

The Bellringer

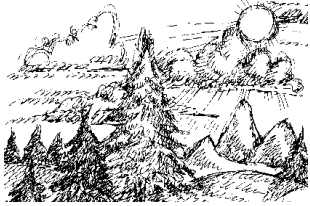


DECEMBER 2011

Nicolls Memorial Presbyterian Church

PO Box 605, 228 Crosby Blvd., Old Forge, NY 13420

Phone: 369-3475 email: nicolls@frontiernet.net web site: www.nicolls.org



Mountain Reflections *by Rev. Lawrence Bartel*

Riddle 1 – *What is it called when 185 people from 12 countries sing the same piece of music without even meeting?*

Answer – A choir!

The Back Story – Eric Whitacre is a contemporary composer and conductor. In May of 2009 he received a digital video of a young girl singing one of his choral pieces. In his own words, “I was struck by the beauty, intimacy, and the sweetness of it. I thought it would be amazing if we could get a hundred people to do this and cut it all together and create a virtual choir.”

Whitacre took a risk. He went into a studio and conducted his composition “Lux Aurumque” piece in total silence. He only heard the music in his head. After the video was finished, Whitacre uploaded the video onto YouTube. He sent out a call to singers across the world.

The response overwhelmed him. 185 singers from 12 different countries recorded themselves singing the same piece of music as he conducted them from the YouTube video. Each of the singers sent their recording to Whitacre who, with a team, set about blending their voices and creating a collage of their images.

Upon viewing the finished video for the first time, Whitacre shared, “When I saw the finished video for the first time I actually teared up. The intimacy of all the faces, the sound of the singing, the obvious poetic symbolism about our shared humanity and our need to connect; all of it completely overwhelmed me.”

Inspired by the first virtual choir Whitacre embarked on a second piece, “Sleep” by again calling on singers around the world. Over 2000 people from 58 countries combined their vocal artistry to create another phenomenal musical experience!

(Enjoy both of these pieces by typing the name “Eric Whitacre” and the song title into your internet search engine.)

Riddle 2 – *What is it called when dozens of people of all ages are inspired to make a sacred story of scripture come alive through paper and paint, clay and crayons?*

Answer – A Christmas Story!

The Back Story – Throughout worship this summer, we experienced how “...we are God’s work of art created in Christ Jesus,” (Ephesians 2:10). We are creators fashioned by the great Creator. We are artists gifted by the finest Artist. This Advent, we will prepare for Christmas Eve with as much of a sense of collaboration as Eric Whitacre’s virtual choirs.

The difference is this – you are invited to create a piece of art inspired by a scene in the Christmas story as unique and beautiful as you. You are invited to become a storyteller of this good news of great joy along with every person in the congregation.

On Sunday, December 4, you are enthusiastically invited to a Advent workshop after the 10:00 am worship service. Everything will be ready for you to create a piece of art. There will be seasoned artists among us to offer guidance. Perhaps you will be inspired to make a collage about the announcement to Mary. You may be drawn to paint a simple scene from the journey to Bethlehem. You may wish to make a play-doh sculpture of the stable. Your artwork as well as pieces from others in the congregation will then be united to tell one Christmas story.

This story of God’s great love for us will be featured at our family Christmas Eve service. While the gospel story is told through the spoken word, the story of Jesus’ birth will come to life as the images of our original artwork are projected for all to enjoy. The actual pieces of artwork will then be on display for everyone to get a closer look following both Christmas Eve services.

Bring your gifts on Sunday, December 4th to tell a part of the Christmas story that only you can tell.

Become, once again, a unique part of the greatest story ever told!

Congregational Sabbatical Ideas Sought

by Star Livingstone for the Sabbatical Team



Now that we know the time, place, duration and funding for Pastor Lawrence's sabbatical, the sabbatical team is turning its attention to exploring ways we here at home may "Walk with God on Holy Ground." We hope in the next three months as the Bartels make reservations, buy tickets, organize and pack for their trip, we all will be preparing to make the journey at home. Your thoughts and ideas are needed to shape the spiritual disciplines we may use to make our walk here more mindful. One of the offerings available will be a special lending library of reading material relevant to our theme. If you have a title to share please let us know. We will be ordering books in January.

