From BALTIMORE to BETHLEHEM (of Galilee, that is)

“Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.”

(Luke 2:4-5)

It is 5,816 miles from Baltimore, Maryland to Bethlehem of Galilee. That’s one way to measure the distance we travel at Advent, but it’s surely not the most common way to gauge the distance we traverse through the holidays each year. Far more common than planning a trip to the Holy Land to celebrate Jesus’ birth is a trip to the mall that we might take to celebrate ‘the gift of giving’ in this festive season. I recently heard someone remark that in our modern celebrations “Christmas has become the Disneyfication of Christianity.” I winced when I first heard that characterization. It hurt because it contains an embarrassing element of truth that has more or less been accepted as a ‘given.’ All of us now participate in the commercialization of Christmas. Our journey to the manger has been sidetracked (some would say ‘hijacked’) to the mall, and our pursuit of seasonal purchases has overtaken our awareness of the Holy gifts we are uniquely positioned to receive from God in this season.

In the rush to meet the December 25th deadline, we will hear more expressions of exhaustion than anticipation and see more increasing franticness than hope.

The chaos is not only in the traffic and the milling crowds in the malls, it is in the frustrated lives of people who are spending money they cannot afford to part with to buy gifts that people do not need and/or want.

Surely the Lord God Almighty never intended for life to be like this, especially when it is to be lived toward the birth of our Redeemer.

The traditional themes of the Sundays of Advent are Hope, Peace, Joy and Love; not Shopping, Partying, Fretting over Shopping, and Being Fed Up With It All Before Christmas Arrives. It might just be me, but it seems that the commercial distractions that we embrace in the season overshadow the simple and everlasting meaning of what God has in mind for us to continue to experience in the event of Jesus’

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

5 PM Family Service (children’s preludes begin at 4:45 PM)
8 PM &11 PM “Baltimore to Bethlehem: The Journey is Our Home”
Session Highlights—November 18, 2014

The Rev. Thomas Blair opened the November 18 Session meeting with elders taking turns reading the Belhar Confession. This is a translation of the original Afrikaans text of the confession as it was adopted by the synod of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa in 1896. The 221st General Assembly in 2014 sent the presbyteries a proposed amendment to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)’s Book of Confessions that would add the Belhar Confession.

Session will be evaluating the 11:15 AM start time of the traditional worship service based on responses from the congregation. Although it is too early to tell if the traditional worship service will continue to start at 11:15 AM, Session is eager to hear of your responses understands that there are a variety of reasons for continuing with the 11:15 AM start time and returning to 11:00 AM.

Session devoted the better part of their November meeting to discussing two concepts that appear to be evident in religious life; the "nones" and the "dones." The "nones" denotes a growing number of Americans with no religious affiliation. They are known for having had no or very little religious upbringing. The "dones" is another term that is emerging for those who are abandoning the church. They are the ones who grew up in the church and were active thorough their adult years but, unfortunately, have gotten tired of church life.

However, this does not mean that they are done with church life. Session realizes that they are very faithful and strong Christians who are looking for ways to act out their faith even more so than when they were actively involved. Session realizes that we need to look at those who we already have and listen and talk to them to be sure that they are not the next generation of "dones." Ideally, churches that take on this process realize that their main focus should not be limited to Sunday morning services but with intergenerational activities and service to the community.

~Scott Silverwood for the Session

Christmas Memorial Flowers
Due Sunday, December 14

Donations for Christmas memorial flowers will be accepted until Sunday, December 14. The donors’ names, along with the names of the person(s) remembered or honored, will be included in the Christmas worship bulletin. Plants will be distributed to our shut-ins by the Deacons after Christmas. To participate, contact Joyce Zimmerman at 410.467.4210, e-mail at jzimmerman@secondpresby.org, or simply send a note.

Contributions may be made to Second Presbyterian Church, noted for “Chancel Guild,” and directed to Joyce at the church.
Our Journey from Baltimore to Bethlehem

Let’s Walk!

