

Shepherd's Journal

Humor For The Hard Times

"Worrying does not take away tomorrow's troubles; it takes away today's peace."

—Author Unknown

**Sign outside So. Seminole Church of Christ, Winter Park, FL:
"There are no idle rumors; they are all busy."**

—via Bobbe Lyon
Maitland, FL

Inside this issue:

Tyumen Newsletter	2
Birthdays and Anniversaries	4
Spotlight on the Flock	5
Mystery Solved	6
Sermon Schedule	7
Events and Nursery Schedule	8
Mission Trips	9

ISSUE 01



January 2012

Church of the Good Shepherd - Pastor's Ponderings

Teenagers from around the District ended the year at Good Shepherd with an overnight lock-in. During one of the activities, they listened to a poem by Ken Sehested that begins

"May your home always be too small
to hold all your friends..."

Challenged to think of a similar blessing (with a twist), they came up with

May you make mistakes
so that you will learn life's lessons.

May your eyes be filled with tears
of joy from giving your time to the less fortunate.

May you be silent
so that when you speak, it will be words of wisdom.

May your story end
so that you can find a new beginning.

Sehested's poem includes these lines:

"May your hankering
be in rhythm with heaven's
whose covenant vows
a dusty intersection with your own:
when creation's hope and history rhyme."

May you indeed know that during 2012, you are walking alongside the Lord. And it will be a very good year!

See you in church.

Christmas Newsletter of Tyumen United Methodist Church of Salvation: Miracles of Jesus in Tyumen in 2011



We all expect wonders and miracles at Christmas, because Christmas is the greatest miracles on Earth – the Birth of God among people to save us! But if we were there, in Bethlehem, it might not seemed to us a miracle- a young women Mary gave a birth to a baby in a poor place, among animals. God still performs so many miracles around us that might not seemed to be such, and we take them for granted. This Christmas we want to remember some of miracles of Jesus in our life and life of the church in 2011, and to glorify our Lord, and magnify His name.

Our family's miracle of Jesus: Matt our son was diagnosed last year with almost total alalia (absence of speech). At the age of 3 he could hardly pronounce separate sounds and syllables. Many people prayed for him. We worked much on his speech. Today he speaks, tells stories and jokes, and even started to recite poems. *"And the LORD said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the LORD?" (Ex.4:11).* We praise the Lord!

The building of the church is a miracle. So many people invested in faith into this first United Methodist church building in Western Siberia. The walls are up, the permanent roof is on, and the temporary fence is around. The first window is already made, and if it fits well, the company will work on the rest. In Summer and Fall we hold weekly prayer meetings in the building. We had to move them in a warmer place until the windows are there. It is warm in the basement, and 2-3 workers continue to work on the walls and floors inside in winter time. This year we have been paying all the utilities in the building. This past Saturday church members had a fundraising fair, where they brought beautiful things they made with their hands. It was a very cold day, -26C, and we did not expect many to come. But people came to worship and participated in this fair and raised \$300, which is 4 times more than our usual weekly offerings for building. *"But who [am] I, and what [is] my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things [come] of thee, and of thine own have we given thee". (1Chr.29:14)*



"It is a
miracle how
God changes
lives of
people in
our church."

It is a miracle how God changes lives of people in our church:

Katya Baranova's story reminds me of a women, who was brought before Jesus for judgment. She entered the church year and a half ago with her one and a half year old son. She wanted a different life than she had. It took her some time to give her life to Christ. This summer she was baptized. Today she is a follower of Jesus, attends worship and Bible studies even when it is so cold outside.

Sasha Semyonov. His wife Olga prayed for him for 7 years, he came to the church last year, stopped smoking. This year he renewed his baptismal vows, ones made in Russian Orthodox church. Every week he brings his family to the church from the nearby village Molodyozhny, where they live with their 2 daughters – 8 and 1 years old. His wife Olga teachers toddlers in the church. We praise God for a miracle in this family.

