



## Northminster GAIT

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January 2008

### **Children Do Worship!**

Rev. Dr. Stacey D. Jones

Can children worship? Children worship with each new discovery of their lives: stars, puppies, and even snowflakes. Reverence, respect, love, awe, praise, adoration, appreciation, and honor come naturally to children. Jesus himself valued their songs of praise during his final week on earth.

In worship with the congregation, children will actively experience words such as these:

Hosanna – Hallelujah – Shalom – Praise.

Sofia Cavalletti, a Christian educator in Italy, has developed experiences for educational settings in which children can experience worship. She wrote in *The Religious Potential of the Child* that she has observed that all children experience God, whether or not they have structured religious education. Each child with whom she has worked has shown a spiritual inclination. As she shared Jesus' stories with youngsters, she observed their deep and spontaneous responses. Children expressed their experiences with God by their deep concentration and their expressions of joy and peace.

Cavalletti is convinced that young children are not just getting ready to learn about God, but that they can actually know, love, and worship God in ways that are appropriate for their development and understanding. She emphasizes that children are not just learning about God through explanation and interpretation, but that children are worshiping through entering into the experience of the presence of God. The children are participating and "taking in" the experience.

Next month "Children seek to be involved in worship

### **Youth News!**

Chris Jones, Rebecca and Tom Brandau, and Stacey Jones

December was a busy month for youth mission. The Youth group was responsible for baking all the cookies that were decorated at the Prepare to Share church event in early December. Then on December 9th the youth group voted to spend some significant money that they had raised at the garage sale last summer to buy presents for the MICA family. They went shopping and bought many wonderful presents including Thomas the Train toys, boots, and diapers.

They also contributed toward the vacuum cleaner that the church bought for the family. I am amazed at how generous they were to a family they had never met. Then on December 16th they went caroling to our church members living at Green Hills. They took hot chocolate that they had made and sang several songs to as many members as we were able to find. It was a wonderful way to prepare for the holidays. This is a fine group of responsible and caring teenagers and we enjoy sharing our lives with them.

## **The Month Before Christmas**

*Submitted by Skip Walter*

*This was sent to Skip by e-mail, he thought some of you might enjoy this*

'Twas the month before Christmas when all through our land,  
Not a Christian was praying nor taking a stand.  
Why the PC Police had taken away,  
the reason for Christmas - no one could say.

The children were told by their schools not to sing,  
About Shepherds and Wise Men and Angels and things.

It might hurt people's feelings; the teachers would say

December 25th is just a "Holiday."  
Yet the shoppers were ready with cash, checks and credit  
pushing folks down to the floor just to get it!  
CDs from Madonna, an X BOX, an I-pod  
something was changing, something quite odd!

Retailers promoted Ramadan and Kwanzaa  
In hopes to sell books by Franken & Fonda.  
As Targets are hanging their trees upside down  
At Lowe's the word Christmas - was nowhere to be found.

At K-Mart and Staples and Penny's and Sears  
you won't hear the word Christmas; it won't touch your ears.

Inclusive, sensitive, Di-ver-is-ty  
Are words that were used to intimidate me.

Now Daschle, Now Darden, Now Sharpton, Wolf Blitzen  
on Boxer, on Rather, on Kerry, on Clinton!  
At the top of the Senate, there arose such a clatter  
to eliminate Jesus, in all public matter.

And we spoke not a word, as they took away our faith  
forbidden to speak of salvation and grace  
the true Gift of Christmas was exchanged and discarded  
the reason for the season, stopped before it started.

So as you celebrate "Winter Break" under your "Dream Tree"  
Sipping your Starbucks, listen to me.  
Choose your words carefully; choose what you say  
Shout MERRY CHRISTMAS, not Happy Holiday

## **Choir and Song Leader Opportunities**

Ashley Metzler

Hello all! Looking for a great way to give back to your church? Start the new year off right by joining choir! We are always looking for new voices to join us! If choir isn't your thing, we would love to have more volunteers to be song leaders every 2nd and 4th Sunday. On Wednesday, January 9th, I will be available from 6-7 P.M. in the sanctuary if you wish to ask questions to see what NPC choir is all about. You are certainly welcome to come on any Wednesday you want, but there will be refreshments provided on the 9th :) Whether you have years of singing in choirs or singing in showers under your belt, I invite each and everyone of you to check out a rehearsal!

