



**FROM THE DESK OF ....**

**REV. ANDY RIENSTRA**

## GIFTS FOR OUR CHILDREN

What will we be giving our children and grand-children for Christmas this year? I know a person who has 20 grand-children. He told me that he and his wife are overwhelmed by gift giving this season. What can they give that will demonstrate their love, and communicate the spirit of Christmas giving? "Kids today have it all," he said to me. "What do we do?" I didn't have an answer. I am just glad I don't have 20 grand-children.

As I was thinking about his predicament I came across this quote from Patrick Henry, the great American patriot. He wrote: ***"I have now disposed of all my property to my family. There is one thing more I wish I could give them, and that is the Christian faith. If they had Christ, and I had not given them one shilling, they would have been rich, and if they had not that, and I had given them all the world, they would be poor."***

Once again this year material gifts will dominate Christmas celebrations. Most of our youngsters will receive an abundance of toys, games, and gadgets. It is fortunate that they were born in an age and culture where this is possible. My hope is, however, that in this whole process of giving and receiving they will grow in the faith that God is the giver of it all. May God help us parents and grand-parents to be gifting our children with the challenge to love and trust God for all we possess!

The Rotary Club to which I belonged for many years annually held a Christmas party for children who were not as richly blessed with material things as many others. Most of these children come from emotionally, spiritually and materially deprived situations. It was always interesting to watch them sit on Santa's lap, and receive their gifts. Their eyes sparkled and their faces beamed as they thanked Santa. They appeared to be very grateful. Watching and talking with them always elicited a prayer in my heart that this act of compassion would in some amazing way lead them to the greater gift -- faith to know that there is a God who cares for them and reaches out to bless them even in life's most difficult moments

Hopefully the way we give presents to our children this year will make them aware as well of this greater gift. There are no fool proof guidelines for doing so, but this I know. When people of faith live out faith in their daily walk children and grand-children get the message. They are encouraged to receive the gift of faith. At this time of the year I often have memories of Christmas as a child. I remember many of the gifts my parents put under our tree. One of the nicest memories is of an electric train Dad had all set up and running when we came into the living room one Christmas morning. Best of all, I remember that both Dad and Mom always made it very clear that every good gift came from God, and that Jesus was the living symbol of that truth. God help all of us to do the same for our children and grand-children this Christmas and always.



**Sunday, December 24th** ~ we will be having 2 services at Second Church. Our regular **10:00 am service** will be the time for our Sunday School children to share with us their Advent and Christmas program, and our annual **7:00 pm** Christmas Eve Candlelight service .

Please come, rejoice, and attend both services. Bring friends as well!





## Advent Candles

Members helping to light our Advent Candles:

December 3rd ~ The VanGlahn Family  
December 10th ~The Kang/Park Family  
December 17 ~ The Holz/Fisher Family  
December 24 ~ The Chibbaro Family

## Faith, Commitment & Gratitude: The Future



Why do people spend hours and hours at this busy time of year shopping around for the 'perfect gift'? Probably in most cases they are looking for a tangible way to express their love, care and perhaps gratitude to others.

How do we as faithful and committed Christians show our gratitude to God for the love, grace and countless blessings that he has bestowed upon us, especially now as we prepare to celebrate the birth of God's Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ? One of many ways is our level of giving during this past year. Our offerings are not just a means of 'paying the church's bills' (important as that is!) but also signs of our faith, commitment and gratitude.

During this time of 'Self-Study' where we are searching to discern God's Will for our congregation's future, we should also-individually and collectively-ask ourselves "What does God ask of me?" to advance the current work and future mission of Second Reformed Church?

You will be receiving a Stewardship packet shortly. In anticipation of its arrival, we ask that you set aside some time in advance to prayerfully reflect on the blessings in your life and how you will express your gratitude to God with your 2007 offering pledge. Gratefully, you will not have to contend with the traffic and mall crowds to thank God with your 'perfect gift'!

Thank you.