Journaling the journey is another possibility. If you are in the habit of journaling the team would like to know what makes it work for you. Do you use a particular kind of notebook or paper, have a special time for writing, do it in conjunction with reading or meditation? If you have never kept a journal but think you might like to try it during this sabbatical time, what are your questions, doubts, possible roadblocks? We are seeking your comments on journaling specifically at this time but all ideas are very welcome and helpful to us as we consider what to offer in the way of spiritual food for the journey. Your idea may be just the blessing someone else needs. Feel free to contact any member of the team or drop off a message in the office. Thank you.

USHERS

THIS MONTH

December 4

Ellen & Jeremy Dreja
Deb Elmer
Kathy Riehle

December 11

Polly & Jordan Yesuras
Lois Lowenberg
Hailey Craig

December 18

Carolyn & Greg O'Hara
Sue Norris
Mary Burke

December 24

Damon Kull
Patrick Venetz
Kelsey Kiefer
Alex Levi
Jordan Levi

December 25

Betty Stem
George Lapinsky

Transitions

Each month we share "transitional experiences" within the Niccolls family. Please call the church for more information or if you have an individual to add.

Compassion

Brandon Beal – home
Bob Decker - home
Grace Flock – home
Bob Liddle – home
Sheila White - home
Ellen Wilcox – home



Elders and Deacons

Elders serving on Session:

Judy Barker	Deb Langworthy
Jean Bird (winter)	Lois Lowenberg
Dave Durfee (summer)	Sue Mahoney
Olin Eddy	MaryAnn Nelson
Darwin Johnston (summer)	Tom Ryan (winter)
Mallory Kleps	Nadine Sanders
George Lapinsky	Polly Yesuras (winter)
Jeff Livingstone (winter)	

Deacons serving on the Board of Deacons:

Katie Boesché	Patty Mahardy
Mary Durfee (summer)	Ann Powley
Kristin Frymire (winter)	Kathy Riehle
Linda Hippisley	Lynda Ryan (summer)
Marilyn Hurlbutt (summer)	Nancy Venetz
Therá Levi (winter)	Jordan Yesuras (winter)

Please lift all of our church leaders up in prayer as they cultivate grace-filled ministry and mission throughout the entire Niccolls fellowship.

Stewardship Snapshot as of October 31st

Oct. 2011 Revenue	\$36,476.16
Oct. 2011 Expenses	<u>\$10,009.74</u>
Revenue less Expenses	\$26,466.42
Fiscal Year 2011-12 Revenue	\$36,476.16
Fiscal Year 2011-12 Expenses	<u>\$10,009.74</u>
Fiscal Year Revenue less Expenses	\$26,466.42

Advent and Christmas Schedule

All are invited to attend and/or participate in any and all events!



- Sat. Dec. 3 10:00 a.m. – decorating the church
- Sun. Dec. 4 11:15 a.m. – soup luncheon (bring bread to share if you're able) and Advent Workshop
- Tues. Dec.13 7:00 p.m. – Service of Remembrance
- Sat. Dec. 17 2:00 p.m. – “A World of Christmas” at View – Niccolls Choir and Adirondack Community Chorus
- Sat. Dec. 24 5:30 p.m. – Family Christmas Eve Service
10:00 p.m. – Candlelight Communion Service
- Sun. Dec. 25 Christmas Day – one service at 10:00 a.m.—come as you are and share special Christmas memories
- Sun. Jan 1 The first day of a brand new year – one service at 10:00 a.m.



ORDER YOUR

Poinsettias

Bring Life and Beauty

to our sanctuary as we prepare for Christmas. Order your poinsettias now for our display in the

Sanctuary through the Christmas season. To order a poinsettia please contact the church office at 369-3475 by Thursday, December 8th. Please let us know the name of the loved one your plant will honor or remember so we may include it in the Christmas bulletins. The plants are \$14 each.

Alternative Christmas Market Report

by Joanne Strike for the Mission Committee

The Alternative Christmas Market has been growing every year. This year's Market on Sunday, November 20th, attracted many people from the community as well as our faithful Niccolls' supporters. As our Market grows, we help more artisans who are supporting their families by their workmanship. Thank you to everyone who purchased a craft.