Lena Kushnina. Natasha preached to her on a bus, while riding home 2 years ago. This year she got a call from Lena: "you might not remember me, but 2 years ago you told me about Jesus – I want to know more and want to come to church). Today Lena is an active member of the church, her 13 year old daughter comes to church often with her. Lena is a physical therapist for handicap children – she prays for the children she works with

continued on page 3

Miracles of Jesus in Tyumen in 2011 continued from page 2

and encourages their mothers. We praise God for Lena's salvation and her changed life, We praise God for Natasha, who tells about Jesus everywhere she goes. Most Russians think, she is strange; Natasha thinks she is blessed and strives to evangelize better.

Julia Smerdova – came to our church several years ago through her mother. Julia works with children and youth, sings in a choir, prepares power point presentations for worship every week. She graduated from Oil and Gas University, and this year she was invited to teach Math in college there. She is the only practicing Christian teacher in her department in the university, she does not take bribes from students and does not participate in rumors and quarrels among teachers. We are so proud for her that she is different. She is another type of teachers. She shows Christ at her workplace. We praise God for Julia.

Sasha Alexandrov, spent 10 years in prison, where we met him with evangelism preaching. He accepted the Lord, and after he was released from prison, he stayed in the church and got baptized here. It took him couple of years to finally choose the Lord's path. This year he got married to a women with a child, and now they have a mutual child. He works, regularly comes to worship with the family, tithes, and participates in a small group. It is a miracle. We praise God for that.

It is a miracle of God to see the **leaders in the church**, who came to know the Lord 4-6 years ago, and over these years became devote Christians. It is a miracle that **2 lay members of the church decided to get theological education** in a local Bible college, knowing that they will not get official degrees. It is a miracle to see ordinary people becoming leaders for Christ.

It is a miracle that this year we have two "**Disciple Bible study 2**" groups. I remember when we prayed with Bishop Wilke in 1999 in Kansas City for the translation of Disciple 1 into Russian. It is a miracle to see prayers being answered. We can now study "Disciple 2" here in Siberia.

It is a miracle of God that **pictures of children from our church were displayed in the Tyumen city art museum**. Children of 3 faiths: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, made pictures about Solomon, his life and proverbs. Not often Protestants are recognized in the city. Most people consider Protestants in Tyumen to be members of cults and treat them with suspicion. We are grateful for the opportunity to be recognized in the city. The officials gave only week day and inconvenient time for opening and closing of the exhibition, and did not invite any media to be there. But still for history – it was an important event. Kids were happy to receive diplomas and presents for participation. Our little Matt also painted and got a personal prize.

I cannot miss one more miracle of God in Tyumen. For several years we had Council of Christian Churches, where pastors of different Protestant denominations came together to discuss problems, to have mutual projects. But it was always hard for them to get together not for projects but for prayer only – to seek God's will. This year we **started regular prayer meetings**, where pastors of many churches and Bible groups of different denominations came together only for prayer. Only God could change our hearts so that we set aside our differences and stand in prayer together.

We expect one more miracle for Christmas. 6 members from our church rehearse every week with a big choir that consists of members from other Christian churches. On Russian Christmas Day, January, 7th, Protestant churches will make an evangelism concert in one of the city halls, where **150- member choir will sing Christmas songs** and a beautiful Christmas story will be performed. We expect miracles.

This Christmas we pray to see many more miracles of Christ in our family, in our church and in our city. We pray for the miracles of God in your life, in your church, in your city.

