

The Evangel
Newsletter of Community Presbyterian Church
Lake City, Colorado
November/December 2010



Pastor Rick's Message: Christmas 2010 "From A Stable..."

As our family prepares to spend our first Christmas with your families we give thanks to God for God having brought us together. Walking the roads of the Church is always interesting as I firmly believe that God was the first Travel Agent. From the very beginnings of the Bible, God seems always to be in the process of moving people around. From moving Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden to moving Abraham into the world from his home in what is now the country of Iraq, to the apostles, the Saints, the martyrs, and the believers through all time and places, God is never the God of the status-quo. Rather God is a moving, relational, up-close-and-personal God who is always moving among God's people, bringing in and sending forth. And, now God has brought us together and for that we give thanks during this Christmas Season.

It is appropriate that this time of the year is a time to pause and reflect. Indeed, our very decorations remind us of our Christian history and heritage and the inherent meaning in so many of those decorations. The evergreens we hang remind us of their being "ever-green." "Green" is the color of everlasting life, just as the evergreens never lose their color, so God has promised us everlasting life. The circle of the wreath reminds us that God's love for us is never-ending. A wreath has no beginning and it has no end, just as a circle has no beginning or end. The lights on our tree symbolize Christ as the light of the world and also the fact that the light always and forever overcomes the darkness. Candles in the window are both an old Irish custom of hospitality meaning that a weary traveler may enter that house for the evening, and the candles also reflect God's light shining in our lives. (In case you are wondering, the mistletoe did not get into this select list; the mistletoe was deemed "too pagan" by the early Church, so it is not assigned a theological significance or meaning. Sorry about that.) Red lights remind us of the blood of Christ shed for us; green lights, again for everlasting life; blue lights are the color of eternity as deemed by the Church; white lights show us the sinlessness and purity of Christ; purple lights are the colors of royalty. Our Christian history and heritage surround our decorations.

And, yes, even Santa Claus has a strong Christian origin. Back in the early years in a part of the world known as "Asia Minor", now known as the country of "Turkey", there was a man of the Church named Nicholas who was very good and a very devout servant of the Church. He went around each Christmas dropping food and dowries through the chimneys (house were built much shorter to the ground then and access to the chimney was much easier than now) to people of the town and to families who had daughters of "marriageable" age who might be able to afford a proper dowry for the

coming spring or summer wedding. Yes, he did this each and every December; yes, he did dress in bright, bright red; yes, he did have a white beard; yes, he did carry the gifts in a large sack. No, there were no reindeer. Sorry about that Dancer and Prancer and all the rest of you - you reindeer came later. The Church knows him as "Saint Nicholas" and we know him as Santa Claus. In times to come we will explore together the customs of the Season (and there are many more), that give evidence of Christian historical origins that sometimes have been lost or neglected or ignored by society. Still, much of what we do to celebrate the Christmas Season have their origins deep, deep in Christian history and need to be brought forth and expanded into our lives today. There are also Christian origins to many of the Holidays (remember the word "Holiday" is a corruption of the Olde English word "Holy Day"), and there are customs and sights that reflect their Christian origin. We will be exploring those as we go through the Church year.

So, in this Season of Christmas of bright lights and presents and times with families, let us pause, reflect, and celebrate and remember the birth of our Savior. Let us journey yet once again to Bethlehem and behold the wonder. The story is fresh and bright and new each and every year. The old story comes alive again every year as we behold the wonder of a child's birth. Let us remember that God chose to reveal God's Son to the world through a teen-age young lady and a carpenter, to poor shepherds abiding in the fields. You all remember when Prince William and Prince Harry were born to Charles and Diana. No stable. Rather, the best hospital England had to offer. No starry, starry night. Rather, the bright, efficient lights of a modern delivery room. No shepherds, some of the poorest occupants of the land in attendance. Rather, maids and gentlemen and courtiers and attendants along with Diana and Charles and rest of the Royal Family. Remember seeing any donkeys or cows when William or Harry was born? I don't think so. Horses, yes, but those were the Coldstream Guards marching in celebration. No dark, silent night with a birth largely un-noticed. Rather, the news was proclaimed by Town Criers and the mass media throughout the land and, indeed, throughout the world. No angels proclaiming God's glory. Rather, the people of the land celebrating the birth of, as they call it, "an heir and a spare." No proclamation from the stable to the world. Rather, a proclamation from Buckingham Palace and Her Royal Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. How different! How very different! Remember the picture of Jesus and Joseph and Mary immediately after the birth of Jesus in the stable? No, you don't, you can't, it didn't happen. Remember the picture of the entire Royal Family on one of the balconies of Buckingham Palace with Princess Diana proudly holding the newly born Prince? Of course, you do as it is one of the most celebrated pictures of the last century. How different! How very different! How different God does things from the way the world does things! How different from the birth of a Prince of England and the British Commonwealth of Nations from the birth of the Saviour of the World! How different the announcements of God from the announcements of the world! Such is the way of the world and such is the way of God. How different. How very different.