The Alternative Christmas Market not only supports artisans and their families, it also supports their co-ops and communities. These groups provide training in their craft and in the business skills needed to market their products.

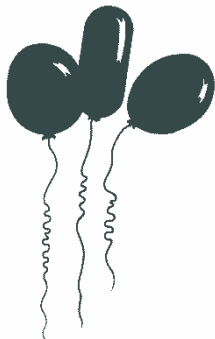
The Alternative Christmas Market also sold Equal Exchange coffee, tea, cocoa and chocolate. These sales enable farmers to produce and market their crop without child exploitation. Farmers in Fair Trade Co-ops can expand their farms, purchase equipment, and send their children to school with the money they earn. A huge thank you to Mary Sauer Burke for taking over our Equal Exchange coffee, tea, cocoa and chocolate sales.

Church World Service gave us a chance to buy a gift for someone who needs it in honor of a special friend or loved one. Ashley André organized this part of our market this year including a large poster explaining the gifts that can be purchased and the benefits of the gifts. Donations were received to benefit many specific projects in developing countries. Thank you to all who donated.

Thank you also to all those who helped to set up the beautiful displays, to those who helped on the day of the Market, and to Mary Moore for lots of help at various points along the way. This is always a community effort.

DECEMBER Birthdays:

Allyson Brosemer	12/3
Jeremy Dreja	12/9
Sue Norris	12/9
Naomi Kelly	12/12
Gregory Hunkins	12/17
Jackie Rudolph	12/18
Joanne Strike	12/19
Caitlin Bailey	12/21
Philip Pepper	12/26
Tommy Cooper	12/27
John Hogan	12/28
Casey Venetz	12/28
Elise LaGrange	12/29



Niccolls Women's Fellowship

by Ruth Brussel and Ginny Milton

November was busy. We held a cookie walk at the Holiday Bazaar and, combined with many baskets (thanks to Ellen) filled with goodies that were auctioned off, we had a very successful day for our giving budget. Once again, we voted to promote the Samaritans Purse Christmas boxes for children around the world. We placed many boxes on a table and they all disappeared and came back loaded with goodies for ages 2 to 14. With your support we were able to take 48 full boxes to Boonville to load into the Operation Christmas Child truck. Thank you!

We were honored by CAP-21 at the Tip of the Cap awards with a beautiful framed certificate for our work in the community. None of this would be possible without our church family behind us. We hope to have it on display in the Social Room soon.

Our last project for the year is a Soup Sunday on Dec. 4th followed by an Advent Workshop led by the worship committee. It will be for all ages and will be a lot of fun. Please stay and feed your body and soul and experience a wonder fellowship.

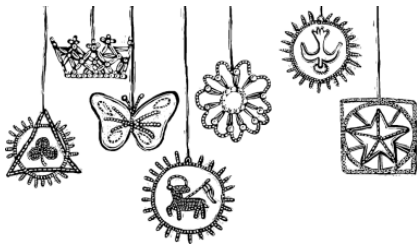
Lani Ulrich invited the Women's Fellowship and others to her home for tea and cookies and a travelogue of Lani & Jim's Scandinavian trip. It was an armchair view of Norway, Sweden and Denmark. We even got to meet Ruth's cousin May and her husband Per Kristen in their Oslo Home. Thanks, Lani, for sharing your trip with us. We will be sharing our bounty from our treasury before year's end and will report this next month.

We will be having our annual Christmas luncheon on Monday, December 5th at Barb & Reed Proper's beautifully decorated home. So, ladies, plan to join us for this fun time together. Call Ruth if you want to know what kind of dish to bring.



Thrift Shop News

by Deborah Elmer for the Thrift Shop Team



How many shopping days 'til Christmas?

With days getting shorter, gas costs increasing, and Christmas lists as long as your arm, be sure to make the Thrift Shop your first stop for holiday shopping. Not only do we have enormous quantities of Christmas decorations to brighten your home, we also have toys guaranteed to bring smiles to your children's faces, china and glassware to enhance your holiday table settings, and small tools and electronics that are sure to please the handyman. Don't forget the joy of reading ~ our shelves are stocked with books for every age and interest.