The Rev. Katya Zoubkova

Pastor of Tyumen United Methodist Church of Salvaiton



January Birthdays



January 1
Walter Breedlove

January 3
Kambrie Bolyard

January 5
Kelly Brown

January 10
Nancy Ludwick
M. Lee Thompson

January 11
John Shay
Tiffany Jenkins

January 12
Chuck Proudfoot

January 14
Sarah Reneau

January 17
Susan Shelton

January 25
Emily Smith

January 28
Jim Brown II

January 29
Ed Bolyard

January 31
Kelsey Thompson



from JoyfulNoiseletter.com
©Harley L. Schwadron
Reprinted with permission

January Anniversaries



Happy Anniversary

January 02
JoAnna & Mike Pratt

January 09
Richard & Wilma Bowman

January 23
Susan & Craig Shelton

January 25
Dan & Jeannine Mankins



Ruth Ann Swisher, our church's secretary

Spotlight on the Flock

Conversations with Carla

This month I talked to Ruth Ann Swisher, our church's secretary. She and her sister, Bonnie, share a home in Thornton. Ruth Ann has a niece, Kim Bock who lives in Philadelphia and a nephew, Keith Rosier, who lives in Washington State. They have two dogs, Rylee a beagle and Bella Noel a Shih Tzu who arrived at Christmas a year ago.

Ruth grew up in Grafton and graduated from Grafton High School. She worked for fifteen years as an office manager and quit to become a caregiver for her parents in 1998.

She is a member of the Thornton United Methodist Church and is very active in the church. She completes the children's bulletins and also puts the answers in the bulletins for the children. She is an assistant Sunday

School Teacher for ages 3 to third grade. Bonnie and Ruth Ann are the coordinators for Vacation Bible School. They also do fundraising activities for the church including making apple butter, publishing a cookbook, and selling candy. They coordinate the children's Christmas and Easter programs. Ruth and Bonnie have their own Puppet Ministry, Seeds of Faith. This Christmas was their last performance due to joint complications with Ruth Ann's hands. They basically do whatever the minister asks them to do.

She loves to do crafts and works on whatever draws her attention at the time. She collects angels. Ruth Ann's favorite food is pepperoni pizza with lots of onions.

She likes to read Amish books. Her sister reads the book first,

then she reads the book and then her aunt and the book chain continues.

Some of her favorite memories are of Christmas. Her parents always made Christmas very special. They also went to their Grandparents every Sunday after church. Her extended family was always there, including aunts, uncles and cousins.

Ruth Ann likes the people that she has met from Good Shepherd; she told me that everyone is very friendly. She likes everything about our Church.

Her favorite Bible passage is John 3:16, because it tells us what God did for us, He made the sacrifice for us.

Ruth Ann's favorite hymns are Amazing Grace and Call on Jesus by Nicole Mullen.

Lincoln's View of Politicians

When he was President, Abraham Lincoln once told this story:

A king wanted to go on a hunting party, and consulted the court's minister to see if it was going to rain. The court minister assured him it would be a sunny day.

When the royal party set out for the hunt, they met a farmer riding a jackass. The farmer warned the king not to make the journey because it was going to rain.

The king laughed at the peasant and continued on his way, but soon, a torrent of rain drenched the royal party. When the king returned to his castle, he fired the court minister and sent for the farmer.

He asked the farmer how he knew it was going to rain when the sky was sunny and cloudless. "My jackass has a way of knowing these things," the farmer replied. "He puts one

ear forward when it's going to rain."

The king bought the jackass from the farmer with a chest full of gold, and appointed the jackass as his new court minister.

Lincoln remarked that this was a great mistake on the king's part because "ever since that time, every jackass wants a public office."

—via *Apple Seeds*

Mystery Solved by Leah Powell

On a nice warm day in November I was cutting and trimming the hosta and other plants in front of the church. I was picking up leaves and sticks. As a lot of you know I love to work in flowerbeds and dig in the dirt. But this time as I cut one of the hosta plants an object flew up at me! I thought it was a snake and I jumped to get away from it. To my surprise it was a small animal skull. It was clean and white. I picked it up and took inside to see if anyone could identify what kind of animal it was. Meredith was still working here then and she yelled, "Leah, I can't believe you. This is gross." Arnold was in the office and he wasn't sure what kind it was. He thought it might be a possum.

Pastor Bert wasn't sure either. We did know that it was not a cat.

