

The Bellringer



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New Chapel Ready For Holiday Prayer, Meditation

Paradoxically, the Christmas season is one of both great spiritual opportunity and challenge ? a time of celebration as well as stress.

"You can get through the whole holidays and be caught up in the parties and the pressures," says Pastor Jack Sharp.

Thanks to the generosity of long-time Govans members John and Helen Kovach, the church has a new facility for people seeking a refuge from the pressures of the season

- and beyond. A new chapel, located in the administrative building adjacent to Pastor Sharp's office, opened last month.

The chapel features a cherry wood and limestone interior, a skylight, and CD sound system. It is nine feet by nine feet, with an 18-foot-ceiling, making it perfect for individual or small group meditation, small weddings, prayer or quiet reading.

It will be open

whenever the church is, typically 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

during the week and many nights and weekends when events are being held in the building. By design, there is no lock on the chapel's door.

Pastor Sharp says he wants to avoid having it become a space for committee meetings and

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Topics to Look For:

- NEW: From the Pastor's Bookshelf
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- Senior Network's Sunday Luncheon
- Celtic Concert & Silent Auction
- New Members' Dinner
- And a lot more!!!!

From the Pastor: EMMANUEL

Not too long ago a church member asked what the name Emmanuel meant. It is used around Advent and Christmas each year as we sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." Who is this Emmanuel (or "Immanuel" as it is sometimes spelled)? It is a Hebrew name which literally means "God with us." It is used in the book of Isaiah 7, verse 14 as a promise of the birth of a baby to signify God's presence with the people of Israel. The title has been

applied, since the earliest days, to Jesus, who is our Emmanuel. Jesus Christ represents God coming to dwell with humankind. It is the affirmation that we are not alone in this crazy world or in this vast universe.

It is a name you can apply to Jesus when you are praying at anytime in any place. It is lifted up at Christmas to celebrate the "Incarnation" - which is the

Latin word that refers to God becoming human (literally in the flesh) through Jesus Christ. The hymn writer has said it best, "O come Desire of nations, bind, All peoples in one heart and mind; Bid envy, strife and discord cease; Fill the whole world with heaven's peace. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, Shall come to thee, O Israel!"

Pastor Sharp

Editor:

Caprice McLaughlin

Editorial board:

Mike Field

Jon Morgan

Jim Williams.



the such, something that is contrary to its purpose.

A candle and icon on the bronze shelf is now the focal point, and the church is looking at other ideas for interior decoration. Bibles and prayer books will be kept in the chapel.

"Somebody who is upset about something, or just needs a quiet place, can come in and use it," the Pastor says. It offers an important alternative to the large sanctuary, which is expensive to keep heated and lit dur-

ing off-hours.

The chapel, and associated renovations of the pastor's and secretary's offices, cost \$160,000.

Pastor Sharp offers these suggestions to first-time users:

*First light the candle, to focus your attention and help clear your mind.

*Keep the music soft.

*Start with a silent reading of scripture. Many of the psalms, especially 23, about the Lord leading us to still waters, are good ones to start with. Psalms 27, 28 and 30,

about healing, and 42 are also good.

*Close your eyes and try to picture the scene described in the psalm in your mind, and meditate on its meaning.

"Some may find it comforting that the psalmists went through the same things that they are now," the Pastor says. It is believed the psalms were first written 500 years before Christ.

By: Jon Morgan

A Heartfelt Thank You to All

Dear Friends,

Although the Bible doesn't mention mandolins, the Psalmist calls on us to praise God with "stringed instruments and flutes." [Psalm 150:4]. Now, thanks to your generosity, the Sharp house is full of praise as I practice and enjoy playing the beautiful Ovation "Applause" mandolin you gave me for my 65th birthday. Thank you very much for your kindness and this joyful surprise gift.

Pastor Jack Sharp

An Advent Program: "Soup at Six"



Does the holiday "hustle and bustle" have you walking around in circles? Are you having trouble remembering why you have to buy 4 Calling Birds, 3 French Hens, 2 Turtle Doves and a Partridge in a Pear Tree? Have you forgotten what Advent really means? If you answered "What?" to any of these questions, then **Soup at Six** is for you. Actually, **Soup at Six** is for anyone who would like to join us for a time of mediation and reflection using various means such as walking the laby-

rinth, guided meditation, or Bible reading and reflection. Following this time of reflection, we will then come together for a delicious bowl of soup and bread before we go on our various ways.

