

THE CHALLENGER

VOLUME 7 ISSUE 6

NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2008



“Building on Concrete Rather than Straw”

by Pastor Greg Dyson
Interim Minister

**He has shown you, O man, what is good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But to do justly,
To love mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?**

Micah 6:8

Probably one of the hardest steps in a person’s life is changing one’s diet. If you think about it, sometime around the beginning of the year, there are massive ads for diet programs and infomercials that offer promises of losing weight or toning the body that you have. That, coupled with going into the bathroom and passing the full length mirror, is usually enough of a look at reality to start the process of spending the money, adjusting your schedule and starting a weight loss program. The first 20 or 30 minutes of the workout feel so invigorating! The heart is pumping and it feels like you have lost 20 or 30 pounds in sweat alone! The 2nd day is almost as invigorating as the first, but in the back of your mind you begin to remember the things that are waiting for your attention so you end the work out 15 minutes early. After all you don’t want to shirk your responsibilities!

Within a week you have again rationalized that as important as getting in shape is, this activity must be sacrificed on the altar of immediacy and you will “get back to it” when you have more time. Eventually you don’t even care that your gym clothes are buried in the bottom of your dresser and the “fire” of getting in shape leaves you until you get the courage to look in the mirror on your way out of the bathroom. Don’t worry, that urge won’t hit until just after Thanksgiving and in time for you to start another resolution to lose weight or get in shape next year!

Changing your spiritual habits can be as daunting as changing your physical habits. There is a road that has been lined with good intentions. Looking at the verse from Micah 6:8 that is in the beginning of this article we find some clues to radically different living:

Requirements It will be important to view what God is saying as a requirement rather than a suggestion. The concept that God has something special for me and you to do is important.

(continued on page 2)

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Thanksgiving Worship*
- *Advent & Christmas*
- *Angel Tree Program*
- *Thursday Family Nights*
- *College & Homeless Ministries*
- *Search Comm. Update*

HOME *for the* HOLIDAYS



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What God is directing you to do is a *must*, rather than a request. To live a fulfilled life, we MUST engage in what He has for you and me.

Justly

Making justice a part of our fabric, and clearly a part of your life and my life. Seeing the world from God's vantage point. We must realize that God's justice is different than your justice and my justice. Taking up God's justice might mean laying down our rights and privileges. The World, your family and even your closest friends might not understand how and why you choose God's ways over your own. There seems to be nothing "just" in doing that.

Humbly

Now is the time to lay aside our pride and realize that we are smaller than the God that created us. We can get rid of some spiritual fat by digesting a diet of humility. Thinking of others higher than ourselves. Willing to allow someone the seat of authority. Opening our minds up to the possibility that God might lead or speak in a situation using someone else to convey His thoughts.

With God

There are two ways to live. With God or without Him. The second is a rather miserable existence. By maybe you have created a third existence. With God but not really living in the reality of His love and His power—a kind of pseudo-existence. Why not consider the possibilities of letting the Master have full reign in your life! God is ready to help you and me walk with Him. This opportunity is a great one. Don't be afraid to take up the challenge; God awaits you!

With eternity in Mind,

Pastor Greg

COLLEGE CONNECTION MINISTRY

October 3-4th Church in the Acres was host to the InterVarsity fall conference. The theme was Rest & Risk. Some 70 college students from area colleges came together for 27 hours of both Risking and Resting. The friends and members of Church in the Acres did an amazing job of caring for the needs of the students. Lena Lee, Gina Dyson and Sandy O'Neil led several of the activities that happened during their stay. The great work of the Church Choir and Celebration II made their stay spectacular. On the first evening, the students enjoyed a time of worship from the Wawwy band and a message from Pastor Greg, then they took a late night Peter Pan bus tour of the city. This included the good and challenging opportunities that the city has to offer. It was during this tour that they met a real risk—meeting and helping some of the needy in the city. One of the leaders literally gave the clothing off his back for those in need. It was a good night that ended at the Lion's Den.



The students on the 2nd day went to the Lion's Den and led a block party there. They did a wonderful job. On their final afternoon they participated in a group Sabbath. It was a great time of quiet, prayer and contemplation. The students ended their stay with us with a wonderful time of praise and worship. The day included messages from Jess Chung & Kate Irving.

We certainly hope we can host them again. They were a great blessing to us!