Join us for the journey to Bethlehem, the place where we are met by Emmanuel, God with us! Our journey isn’t just spiritual, but also physical. Prepare for Jesus isn’t just something we do for our spirits, but during this Advent we are also challenged to care for our whole selves, including our bodies.

So, as a congregation, we are going to walk from BALTIMORE To BETHLEHEM!

Want to participate? It’s as easy as keeping a daily record of how many steps you take. Walking, running, biking, skateboarding, swimming or any physical exercise could be used and converted into steps (or miles).

Bring your weekly “step count” to church where they will be added with others and displayed on a map to show our collective progress on the journey.

All ages and stages of life can participate.

Use this time of exercise to celebrate God’s presence, pray, or listen for God’s leading in your life; prepare yourself for the ADVENT of Christ.

So, let’s talk numbers:
- There are 5,105.8 nautical miles between Baltimore and Bethlehem
- That is approximately 10,783,450 steps
- Which means each member of our congregation needs to take 20,000 steps during Advent (November 30-Dec 25)

Journey through Words & Images

Devotionals: You can also experience the journey in words and images through our daily Advent devotionals, which will be sent to the Friday Flyer list. (Copies may be printed for people who don’t use email.)

Adult Seminar: Cecilia Amaral, Executive Director of the Pastoral Counseling & Care Ministries will lead the Sunday Adult Seminar on December 14 & 21.

Annual Children’s Christmas Pageant

Sunday, December 7, Single Worship Service at 10 AM

The “Surprising Christmas Pageant” is a wonderful way to usher in all that is joyous about the Advent and Christmas season, and to experience the familiar story of Jesus’ birth from a fresh perspective. And the little sheep, angels and shepherds are always so cute.

A Step in the Journey to Healing & Wholeness

Wednesday, December 17, 7 pm, Sanctuary

Are you facing the holidays after the death of a loved one or following a divorce? Have you experienced the loss of a job or an emotional loss? Are you feeling pressured and overwhelmed by holiday preparations? If you, for whatever reason, are feeling loss, lost, harried, or harrowed this holiday season, and “jolly” just isn’t part of your holiday spirit, then consider attending Second’s Service of Healing and Wholeness worship service.

December Sermons

NOVEMBER 30
First Sunday in Advent
Isaiah 64:1-9; Mark 13:24-37
“Baltimore to Bethlehem: The Journey Begins in the Dark”
The Rev. Dr. Tom Blair

DECEMBER 7
Second Sunday in Advent
Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-8
“Baltimore to Bethlehem: The Journey is More than it Seems”
The Rev. Dr. Tom Blair

DECEMBER 14
Third Sunday in Advent
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
Luke 1:46b-55
“Baltimore to Bethlehem: The Journey Regains Focus”
The Rev. Jenn DiFrancesco

DECEMBER 21
Fourth Sunday in Advent
2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
Luke 1:26-38
“Baltimore to Bethlehem: The Journey is Made Real”
The Rev. Dr. Tom Blair

DECEMBER 24
Christmas Eve
Family Service 5 PM
The Rev. Jenn DiFrancesco
8 & 11 PM
Isaiah 9:2-7; Luke 2:1-7
“Baltimore to Bethlehem: The Journey is Our Home”
The Rev. Dr. Tom Blair

DECEMBER 28
First Sunday after Christmas
One service at 10 AM
Help Us Decorate!
Sunday, December 7, 5 pm

Help us festoon the church with candles, lights, trees and wreaths for Christmas. All are welcome. Pizza will be served. Questions? Contact Janet Short at jesasc73@aol.com.

Second Church
Annual Christmas Party
Friday, December 19, 7 pm

At the home of Heather & John Warnack
5223 Putney Way, Baltimore MD 21212

Enjoy a festive evening of fellowship and fine food at Second’s annual Christmas party. Heather and John Warnack have graciously offered to host this year’s party in their Homeland home. The cost is $15 per person plus the contribution of an appetizer or dessert. RSVPs to the church office at office@secondpresby.org or 410-467-4210 are requested by Friday, December 12th.

humble birth.