Thanks! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

## Caring and Sharing at Christmas

Karen Thompson, Deacons

NPC's cheerful giving helped make Christmas extra special for many people this year. The Deacons were worried, at first, that there might not be enough time for church members to respond to our last-minute announcements, but we should have remembered the angels' oft-repeated greeting, "Fear not!"

The gift box for the Connect Program was full and overflowing by December 13! After the Deacons divided up the amazing assortment of donations -- which sort of felt like making order out of chaos! -- the church was able to provide each child in the Connect program with a \$5 restaurant gift card, a book, a bag (hand-decorated by NPC children) of snacks and two or three few small personal items or toys. These things surely brightened the eyes of these very needy youngsters.

The Northminster Youth Group and some generous NPC families also came through with flying colors on behalf of our Project Home Mission family. A warm winter coat and gloves for "Jackie" (the mother), as well as clothes, boots, shoes, puzzles, and bright-colored toys for "Justin" (the toddler) and "Curtis" (the baby) were among the presents purchased by church members. The NPC Youth Group also pitched in generously with money they earned from last fall's garage sale! Accompanied by Youth Leaders Chris Jones and Tom & Rebecca Brandau, they shopped for gifts, diapers and other household goods, and searched for the vacuum cleaner.

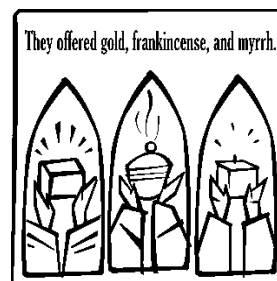
The request for a "big ticket" appliance such as a HEPA vacuum may have been a surprise at first. Yet, knowing that the members of our PHM family have some health problems, and realizing how greatly this device could improve the quality of their lives, our congregation really responded. Cash contributions from individuals, a little over \$60 from the Youth Group, and the heart-warming offer of one family to make up the entire shortfall ensured that we were able to purchase a reliable, high-quality model. It even has washable filters, eliminating the need for Jackie to spend \$50 - \$75 per year on replacements. Finally, a little over \$1800 was raised through purchases from the Alternative Gift Market. As

you know, the proceeds from these purchases go to whichever assistance programs they buyers select -- supporting food, shelter, medical assistance and self-help programs for people in Ames or around the world, and for protection of endangered wildlife and habitats. Alternative Gifts are the perfect way to shop for those who have everything AND those who have nothing. (You may buy alternative gifts throughout the year from <http://www.churchworldservice.org>.) Thanks again to the Sunday School children who decorated gift bags, the NPC Youth Group who gave from the heart, Tom McElherne and Dave Briseno who managed the AGM, and everyone else who purchased, wrapped, and spread love at Christmas.

## Magi Quiz

Matthew 2:1-12 tells the story of the magi who visited Jesus, and we read this story on January 6. However, many of us are familiar with this story from hymns such as "We Three Kings," from Christmas cards, and from nativity scenes. Without reading the story, take this short quiz, then read Matthew 2:1-12 and check your answers with the ones below.

1. How many magi were there?
2. How many kings were there?
3. What does the word *magi* mean?
4. What nationality were the magi?
5. What guided them on their travels?
6. How did they travel to Bethlehem?
7. How did King Herod react when he heard about Jesus' birth?
8. Where did they visit Jesus and his family?
9. What gifts did the magi bring?
10. How did they go home?



## Magi Quiz Answers

1. For centuries, people have assumed that there were three, because of the three gifts. However, the Bible does not say; there could have been any number.
2. This is a trick question – the Bible does not call them kings at all! The gifts they bring are quite expensive, and so legends arose suggesting that they must have been kings to afford gifts of such value. Also, some people think it makes the story kind of special to think of rulers of foreign lands coming to recognize Jesus as a king. Despite the popularity of the hymn “We Three Kings,” the magi probably were not royalty.
3. *Magi* is the plural of *magus*, which means “wise person,” “priest,” or “one who studies the stars.”
4. The magi came from “the East” (Matthew 2:1) – probably Persia, although many images tend to portray one of them as being African. This comes from the idea that they represent a variety of different nations and symbolizes that all the nations of the world came to worship Jesus.
5. They followed a star (Matthew 2:2).
6. We do not know how they traveled. It might have been by camel, which is how they are often portrayed, but the Bible does not tell us.
7. Matthew 2:3 states that King Herod was frightened, and so were all of the people of Jerusalem. Herod had good reason to be scared, because he felt threatened by the presence of another “king of the Jews,” which is how the magi referred to Jesus.
8. According to Matthew 2:11, the magi visited Jesus and Mary in a house (not at the stable). This leads some scholars to think that this happened quite some time after Jesus’ birth.
9. They brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Frankincense was often burned in worship to create a sweet-smelling smoke that was believed to be pleasing to God. Myrrh was a very expensive perfume used for anointing bodies for

burial. All three gifts remind us of aspects of Jesus’ life.

