do you ever look at the complexity of the holidays? There is lots of joy (not so much peace) but a fair share of confusion and pressure. The components of this situation can be called:

The Four 'F's of Holiday Friction: Fantasies, Family, Food and Finances."

- **FANTASIES.** The media does a great job of portraying an idyllic image of the holidays. To create them in our own lives includes aspiring to "do it all". The season turns most of us into sentimental jelly fish, overcome by longings and memories of times past. The key to managing this friction is to gently embrace, not cling, to magical memories. Discover a blend of magical realism that provides balance.
- **FAMILY.** Holiday gatherings with family can be the best or the worst. Bringing together multiple personalities, each with his or her own set of expectations can certainly present a challenge. At best, a sincere evaluation of known entities and devising a plan for conflict prevention, such as designated seating at the holiday table, can go a long way to a pleasant time.
- **FOOD.** For some, the caloric chaos of the holidays is like a train wreck waiting to happen. Running helter skelter, not stopping for lunch, overdosing on the cookies and chocolate a colleague brought to work -- well, isn't that a given? Instead, have a few healthy snacks throughout the day, especially before the Big Meal, appoint a designated nagger for reminders not to overdo, and walk briskly when at the Mall.
- **FINANCES.** Keeping the economy afloat is not an individual responsibility. Setting and sticking to a spending limit is wise all year long but truly important during the season of good will. Rethinking gift-giving habits may be in order. Expensive gifts won't guarantee a happy holiday. Consider starting a name exchange, make a

Continued on next page

- shopping list (check it twice) to avoid oversights or last-minute panic and prevent impulse purchases.

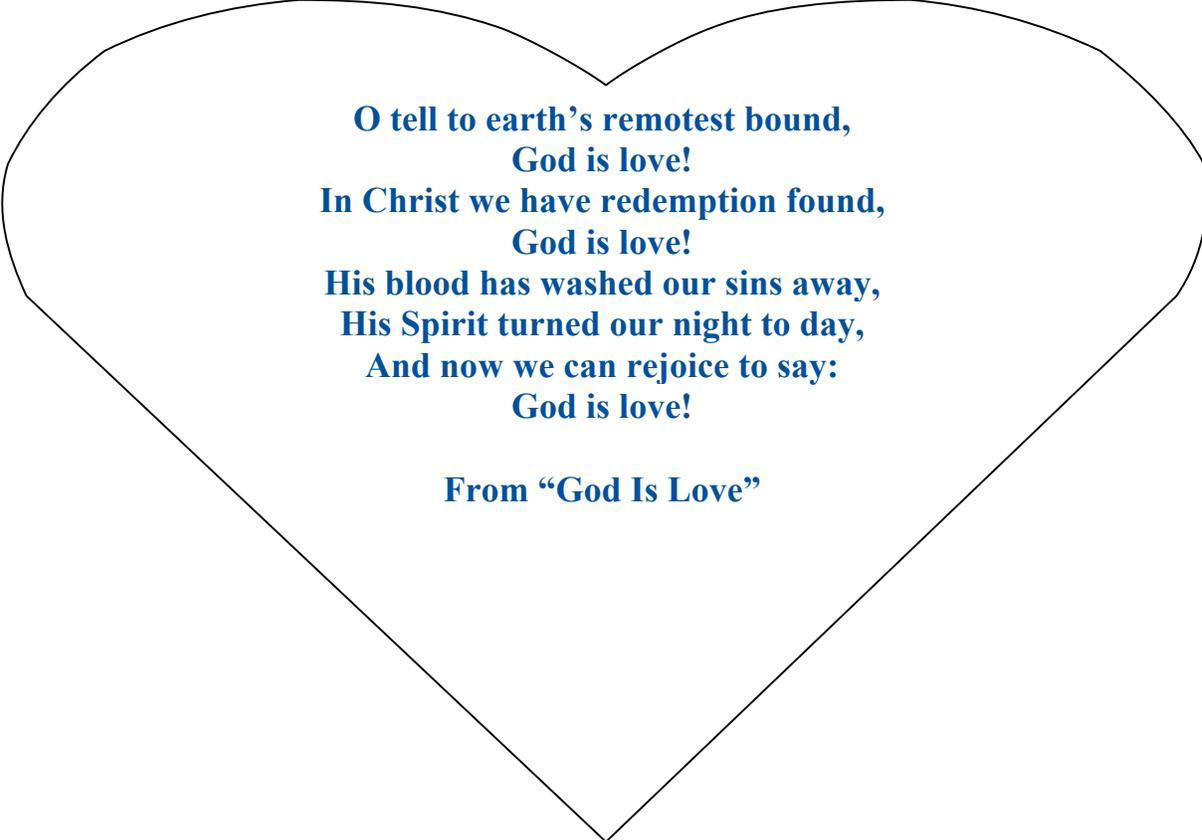
Holiday stress is inevitable!! **How we handle it is a choice.** One of the choices is to decrease the impact by planning. Here are some thoughts in that direction:

Quick Tips for Holiday Stress Reduction

- Have a positive attitude
- Try not to worry about things out of your control
- Problem solve with other people
- Exercise -- a few minutes a day can help alleviate stress
- Eat nutritional food -- decrease the intake of fat and sugar
- Meditate or practice relaxation and/or stretching techniques
- Avoid drinking caffeinated beverages
- Rest -- focus on getting eight hours of sleep each day
- Get a massage -- it can be beneficial for the mind and body.

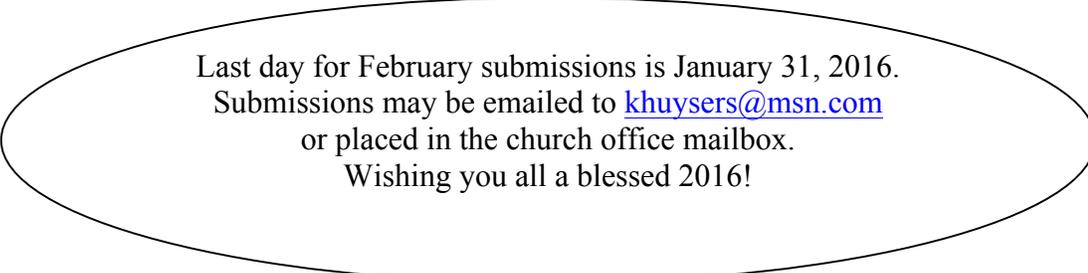
The Parish Health Ministry wishes all a Blessed, Joyful and relatively stress free Christmas season.

Carol O'Neil is the parish nurse at Old Paramus Reformed in Ridgewood, NJ.



**O tell to earth's remotest bound,
God is love!
In Christ we have redemption found,
God is love!
His blood has washed our sins away,
His Spirit turned our night to day,
And now we can rejoice to say:
God is love!**

From "God Is Love"



Last day for February submissions is January 31, 2016.
Submissions may be emailed to khuyzers@msn.com
or placed in the church office mailbox.
Wishing you all a blessed 2016!