Pastor Greg



COMMUNITY ECUMENICAL THANKSGIVING SERVICE
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23RD AT 7:00 P.M.
AT FOSTER MEMORIAL CHURCH

Back by popular demand! For many years the churches of 16 Acres joined together to share in thanksgiving and worship on the Sunday evening before Thanksgiving Day. After an absence of this gathering for the past few years, we are happy to be a part of this Ecumenical Service again. Clergy and choirs from several churches will participate in this service and our own Cathy Berry is the Music and Choral Director for the service.

Representatives from many local churches of various denominations have been planning this worship service for months. Please mark your calendar and plan to join us on the 23rd at Foster Memorial Church at 16 Acres center, 1234 Parker Street.

REV. GAGE HOTALING CELEBRATES THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS FIRST SERMON

On Sunday, November 16th, join us for Celebration I worship at 9:45 a.m., when our Pastor Emeritus, Rev. E. Gage Hotaling, will bring the message "Be of Good Cheer".

This commemorates 75 years since he delivered his first sermon on November 19, 1933. Plan to come and greet Gage and Dell on that day.



NOVEMBER 8TH
5 to 7 p.m.
Walker Hall

*Sponsored by our
 Missions Team*

Turkey with all the fixings

Adults \$7 Children ages 4-10 \$4

Take out and delivery available.

Mark your calendar and invite friends.

We would love to have your help on set-up, clean-up, cooking, serving, etc.

Please contact: Jane Beckland (543-8585), Bev Vautrain (782-7074) or Margaret Slade (525-5092) to help. Thank you.



Advent begins on November 30th

Join us each Sunday as we worship together and prepare for the celebration of the birthday of Jesus. Pastor Greg has prepared a special Christmas sermon series.

Please note that the 9:45 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. worship celebrations will continue through December, EXCEPT FOR DECEMBER 14th WHEN WE WILL ALL WORSHIP TOGETHER at 9:45 a.m. in the sanctuary.



Mark your calendar now for our annual All-Church Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in the sanctuary. This is always a lovely worship experience with special music and carols.



FOOD COLLECTION FOR THE OPEN PANTRY

Thank you for your donations of non-perishable FOOD ITEMS for the Open Pantry throughout the year. During November, we place special emphasis on this outreach. Please bring in your special Thanksgiving food donations in through November 23rd for pick-up on the 25th. These items will brighten someone's life during the holiday season. Let's remember those less fortunate as we give thanks for all that we have. Items may be brought in on Sundays or during weekday office hours and placed on the table in the Narthex or in the Open Pantry grocery cart in the coat room. Especially needed are rice, pasta, dry milk, snacks, juice, soups, cereals, peanut butter and meal helpers.



ANGEL TREE

We will again be having our Angel Tree Christmas ministry program for children of incarcerated parents.

Look for the Angel Tree tags in early November, and take home one or more to purchase a Christmas gift for one of the children.

The **Angel Tree Party** will be held during Christian Living Night on Thursday, December 11th downstairs in room 2.

If you are interested in helping this year with set-up or during the party, please call Gina Dyson at 782-0839.

RECENTLY BAPTIZED

The following people were baptized in our church by Pastor Greg Dyson on Sunday, October 19th:

Miranda L. Dyson and Caitlyn M. Jernigan

This was a wonderful worship service in which several members of the Chinese Church were also baptized.

If you are interested in being baptized, see the article on page 5 for information about the next class.



TO OUR CHURCH OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

The following people have assisted in various ways during the first 10 months of 2008, and your willing efforts are very much appreciated!

Eleanor Davidson, Betty Dudek, Melissa Cabey, Jim Fields, Warren Christensen, Don Gaines, Lyle Butler, Don Gregg, Nancy MacCallum, Doris Anderson, Betty Coughlin, Mary Kilpatrick, Sandy O'Neil and Barbara Piner.

WINTER STORM CLOSINGS

As we enjoy the beautiful fall weather, we realize the winter months and storms are not far behind. If you think a church service or event may be cancelled due to a storm, please tune in to TV22, ABC40, or log on to WGGB.com. Please note: TV40 will only broadcast worship service cancellations; other events will be listed on their website.

Small meeting cancellations will be handled by phone calls.