One small way we can seek to recapture what God wants to give us in this season is through the gift of prayer. Take it as a small, early Christmas present to guide us through these next days:
Lord, show us how to become instruments of your peace:
Help us to want to love,
instead of wanting to be loved.
Help us to love even those with whom we disagree.
Help us to forgive and release
those who have hurt us
to heal those places of hurt
in others
and in ourselves.
Help us to embrace our own doubt
in order to believe,
to take that first step
into the darkness before us.

Help us to invite hope into the lives of others,
and allow it in our own hearts.
Cause your light to shine
into the dark corners of our lives
And make us a source of light to others.
Help us to allow our joy to enter our being,
so that we can dispel the sadness
around us and within us.
Hope, peace light, joy, and love:
make us into vessels to carry these things
into our broken world.
Bring to us today the peace that cannot be understood,
and cause us to pour it out on our sisters and brothers,
in spite of our earthen natures.

In the name of the Prince of Peace,
Amen.

Blessings to you & yours in this most special season,
“In all this I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” Acts 20:35

**Supporting Our Christmas Mission Projects**

**2014 Alternative Gift Market**

**Sunday, December 7, 11 AM—1 PM**

The annual Alternative Gift Market is our wonderful opportunity each year to purchase special gifts while supporting worthy causes. A number of organizations, both old favorites and new, will be participating this year. Start soon making your list of the people you need to purchase gifts for this year. We’re sure you will find some wonderful gifts to purchase! Here are some of this year’s vendors:

- **Crafts from Asyee Women Enterprise:** These items are made by women who are candidates for legal asylum in the U.S. because of threats of violence or imprisonment in their home countries. The Baltimore-based organization provides transitional housing, companionship and community.

- **Afghan Jewelry & Rugs supporting the Afghan Women’s Fund:** This may be the final year that Fahima Vorgetts of AWF brings her beautiful hand-made Afghan rugs, jewelry and crafts to our AGM. Please continue to support AWF’s projects that provide education and training for women and girls in Afghanistan.

- **"Pittsburgh Powder”**, a wonderful spice mixture for meats, poultry, fish, etc. that has its roots with Pittsburgh steel workers. A portion of the proceeds will go to Second’s mission fund.

- **Hand-painted notecards by Lynn Macon**— sold in upscale gift shops, Lynn will donate all proceeds from the sale of her cards to the mission fund.

- **Schermer’s Pecans** will be again available. The pecans are this season’s new crop: one-pound bags of pecan halves are $10 per bag, and dark chocolate covered pecans are $9 per 12 oz. bag. For more information or to order, please contact Becky Ferrell at russferr@verizon.net.

**Our Daily Bread Men’s Christmas Party**

**Saturday, December 13, 2 PM —5:30 PM (YOUTH & ADULTS)**

Youth, ages 13+, and adults are invited to serve and eat dinner, sing carols, and hand out donated items to homeless men from around Baltimore. We will meet at Second Presbyterian at 1:15 PM, and return to Second around 6:00 PM. Ten youth and adults are needed. Sign up at secondpresby.org/signups. For more information, contact Bethany Dietz (bdietz@secondpresby.org) or Ray Herman (herman7003@comcast.net).

**Angel Tree**

Be an angel for kids at the McKim Center or senior citizen residents of Westminster House in Mount Vernon. Pick your angel from the Christmas Giving Tree in the Rotunda. Please bring your UNWRAPPED present with the tag to the church by Sunday, December 14th.
“A Journey to Christmas”

December 15, 2014
7:00pm

Second Presbyterian Church
4200 Saint Paul Street Baltimore, MD
www.charmcitybronze.com

Handel's Messiah
Baltimore's Holiday Tradition for 80 Years!
(with members of Second Presbyterian’s Chancel Choir)

8 pm Saturday DECEMBER 13, 2014 | Saint Ignatius Catholic Church | 740 North Calvert Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21202

3 pm Sunday DECEMBER 14, 2014 | Church of the Redeemer | 5603 North Charles Street (at Melrose Avenue), Baltimore, Maryland 21210

$47 / $37 / $10 student with ID
Handel’s great oratorio on the human experience of the divine!