Bring a friend and join us on Thursday evenings, December 4, 11, 18 in Sharp Hall at 6:00 p.m. as we gather to pause and renew our spirits as we enter this holy time of the year .

By: Ed Richardson

The Gratitude Corner:

"Sad is the man who has no place to put his faith other than in himself."

- Roy H. Williams

Hard to be Merry Christmas

The seasons of Advent and Christmas are an emotionally charged time. There is a great deal of pressure placed on people not only to spend a lot of money, but also to feel a certain way and experience a particularly joyous mood. All of this is coupled with an emphasis on remembering, together-

ness, and family. For those who are hurting - for any number of reasons - the atmosphere of this time of year can amplify feelings of pain, grief, loneliness, or despair.

Join us here at Govans Presbyterian Church on Sunday, December 14 at

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An Invitation From the Church Growth & Outreach Ministry Area

Think of three friends who don't go to church. We invite you to invite them to Govans!

Research into church growth has consistently shown that the single most important way that people come to a new church is by being invited by a friend.

Growth at Govans means that we all must take an active part in inviting friends to church

for worship or any of the many other activities at Govans.

Advent is a particularly good time to invite friends to Govans. Invite them to the free Keltia Concert on December 6th; they will be welcome to join in the silent auction as well. If they have children, be sure to invite them to the 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve service featuring the liv-

ing nativity in which all the children participate (you can never have too many shepherds and angels). This has been a particular Christmas Eve favorite for Govans families over the years.

Others may appreciate an invitation to Christmas Eve Communion at 8:00 p.m. or the 11:00 p.m. service which features our choir.

Still others may appreciate Pastor Sharp's Advent sermons on the theme "The Road to Bethlehem."

While you are thinking of friends you would like to invite, consider which of these services you and your family will be attending. Join with your church family and their guests as we celebrate Advent and Christmas together.

Christmas Celtic Concert and Silent Auction

Keltia, the Baltimore Celtic music ensemble, will perform a free concert at Govans Presbyterian Church on Saturday, December 6. Led by Jared Denhard, the *Keltia* concert will be part of the church's "Celtic Christmas" celebration which features the Concert, a silent auction, and wine, cheese, and dessert refreshments. It's all free and open to the public. Child care will be provided.

Doors will open at 6:00 pm for the silent auction featuring donated items, services and vacation

opportunities. "There will be something for everyone," said Kit Clark, one of the celebration co-chairs. The *Keltia* concert will at 7:30 in the church sanctuary.

Govans Presbyterian Church is widely known for its community involvement. It is one of the founding churches of GEDCO (the Govans Ecumenical Development Corporation), the developer of Stadium Place.

The church is located at 5828 York Road, just south of Northern Parkway and the Senator Theatre.

A HAPPY THOUGHT

"Words have weight, sound and appearance; it is only by considering these that you can write a sentence that is good to look at and good to listen to."

-Somerset Maugham

MARINERS

The Mariners Christmas Party will be held December 13th at the home of Charles and Marilyn Forbes, 13408 Bladon

Road at 6:30 p.m. Call the Forbes to tell them you will come (410) 667-4241 and what you will bring.

Cont'd from page 2—Hard to Merry Christmas

4:00 p.m. for a special time of worship and reflection. This worship service is to provide a setting where people can come together, acknowledge their pain, be reassured that they are not alone in their feelings - and that there is nothing wrong with the feelings they may be having - and to experience the message of God's unconditional love which is at the heart of this season.

By: Ed Richardson

Parents With Young Children

Our next event will be a Cookie Decorating Party and Potluck Dinner. Please join us on Saturday, December 13th from 5-8 p.m. in the church's multi-purpose room in the basement. Undecorated butter cookies, icing and decorations will be provided. However, feel free to bring your own undecorated sugar cookies, ginger bread men, etc. Each family will leave with a plate or two of cookies! Also, please bring a dish to share for dinner. Contacts: Alison Petersen (410-737-8355), Doris Shenk (410-433-3366) or Karen DeCamp (410-323-9780)

Automatic Debit Now Being Offered At Govans

Automatic Debit Govans is really into the 21st century now! For members who make regular pledge contributions we can arrange to automatically debit your bank account. Avoid any costs associated with writing checks, or missing a contribution while you are away. It's easy to set up. See our treasurer, Carol Hamilton, or her associate, Charles Forbes, any Sunday morning in the work room for more details, or to arrange for this innovative service.

