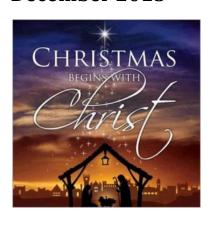
Puckety Presbyterian Church

Following Jesus... Making Disciples... Loving One Another as He Loves Us

December 2015



It Began in a Manger (Christmas)

by Max Lucado • March 22

Curious, this royal throne room. No tapestries covering the windows. No velvet garments on the courtesans. And, instead of a golden scepter, the king holds a crudely whittled olive-wood rattle. Curious, the sounds in the court. Cows munching, hooves

crunching, a mother humming, a babe nursing. It could have begun anywhere, the story of the king. But, curiously, it began in a manger. Step into the doorway, peek through the window. He is here!

The Arrival The noise and the bustle began earlier than usual in the village. As night gave way to dawn, people were already on the streets. Vendors were positioning themselves on the corners of the most heavily traveled avenues. Store owners were unlocking the doors to their shops. Children were awakened by the excited barking of

the street dogs and the complaints of donkeys pulling carts. The owner of the inn had awakened earlier than most in the town. After all, the inn was full, all the beds taken. Every available mat or blanket had been put to use. Soon all the customers would be stirring and there would be a lot of work to do. One's imagination is kindled thinking about the conversation of the innkeeper and his family at the breakfast table. Did anyone mention the arrival of the young couple the night before? Did anyone comment on the pregnancy of the girl on the donkey? Perhaps. Perhaps someone raised the subject. But, at best, it was raised, not discussed. There was nothing that novel about them. They were, possibly, one of several families turned away that night. Besides, who had time to talk about them when there was so much excitement in the air? Augustus did the economy of Bethlehem a favor when he decreed that a census should be taken. Who could remember when such commerce had hit the village? No, it is doubtful that anyone mentioned the couple's arrival or wondered about the condition of the girl. They were too busy. The day was upon them. The day's bread had to be made. The morning's chores had to be done. There was too much to do to imagine that the impossible had occurred. God had entered the world as a baby. Yet, were someone to chance upon the sheep stable on the outskirts of Bethlehem that morning, what a peculiar scene they would behold. The stable stinks like all stables do. The

stench of urine, dung, and sheep reeks pungently in the air. The ground is hard, the hay scarce. Cobwebs cling to the ceiling and a mouse scurries across the dirt floor. A lowlier place of birth could not exist. Off to one side sit a group of shepherds. They sit silently on the floor, perhaps perplexed, perhaps in awe, no doubt in amazement. Their night watch had been interrupted by an explosion of light from heaven and a symphony of angels. God goes

Near the young mother sits the weary father. If anyone is dozing, he is. He can't remember the last time he sat down. And now that the excitement has subsided a bit, now that Mary and the baby are comfortable, he leans against the wall of the stable and feels his eyes grow heavy. He still hasn't figured it all out. The mystery of the event still puzzles him. But he hasn't the energy to wrestle with the questions. What's important is that the baby is fine and that Mary is safe. As sleep comes, he remembers the name the angel told him to use . . . Jesus. "We will call him Jesus."

to those who have time to hear him—so on this cloudless night he went to simple shepherds.

Wide awake is Mary. My, how young she looks! Her head rests on the soft leather of Joseph's saddle. The pain has been eclipsed by wonder. She looks into the face of the baby. Her son. Her Lord. His Majesty. At this point in history, the human being who best understands who God is and what he is doing is a teenage girl in a smelly stable. She can't take her eyes off him. Somehow Mary knows she is holding God. So this is he. She remembers the words of the angel, "His kingdom will never end."

He looks anything but a king. His face is prunish and red. His cry, though strong and healthy, is still the helpless and piercing cry of a baby. And he is absolutely dependent upon Mary for his well-being. Majesty in the midst of the mundane. Holiness in the filth of sheep manure and sweat. Divinity entering the world on the floor of a stable, through the womb of a teenager and in the presence of a carpenter. She touches the face of the infant-God. *How long was your journey!* This baby had overlooked the universe. These rags keeping him warm were the robes of eternity. His golden throne room had been abandoned in favor of a dirty sheep pen. And worshiping angels had been replaced with kind but bewildered shepherds.