Handel Choir and Handel Period Instrument Orchestra
Laura Choi Stuart soprano
Monica Reinagel alto
Brian Giebler tenor
Steven Combs bass
Arian Khaefi conductor

Preconcert lecture one hour before each performance by Brian Bartoldus, artistic director of Third Practice. Buy tickets at www.handelchoir.org.
Getting to Know Your Second Family- Our Church Officers
Susan “Fay” Miller, Deacon

By Anne Zouck Perry

Susan Fay Miller, the youngest of 3 children was born in Clarksburg, West Virginia, but because her parents were Maryland natives, she did not live there for long. Her dad, who was a graduate of the University of Maryland, College Park, wanted dearly to return to his home state. Since he was employed by the Social Security Administration he was able to secure a position in Maryland and moved his young family to Salisbury where Fay remained until she began first grade. (Yes, she has always gone by the name “Fay” and has never used her given first name. The ladies in her family were often called “Fay,” and the name was carried through several generations including her mother and grandmother.

The Millers then relocated closer to home in the Arbutus community of Baltimore County. The family attended Arbutus Methodist church and were active in their community. Fay graduated from Lansdowne High School and obtained a B.A. Degree from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), which was near her home. After graduation Fay obtained a real estate license, as there were not a lot of positions available for history majors, and entered the Baltimore labor market. She found that she was not too successful as a sales person, as she explains, “I am not a shopper. I see something I like and I buy it. It was very difficult for me to take my clients shopping to look at house, after house, after house.” Clearly this was not her forte. Fay found, however, that she was intrigued by the mortgage finance process. She soon found herself becoming a loan officer financing real estate purchases. She discovered her niche working at Maryland National Bank (now part of Bank of America). Later she moved to First National Bank of Maryland (now a part of M & T Bank). There she became a Vice President working in what was then the developing industry of mortgage banking, a new specialty area of real estate. She created a corresponding lending group, purchasing loans throughout the NJ/DE/VA area. Fay practiced what she preached, too. She knew the market well and, in fact, bought the first of her four homes when she was only 25 years of age. Fay married in her late twenties and divorced seven years later.

Fay’s successful mortgage banking career hit a big bump in 1990 when she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, which caused her to slow down considerably and refocus her life. Her schedule while working was just too hectic and her future was unknown. She tried to adjust her life around possibilities, not realities. Being the sharp professional that she is, Fay again found herself involved in a related field, but one that moved at a much slower pace. She found a new career in title insurance working with Fountainhead Title Company. There she examined titles and directed resolution teams, balancing her time between downtown Baltimore and Columbia. She retired in 2011. To date her disease is under control with the help of new disease modifying drugs. Fay tires from time to time, but her only real drawback is finding someplace to refrigerate her meds when she is traveling.

Her older sister, Sheila, now resides in San Francisco. Her mom, with whom she is very close, still resides in the family home, and both her dad and her brother, Murray, who lived in Federal Hill, have passed away. Murray’s death occurred only one year ago and was due to early onset Alzheimer’s which was extremely difficult for the family. Fay and her mom shared caregiving responsibilities, as his health worsened, and leaned on and supported one another during those very rough years.

