

**TOLONO PRES NEWS**

DECEMBER 2009 EDITION

**INSPIRATIONAL VIDEOS AND QUOTES**

Music Video—"Wexford Carol" performed by Alison Krauss, Yo-Yo Ma, and Natalie MacMaster <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6-LgrRpM6I>

Music Video—"Silent Night" performed by Sixpence None the Richer [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6ml\\_YbgJsQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N6ml_YbgJsQ)

"You say grace before meals. All right. But I say grace before the concert and the opera, and grace before the play and pantomime, and grace before I open a book, and grace before sketching, painting, swimming, fencing, boxing, walking, playing, dancing and grace before I dip the pen in the ink." -- G. K. Chesterton

"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." -- Albert Einstein

"Christmas gift suggestions: To your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service. To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect." -- Oren Arnold

"The whole concept of God taking human shape had never made much sense to me. That was because, I realized one wonderful day, it was so simple. For people with bodies, important things like love have to be embodied. That's all. God had to be embodied, or else people with bodies would never in a trillion years understand about love." -- Kathleen Norris, *The Cloister Walk*

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**TOP STORIES**

- Time to celebrate the newest church member!
- There are many ways to celebrate the Christmas Season in the church!

**KNOW YOUR SESSION MEMBERS!**

<b>Chris Schweighart</b> - Clerk 485-5195	<b>Gary Fisher</b> - Buildings & Grounds 485-8120	<b>Rev. Kerry Bean</b> - Designated Pastor
<b>Delores Lucas</b> - Memorial 485-5197	<b>Barb Kelley</b> - Membership/Finance 485-5547	Cell phone number- 618-314-2298
<b>Jeannette Hulick</b> - Mission 485-5678	<b>Jim Wilson</b> - Buildings & Grounds/Worship 485-5730	Email address- kerrybean@frontiernet.net
<b>Susie Fisher</b> - CE/ Personnel 485-5358	<b>Jeri Brooks</b> - Worship/ Buildings & Grounds 637-5464	Skype account: Kerrybean1
<b>Cheryl Smith</b> - Treasurer/ Finance/Personnel 898-4149		

## PASTOR'S PAGE

## It's Also Blessed to Receive

Every week during Sunday worship (just prior to the offering) I mention that we have received blessing upon blessing. Advent and Christmas are wonderful times to remember just how true that is.

It has always been one of the foundational teachings of the Christian faith that we have received grace through Jesus Christ as a *gift* from God. Such grace is not earned, even if we follow the rules of the law very closely. It's not a matter of how righteous we are, because we can never be righteous enough. All the good works we do have their value, but God does not keep a ledger of our good deeds like a divine accountant or Santa Claus. Even our desire to do good- and to please God- comes from God in the first place.

Actually, everything is a gift from God, when you think about it. And that's what I hope you will do during the coming days and weeks: take the time to reflect how God is present in every aspect of our lives. To remember that every moment is gift- and that God's desire is that we find hope and peace and love and joy throughout our lives.

I'm not trying to sound like a Hallmark Christmas card here. In fact, what I'm proposing is really pretty profound. If we can wrap our hearts and minds around the realization that our lives are a *continuing* blessing from the hand of God, then we can begin to appreciate just how holy those lives (by their very nature) really are. This is very mysterious, even to the point that it's *incarnational*.

And that's what the birth of Jesus Christ is: God becoming human and living among us.

My point is: that even two thousand years later, God *still* lives among us, through the Holy Spirit and through the gifts of life, peace, hope, love, and joy. And so if we are thankful for those gifts- and inspired, too- then we will be ready to be blessings to a world that so needs to feel blessed. Through God we can become instruments of peace. We can bring healing where there is brokenness, and light to those trapped in the dark.

This Advent and this Christmas, I wish us all the blessing of a grateful spirit- and a heart ready to follow Christ wherever he leads us in the days to come.

Peace,

*Rev. Kerry Bean*, Designated Pastor



## MISSION MOMENTS

### Clothing Drive

Thanks to the generosity of members and friends, we sent eight large boxes of warm winter clothing to the Native American Heritage Association for distribution to the Lakota reservations they serve. Thanks to all to participated either by donating clothing or helping with postage!

### Operation Christmas Child (the shoebox project)

Wow! Between members of our congregation and the kids at WYN, we wrapped, assembled, and packed 38 shoeboxes for children this year! That is amazing! They have been delivered to Meadowbrook Church in Champaign, who then ships them out to the larger distribution centers to be sent around the world. I gathered all the donations for postage for the shoeboxes (thank you!) and made one large donation online. Donating the shipping fees online allowed us to receive a tracking number, which was attached to each box. Once the boxes are received, an email will be sent to me telling me where each box ended up! Stay tuned to hear where our boxes went!

### Christmas Joy Offering

The annual Christmas Joy Offering will be collected on Sunday, December 20. Fifty percent of the receipts to the Christmas Joy Offering are distributed to the Board of Pensions for assistance programs that provide support to retired and active church workers and their spouses and families. The other fifty percent supports Presbyterian-related racial ethnic education through the General Assembly Council. To learn more about this important offering, go to: <http://www.pcusa.org/cjoffering/about.htm>

### Christmas Giving Tree

Listen for announcements in church about our annual Christmas Giving Tree, where we help provide Christmas gifts for area children in need.