Some of the men of the church had some good ideas about what kind of skull it was. I learned a lot about taxidermy, from the men.



Carla took it to school to ask the science teacher. He wasn't sure what kind of animal skull it was

either, but since Pastor Bert thought it might be a possum he agreed with that.

Finally, I asked Gary Foster. Gary is the Supervisor of Game Management for the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources. He took it with him. The next Sunday, he said that it was a young skunk. As skunks mature their skulls change.

The little skull will now be displayed with other wildlife artifacts. It will become part of a learning display for students in West Virginia. A big thank you to Gary Foster for solving the mystery.

Sermon Schedule

During the next 18 weeks, our worship will focus on the stories that make up The Story, the narrative of God's love for us. Each week's story will be one part of the message that began with Creation and will be fulfilled when Time becomes Eternity.

January 8 Creation

15 Adam and Eve

22 Abraham and Sarah

29 Joseph

February 5 Moses

12 Joshua

19 Ruth

26 David

March 4 Daniel

11 Esther

18 Job

25 Mary

April 1 Jesus

8 Thief on the Cross

15 Mary Magdalene

22 Disciples

29 Paul

May 6 Second Coming

Each Sunday evening at 6:30, there will be a time for those who want to know more about that day's story. We will read and pray together to learn how each of us is a part of God's story, too. Materials will also be available for parents who would like to "home-Sunday-School" their children.

A man living in a rural Kansas area reported: "We recently had a new neighbor call the local township administrative office to request the removal of the 'DEER CROSSING' sign on our road.

"His reason: "Too many deer are being hit by cars out here! I don't think this is a good place for them to be crossing."

—via Lowell Yoder
Holland, OH

This is one of Joe Garagiola's favorite stories about his friend Yogi Berra:

When Yogi was a catcher for the New York Yankees, there was a ballplayer who always drew a cross in the ground next to home plate when he came to bat.

Finally, one day Berra, himself a devout Christian, reached over, wiped out the cross with his catcher's mitt, and told the batter, "Why don't you just let God watch the game?"

JoyfulNoiseletter.com

Coming Events for January

January 8

2:30 - Russia Initiative

January 9

7:30 - Trustees Meeting

January 17

5:00 - Nurture Committee Meeting

6:30 - Finance Committee Meeting

7:30 - Administrative Council Meeting



“On the first day of Sunday school, a five-year-old boy handed his teacher a note from his mother.

It read, ‘The opinions expressed by this child are not necessarily those of his parents.’ ”

—via George Goldtrap

Ormond-by-the-Sea, FL



NURSERY VOLUNTEER SCHEDULE

Nursery workers need to arrive at 10:30 to receive children. Guidelines are posted in the narthex and outside the nursery door. Weeks can be traded with other volunteers if a conflict arises.

January 1 - Volunteers

January 8 - Volunteers

January 15 - Emily Moon and Alex Coffman

January 22 - Diane Knight and Kaitlin Knight

January 29 - Alex Coffman

MISSION TRIPS FOR 2012

The West Virginia Annual Conference is sponsoring several mission trips this year.

In addition to trips to Russia, there will be teams going to

Haiti (earthquake recovery)

New York (flood recovery)

Japan (earthquake recovery)

Pennsylvania (flood recovery)

Missouri (tornado recovery)

Oak Hill, WV (housing repair)

Burlington, WV (children's home)

Beckley, WV (children's home)

Holy Land (Bethlehem olive harvest)

England & Wales (John Wesley tour)

Native American Site

Peru

Guatemala

Cuba

Hungary

South Africa

For dates, cost, and additional information, contact Pastor Bert.



"Sorry, Congressman, there's the matter of all those unfulfilled campaign promises..."

from *JoyfulNoiseletter.com*

©Harley L. Schwadron

Reprinted with permission

Church of the Good Shepherd

RT. 4 Box 284
Grafton, WV 26354
304-265-1705
shepherdwv@comcast.net

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 57
GRAFTON, WV 26354

«AddressBlock»