And that is our call in this Christmas Season: to remember what God has done, what God is doing now, and what God will do in the future. Yes, the shepherds still abide in their fields. Yes, the angels still bend low to the earth with their wings fluttering. Yes, the night is still silent, and dark, and beautiful and starry. Yes, God does still give gifts to God's people. Yes, Jesus Christ does come close to us. Yes, the Christmas Story is

real. Yes, belief is real. And perhaps, perhaps - maybe, just maybe (and I think this is most certainly true) - it is so much easier to hear God's voice in the midst of a silent, still, starry, starry night in the midst of either Lake City or Bethlehem than it is in the hustle and bustle of busy Boston or London. God is here. God is present. The invitation is to all. Come, worship the child who grew up to be something much more than was originally anticipated by anyone but Mary and Joseph and prophets.

If you were in Bethlehem this Christmas Season or any other time, you could stand at the precise place where tradition tells us Jesus was born. Many people bow at that place. That is highly appropriate - bowing before Royalty. However, in Bethlehem people bow before the King of kings and the Lord of lords. (Note the selective capitalization of those words; that is highly intentional.) The King is Jesus; the Lord is Jesus; the kings and the lords of the earth bow before this King born to peasant parents in a lowly stable on a dark night with only animals and shepherds in attendance. Then, the heavens were split and the angels appeared announcing a birth that would change history forever and ever - and this Kingdom would have no end forever and ever. Thanks be to God for this most remarkable, most miraculous, most unexpected, most un-anticipated way of doing things. How different. How very different. How like God!

Merry Christmas from our family to yours - Peace on Earth!

PNC Update

We are all delighted that our church has been joined by the Underwood family – Pastor Rick, his wife Faye, son Michael, daughter Meredith, and eleven-year-old Buddy the Rocky Mountain Wonder Dog. Rick preached his first sermon as our Pastor on December 5, one day after the family arrived from a six day adventurous trek with a U-Haul, across America from Boston to Lake City. The family is in the process of getting settled into the Manse and we are excited to have them all with us!

A Thank-you to John Roose

The Session and PNC want to especially thank John Roose for his months of help and devotion to CPC during the time of our pastor search. His help in giving us a sense of weekly continuity and his thoughtful sermons were priceless. Many, many thanks John!

Columbarium Update

The highly anticipated Columbarium has broken ground! Leo Coniglio is busy building the foundation and concrete support around the core structure that is in place in the northeast corner of the church yard. The location is under pine and cottonwood trees and will be enclosed with a metal fence. Benches and wildflower gardens will be added this spring. Leo will begin an artistic moss-rock facing of the columbarium and a flagstone path as weather allows. Thanks to Jay Farrar, Mary Farrar, and John Roose for their hours of work on the project.

Lake City Student Ministry

The Lake City Student Ministry Counsel has hired a new director to replace our former youth directors Seth and Crystal Dady. Brannon Brown and his wife Melanie have moved from Washington DC to take over the multi-denominational student ministry. Brannon is the son of seasonal resident Randy Brown and has spent time in Lake City working at Camp Redcloud and the San Juan Soda Company. We are delighted to have Brannon and Melanie join us and look forward to many future events together.

A majority of Lake City students take part in the exciting, educational, and charitable activities offered by Epic and KLUB. Earlier this year, Epic students were involved with the Pink Flamingo Fundraiser that was very successful. The Epic group was also busy in November packing gift boxes for children ages 2-14 that will be sent to 40 different countries as part of the "Samaritan's Purse" program. A total of 27 boxes were packed with school supplies, candy, toys and hygiene items. Way to go!

KLUB News

Attendance has been outstanding for KLUB's wonderful weekly get-togethers at CPC. Amy Humphreys is doing a wonderful job with the youth of Lake City and has a dedicated staff of helpers. We are very grateful for all of you!

KLUB Christmas Program

The KLUB Christmas Program was held December 15th at 5:00 pm in the sanctuary. The program was followed by refreshments in Darley Hall. The performance was delightful with outstanding presentations by all the children. Thanks to all the KLUB adult volunteers, the great kids and their parents.