By: Fred Gaede

LECTIONARY FOR THE LORD'S DAY: DECEMBER

12/7 *2nd Sunday of Advent*
Mal 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; Phil. 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6

12/14 *3rd Sunday of Advent*
Zeph. 3:14-20; Isa. 12:2-6; Phil. 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18

12/21 *4th Sunday of Advent*
Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:47-55 or Psa. 80:1-7; Heb. 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

12/24 *Christmas Eve*
Isa. 9:2-7; Ps. 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

12/25 *Christmas Day*
Dawn: Isa. 62:6-12; Ps. 97; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:(1-7) 8-20
Day: Isa. 52:7-10; Ps. 98; Heb. 1:1-4 (5-12); John 1:1-14

12/28 *1st Sunday After Christmas*
1 Sam. 2:18-20, 26; Ps. 148; Col. 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

It has been a tradition here at Govans to help our neighbors less fortunate than most of us, during the holiday season.

Beginning on November 30th, the traditional "Angel Board" will be set up in the Gallery with names and needs of folks whom we can assist to have a Merry Christmas.

This year we will be having about 5 families including 25 individuals from Family and children's Services, 10 individuals from Micah House, and 25 children's gifts for McKim Center.

Plan now to take an individual or two from the "Angel Board". We hope we can give everyone a Merrier Christmas.

Signing added to Service

The 11 p.m. service is now offered with sign-language translation for the hearing impaired, thanks to member Connie Newton. < Connie has a hearing impaired friend who expressed an interest in attending our services and Connie volunteered to provide the translation. She obtains advance copies of Pastor Sharp's sermons in preparation, and stands to the right of the pulpit, at ground level, during the service, signing. < "There are very few choices for a deaf person to go to church," the pastor says. < The church plans to place a number of advertisements in coming weeks, inviting other hearing-impaired people to attend.

From Pastor Sharp's Bookshelf



Beyond Belief: The Secret Gospel of Thomas – written by Elaine Pagels.

This book has been on the best seller list for a number of weeks - and it is no wonder. In a fascinating narrative, Dr. Pagel contrasts the Gospel of Thomas with the Gospel of John. The Gospel of Thomas is one of the lost gospels discovered among the Nag Hammadi scrolls in Egypt in the last century. Pagels suggests that we should recover Thomas as a way of experiencing the diversity of our religious history. The book gives a fascinating account as to how the gospels were selected for the canon of scriptures, and what happened to those (like Thomas) which were rejected. The book is semi-autobiographical as Pagels leads you on her own spiritual journey.

WORSHIP LEADERS FOR NOVEMBER

12/7 Robin Chandlee
12/14 JoAnn Copes
12/21 Fred Gaede
12/28 David Draper

If you are interested in being a Worship Leader or you would like your name removed from the list, contact the church office at 410-435-9188 or Caleb Corkery at 410-433-3366.

USHERS FOR NOVEMBER

9:30 a.m.
Ray Family
11:00 a.m.
Joe Hamilton, Capt.
Fred Gaede
Karen Duncan
Rosemary Lareau
Magdalene Fennell
John E. Markel

The Presbyterian Home of Maryland, Inc.

The Presbyterian Home of Maryland currently has rooms available for independent residents as well as those who require a moderate amount of assistance with the tasks of daily living. During the next two months, the Home will be brimming with holiday cheer and treasured decorations. This is wonderful time of year to visit with us! Please call Pam Patterson at 410-823-4622 for information or to arrange a tour. We look forward to seeing you!

Parents Afternoon Out!

Need to do that last minute shopping? Need a few hours just to yourself? Youth group is sponsoring a Parents afternoon out on Saturday, December 20 from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. We will provide activities, lunch and even naps as needed! (Ed has volunteered to lead the Nap Brigade!) Reservations are not needed but certainly helpful in planning the food and the craft. Call the church office at 410-435-9188 to sign up today!

Parent's Day Out

Parent's Day Out will be held on Saturday, **December 20th** from **10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** This event helps to support the Youth's fundraisers. The cost per child is **\$25.00**. The children will receive

lunch and entertainment. This time can be used to get any last minute Christmas shopping done. Reservations are preferred but not required. Call 410-435-9188 to let us know you are coming.

