

**Peckville and Bradley Memorial United Methodist Charge  
Christmas 2007 News Letter**

**From The Pastors' Pen**

A Blessed Greeting to All

As we move through the season of Advent and the four Sundays leading up to the celebration of Christmas, we anticipate the commemoration of the birth of Jesus. But in our society, the greater truth is that as December 25<sup>th</sup> gets closer, we often find ourselves filled more with the anticipation of the time off work, of being with our family, or with the hope of receiving a gift or two.

In the midst of all those current and important things of our earthly life, sometimes truly celebrating the birth of a baby born two thousand years ago gets lost in the shuffle. It drops to the middle (or bottom) of our Christmas "To Do" list. It is difficult to get too excited about something you already know you have.

Maybe this Christmas we need to be reminded just how important this two thousand-year old gift is to us and to the world today! The Messiah was certainly a much desired and much needed person in the days before Jesus was born. The prophet Isaiah, when he was looking forward in expectation of the birth of the Messiah, called Him, among other titles, the "Prince of Peace."

Oh, how much our world needs the gift that the Prince of Peace has to offer! I invite you to move celebrating the birth of Jesus back to the top of your "To Do" list. Find the space to mark Jesus' birth in your heart and in your home. Give thanks to God when you eat your Christmas meal. Join us in worship as we celebrate God's most wonderful gift. With these subtle, yet powerful personal actions may we help fill our world with the Peace that God wants for all creation. Fred and I wish you and yours a Peaceful and Blessed Christmas.

Peace,

Pastor Sharon and Fred

**Advent**

***Advent is the beginning of the Church Year for most churches in the Western tradition. It begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, which is the Sunday nearest November 30, and ends on Christmas Eve (Dec 24). If Christmas Eve is a Sunday, it is counted as the fourth Sunday of Advent, with Christmas Eve proper beginning at sundown. Originally, the Advent season was a time of strict fasting, observed in anticipation of the festival marking the birth of Jesus Christ. Christians believe that Advent is a time to prepare our hearts for Christ, just as we prepare our homes for Christmas.***

**Red Bird Mission Report**

Since Pastor Dietz introduced the Red Bird Mission to our children during the Children's Message in 2005, our children, and their adult friends, have contributed \$611.50 to the Beverly, Kentucky mission.

Another way we can help the Mission is by collecting and sending to them General Mills "Boxtops for education" coupons found on most General Mills products. It is worth your effort. I found on-line that Red Bird Mission School has earned since 2002 \$155,557. Last year they received \$27,574 and so far this year they have received \$13,955. From the 2005-2006 collection efforts the Mission was able to replace 20+ year old lockers in the high school and middle schools. Paul has volunteered to collect these for our church.

***He was created of a mother whom He created.  
He was carried by hands that He formed.  
He cried in the manger in the wordless infancy,  
He the word, without whom all human eloquence is mute.***  
*St. Augustine of Hippo*

## Report from Peckville's Treasurer

At the bi-monthly Ad Board meetings I begin my report by saying that we are current on all bills, then the news that we are spending more than we are receiving in offerings. Since most church members do not attend these meetings we thought that I should give a report for all to consider.

I took the months of January, May, August and November and found the average receipts from the Sunday Worship Service offering were \$3,846.23. The expenses for the same months amounted to \$5,793.08, or a deficit of \$1,946.86. The actual deficit for the eleven months ending November 30, 2007 is \$18,137.56. The current checking account balance is \$2,467.85.

Please consider increasing your giving.

*The birth of Jesus is the sunrise of the Bible.*  
*Henry Van Dyke*

## Report from Peckville's Finance Chairman

Once again the Christmas holiday season is quietly sneaking up on us. With Thanksgiving over, the traditional shopping and gift-giving time is here. Our church will be busy with Christmas decorating and special music programs.

Recently the parsonage has had a facelift – with a new roof and a much needed new sidewalk. The garage also has a new roof. The nativity scene is also beginning to take shape.