FOR JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2009 CHALLENGER ARTICLES IS: DECEMBER 15TH



BAPTISM INFORMATION CLASS

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH
AT 7 P.M.

Our next Baptism information class will be held in the Friendship Room on November 10th. This class is open to all who wish to learn more about baptism.

For those who make a decision to be baptized, the Baptism Service will be held on Sunday, November 30th, the First Sunday of Advent, during our Celebration II 6:00 evening service. Celebration II will be held in the sanctuary that evening.

MEMBERSHIP

INFORMATION CLASS

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 2ND
AT 6 P.M.



Membership Class

Our next Church Membership information class will be held in the Friendship Room on December 2nd. You must sign up for this class which will be limited to 7 people, with another being offered in January or February.

Who should attend?

- People who attended the previous class
- People who have been attending Church in the Acres for several months
- Anyone interested in learning about membership at Church in the Acres

THANKSGIVING OFFERING AND CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Special offering envelopes are available in your giving envelope boxes, in the pew racks and in the back of Walker Hall for your over-and-above Thanks offering and Christmas giving to help continue the ministries of our church.

Give as you feel led.

THURSDAY FAMILY NIGHTS CHRISTIAN EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH AND ADULTS

We gather at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary for opening exercises and then go to various rooms with our peer groups to draw close to the Lord. Something for everyone including a Study of Acts, Prayer Group, Couples Class, Children's Classes, Youth Group and more.

Special events coming up include the Advent Workshop on Dec. 4th and the Angel Tree and Church School Christmas Party on Dec. 11th.

BIG E FUND-RAISER UPDATE

We have received a check from Cold Hollow Cider Mill in the amount of **\$7,507.83** for 1,072.55 hours worked by our dedicated volunteers. Great job working for our church!

A DAY FOR GOD'S BEAUTIFUL WOMEN A SUCCESS

A BIG THANK YOU to all who participated in and attended our 3rd annual Women's Vendor Event on October 25th. It was a wonderful day of blessings for all, and our proceeds totaled **\$384.20** for our church's maintenance and utilities budget!

MEN'S BIBLE STUDIES CONTINUE

Join us for monthly Breakfast Bible Studies—next two are **Nov. 9th** and **Dec. 7th** at 7 a.m.

Also: Weekly Men's Bible Study at Christ Presbyterian Church, Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m.

MAN CAMP: Nov. 14-16 — See Pastor Greg



ORDER YOUR POINSETTIAS

From November 2—21, order forms for poinsettias (\$15) will be available at church. The plants will adorn our sanctuary altar for Celebration I on Christmas Sunday (December 21st) and may be given in memory of or in honor of a loved one, or in celebration of the season. You may pick up your plant after worship or donate it to be given to a shut-in. Order deadline is November 21st.



SEARCH COMMITTEE UPDATE

Some of you have probably been wondering what the Search Committee has been up to since we last reported on our work. As you know, we spent a significant amount of time in the Spring and early Summer listening to all of you who would talk to us via discussion groups, surveys, and informal conversations. Throughout the summer we reviewed this input, began developing a profile of our Church, and assembled a list of the skills we believe to be most important for the next senior pastor of our Church. This was both a challenging and rewarding process as we attempted to take what we heard from you and articulate what that means for the future of our congregation.

Our identification of the skills we are looking for in a senior pastor readied us to begin reviewing the profiles and applications of potential candidates. Since the summer, we have reviewed the profiles of nearly four dozen potential candidates and significantly narrowed the list based primarily on our understanding, from you, of what we are looking for in a senior pastor and the direction we believe our Church is headed.

So where does that leave us? This month, October, we are completing our Church Profile which documents who we are, where we have been, where we are now, and where we are going. This will be shared with potential candidates as they conduct their own discernment process about God's calling. At the end of October we will begin initial interviews with potential candidates.

As always, if you have questions please feel free to contact myself or any member of the search committee. We will very happily discuss where we are in the process, but for reasons of confidentiality we will not be able to discuss the status of any particular candidates. Thank you for your continued prayers!

Paul Foster

PHOENIX ARTS PROJECT SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH

Nehemiah Ministries, Inc. and the Phoenix Arts Project invite you to the 3rd annual Phoenix Art Show and Sale on Saturday, November 15th from 2—8:30 p.m. at Christ Church Cathedral, 35 Chestnut Street, Springfield.