Today Fay, who has lived at Highfield House across from Second Church for the last 11 years,  

(Continued on page 10)
December Birthdays

2nd
Jeff Rodman
Jim Risser

3rd
Allison West

4th
Sarah Emrich

5th
Rebecca Dineen

6th
Nancy Lewis

7th
Peggy Widman

9th
Grace Follmer
Dorie Young

10th
Claire McGagh

12th
Mark Felder
Leslie Kleban

13th
Jean Coates
Katie Duncan
Meredith Etherington
Tom Gilliss
Meredith Shuey

14th
Debby Graf
Eliza Kleban
Maxwell Kleban
Jim Mayer
Anne Riley
Christy Wyskiel

15th
Julie Creaby
John Miller

16th
Charles Herndon III

17th
Charlie Barton
Eloise Bensberg
Terri Smith

18th
Karen Ruppert

20th
Clay Furtaw
Bernard Levy

21st
Christine Gummerson
Eric Suan

22nd
Caryl Siems
Scott Gummerson

23rd
Gretchen Martin
Anne Perry
Andrew Paulk

24th
Mary Dell Harlan

25th
Carol Fitzpatrick

28th
Mob Turner
Steve Boesel

29th
Grace Serafini

30th
Nicole Risser
Sheri Slezak

31st
Eric Strain
Ted Martin

---

Church Family News

We celebrated the birth of:
of Kevin and Julie Creaby and the little brother of Genevieve.

We celebrated on November 9, 2014 the baptisms of:
Elizabeth Ashby Thoeni. Elizabeth, born July 3, 2014, is the
daughter of Parker and Ashby Thoeni.
Parker Engle Thoeni, father of Elizabeth.

We extend our Christian love and sympathy to:
Jim and Nicole Risser, Olivia, and Michael on the death of
Jim’s father in PA on November 10, 2014.

---

Second Church Small Groups

Tuesdays at Ten Bible Study, Seminar Room
Please come with us in December as we travel from Nazareth to
Bethlehem for a fascinating look at the birth of Jesus Christ. In
our DVD Bible study, “The Journey,” we will be retracing the
actual path of Mary and Joseph in their walk to Bethlehem. The
course consists of five sessions that examine the geographical,
cultural, and historical setting of the events that resulted in the
birth of the Christ Child and, ultimately, help participants see
themselves in the story as recorded in Luke’s and Matthew’s
accounts. Each Tuesday, we will view an informative video
presentation, participate in a group-friendly discussion and enjoy
the wonderful Christian fellowship always present whenever we
meet. Contact Gene Haupt at 410.366.7599 or
mghaupt@comcast.net.

Men’s Bible Study, Thursday, November 13, 7 am,
Westcott Room
All men are invited to join our Men’s Bible Study. The theme this
month is “Building a Team”- from Exodus 18:1-7. (This is a rare,
peaceful encounter, after the sea-crossing, between Moses and the
leader of another people, Midian. Jethro is an ambassador for
peace and mutual respect, and Moses is wise to heed his sage
counsel. Where do we meet peace and find wise counsel in our
lives?) Contact Tom Blair at t
blair@secondpresby.org.

Tapas, Talk & Theology: Study on the Gospel of
John, December 5, 7 pm
Tapas, Talk and Theology is currently discussing the Disciple
Bible Study, “Invitation to Psalms,” The format includes
fellowship and a light supper followed by study and
discussion. This course offers a deeper connection to the world of
the Psalms so that these well-known scriptures can help you give
voice to all aspects of our human experience—joy, faith,
uncertainty and sorrow. Carol Clark will host on December 5th.
Anyone interested in this study course is encouraged to attend and
can contact Becky Ferrell at rrussferr@verizon.net for more
information.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**December 2014**

**Sunday, December 7:**
- *Pageant Sunday*
- Curtain Call 8:30 AM
- Worship & Pageant — 10 AM
- Alternative Gift Market 11 AM
- Christmas Decorating 5 PM