The recent repairs will be paid from your gifts to the renovation fund and also from the memorial fund. Remember only the interest is used from the memorial fund.

When planning for gifts for family and friends – please remember to include our church's general fund on your holiday list. With the normal operating expenses for our church continually increasing, your gifts to the church are greatly appreciated.

With all the hustle and excitement of the Christmas season, take time to reflect on the true meaning of Christ-mas.

Respectfully yours

Bob Elvidge , Finance Chairman

***REJOICE, that the immortal God is born, so that mortal man may live in eternity. Jan Huss***

## Bradley Memorial United Methodist Women news

The Bradley Memorial UMW have been very busy!!! On October 13, 07, we held our first major fund raising project, a Spaghetti supper. With the aid of donations from within our church family, and wonderful, willing volunteers, we were able to realize a profit of just over \$ 1,000.00 . We were all ecstatic, knowing that our hard work will GREATLY aid Bradley Memorial with our ongoing expenses. On October 20, Pastor Sharon and Heather Newton attended the Wyoming Conference Seminar at South Gibson, PA. At this meeting, we completed 2 of the 5 points of the UMW Star, by honoring Pastor Sharon and memorializing Mabel Longworth with the lighting of 2 special candles. October 21, was Laity Sunday, and Nancy McLain, conducted the worship service, and Heather Newton read the Scripture. We also decided to honor George Parker, and our honoree was very surprised when he heard the announcement, and extremely surprised to notice that his wife Bonnie, her sister, and his sister, Marge and her husband, had come into the congregation while his back was to them playing the piano! After the service, a brunch was enjoyed in George's honor, and we presented him with a gift, thanking him for all he does for Bradley Memorial.

We completed the third point of the UMW Star, by planning a Calendar project. We had so much fun counting steps in our houses, earrings, windows, pets, ties, hats, etc. and then adding up the pennies, nickels, and dimes to be sent for the World Thank Offering. In November, we held another fund raising project by hosting a Home and Garden Party. Along with the great refreshments, we had a fun time and raised money for the Church while enjoying fellowship. We were able to complete the fourth point of the Star by sending our pledge to the Scranton District, for Missions.

Our December projects include-purchasing elegant, cracked glass hurricane lamps for the windows in our Sanctuary to be lit in Honor/Memorial of Loved Ones, and lit on December 23, and 24th. We will also be offering Poinsettias for the same. On December 11, we will be having a much deserved, sit down Christmas dinner and Party at Anna Maria's in Dunmore. For the New Year, we will be discussing fund raiser ideas to continue our work for our church, through Christ.

We, the Bradley Memorial UMW, wish for you and your loved ones a Blessed Advent season, and a Healthy and Happy New Year.

### **Christmas Food Baskets**

We will start collecting non-perishable food for the food baskets at Christmas for the needy on Sunday December 2.

Please do your part to help those less fortunate than us.

### *The Colors of Advent*

*Historically, the primary sanctuary color of Advent is **Purple**. This is the color of penitence and fasting as well as the color of royalty to welcome the Advent of the King. Purple is still used in Catholic churches. The purple of Advent is also the color of suffering used during Lent and Holy Week. This points to an important connection between Jesus' birth and death. The nativity, the Incarnation, cannot be separated from the crucifixion. In many churches the third Sunday remains the Sunday of Joy marked by pink or rose. However, most Protestant churches now use blue to distinguish the Season of Advent from **Lent**. **Royal Blue** is sometimes used as a symbol of royalty. Some churches use **Bright Blue** to symbolize the night sky, the anticipation of the impending announcement of the King's coming, or to symbolize the waters of Genesis 1, the beginning of a new creation.*

### *The Spirit of Advent*

*Advent is marked by a spirit of expectation, of anticipation, of preparation, of longing. There is a yearning for deliverance from the evils of the world, first expressed by Israelite slaves in Egypt as they cried out from their bitter oppression. It is the cry of those who have experienced the tyranny of injustice in a world under the curse of sin, and yet who have hope of deliverance by a God who has heard the cries of oppressed slaves and brought deliverance!*