## CHRISTIAN EDUCATION REPORT

### WYN

Another semester has flown by for the WYN program! We averaged about 20-25 elementary students and 10-15 junior high students each Wednesday night. We studied the stories of Esther, Daniel in the Lions' Den, and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the Fiery Furnace and learned, through games, crafts, cooking, science, drama, music, and other lessons, about these amazingly strong and faithful followers of God. If your child attended WYN this semester, see if he or she can tell you something about these stories. Thanks to all the adults who helped with WYN; we truly could not do this program without all of you! A special thanks also to all those who donated items for the shoebox project (Operation Christmas Child). We sent 38 shoeboxes!

### Children's Christmas Play

Our annual Children's Christmas Play will be performed during worship on Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. Tamara Kirby is directing this year's play, which follows the traditional nativity story. If you know a child interested in participating or you are willing to help, please contact Tamara at 402-5041. The rehearsal schedule is on page 5 of the newsletter.

**A NEW BABY IN THE CHURCH!**

The Brooks Family would like to announce the newest addition to the church family! Joseph Brooks Kamradt was born November 15 at 4:58am. He weighed 7lbs 6 oz and was 21 inches long. Proud parents, Kyle and Staci Kamradt, and baby are all doing wonderful. If you missed meeting 'Joey' at the Thanksgiving Dinner, please feel free to stop by the church office during Staci's office hours, where he will be a frequent visitor.

**A NOTE FROM THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE**

A **big thank you goes out to our members** for giving what they did for the special offering. It just goes to show God does work through all of us to make things happen when really needed.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for Christmas Caroling on Sunday Dec 13<sup>th</sup> 3pm. Please meet at the church. If there is anyone you think may need a visit let one of the session members know so we are sure to include them.

**ADVENT VESPER SERVICES**

There will be a series of Advent worships on Wednesday evenings at the church. The time is 6:30pm. They'll be very simple services, based on a beautiful resource called the Book of Daily Prayer (now part of our Book of Common Worship). Think a few brief prayers, a hymn or two, and a devotional reading- and no sermons!

I hope you can join me (Pastor Kerry) for this time of worship- in the sanctuary. It's all about hope- and helping us open up to the true Christmas Spirit.

**A NOTE FROM THE PRESBYTERY MEETING**

Presbytery met in Decatur on Nov 19 at Westminster Church near the Millikin Campus. The body voted to share the expenses of any youth interested in attending the Triennium in 2010. We heard the Millikin Choir sing beautifully, an entertaining report on Camp Carew by Rev Bean, and a miraculous report on well digging in Malawi, Zambia, and Tanzania by Jay Logan. In nine short weeks last summer volunteers dug 2066 wells to bring clean water to over 400,000 people.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Smith

# DECEMBER 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2 Vesper Service 6:30pm	3	4	5
6 Worship 10:30am	7	8 7pm Session	9 Vesper Service 6:30pm	10	11	12
13 *** Worship 10:30am	14	15	16 Vesper Service 6:30pm	17	18	19
20 *** Worship 10:30am	21 Friends Lunch	22	23 Vesper Service 6:30pm	24 Christ- mas Eve Serv. 5pm	25 Merry Christmas!	26
27 Worship 10:30am	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve		

## Birthdays!

12/1 Jamie Evans  
12/1 Josh Hawn  
12/11 Lindsay Brooks  
12/17 Celeste Taylor  
12/22 Rose Appl

## More important events.....

December 13th Caroling 3pm and Special Congregational Meeting after Worship

December 20th Christmas Play

Practice Schedule: Sunday, Dec. 6 – 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 13 – 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (pizza lunch will be served)

Saturday, Dec. 19 – 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (dress rehearsal)

Sunday, Dec. 20 – performers should arrive at 9:45 a.m., church begins at 10:30 a.m.

**Lay Leaders** 12-6 Bonnie Woolard 12-13 Jeff Fisher  
12-20 Susie Fisher 12-27 Jeannette Hulick

## Anniversaries!

12/25 Marvin and Dorothy Little  
12/27 Jay and Beth Rogers

New Church Website-

<http://www.tolonopresbyterian.org>

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH OF TOLONO**

104 E. Vine St.

Tolono, IL 61880

Phone: 217-485-3725

Email: [tolonopres@yahoo.com](mailto:tolonopres@yahoo.com)

Worship is every Sunday at 10:30 am.

Adult Sunday School is at 9:15am and Children Sunday School is at 9:30am.

The Quilting Group meets every Wednesday at 1pm in the church basement. All are welcome!

The Friends of the Church meet for lunch of the third Monday of each month at 11:30am at the Hometown Buffet on North Prospect in Champaign. Everyone is welcome to join!

Please visit our new website for more information! [www.tolonopresbyterian.org](http://www.tolonopresbyterian.org)