Lake City Community Choir

The annual Christmas Concert by the choir is scheduled for 7:00 pm on Saturday, December 18 in our sanctuary. Coffee and refreshments will follow in Darley Hall. Please join us for this wonderful event!

Service of Lessons and Carols

The Service of Lessons and Carols is planned for December 24th at 7:00 pm in our sanctuary. Scripture passages are interspersed with the singing of carols. The service ends with the lighting of congregational candles and the singing of "Silent Night."

2010 Mission Committee Report

Each year CPC gives Student Ministries \$10,000 to help support their vital ecumenical outreach in our community. This amount is above what is budgeted each year for missional giving. In the budget for 2010, session agreed to allocate an additional \$10,400 to missions. We support Christian Community Services each year with a \$1,200 donation, Public Health with food vouchers for milk, eggs and bread, and supplement One Great Hour of Sharing and Christmas Joy (special offerings). These donations come out of the \$10,400 allocation. That left us this year with \$8,000 to support other missions.

The committee (CPC/MMC☺) has the responsibility of looking into possible opportunities for giving both locally and internationally. The committee consisted of John and Shelby Bonner, Jay and Mary Farrar, Lynn Hudgeons, and Rick Underwood. This year we have selected the following recipients that were approved by Session.

Lake City Christian Community Service (CCS) - \$1,000 (additional help)

Wee Care - \$2,000 (to be used as needed and for the building fund)

Public Health - \$500 additional

PC(USA) Self Development of People - \$1,000

Heifer Project - \$1,000 for the Milk Menagerie collection

American Indian Christian Mission (Show Low, AZ) - \$2,500

Our thanks to all of you who make this important outreach possible with your generous giving and support. Blessings to all of you.

Mary Farrar, Committee Chair

Reading through the Bible Study

This weekly Wednesday Bible Study continues with participants that are here full-time and others that are keeping in touch by e-mail. Karen Roose is leading this ambitious and insightful study.

Tuesday Book Study

The Tuesday Book Study group will resume in January. Everyone is welcome! See John Roose for more information.

Community Men's Prayer Breakfast

The weekly Thursday prayer breakfast continues at the Baptist Fellowship Hall. All of the men of Lake City are invited to gather for breakfast, fellowship, prayer, and informal Bible study. Come join them at 6:30 every Thursday morning!

To the Members, Family and Friends of Community Presbyterian Church

November 10, 2010

Leaving Boston on I-93, turning onto Mass 3, down across the Sagamore Bridge over the Cape Cod Canal in Buzzard's Bay, and "onto Cape" as the locals call it. Travel the highway to the Barnstable/Hyannis exit and enter the picturesque and historic seaport community of Hyannisport. As I write this it is a dull and gray and gloomy day in Hyannisport. The wind sweeps the silent streets, the rain sputters from the heavens, and the shops are closed and shuttered, the people having disappeared into the shadows of winter. The Hy-Line Ferry has completed its last trip of the day to Nantucket and is now dark. Fishing boats bobble gently in the winter waters. The summer season is gone, day is done, and winter has come.

As I reflect on this, I see a parallel. The summer season is gone both in Massachusetts and in Colorado. Now is the new time of winter, a time of silence and beauty, a time of peace and calm, a respite from the hectic life of summer. Now, something new is being born. Something Holy. Something Sacred. Ecclesiastes assures us that to everything there is a season. The merry, festive, jolly summer season has gone from Cape Cod and Hyannisport. Likewise the season for the lives of the Underwood family in Massachusetts has drawn to an end. The fishing boats which set out so often for new horizons and adventures on the open waters now remain in their slips. The Underwood family begins to sail away from Massachusetts to new horizons and new adventures...with you, the good people of Lake City, Colorado. Those who go down to the sea in ships are resting for this time; the Underwood family is taking some time off as well as we begin to think about our voyage to you. From the rocky, sandy shores of New England to the Heart of the Golden West, seasons are changing for you and for us as well. Yes, we will return to New England from time to time. Boston is a fantastic city and Cape Cod (yes, named for a fish) and Cape Ann (named for the mother of King Charles) have been wonderful places for us, but they will never again be the same as they are now for we are moving into God's next step for us. And that step, my friends, is

with you. This is God's time. This is God's day. This is God's present and God's future.

The God we love and serve is a God of presence and a God of revelation. This God of presence has been with each of you in the past, is with you in the present, and will most certainly be with you in the future. This God of revelation has brought our once divergent paths together and they have converged now in Lake City. The God of the past, the present, and the future has ordained that our love and service to God shall now be joined as we seek to reveal God's kingdom on earth as it already is in Heaven. This is God's glory revealed in reality.