### **Peckville Church Envelopes**

If you do not receive church envelopes by the end of the year and wish to use envelopes, please contact Bonny Taylor, Finance Secretary at 489-6093

### *The Advent wreath*

***The circle of the wreath reminds us of God Himself, His eternity and endless mercy, which has no beginning or end. The green of the wreath speaks of the hope that we have in God, the hope of newness, of renewal, of eternal life. Candles symbolize the light of God coming into the world through the birth of His son. The four outer candles represent the period of waiting during the four Sundays of Advent, which themselves symbolize the four centuries of waiting between the prophet Malachi and the birth of Christ.***

***The light of the candles itself becomes an important symbol of the season. The light reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world that comes into the darkness of our lives to bring newness, life, and hope. It also reminds us that we are called to be a light to the world as we reflect the light of God's grace to others (Isa 42:6). The progression in the lighting of the candles symbolizes the various aspects of our waiting experience. As the candles are lighted over the four week period, it also symbolizes the darkness of fear and hopelessness receding and the shadows of sin falling away as more and more light is shed into the world. The flame of each new candle reminds the worshippers that something is happening, and that more is yet to come. Finally, the light that has come into the world is plainly visible as the Christ candle is lighted at Christmas, and worshippers rejoice over the fact that the promise of long ago has been realized.***

### **Christmas Memorials and Honoriums**

Christmas gifts in memory of or in honor of may be given to the following funds.

Memorial Fund – Bill Llewellyn

Organ & Renovation – George Kinback Jr.

Warring – Fendick Scholarship fund – George Kinback Jr.

Music Fund – Bonny Taylor

Poinsettias – Bob Elvidge or Bonny Taylor

Sky Lake – Tom Taylor

To insure that your memorial or honorium is listed in the Christmas booklet, please have them in to the designated funds by Sunday, December 16. This is a

big help to the charge secretary and she thanks you for your cooperation.

### **Living Nativity**

Peckville will be presenting a living nativity on Sunday, December 16 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm with live animals from the "Dietz Farm" If you would like to make a donation or help in any way please let Beth, Bonny or Pastor Sharon know. We are in need of people of all ages to stand in the nativity; help in the kitchen to provide refreshments, also needed are the refreshments. themselves. Thank You in advance for all your help.

### **Food Basket Delivery**

Food baskets will be delivered on Friday evening December 21st . If you would like to experience the true meaning of Christmas giving, come and help. We met at the church between 6:00 and 6:30.

### **Christmas Caroling**

This year we will be Christmas Caroling on Saturday Night December 22nd .We will meet at the Peckville church around 6:00p.m. and leave from there. Refreshments will follow. All are welcome!

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*The very purpose of Christ's coming into the world was that He might offer up His life as a sacrifice for the sins of man. He came to die. This is the heart of Christmas.*  
**Billy Graham**  
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### **Christmas Eve Services**

Christmas Eve services this year will be at Bradley Memorial church at 9:00p.m. and Peckville at 7:00p.m.

### **Peckville Christmas Cantata**

The Peckville United Methodist Choir will present the cantata "Christ Is Born" by John W. Peterson on Sunday December 16<sup>th</sup> at the 11:00am service.

### **Peckville December Food and Fellowship**

Our December food and fellowship will be held following worship on December 16. We are thinking we will have a soup and sandwich day. Do you have a

favorite soup recipe you would like to make a pot to share? Please let Beth or Bonny know. Thanks.

### **January's food and fellowship**

If there is enough interest in January, we are thinking of doing a roast beef dinner for our food and fellowship following the worship service on January 20. We feel we would need to do a little more planning for this. If you are interested please let Bonny know. So we ca have some idea of a count Thank You.