Emerging artists from Springfield's homeless and low-income population will showcase over 100 new works of art. Live music and poetry at 4 p.m., headlined by local gospel performer Soft Spoken Prophet. The event will also feature handcrafted gifts from local crafters and the Pulse café serving snacks, beverages and dinner.

The project was initiated by Nehemiah Ministries, Inc. as a way to therapeutically offer peace and hope to this often isolated marginalized population, and to give them a face, voice and connection to the broader community of Springfield.

For more information call 732-7778 or 313-1323. Web site: phoenixartsproject.org

Shiloh Bradshaw, Arts Project Director

WORLD COMMUNITY DAY Church Women United Friday, November 7th, 8:30 to 1 p.m. at Wilbraham United Church

500 Main Street, Wilbraham, MA
Theme: "God's Wisdom Sets Us Free"
See posted flyers and RSVP by Monday, November 3rd to 783-3378.

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP SUPPER AT CAMP GROTONWOOD

Sunday, November 16th
Appetizers at 5:30, Dinner at 6:00
Cost \$13pp, or \$11pp for groups of 5 or more

Call 978-448-5763 for information and reservations.



HOMELESS OUTREACH REPORT — “THE MONDAY REPORT”

It was the first night out on the streets since last May. During those months, most contact has revolved around a question: “When are we going back out again?” Our agreed to time was Columbus Day Monday. Everything was in place, I had a full load of sleeping bags from Pastor Jack in my back seats, some thermoses of coffee and tea and mechanically the van was all set after \$969 worth of maintenance. But the real question was if our team was ready and what would God do tonight? He always does well. The launch team was exceptional. Many regulars were there armed with love and ready to share it with others that we would meet.

We were even joined by an outreach team from MIT. They drove down from the Boston area especially to see and understand more about what we were doing on the streets. They do ministry work among the homeless and with a twist. Their ministry team fasts during the day prior to going out on the street. All the food they would have eaten they purchase and put aside, then in the evening they give that same food away to those in need. Powerful!

We gathered in a circle to pray, loaded up and headed out. God made the first move—He took us off our assigned course. We headed down an alley where we once found Wayne. The night we found him he had a flesh wound from being shot earlier in the day. Wayne is dead now, but the memories we had together are not. No one was in the alley tonight. But now it put us on another path. Soon we were passing places that Stephen used to hang out. Stephen, too, is dead but I found myself slowing down, looking for him. The streets are not deadly for us, but for homeless women and men in their 40-50’s it is an open casket.

There! Look! A man sitting on a parking lot barrier. We pull 5 vehicles into the lot. Someone asked me “Are we all getting out?” Certainly, it looked like overkill, but one of the great things about this large group is that it takes lots of eyes, ears, ideas and hands to love just one. So we deployed to provide what we had: “silver and gold have we none, but what we have we give to you...” Acts 4. Before we could reach the man we spotted two other people. The woman looked at me and spoke first: “You are a lucky man” she said. Then she quickly scanned the group, “look at you all—you are beautiful people.” She had container in her hand and was drinking something. She looked back at me again. A bit of fear ran through me. I sensed that she had some understanding and that it was supernatural. I am not afraid of the supernatural, but I was concerned about the source of her information. One team member moved in close to me. I wonder if he sensed something, too. He spoke kindly to her “Hello, my name is ____ he said, what is yours?” She confirmed my thoughts. “I have a tormented soul” she said. “The only rest I get is at night when I sleep”.

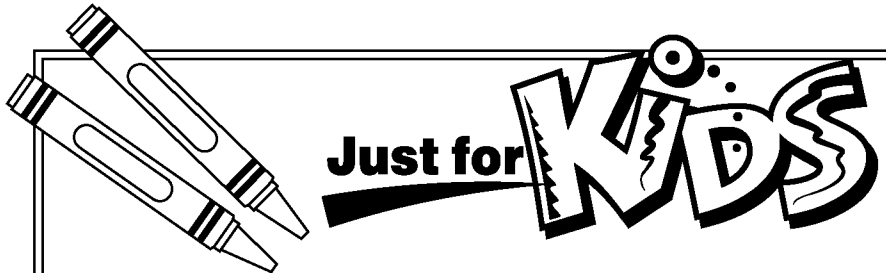
Suddenly she looked around and said “You all must be Christians—I can see it—you are such beautiful people”. The team had fanned out by now, about 10 standing around each of the 3 homeless people there. Others in the background were praying or awaiting direction. I stayed in the circle with this woman (we will call her “Liz”). As she shared the despair of her life, it was easier to understand why she was on the street and what we were to do about it. All we could do was call upon her Creator and ask for His mercy to rest greatly on her. So we laid hands on her and, with her permission, prayed for God to give her the strength to make it though. We all profoundly sensed the presence and power of God. When we finished, she made a decision to go back to the drug assistance program and to see how powerful God really is. We pray that she can not only have her kids back, but also her life. One thing she said stuck with me. “The problems I have cannot be corrected by human means. If they could, don’t you think I would have done something about it?” She’s right—problems need God to step in to affect change. Keep “Liz” in prayer.