A Million Thanks To All Of You

Many thanks for the communion offering of August 3, 2003 for the Cairo YWCA Summer Camp Scholarship fund. I cashed the check of \$264.00 and it was converted to LE1320.00 which was a good amount. This will enable a number of children to enjoy a week away from the hot environs of a Cairo summer who would not otherwise be able to attend camp.

Jean Isteero

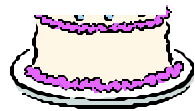
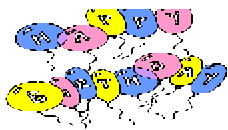


Summer Mission Trips

Summer mission trips are approaching quickly. We are working on possible trips to El Salvador, Montreat, Pine Ridge, SD and a possibility of attending Presbyterian Youth Triennium at Purdue University. SO, we will be sending out letters with information including dates, costs and other info. Please note* if you are interested in attending Montreat Youth Week, please let us know . Reservations are due by mid-January!

Confirmation Class 2004

Confirmation Class will begin in February 2004. WE will be contacting Middle school parents and youth. If you have not been confirmed and would like more information, contact Ed Richardson or Pastor Sharp.



Senior High News

2nd

Tom Clark

Ian Robinson

5th

Paul Blackiston, Jr.

Bob Cushman

Christina Campbell

Paul Hobbs

Owen Corkery

6th

Ralph Arnsdorf

Robin Trully

7th

Joe Hamilton

Andrew North

11th

David Bryant

12th

Catherine Burleson

13th

Eva Kaplan-
Leiserson

16th

Stuart Ray

Nene Orié

22nd

Ted Kruse

23rd

Ellen Leiserson

Alex Cox

24th

Bill Leard

25th

Jean Lowers

27th

Bettyann Phillips

Kathy Haduch

Brad Seabolt

28th

Ken Kaniecki

Lise Worthington

29th

Lena Thompson

Kenny Corson

Gerald Dorsey

Shannon Hopkins

30th

Caroline Knarr

Jeannette Hobbs

Beginning on December 7th, we will be hosting "First Sunday Film Series" for all senior high youth. We will meet at 10:10 a.m., following the first service. The morning will include a video and discussion and brunch. We will plan to conclude the morning by 12 noon when the second service is over.

The "First Sunday Film Series" will continue the first Sunday of the month

through the spring of 2004. On December 14th and 21st we will be making Christmas decorations for our shut-ins and friends in need. Please come for some social time and fun while we get creative.

Hope to see you each week throughout December.

By: Bonnie Thomson

Thank You From the Youth Group

A big Youth Group thank you to all the people who continue to support us in our fund raising endeavors. Your participation allows more youth to be involved in the trips!

Thank you once again.

LABYRINTH WALKS IN DECEMBER

The Indoor Labyrinth will be open each Thursday evening from December 4 through December 18th in Sharp Hall at 6:00 PM

The Outdoor Labyrinth will be lighted, with a guide present for outdoor walks on the Winter Solstice, December 21st at 7:00 PM, (The Solstice is actually at 2:04 AM the 22nd, but we will walk the evening before). Finally, the Outdoor Labyrinth will be open for walks and on Christmas Eve between the Services

The Indoor Labyrinth will also be available for walkers on Sunday, December 14th following the "Hard To Be Merry" Service at 4:00 PM.

ADULT OPTIONS

Exploring the Magnificat: Our Advent Study will focus on one passage, the Magnificat of Mary found in Luke 1:46-55. Our study will incorporate looking at the Magnificat through three different lenses: biblical narrative, music, and art. Ms. Barbara Stumpf, will lead this series. December 7, 14, and 21.

If your birthday does not show in your birth month we might not have it. Please call the office at 410-435-9188 and let us know when your birthday is, or you may e-mail it to gpcoffice@yahoo.com.



*Govans Presbyterian Church
5828 York Road
Baltimore, MD 21212*

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9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICE

With Contemporary Music (Coordinator: Mike Kirkpatrick)

10:10 a.m.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND ADULT OPTIONS

11:00 a.m.

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP

with Organ and Chancel Choir (Dir. Of Music, James Galdieri)

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CHILDCARE IS PROVIDED FOR BOTH SERVICES

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THE ELLEN MORRISS MEMORIAL LABYRINTH

is open from dawn to dusk daily



**CHRISTMAS EVE
SCHEDULE**

5:00 P.M.

***Children & Family Service
with Pageant***

8:00 P.M.

Communion Service

11:00 P.M.

***Candlelight Service with
Lessons & Carols***