**Monday, December 8:**
- AA 8 PM
- Tuesdays at Ten Bible Study 10 AM
- Trusteess 7 PM

**Tuesday, December 9:**
- Handbell Choir 7 PM
- Prayer Shawl Ministry 7 PM

**Wednesday, December 10:**
- Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM

**Thursday, December 11:**
- Men’s Bible Study 7 AM
- Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM

**Friday, December 12:**
- Annual Christmas Party 7 PM at the Warnacks
- Tapas, Talk & Theology 7 PM

**Saturday, December 13:**
- Pageant Dress Rehearsal 2 PM

**Sunday, December 14:**
- Worship 9 AM — Chapel Sunday School — 10 AM
- Adult Seminar — 10 AM
- Worship 11:15 AM — Sanctuary
- Youth Second Sundays — 6 PM

**Monday, December 15:**
- Charm City Bronze Handbell Ensemble Concert 7 PM
- AA 8 pm
- Tuesdays at Ten Bible Study 10 AM
- Session 7 PM

**Tuesday, December 16:**
- Staff Meeting 9:30 AM
- Handbell Choir 7 PM
- Healing & Wholeness at Advent Worship Service 7 PM

**Wednesday, December 17:**
- Men’s Bible Study 7 AM
- Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM

**Thursday, December 18:**
- Church office closed

**Friday, December 19:**
- Annual Christmas Party 7 PM at the Warnacks
- Tapas, Talk & Theology 7 PM

**Saturday, December 20:**
- Church office closed

**Sunday, December 21:**
- Worship 9 AM — Chapel Sunday School — 10 AM
- Adult Seminar — 10 AM
- Worship 11:15 AM — Sanctuary

**Monday, December 22:**
- Candlelighters 7 PM
- AA 8 PM
- Tuesdays at Ten Bible Study 10 AM

**Tuesday, December 23:**
- *Christmas Eve*
- Church office closed at 12 noon
- Family Service 5 PM
- “Baltimore to Bethlehem: The Journey is Our Home” 8 PM & 11 PM

**Wednesday, December 24:**
- *Christmas*
- Church office closed

**Thursday, December 25:**
- Church office closed

**Friday, December 26:**
- Church office closed

**Saturday, December 27:**
- Church office closed

**Sunday, December 28:**
- Worship 10 AM — Sanctuary
- (one service — no Sunday school)
- AA 8 PM
- Tuesdays at Ten Bible Study 10 AM

**Monday, December 29:**
- New Year’s Eve Church office closed at 12 noon

**Tuesday, December 30:**
- New Year’s Eve Church office closed

**Wednesday, December 31:**
- New Year’s Day Church office closed

**Thursday, January 1:**
- New Year’s Day Church office closed
On Being Presbyterian

Perhaps you sometimes wonder what differentiates our Presbyterian denomination from other Protestant traditions. The new “On Being Presbyterian” column will shed some light on what it is that makes us uniquely Presbyterian.

A main feature of the Presbyterian Church is our form of government. Though a somewhat dry topic, governance affects much that we do in the church. There are three main forms of protestant church government: hierarchical where the power comes from the top as in the Episcopal Church; congregational where each local church acts autonomously as in the United Church of Christ, Congregational and Baptist Churches; and representational — that’s us, the Presbyterians.

The important point is that in essence the Presbyterian Church is a republic like the U.S. government, and not a direct democracy. Each church elects a group of elders, the session, for oversight. Ordained representatives of the sessions (ruling elders) and the clergy (teaching elders) for a given geographical area form a Presbytery. Presbyteries in a region form a synod. And all the synods together form the General Assembly.

It is the Presbyteries that exercise authority over individual churches. The church representatives, or Presbyters seek to discern God’s will in a given situation. Votes are taken and decided by majority rule like the U.S. Congress, but there is no 60-vote super majority requirement as in the U.S. Senate. And like the U.S. court system decisions of lower governing bodies can be reviewed by higher governing bodies in the church. Presbyterians, Donald McKim says, “believe this governing system is established in accord with Scripture and exists to further good order in the church while seeking to be open to God’s ongoing work in the church and in human history.” Where the system breaks down is when there is disagreements that can’t be resolved. Throughout church history Presbyterian churches have broken off to form new branches of the church. This happened over the issue of slavery when the northern and southern branches split up (a rift that was only healed in 1982), and is happening today over the issue of same-sex marriage with the creation of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of America.