Another encounter was with “Don”. He was a man that I had been diligently looking for! A week ago a young lady attending an InterVarsity Retreat had met Don while we were doing some street outreach and had asked that we get her blanket to Don. We had looked for him but were unable to find him. I am so glad we finally did. He was both thankful and grateful for the blanket. Don is a Veteran of the Gulf war and has been on the streets for some 5 months. We prayed and asked the Lord to give him the courage and strength to begin the process to get him off the street. Please don’t wait for someone else to help those in need around you. Step in and make a difference today. (By the way, have you called and checked up on Claire Mendoza lately? Her number again is 413-363-0880; remember her needs are high, but just being open to talk to her will help keep her stable and off the street.)

It is getting cold. Please pray for those on the street, and pray that God will allow us the opportunity to serve as His hands and feet in our city.

Pastor Greg

Please share this page with a child in your life...

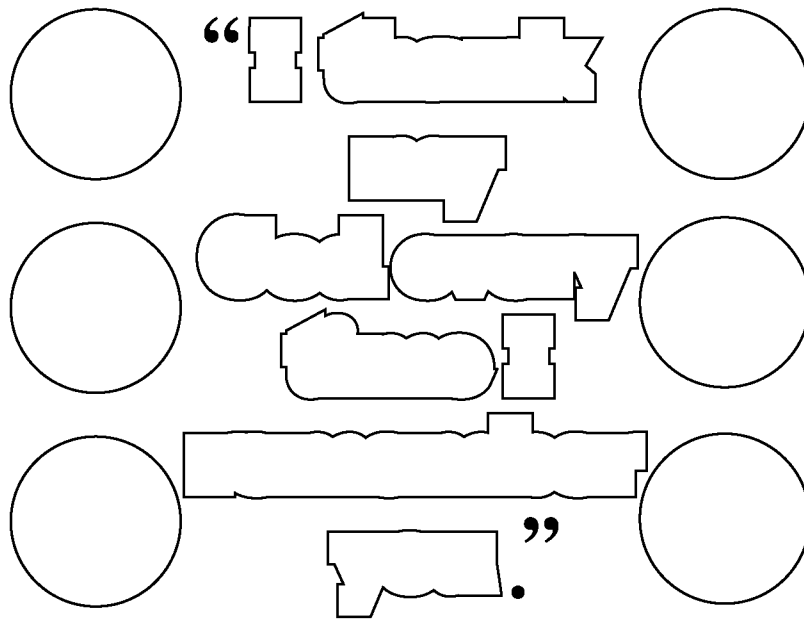


Thanksgiving and Prayer

When Paul sent a letter to the church at Philippi, he told his friends how he felt about them. Finish this puzzle to read what Paul wrote in Philippians 1:3.

Match words in the list below to the correct word shape. Then write the letters inside each shape. In the circles, draw the faces of people you're thankful for in your life.

WORD LIST: remember time you I God
I my thank every



Answer: "I thank my God every time I remember you."

THANKSGIVING GATHERING



When you are with family and friends this holiday, let them know how thankful you are for them with this fun craft.