The 2007 Stewardship Team

## Ornaments for our

## Narthex Christmas

## Tree

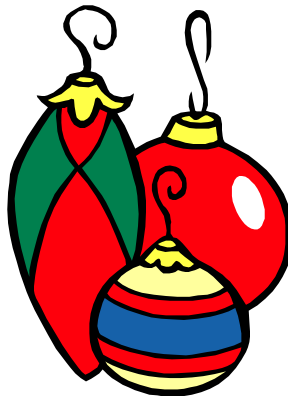
### \*\*\* Tree \*\*\*

Walt Holz is donating a Christmas tree this season to be displayed in our Narthex. So, now that we have a tree, all we need now are all the trimmings!

We are asking for donations of a tree topper, lights & a tree skirt. The tree is going up on **Friday, December 1st**. If you have any donations, please email me or call me at the church office or at home 732 846-1581 as soon as possible.

### \*\*\* Ornaments \*\*\*

We are trying something new this year...maybe it will even become a Second Church tradition!? We are asking all members to bring in an ornament (or two) to help decorate our tree.



The ornament could be store bought or handmade, simple or personal....one that reflects you or your family. (For instance, my family may donate a skier).

There will be colored ribbons & sharpie markers in the Narthex. Write you or your family's name on a ribbon with the year, attach the ribbon to the ornament and place it on the tree any Sunday in December. On Christmas Eve, we will light our tree at the Candlelight service!!

The ornaments will be saved and stored from year to year. If you have any ideas to make this better ...let me know!

**Kathy Fisher**



## Greening of our Church

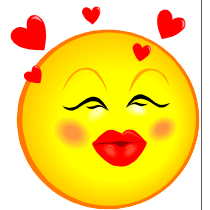
We will be decorating our church with Christmas wreaths on Saturday, **December 2nd**. Kathleen and Tom Williamson will be heading this festive venture. If you would like to help make our church look beautiful during the advent season, please contact Kathleen at 732 605-9345 ASAP.

## Women's Lunch

Join together with the women's group on Tuesday, **December 12th** at 12:00 pm for Christmas stories, poetry and memories. Bring Christmas cookies to share over tea after your bag lunch. Martha Palmer & Mae Rienstra are planning a special top secret Christmas program. Come and find out what it is all about.....all women are invited. Noel, Noel!

## Christian Education Happenings

The children of SRC will be participating in the Sunday morning worship service on **December 24th**. They will be putting on a short Christmas program with a song and a skit which you won't want to miss. All children who would like to be part of this program are encouraged to attend Sunday School over the coming weeks since that will be our time to prepare for Jesus' coming and to prepare for their Christmas message on the 24th! We have some Advent lessons which we will also cover in Sunday School during the coming weeks.



The children sang and spoke the Lord's Prayer during church on Nov. 19 using American Sign language while singing it. The children have been studying from Exodus this Fall. They have learned a lot about God, Moses and the Exodus from Egypt. The children are memorizing the Ten Commandments- adding a new commandment each week. All children who succeed in memorizing all 10 will receive a special gift certificate. They are learning lessons about how we should treat one another and to show our love for God through respectful behavior, and acts of kindness and love to others. They will learn Jesus' summary of the law.

The kids built a model of a tabernacle on Nov. 26, thinking about the offerings that were made by the Israelites "whose hearts were willing". They were challenged to think about ways that they can make free will offerings to God as well, and to take care of God's House of Worship. They came up with some great ideas, which hopefully they will carry out.

The children showed their love and concern for others by sending cards to church friends who were recovering from illness or surgery- Mrs. Koops, Mr. George Wade and David Wehr, around the time of his birthday. New children are always welcome to join us at Sunday School. Please feel free to invite a friend to come even for one Sunday. If you have any suggestions or ways to improve our Sunday School program feel free to share your ideas.