10. King Herod wanted the magi to come back and tell him where Jesus was. Herod said that he wanted to worship him, but in fact he wanted to harm him. However, the magi were warned about this in a dream not to return to Herod, and so they went back to their country by another road.

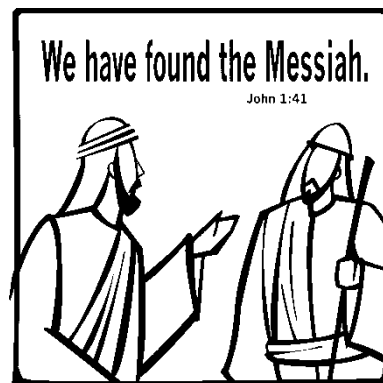


Table grace

God, we thank you for our food,  
and the gift of this New Year.

Open our hearts  
that we might share  
with friends both far and near.

Amen.

## Cents-Ability

*Submitted by Karen Thompson*

**Cents-Ability** comes not from our regular tithes and offerings, but from spending less on ourselves. As St. Paul says, "I am not trying to relieve others by putting a burden on you, but since you have plenty at this time, it is only fair that you should help those who are in need. Then, when you are in need and they have plenty, they will help you. In this way, both are treated equally." (II Cor. 8:13-14)

Please continue to remember the less fortunate when you save and set aside 2 cents a meal.

**January 13 will be Noisy Coin Sunday!**

## Remedial Presbyterianism

Rev. Dr. Stacey D. Jones

In a college town where everyone is working on college courses or even advanced degrees, perhaps we need to back up and look at being a Presbyterian from a High School student's perspective. This is also a course for those who are interested in joining our congregation. Please join us beginning Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup> during the Sunday School hour as we explore what it means to be a Presbyterian.

### January Acolytes:

The upcoming schedule for candle lighters is as follows:

**January 6** Nick and Garrett Johnson

**January 13** Daniel and David Vigil

**January 20** Tierney and Claire Rogers

**January 27** Ben Sulzberger and Andrea Daley

**February 3** Brad and Lucas Johnson

GREAT JOB EVERYONE!! THANKS FOR YOUR HELP WITH OUR WORSHIP SERVICES.

### Happenings in January

January 5<sup>th</sup>: Happy Birthday Lori Sulzberger!

**January 6<sup>th</sup>**: Epiphany of the Lord; Isa. 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14; Eph. 3:1-12; Matt 2:1-12

Happy Birthday Karlene Garn!

**January 8<sup>th</sup>**: Happy Birthday Jason Rogers

**January 11<sup>th</sup>**: Happy Birthday Dennis Vigil

**January 13**: Baptism of the Lord; Isa. 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matt. 3:13-17

**January 14<sup>th</sup>**: Happy Birthday Tijana Grove!

**January 15<sup>th</sup>**: Happy Birthday Curtis Malone and Daniel Beck!

**January 20<sup>th</sup>**: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time; Isa. 49:1-7; psalm 40:1-11; 1 Cor. 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

**January 21<sup>st</sup>**: Happy Birthday Joan Greiner and Joanne Marshall!

**January 26<sup>th</sup>**: Happy Birthday Isabelle Rogers and Nicholas Sulzberger!

**January 27<sup>th</sup>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time; Isa. 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1,409; 1 Cor. 1:10-18; Matt. 4:12-23

Congregational Meeting

**January 28<sup>th</sup>**: Happy Birthday Mom! (Sue Maffett)

**January 30<sup>th</sup>**: Happy Birthday Megan Daley

GAIT Deadline for February is Thursday, January 24<sup>th</sup>. Please e-mail your articles to [rpcykp@msn.com](mailto:rpcykp@msn.com) or put them in the GAIT editor's box next to the church office