Our clothing racks are filled with first-rate coats and jackets, sweaters, slacks, and tops for men, women, and children. Need shoes or boots, hats and gloves? We have those, too. And ~ if you're planning to step out on the town this season, you'll light up the room in our holiday apparel!

Please check below for shopping days and hours. We look forward to seeing you in the Niccolls Boutique!

December Thrift Shop Days and Hours

With the exception of December 23rd and 24th, the Thrift Shop will be open this month every Friday and Saturday at the times listed below:

Fridays 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon and 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Saturdays 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Dates to note: December 16 & 17 BAG DAYS/ALL CHRISTMAS ITEMS FREE

December 23 & 24 THRIFT SHOP CLOSED

Christmas Greetings to Our Patrons

May you sing with the angels and dance with the shepherds, may your hearts be filled with joy and wonder as we celebrate the birth of the Holy Child of Bethlehem, our Redeemer and King!

Sponsor an Education for an African Child

Education is the key to the future for African children. Without a decent education many children are condemned to a future of extreme poverty. This is especially true in rural Africa. Many children have no access to a school. When government schools are available they are often poor with large classes and untrained teachers. Even when such schools are available some children are excluded because they cannot afford books or uniforms.

Nicolls has partnered with Amazing Grace Christian Assembly in Uganda to help educate the children in one such African village, Bugala. For the last several years, through the ***Hands of Mercy Scholarship Fund***, we have provided scholarships for Bugala children to attend school. Last year we provided scholarships for twenty two children. This year we would like to be able to provide twenty five scholarships. To do this we need more sponsors. And we need current sponsors to renew their sponsorships. If you would like to sponsor a year of education for an African child or contribute to the scholarship fund please complete the form below and return it to the church office along with a check. Consider making a Christmas gift of a scholarship on behalf of a friend or relative. For more information contact kas14@cornell.edu



THANKS!

I would like to help pay the school fees of a Ugandan child. I am making a
One time contribution to the scholarship fund of \$ _____
A regular contribution to the scholarship fund of \$ _____ per year

I would like to support a particular child
At the rate of \$225 per year for an elementary school child _____
At the rate of \$300 per year for a secondary school child _____

This is renewal. My child's name is _____

I would like to pay annually _____, three times a year _____

My name and address are:

My email address is:



Opportunities for Giving This Christmas

Hope House

Once again this year, we will be collecting items for Hope House. Please mark them "Hope House," leave them in the church office or take them down to the Thrift Shop sorting area.

Hope House Wish List

- Hot Chocolate, Coffee, Tea Bags
- V8 Juice
- Toiletries – all kinds
- 9" Styrofoam Plates, 6" Paper Plates, Coffee Cups, Toilet Paper, Hand Soap
- Fans for summer lending
- Powdered creamer
- Used books especially children's
- Hot chocolate packets
- Postage stamps

Remember those
who are less
fortunate



The Deacons of Niccolls Church

You may wish to remember the Niccolls Deacons in your holiday giving this year. They are putting together Christmas "baskets" for many families this month and the Food Pantry as well as their supply of gift cards from Kinney's, Diorio's, and Fastrac (gas) will be depleted. A monetary donation will help most. Please make your check out to The Deacons of Niccolls Church and put it in the collection plate during worship, leave it on the secretary's desk or mail to PO Box 605, Old Forge, NY 13420. Also needed are non-perishable items for the Food Pantry – especially protein foods such as peanut butter and canned meats. There is a basket just inside the back door for Food Pantry donations.

Hospice & Palliative Care, Inc.

Support their "Light Up a Life" program by giving a suggested donation of \$10. There will be a holiday tree at Kinney Drugs in Old Forge from December 5th through 11th. With your donation to "Light Up a Life" they will place a personalized ornament in honor or memory of a loved one on the tree in the location of your choice.

Hospice & Palliative Care, Inc. is an independent, non-profit, comprehensive health care program for people with a life expectancy of 6 months or fewer. Trained professionals and volunteers offer a life-enhancing support system designed to promote quality of life and enable the patient to remain at home where caregivers receive instruction and support from Hospice Care staff in caring for their loved ones.