Meanwhile, the city hums. The merchants are unaware that God has visited their planet. The innkeeper would never believe that he had just sent God into the cold. And the people would scoff at anyone who told them the Messiah lay in the arms of a teenager on the outskirts of their village. They were all too busy to consider the possibility. Those who missed His Majesty's arrival that night missed it not because of evil acts or malice; no, they missed it because they simply weren't looking.

Little has changed in the last two thousand years, has it? "Just a Moment" It all happened in a moment, a most remarkable moment. As moments go, that one appeared no different than any other. If you could somehow pick it up off the timeline and examine it, it would look exactly like the ones that have passed while you have read these words. It came and it went. It was preceded and succeeded by others just like it. It was one of the countless



moments that have marked time since eternity became measurable. But in reality, that particular moment was like none other. For through that segment of time a spectacular thing occurred. God became a man. While the creatures of earth walked unaware, Divinity arrived. Heaven opened herself and placed her most precious one in a human womb. The Omnipotent, in one instant, made himself breakable. He who had been spirit became pierceable. He who was larger than the universe became an embryo. And he who sustains the world with a word chose to be dependent upon the nourishment of a young girl. God as a fetus. Holiness sleeping in a womb. The creator of life being created.

God was given eyebrows, elbows, two kidneys, and a spleen. He stretched against the walls and floated in the amniotic fluids of his mother. God had come near. He came, not as a flash of light or as an unapproachable conqueror, but as one whose first cries were heard by a peasant girl and a sleepy carpenter. The hands that first held him were unmanicured, calloused, and dirty.

No silk. No ivory. No hype. No party. No hoopla. Were it not for the shepherds, there would have been no reception. And were it not for a group of stargazers, there would have been no gifts.

Angels watched as Mary changed God's diaper. The universe watched with wonder as The Almighty learned to walk. Children played in the street with him. And had the synagogue leader in Nazareth known who was listening to his sermons...

Jesus may have had pimples. He may have been tone-deaf. Perhaps a girl down the street had a crush on him or vice versa. It could be that his knees were bony. One thing's for sure: He was, while completely divine, completely human. For thirty-three years he would feel everything you and I have ever felt. He felt weak. He grew weary. He was afraid of failure. He was susceptible to wooing women. He got colds, burped, and had body odor. His feelings got hurt. His feet got tired. And his head ached.

To think of Jesus in such a light is—well, it seems almost irreverent, doesn't it? It's not something we like to do; it's uncomfortable. It is much easier to keep the humanity out of the incarnation. Clean the manure from around the manger. Wipe the sweat out of his eyes. Pretend he never snored or blew his nose or hit his thumb with a hammer.

He's easier to stomach that way. There is something about keeping him divine that keeps him distant, packaged, predictable. But don't do it. For heaven's sake, don't. Let him be as human as he intended to be. Let him into the mire and muck of our world. For only if we let him in can he pull us out. Listen to him.

It all happened in a moment.

In one moment...a most remarkable moment. The Word became flesh.

It Began in a Manger Published by Word Publishing



Puckety Presbyterian Church's Board of Deacon's meet on November 4, 2015 and opened our meeting with prayer. It is an honor and a privilege to serve as Deacons as we reach out to people in need. We

value the faith the congregation has bestowed on us and strive to be good stewards in this mission.

We received 25 shoeboxes that were packed by members of the congregation for Operation Christmas Child. They will be delivered to a central location for pick up.

Four \$25 Roses gift card were given to Mrs. Dastolfo, the Huston Middle School nurse who will use them for students in need. We like supporting a local business.

Requests for two food baskets have been fulfilled. The Deacons received a request for help with an electric bill. This request was denied due to the exorbitant amount needed to prevent shut off.

The Deacons have received four requests so far for Thanksgiving food baskets. The baskets will be packed on November 16th at 6 p.m.

The Angel Christmas tree was decorated with names from Try City Life. The Mars Home is not responding to our desire to provide gifts for residents residing there. Discussion centered on what to do next if no names were forthcoming. A wait and see attitude was decided on as we've always gotten names from them in past years.

Charlene told us all that her niece (she has been designing and arranging the seasonal silk flower arrangements for the church) was very appreciative of the love gift we sent.