What you need:

- Photos (group or individual) of each person
- Ruler • Pencil
- Scissors • Envelopes
- Cardstock or construction paper
- Glue sticks

What you do:

1. Collect photos of the people you'll be seeing. For group shots, make a copy for each person.
2. On the back of each picture, use a ruler and pencil to draw vertical and horizontal lines. Space the lines 1 inch apart to make a grid with 1-inch squares.
3. Starting in the top-right corner, number the squares beginning with 1. Number the top row across, then the second row and so on.
4. Cut out all the squares and put them in an envelope. Write the correct person's name on each envelope.
5. On the bottom of each piece of cardstock, write "I thank my God every time I remember you, Philippians 1:3 (NIV)." Then sign your name.
6. Give each person an envelope and a piece of cardstock. Instruct people to put the squares in order to reveal their picture. Tell them how many numbers go across and down.
7. For a special keepsake, have people glue their finished photos onto the cardstock.

FAMILY NEWS PAGE

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:
(Our members 60 and up)

- | | | | |
|--------|---------------------|--------|--------------------|
| Nov. 5 | Susan Donoghue | Dec. 5 | Susanne Renaud |
| 6 | Mary Kilpatrick | 6 | Mary Ann Powell |
| 9 | Anna Rogers | 10 | Gil MacCallum |
| 15 | Hazel Jawan | 13 | George Copeland |
| 23 | Marjorie Dambkowski | 17 | Eleanor Davidson |
| | | 18 | Doris Lord |
| | | 19 | Walter Worthington |
| | | 24 | Eleanor Dorsett |
| | | 27 | Fred Remp |



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:
(Multiples of 5 and 50+)

Phyllis and Donald Gregg, celebrating their 62nd wedding anniversary on November 2nd

THANK YOU NOTES

have been received from Michelle Giovaninni for prayers, kind words, dinners and support at the passing of her father; from Horace Edwards for prayers and caring at the passing of his brother and uncle; from Bill and Jan Moore for cards, calls, prayers and meals which are helping them through a difficult time; from Rev. Linda Shaw for cards, prayers and visits after the passing of her husband, Jack Samplatsky and from Rena Ward for the flowers she received from the church.

LAY CARE LIST

Send a card, make a call, say a prayer...

(Addresses are in the Church Directory. Office 782-2577)

- | | |
|--------|--|
| Nov. 2 | Frances Davidson |
| 9 | Jean Rondeau |
| 16 | Rena Ward |
| 23 | John Wanat |
| 30 | Muriel Sullivan |
| Dec. 7 | Florence Dow |
| 14 | Hazel Jawan, Wingate at East Longmeadow, 32 Chestnut Street, B31, East Long., MA 01028 |
| 21 | Frances Cray |
| 28 | Elizabeth Wallace |



Remember our Shut-ins



Claire Mendoza on the passing of her mother, Connie Padykula, on August 27th

Frances Davidson on the loss of her mother, Ellen Thayer, in Georgia on Sept. 8th

Horace Edwards on the passing of his brother, Curtis Edwards, and his uncle in Georgia during September

Marty Fleming and family on the loss of his father on October 9th

NEW ADDRESSES:

Terrie Fleming, 101 Derryfield Avenue, Springfield, MA 01118

Melody Bicknell, 1 Ames Hill Drive, Springfield, MA 01105

RECENTLY HOSPITALIZED:

Keith Giovaninni, Darren Kennedy

Church in the Acres (Baptist)
1383 Wilbraham Road
Springfield, MA 01119-2614

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*Where Christ is at the center,
the Bible is our guide, and People matter.
Growing Disciples to transform the world.*

Time Valued Material
Mailed October 29, 2008

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



***"Blessing and glory and
wisdom and thanksgiving and
honor and power and might
be to our God
forever and ever! Amen."***

Revelation 7:12, NRSV

The Challenger is a bi-monthly publication of the Church in the Acres (Baptist). Articles should be placed in the office drop-off folder outside the office door, the drop-off box on the office counter, mailed, placed in the Walker Hall door mail slot, faxed or e-mailed by the 15th of December, February, April, June, August and October. (Articles may be edited for length.)

E-mail: info@Churchintheacres.org *Fax:* (413) 782-6856

The Church Office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, *and* Tuesday through Thursday from 1 to 3 p.m.. *Phone:* 413-782-2577

Interim Minister	Gregory S. Dyson
Pastor Emeritus	Rev. E. Gage Hotaling
Administrative Assistant	Cheryl Nacewicz
Director of Music	Catherine Berry
Handbell Choir Director	Jeff Tisdell
Celebration II Worship Leaders	Sandy O'Neil, Don Williams
Weekend Custodians	Ruth Butler and Joanne Case