### ***Practical Strategies for a Peaceful Christmas***

#### ***What is your heart's desire for Advent?***

***Whatever it is, does it depend on you doing each and every thing on your to-do list? This year, evaluate your list realistically. Highlight the things you truly love doing. Circle the ones that exhaust you the most. If some of your highlighted items are also circled, then they're probably worth your effort. But are all of the items you circled really necessary? What would happen if you simply didn't do them? Would Christmas grind to a halt this year?***

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**Stewardship in our Local Church**

Greeting and God's peace to all,  
A couple of weeks ago I had the opportunity to bring the message on Laity Sunday to our congregation, "STEWARDSHIP". I didn't spend much time on local church building stewardship but that of helping others in missions, visitation and the like. I did that because I have always seen a response when our local buildings need help and that stewardship shines brightly. Well today, I want to ask for that stewardship response from everyone that is reading this message. The finance committee has reminded us in the past that we have to remember the church and uphold it with finances to keep it alive in our community. The costs are the usual with any household: water, sewer, phone, electricity and heat. Heat oil, most of all, is going to tax us as families and the church. We as stewards of the church will again be having Sunday Services down in the fellowship room starting after Christmas (dates to be announced) for a couple months in order to save on the cost of heating oil. The church and parsonage, like any structure, from time to time needs repairs that are not the ordinary yearly repairs. I want to keep you informed of these repairs. The following is a report of the Trustees to the Local Church Conference Nov 2007. There is a repair from 2006 not on this report

and that is the foundation repair under the Sanctuary: cost \$10000.00. Please take note of the severity of the repairs needed and the cost involved in the correction. These are not the standard monthly or yearly repairs, but were necessary for the upkeep of the structures and safety of our grounds.

## Trustee's Yearly Report

The year from 11/06 to 11/07.

Spring 2006 during severe thunderstorm, the church chimney was struck by lightning. Even though it was covered by insurance, the expense to the congregation was \$500.00 due to the deductible.

The Parsonage roof and garage roof were in need of repairs. The shingles were in a deteriorating, dry and couple loose condition, this along with the age of the shingles being maybe 30 years old made the repairs necessary. Contract bid prices were collected and contractor approved for the project. It was noted, after the shingles were removed from the garage, that some of the boards were rotted to the point of needing to be replaced. The same condition was found on the parsonage roof. The entire roof was stripped, covered with plywood and reshingled. Cost of projects: garage \$2500.00, parsonage \$8600.00.

In order to keep the parking lot in good condition and get more life out of the pavement, it was decided to get a company to crack seal the entire parking lot. Crack sealing was done with a federal highway approved polymer rubberized sealer. The lines of the lot were repainted since they were very faint and crack sealant covered some of them. Eighty per cent of the lines have been painted (the rest will be done in the spring, temperature and weather halted the painting). The Handicap logos were repainted on appropriate parking spots and the arrows at the drive entrance have been painted. Cost of project: \$1200.00.

The sidewalks at the parsonage were in an uneven condition with ¼ to almost ½ inch between some blocks. This created a trip hazard and a possible lawsuit to the church. Contractor approved for the repairs which included removal of old sidewalk (finding a second sidewalk underneath the first, also removed) removal of concrete steps, forming for new sidewalk and placing a layer of loose stone as a bed

under new concrete walk, and replacing the steps with a precast concrete step unit. Cost of project: \$2600.00.

Costs were rounded for this report.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ronald Lucas, Trustee Chairman 2007.

Next summer we will have to tackle the parsonage garage walls for repairs. The lower two feet of the walls are crumbling and need repairs now before repairs won't help. You can see that we have been busy in this past two years with needs repairs. A small portion of expenses has been taken care of by special donations from concerned members. However, a much large portion still has to be found. The Renovation Fund has been exhausted with the first stage of the roofs. The Memorial and Cookie Funds will be used as needed since they are for emergencies. They will also be quickly exhausted if we use and not replenish them.