Thanks are certainly in order for all of you who have done so much in the life of the Lake City Church. A Church is comprised of the people who serve and work within the Church for God's glory. Your Church is evidence of that wonderful fact. I do not come to change things. I come to join with you in a partnership of peace, service, ministry and love with God as the head. We look forward to joining you, learning from you, loving you and serving God. Our God is an awesome God, and God's Spirit has worked across the miles to make this time a new reality in both of our lives.

We are excited to come among you and are ready for our journey to begin together. There is a new day dawning in both the life of the Community Presbyterian Church and our lives as we come to you. God has been faithful and God will continue to be faithful as we each turn the pages into a new chapter in both of our lives. What is past continues, what is present is born again and what is future is anticipated waiting to be revealed. This is God's glory revealed in reality. God has begun to write the next chapter in both of our lives.

Let us be in prayer in these opening days of winter and let us rejoice in what God has done, is doing, and will continue to do. In the depths of winter, there is the assurance of spring and in the turning of the seasons, we see God's power, majesty and awe revealed before our very wondering eyes. This is the day and the time God has made. Let us each rejoice and be glad at what God has planned for us.

It is with pleasure that we come among you to minister and to love and serve the Lord with Community Presbyterian Church in beautiful Lake City. Thanks be to God and may God's peace and power, presence and majesty, comfort and assurance lie with each of you. Rejoice, the Lord is King!

Peace. Courage. Blessings,
We're All In This Together
Pastor Rick

A Closing story from Pastor Rick:

Do you know the origin of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer? I had never heard this story. Enjoy and Merry Christmas!



The story of Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer

A guy named Bob May, depressed and brokenhearted, stared out his drafty apartment window into the chilling December night. His 4-year-old daughter, Barbara, sat on his lap quietly sobbing. Bobs wife, Evelyn, was dying of cancer. Little Barbara couldn't understand why her mommy could never come home. Barbara looked up into her

Dad's eyes and asked, "Why isn't Mommy just like everybody else's Mommy?" Bob's jaw tightened and his eyes welled with tears. Her question brought waves of grief, but also of anger. It had been the story of Bob's life. Life always had to be different for Bob. Being small when he was a kid, Bob was often bullied by other boys. He was too little at the time to compete in sports. He was often called names he'd rather not remember.

From childhood, Bob was different and never seemed to fit in. Bob did complete college, married his loving wife and was grateful to get his job as a copywriter at Montgomery Ward during the Great Depression. Then he was blessed with his little girl. But it was all short-lived. Evelyn's bout with cancer stripped them of all their savings and now Bob and his daughter were forced to live in a two-room apartment in the Chicago slums. Evelyn died just days before Christmas in 1938. Bob struggled to give hope to his child, for whom he couldn't even afford to buy a Christmas gift. But if he couldn't buy a gift, he was determined to make one - a storybook!

Bob had created an animal character in his own mind and told the animal's story to little Barbara to give her comfort and hope. Again and again Bob told the story, embellishing it more with each telling. Who was the character? What was the story all about? The story Bob May created was his own autobiography in fable form. The character he created was a misfit outcast like he was. The name of the character? A little reindeer named Rudolph, with a big shiny nose.

Bob finished the book just in time to give it to his little girl on Christmas Day. But the story doesn't end there. The general manager of Montgomery Ward caught wind of the little storybook and offered Bob May a nominal fee to purchase the rights to print the book. Wards went on to print Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer and distribute it to children visiting Santa Claus in their stores. By 1946 Wards had printed and distributed more than six million copies of Rudolph. That same year, a major publisher wanted to purchase the rights from Wards to print an updated version of the book. In an unprecedented gesture of kindness, the CEO of Wards returned all rights back to Bob May. The book became a best seller. Many toy and marketing deals followed and Bob May, now remarried with a growing family, became wealthy from the story he created to comfort his grieving daughter.

But the story doesn't end there either. Bob's brother-in-law, Johnny Marks, made a song adaptation to Rudolph. Though the song was turned down by such popular vocalists as Bing Crosby and Dinah Shore, it was recorded by the singing cowboy, Gene Autry. "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" was released in 1949 and became a phenomenal success, selling more records than any other Christmas song, with the exception of "White Christmas." The gift of love that Bob May created for his daughter so long ago kept on returning to bless him again and again. And Bob May learned the lesson, just like his dear friend Rudolph, that being different isn't so bad. In fact, being different can be a blessing!

**A Joyous Christmas Season to all –
and God's blessings for your New Year!**