We decided to start a new venture to help Burrell High School students purchase lunch. One of our Deacons works in the cafeteria and has observed students not purchasing lunch but who are obviously hungry. She will discreetly and anonymously funnel money into their cafeteria lunch accounts. We are starting off with \$25 and will determine its success at a future meeting.

A Christmas version of The Daily Bread will be ordered to have during Advent and to pass out on Christmas Eve. A donation will be sent for the 150 copies ordered.

"Counting" during worship was discussed as well as perhaps doing something for the community since Christmas in Lower Burrell will not take place this year.



Our youth church kids will be delivering Christmas cards before worship again this year. Delivery will begin Sunday December 6, and go through and including Sunday December 20th. Save yourself a trip to the post office and the cost of stamps and drop your cards for the members of our congregation in here instead! The kids just love this project. Be sure to look for the mailbox set up in the hallway!

Please be sure to pick up your copy of the new Daily Bread available at each door to the Sanctuary.



WEEK OF December 6

Mal. 3:1-4 Luke 1:68-79 Phil. 1:3-11 Luke 3:1-6

WEEK OF December 13

Zeph. 3:14-20 Isaiah 12:2-6 Phil. 4:4-7 Luke 3:7-18

WEEK OF December 20

Micah 5:205a Luke 1:46b-55 Psalm 80:1-7 Hebrews 10:5-10 Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

WEEK OF December 27

1 Sam. 2:18-20 Psalm 148 Col. 3:12-17 Luke 2:41-52



Upkeep Update: Two new factory preset thermostats have been placed in Faith Hall. What this means to all who use Faith Hall, is that the temperature settings cannot be changed. No one, not even Upkeep, can change the temperatures for heating and air conditioning. If you attempt to manipulate them all you will accomplish is possibly breaking the thermostats. This was not done to punish anyone or any group. The change was done to attempt to have better conservation of energy to lower fuel costs.

The newest edition of the Daily Bread covering December, January and February are now available at each entry door. Please pick up your copy and a copy for any family member or friend you know who might enjoy following this publication along with us!



and helped decorate the church on November 22nd! Everything looks just beautiful and so festive!

CHRISTMAS FOOD BASKETS

Please fill

out this form and give to any Deacon or place it in the offering plate for a Christmas food box for a family in need. The boxes will be packed and ready for pick-up on December 15th.

ContactName/nun	nber:
Family name/num	ber:
Number of Adults Children: (<u>:</u> (ages):



WIRSHAP ASSISTANTS In December

6 Cliff McKay

13 Sophia Earhart

20 Michelle Hough

24 Jennifer Motosicky

27 Chari Burtner

Your Session:
Michelle Hough
Rebecca Fisher
Cliff McKay, Sr.
Debbie Fotheringham
Deb Artman
Kirk Orr
Jolene Kostelansky
Mick Dober
Mike Tatem
Vicki Orr

Corporate Officers:

President: Sophia Earhart Vice-Pres.: Cliff McKay Secretary: Michelle Hough Treasurer: Donna Bracken

THE POWER OF PRAYER!

IF YOU ARE NOT ON OUR
PRAYER CHAIN, PLEASE CONSIDER
SIGNING UP FOR IT. IT ONLY
TAKES A MINUTE TO LIFT
SOMEONE WHO MAY NEED YOUR
PRAYERS! CALL OR EMAIL THE
OFFICE. WE HAVE AN EMAIL
PRAYER CHAIN AS WELL AS A
PHONE CALL PRAYER CHAIN.

Your Deacons:

Sandy Ankney
Vi Adamski
Cliff McKay, Jr.
Rodney Schafer
Charlene McKay
Jennifer Motosicky
Irene Nelson
Bob Bates
Kim Soulcheck
Nita Serene
Hilda Maxwell
Denise Wehrle



Pastor:Kirk Orr

Director of Youth Ministries:

Brandon Brim

Administrative Secretary:

Kelly Kapelewski

Treasurer:

Donna Bracken

Choir Director:

Lorraine Menk

Organist/Pianist:

Sue Close

Custodian:

Dean Kunkle

Housekeeper:

Irene Nelson

Assistant Treasurer:

Sophia Earhart

Financial Secretary:

Judy West



6 Mike Tatem and Vicki Orr
13 Michelle Hough and Rebecca Fisher
20 Cliff McKay and Deb Fotheringham
24 Debbie Artman and Jolene Kostelansky
27 Mike Tatem and Mick Dober



6 Chuck and Judy West
13 Jolene Kostelansky and
Sophia Earhart
20 Chari Burtner and
Matt Wehrle
27 Janet Karan and
Deb Artman



The A/V Team is in need of anyone that can push buttons to join their team! Please see anyone on the team or let the office know if you are interested!