I don't mean to be painting a grim picture, well maybe it is, but I know that all of us as Stewards of OUR local church will again come through with actions. I am asking, no I am pleading that you help in any way that you can in supporting our repairs. You don't have to give a great deal; anything will help with the cause. I believe fully that every dollar keeps adding up to the full amount needed and that you will shine through again. Together as family we can make things happen. Whatever you can donate will be greatly appreciated.

Please place whatever you want in an envelope and  
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*Bethlehem and Golgotha, the Manger and the Cross, the birth and the death, must always be seen together.*  
*J. Sidlow Baxter.*

*When you affirm big, believe big, and pray big, big things happen.*

### Sky Lake Winter Retreat

Jan 11-13, 2008

Ages 3 - 11 \$42.00

Ages 12 and up \$84.00

being a part of God's wonderful creation  
seeing His outdoor sanctuary  
singing together in worship  
and listening to the sounds around you

enjoy a warm fire place in a beautiful lodge  
playing games, singing and dancing with the young  
and the young at  
heart  
cooking hot dogs and smores on an open fire  
being served and taking turns serving meals  
3 delicious, well balanced meals (and not having to fix  
them)  
ice skating, sleigh riding, walks around the lake or just  
sitting in  
the  
warm lodge and watching this all happen.

Come and be a part of this GREAT time  
This is open to ALL ages  
Every year we get at least one or two new people.  
Maybe this year it will be YOU!

You will never regret it.  
For more information call Ron or Karen at 383-1611 or  
Tom or Beth at 3883-2119.

Don't let cost be the problem.  
There is some funds to help,  
We are also accepting funds for this cause.  
If you need help or want to give help,  
This is all anonymous, contact Ron Lucas or Pastor  
Sharon.

Hope to see you there.  
Love in Christ  
Ron

**Mission statement of the Peckville/ Bradley  
Memorial Charge**

**To glorify God by sharing  
The gospel of Jesus Christ,  
Nurturing disciples,**

**And reaching out to a world in need.**

**Calendar of Events**

12/2 – Food basket collection begins  
12/16 – Christmas cantata at Peckville 11:00am  
worship service  
12/16- food and fellowship following worship.  
12/16 – Living nativity 6:00pm – 8:00pm  
12/21 – Delivery of Christmas food baskets  
12/22 – Christmas caroling, meet at Peckville  
at 6:00pm

12/24 – Christmas Eve Services; Bradley  
Memorial at 9:00p.m. Peckville at 7:00p.m.  
1/11-1/13 – Sky Lake Weekend

**Everyone from both Peckville and  
Bradley Memorial are welcome and  
encouraged to attend any or all events  
that interest them. Come and bring a  
friend!**

*“Freely you have received, freely give.”  
Matthew 10:8*

The charge Secretary (Beth Taylor) can be reached  
at 383-2119, [edt1157@yahoo.com](mailto:edt1157@yahoo.com) or  
Peckville\_Bradley\_charge @ yahoo.com.

*A Childs Perception*

*“You know what the Baby Jesus is?” my six year old  
asked me this Christmas.*

*“What?” I asked absently, struggling to get our  
Christmas tree lights evenly distributed.*

*“The Baby Jesus,” she announced, “is what God’s  
love looked like when He turned it into a person.”  
I don’t know if theologians would agree with all the  
ramifications of her statement. But I do know that my  
children often seem to have instinctive insight into  
spiritual things that wakes up my grown-up  
understanding.*

*At Christmastime, children play an essential part in  
our celebrations. So much of what we do is intended  
to please them – and all the while our hearts keep  
hearkening back to the Christmas memories of our  
own childhoods. On Christmas Eve, sometimes we  
can’t help but envy our children the stars in their  
eyes, especially when our own eyes are dull with  
exhaustion.*

*Christmas is so much simpler for a child. Can we  
open our tired adult hearts to that same simplicity?*

**Community of Prayer**

With the start of Advent and the new church year  
we will be refreshing both our community of prayer  
in the bulletin and our phone prayer list. Please  
inform any member of the phone prayer group or  
Pastor Sharon of those needing to be kept on.  
Thank You.