Source: Presbyterian Questions, Presbyterian Answers by Donald McKim

(Continued from page 7)

keeps very busy serving as a member of its Board of Directors, taking yoga, assisting her neighbors, and actively volunteering at Second. She no longer runs or takes pilates, but enjoys long walks throughout her community. She attends the Baltimore Symphony with her mom and they have traveled abroad together several times.

She is now serving her second term as a deacon. Fay has also served two terms as a trustee at Second Presbyterian Church, which she joined in 1990 soon after her divorce. She managed the adult seminar speakers program for a few years and was fascinated by some of the interesting people she encountered.

Fay has taught three year-olds every summer at the Churches of Charles Vacation Bible school for one week since its inception, and is now helping JT Paulk teach the fourth and fifth grade Sunday school class each week.

Fay, who actively attends the 9:00 AM service, strongly feels that, “anything is what you make of it.” She says, “Second has really helped me at times when I have needed it, and it continues to provide me with the opportunity to give back to others.” Fay feels that each of us have a choice...to grow in our faith, to develop friendships within our church and our communities...or not.

She has obviously chosen to exemplify the former. ‡
### Children’s Christmas Eve Preludes

**Celebrating God’s Gift to Us and Offering Our Gifts to the Christ Child**

What can I give Him, Poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb,  
If I were a wise man, I would do my part,  
Yet what I can I give Him—Give my heart.

Children who play an instrument or sing are invited to contribute their musical gifts during the 5 PM family Christmas Eve Service. Children are encouraged to select music that celebrates the birth of our Savior. Please register online at [www.secondpresby.org/worship/preludes](http://www.secondpresby.org/worship/preludes) by Sunday, December 14th.  
(The children should arrive in the sanctuary at 4 PM. The preludes will begin at 4:45 PM. Some advanced students will play during the service this year.)

Questions? Contact Liz Sesler-Beckman at liz.88@juno.com.

### A new Bible Study offering for January 2015...

**Sundays, January 4, 11, 18, 25 & February 8 at 10 AM**

(There’s an old saying in Biblical studies that a text without a context is just a pretext for making it say anything one wants. Another maxim that frequently holds for Biblical studies is that the world of the people who wrote and first heard the texts was very different from our world. )

We would do well to better understand the world of the Bible in order to better understand its message for us in our world.

All Christians wrestle with applying Jesus’ second highest commandment to life as we live it, the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you", (Matthew 7:12, Luke 6:31.)

Mark Achtemeier, a Presbyterian minister and professor of theology and ethics at Dubuque Theological Seminary, outlines key principles of responsible Biblical interpretation regarding God's purposes for marriage. He points out the inaccuracies of drawing conclusions based on isolated Scripture texts. He works his way systematically through passages related to love, marriage and intimacy.

He explores texts showing God working outside people's expectations. For example, the living Word himself became flesh scandalously outside the norms of conventional marriage. He also explores some of John Calvin’s radical reinterpretation of Biblical laws, setting a precedent for fresh interpretations, allowing the Spirit’s freedom to work anew in the world.

This new offering will be led by The Rev. Dr. Tom Blair during the Sunday adult education hour. ‡

### Youth Events

**Saturday, December 13, 2 PM -5:30 PM**

**Our Daily Bread Men's Christmas Party**  
Youth, ages 13+, and adults are invited to serve and eat dinner, sing carols, and hand out donated items to homeless men from around Baltimore. Meet at Second Presbyterian at 1:15 PM and return back around 6:00 PM.

**Sunday, December 14, 6:00-8:00 PM**

**Youth Group Ugly Sweater & White Elephant Gift Christmas Party**  
(Location to be announced.)

**Sunday, January 11, 6:00-8:00 PM**

**Youth Second Sunday**

**Monday, January 19**

**Martin Luther King Day of Service**  
(details to come)