OUR FINANCIAL PICTURE:

GENERAL FUND INCOME FOR OCTOBER 2015	\$ 20,833.00
EXPENSES FOR OCTOBER 2015	\$ 14,780.15
TOTAL INCOME FOR THIS YEAR 2015	\$ 166,777.66
TOTAL EXPENSES THRU OCTOBER 2015	\$ 165,285.98

All of our financial responsibilities continue to be met. We are grateful to God for His faithfulness to our church family!

December Prayer Focus

As we enter into advent, let's spend this month preparing ourselves, and getting ready for Christ's arrival. As part of that, we encourage you to pray that God would remind you of the incredibly generous gift He gave us, in His Son, a gift that none of us deserved! Spend this month asking God to help us find our "secret place" - that place where we can "remain" and enjoy the gift of Jesus, our Lord...

The following is taken from Proverbs 31 website, and a devotional written by Lysa TurKeurst titled "The Secret Place." Use this to help guide your prayer time this month by praying the scripture that is here, and by using the prayers Lysa includes.

"Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me." John 15:4 (NIV)

Can I let you in on something? There's a place I escape to that allows my soul to breathe and rest and reflect. It's the place where I can drop the "yuck" the world hands me and trade it in for the fullness of God. It's a place where God reassures me, confirms He has everything under control, and gives me a new filter through which I can process life. Our key verse John 15:4 says, "Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me." This peaceful and fruitful remaining place is my secret place.

Honestly, it can be hard for a well-meaning soul that desires radical obedience to God to live in that way.

Rather that remaining we allow ourselves to be pulled away. The distractions of the world lure us to sell our souls for temporary pleasures, and it's easy to be conned by Satan's schemes. Other people rub us the wrong way, and we want to give them a piece of our mind. Worldly wealth screams that if only we could do more to have more, then ultimate happiness could be ours. And our right to be right seems to supersede the sacrificial call of God.

All the while God invites our souls to break away from the world and remain in Him. To remain in Him and enter the secret place, I have to make the choice to be with God by recalling Scripture I've stored away in my heart and acknowledging His presence through prayer.

Sometimes I do this because I'm in a desperate place.

I pray, "God, I am here and I need You right now. I'm feeling attacked, invaded, pressed and stressed. Please meet me here and help me process what I'm facing using Your truth. I don't want this thing I'm facing to be processed



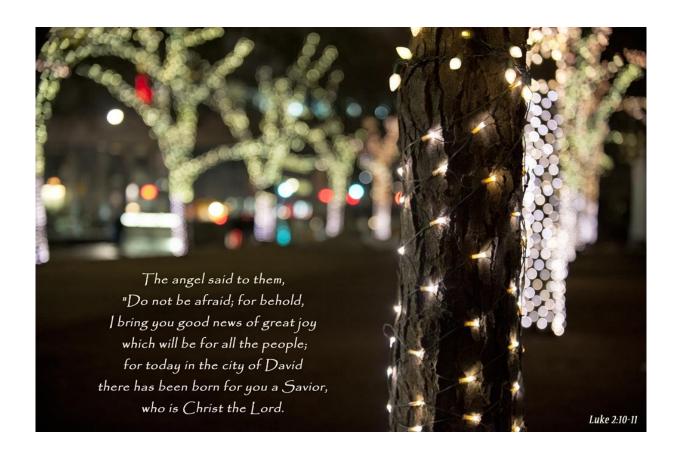
through my selfishness and insecurity. I will surely act in a displeasing and dishonoring way if I'm left to face this on my own. Block my natural reaction and fill me with Your Spirit. Please handle this for me. You speak what needs to be spoken and give me the power to hold my tongue for what needs to be left in silence."

Other times I need to be with God because I'm feeling pulled into something I know is not part of His plan for me. I see something new I can't afford. How easy it is to justify my way to the checkout line, whip out a credit card and decide to deal with the consequences later!