Thank you **Phyllis Beals**

**Give a Gift of Hope**

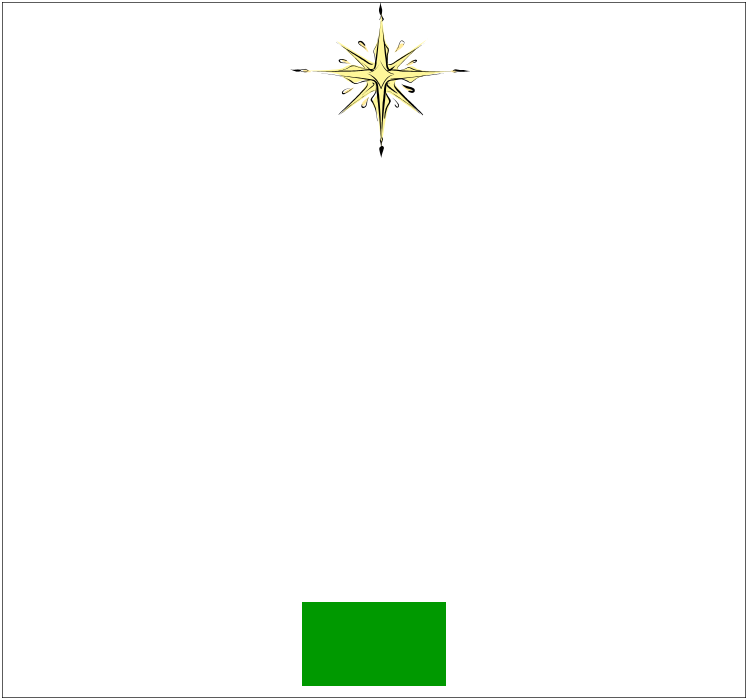
**THIS YEAR'S XMAS OFFERING**

**A**re you looking for a meaningful gift, a new family tradition, or a way to make a difference this Christmas? RCWS is offering 3 Christmas gift projects that will help bring hope to children and families around the world. Members of our missions committee will be assembling the following projects with your monetary gifts:

1. Goat project in Africa (\$35 for 1 goat),
2. Baby kits for infants in the US and abroad (it costs \$40 for 1 kit)
3. Feeding program for children in Malawi (\$50)

**Y**ou can use your Christmas envelope that you received with your offering boxes or earmark your check "Gift of Hope" and place it in any offering plate during December.

# DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



## December Ushers

3—Communion—Helmut Horr & Curly Boelhouwer

10— Kathleen Williamson & Dawn Harris

17— Marilyn Koops & John O'Shea

24 —Christmas Eve Day— Sunday School Children

24—Christmas Eve Candlelight service—Hap Harris & Curly Boelhouwer

31— Helmut Horr & Rich Horr

## December Coffee Hosts

3—Martha Palmer & Mary Belasco 10—The Patton Family

17—The Winant Family & Helen Erdey

24—Morning Services—A Volunteer is Needed

31— Christmas Cookies - All Families



## Craft Show

The North Brunswick Woman's Club will be hosting their 5th annual craft and vendor show on **Saturday, December 2nd** at Our Lady of Peace Church Hall on Rt.#130 in North Brunswick from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will be many vendors showing off their crafts & products, so come on out and get your Christmas shopping done early! Food and baked goods will also be sold.

Proceeds will benefit the Humane Association and local scholarships.

# December 2006

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

					1	2 Greening of the Church
3 10:00 Communion 11:00 Coffee Hr. 11:25 Sunday Sch	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour 11:25 Sunday Sch	11	12 Noon Ladies Lunch 7:00 pm Consistory	13	14	15	16
17 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hour 11:25 Sunday Sch	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 10:00 Worship 11:00 Coffee Hr No Christian Ed 7:00 pm Candlelight Svc	25	26	27	28	29	
31 10:00 Worship Christmas Cookies!			<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p><b>MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!</b></p> </div>			

**Christmas Cookies** ~ Our annual Christmas Cookie Coffee Hour will be on Sunday, **December 31st**. Please leave your contribution in the parlor in a disposable container to share with others. Let's keep the tradition going!!

**2007 Church Directory** ~ A mockup of the 2007 church directory will be placed on the red table in the foyer for your review. As of now, the directory lists only active members and their families. Please review your entry for accuracy and check it off after you have made all corrections.

\*\*\*\*There will also be a section for "Friends/Relatives" of Second Church. \*\*\*\*

If you would like us to list someone who is associated with SRC in some way, write down their name, address & phone number. You could also email the information to Kathy Fisher.