Maybe it's a relationship we know is not in God's will. Or a particular eating habit we know isn't healthy for us. Whatever it is, we don't have to be rendered powerless by this pull. We can pray, "God, I know You are more powerful than this pull I am feeling. I know this thing I think I want so much will only provide temporary pleasure. I know the consequences of making this choice will rob me of joy and peace in the near future. Through Your power, I am making the choice to walk away. I will find my delight in You and look forward to feeling Your fullness replace the emptiness this desire creates."

I need a fresh filling of God's Spirit and Word in me. So I go to the secret place and simply talk to God through prayer and reading Scripture. Then I listen for His voice. Sometimes He provides direction and instruction on something that needs to be done. A sweet invitation for me to lift up an obedient "yes."

The more we say yes to remaining in God's secret place, the more we will live in expectation of seeing Him. The more we expect to see God, the more we will. The more we experience Him, the more we'll trust Him. It all starts with denying the pull of the world and saying yes to God's daily invitation to remain in Him.



DECEMBER 2015



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School 9:30 AM Jordan Baptism Party 10:00 AM Worship/Youth Church 6:30 PM Youth Group	30 Meals on Wheels 6:30 PM Praise in Motion	1 8:00 PM N.A. meeting	2 Meals on Wheels 5:30 PM Girl Scouts 6:30 PM Deacons Meeting 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	_	4 Meals on Wheels 6:00 PM Line Dancing	5 12:00 PM Christmas Dinner
Christmas Card Delivery Begins 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship/Youth Church 6:30 PM Youth Group	7 Meals on Wheels 10:30 AM Card Ministry 6:30 PM Praise In Motion 6:30 PM Upkeep Meeting	8 6:30 PM Session Meeting 8:00 PM N.A. meeting	9 Meals on Wheels 6:30 PM Praise Band Rehearsal 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	10 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	11 Meals on Wheels 6:00 PM Line Dancing	12
9:00 AM Adult Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship/Youth Church 6:30 PM Youth Group	14 Christmas Food Basket Packing Meals on Wheels	15 Christmas Food Basket Pick Up 7:00 PM Sewing Guild 8:00 PM N.A. meeting	16 Meals on Wheels 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	17 5:30 PM Girl Scout Troop 20130 Meeting 7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal	18 Meals on Wheels 6:00 PM Line Dancing	19 12:00 PM Votquenne Birthday Party
20 Christmas Card Delivery Ends 9:00 AM Adult Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship/Youth Church 11:30 AM Coffee Hour Following Worship 6:30 PM Youth Group	21 Meals on Wheels	22 8:00 PM N.A. meeting	23 Meals on Wheels 6:30 PM Praise Band Rehearsal 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	24 Christmas Euc OFFICE CLOSED 7:00 PM Christmas Eve Service	25 Christmas Day OFFICE CLOSED	26
9:00 AM Adult Sunday School 10:00 AM Worship/Youth Church 6:30 PM Youth Group	28 Meals on Wheels 6:30 PM Discipleship Team Meeting 6:30 PM OFFICE CLOSED	29 8:00 PM N.A. meeting	30 Meals on Wheels 7:00 PM Boy Scouts	New Year's Eve	Meals on Wheels OFFICE CLOSED 6:00 PM Line Dancing	

Ladies Lunch is cancelled for December and we'll resume on the 4th Sunday of January.



Blessings On Your Birthday!!!



December 6	December 17
Howard Newell	Emma Hough
December 8	December 21
Mark Benish	Julia McAllister
December 9	December 23
Deb Fotheringham	Bill Dailey
December 10	December 24
Nita Serene	Amanda Schirato
December 14	December 27
Jeffrey Burtner	Linda Zurenski
December 15	December 30
Mary Ann Livingston	Joyce Ewing
	December 31 Jack Guyer

The Deacons annual Angel Tree is up in the hallway near the library. On the tree are "angels" with children's names and wishes. The children are from the Mars Youth Home and Tri-Life Center. Please take an "angel" from the tree, shop for their wishes or anything else you care to purchase, place all items in a gift bag, attach their "angel" ornament to the bag and place it in the office. The gift bags will be delivered soon after December 6th. The gifts need to be into the office by that date! If you have any questions, please see one of the Deacons.

Thank you!

Mark your calendars: Friday February 19, 2016 (with a "snow date" of Friday February 26, 2016) at 6:00 is a fun night for kids! If you know someone who came to our Vacation Bible School, or someone who wanted to come but wasn't able to, bring them to our movie and activity night. Fun evening for any child 3 yrs-5th grade. It's free...watch the bulletin and next month's Post Scripts for more details!

The Deacons would like to thank everyone that contributed to Samaritan's Purse shoe boxes and the Thanksgiving food boxes.



ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTERS

29th Rod, Maria and Sandy Schafer

6th Paul and Marcie Leo

13th Chuck Mann and Anne Johnson

20th Janet Karan and Deb Artman

24th Lauren and Megan Benish





December, 2015

Dear Friends in Christ,

As we enter the Advent season, the Board of Deacons send their prayers that this celebration of the birth of our Lord will be especially meaningful to you. We also want to thank you for your continued support in our outreach.

It has been the tradition at Puckety to extend an opportunity to each of you to contribute towards a monetary gift for the pastor. The gift will be presented before the Christmas Eve service. Your gift may be given to any of the deacons listed below or mailed to the church office **no later than December 20**th. (Please mark the envelope "pastor's gift").

Prayerfully,

The Board of Deacons

Sandy Ankney	Hilda Maxwell	Nita Serene
Rodney Schafer	Irene Nelson	Vi Adamsky
Denise Wehrle	Kim Soulcheck	Bob Bates
Charlene McKay	Jennifer Motosicky	Cliff McKay, Jr.





If you are interested in joining any of any of our teams, please let one of the team members or the office know. Thank you!

Discipleship Team

Brandon Brim
Beth Dober
Chari Burtner
Joyce Ewing
Kirk Orr
Vicki Orr
Brenda McAllister
Jolene Kostelansky
Rebecca Fisher (Team Lead)

The Worship Team consists of:
Debbie Fotheringham- Leader
Kirk and Vicki Orr
Nita Serene
Cliff and Charlene McKay
Janet Karan
Lorraine Menk
Irene Nelson

Outreach team members:

Leader – Deb Artman Members - Matt Wehrle Denise Wehrle

> Marcie Leo Paul Leo Rebecca Fisher

Praise Team: Mick Dober

Rebecca Fisher Marcie Leo Paul Leo

Jennifer Motosicky

Kirk Orr Vicki Orr

Card Ministry team:

Nancy Scibilia, Helen Crissman, Mary Wilds, Carol Johnston, Ann Johnson, Janet Karan, Marti Rugh, Dorothy Beveridge, Donna Bracken

Fellowship and Care Team: Mary Goldinger, Hilda Maxwell, Jean Morrow, Doris Prinkey, Kellie Jaworski, Charlene McKay, Dorothy Beveridge, Clare Kapustick, Irene Nelson, Cliff McKay, Vicki Orr (team lead)

Praise in Motion members: Sandy Ankney, Sophia Earhart, Charlene McKay, Lorraine Menk, Jennifer Motosicky, Vicki Orr, Irene Nelson

Upkeep Team: Vince Appleman (team lead), Dean Kunkle, Jack Guyer, Jack Barnett, Cliff McKay, Sr., George Davis Sandy Ankney and Kirk Orr

Choir members: Vi Adamsky, Sandy Ankney, Gary Close, Sue Close, Beth Dober, Mick Dober, Sophia Earhart, Jessica Guyer, Jim Johnston, Clare Kapustik, Janet Karan, Cliff McKay, Lorraine Menk, Jennifer Motosicky, Irene Nelson, Howard Newell, Kirk Orr, Vicki Orr, Marti Orren, Dorrie Prinkey, Marti Rugh, Nita Serene, Chuck West.

The Youth Group celebrated the Changing of seasons at the Brim's house with a bonfire. We carved pumpkins, toasted hotdogs and marshmallows, and played a game where we stuck our faces in flour. We know how to have a good time.















Puckety Presbyterian Church

1009 Puckety Church Road Lower Burrell, PA 15068

(Return Service Requested)

Last Day For:



Post Scripts Information:

Third Wednesday of the month.

Bulletin Information:

The Tuesday before the Sunday the article is to be announced

REMINDER:

Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Children's Church 10:00 a.m. Youth Group: 6:00 p.m.

Every Sunday ©

