

Wayne and Jan put their shoe leather where their hearts are

Rev. Wayne C. Peck and Jan Leo continue in the spirit of caring entrepreneurship in the creation of a video for the national 2008 More Light conference - they just finished interviewing More Light congregants in Tucson, Arizona, to be including in their video that highlights More Light churches and their members, throughout the United States. We all thank Wayne and Jan for their dedication to this worthy endeavor and for ensuring that the interests of the GLBT community are explored in a thorough way and illustrated in a beautiful and respectful way.

News from the Session of the Community House Presbyterian Church

THANK YOU to everyone who filled out a 2008 financial pledge card. You are fantastic! Each pledge card will help us effectively plan another year of sharing, caring, learning, and growing. The number of received pledge cards has increased. This year the Session says "we hear your commitment!" Other stewardship opportunities include contributions of time and talent (like y'all who jump started our holiday weight

gain with those cookies at the bake sale - ahem).

Rev. Wayne Peck will continue to inform us of volunteer opportunities regarding facility needs, and announcements will take place during church for other opportunities. If you have an idea about how you would like to serve the church, please see a member of Session during coffee hour and let us know!

Updates about our members

Jonathan Springer joined five other tenth-graders from the United States and 54 students from around the world in attending a global symposium on Peace-keeping, Conflict Resolution, and Combating Terrorism in Muscat, Oman.

The symposium is part of the National Association of Independent Schools' Challenge 20/20 initiative whose goal is to link American schools with international

schools in order to explore twenty critical global issues.

The students will critically analyze "traditional" peace-keeping and conflict resolution tactics and philosophies and create new peacekeeping alternatives.

The students are sharing their personal reflections via a blog that offers a first-hand look into their day-to-day experiences in the Arab world. Click on WT Oman Blog <<http://wtomanblog.learnerblogs.org/>>



The date of the Kwanzaa celebration has been changed. This year we will incorporate the observance of Kwanzaa when we celebrate Black History Month. Each Sunday of the month will represent a different theme beginning with the meaning of Kwanzaa and the various ways it is celebrated throughout the world. The month will end with our traditional "Soul Food Sunday" which has always been a favorite event in our church. The whole month will be special and for those who feel they need events to invite others, this would be a good time. February will be here soon, so be thinking of all the folk you can invite to experience the many celebrations and how you can participate in Black History Month here at the Community House Church.

Have you got an idea or article you'd like to see published in our newsletter? Please give your idea or completed article to Amy Constantine at constantineace@hotmail.com, Jen Saffron at jensaffron@comcast.net or Bobbi Donovan at bobbilee@comcast.net. Please get your ideas to any of the above women by the 15th of the month or articles by the 25th of the month for publication in the following month's Unity News.

Sharing Our Church and Celebrating Our Community

Recently, our church was rented out for two special events. One featured Tom and Suzanne who played a concert of klezmer music. The other was the East End Food Co-op's Board Training, which took place over two days.

As a reminder, Community House is for rent at a reasonable cost, and it is one way to share our wonderful space with the community while increasing earned revenue for the church. For space rental, please see David Perkins, Rev. Wayne Peck, a member of Session. Special event forms are on the small table next to the kitchen.

A HEARTFELT THANKS!

Thank you to all of our wonderful adult volunteers for working with the children of our church from September 2006 through August 2007! This month we thank those who took leadership roles in the religious education of our children and youth: Sunday School leadership was provided by Molly Peck (Nursery Coordinator), Jonathon Springer (Nursery Assistant, Betsy Graf (Praise Coordinator and Curriculum Development), Sarah Springer (Explorer Coordinator), Jan Leo and Wayne Peck (Explorer Leaders) and Darlene Durrwachter Rushing (Sunday School Administrator).

Affirmations and Intentions

During this month of many holidays let us remember those who lives lack the very basic necessities: heat, food, compassion and love. Seek out some way to turn your prayers into action by contributing to a gift or food drive in your community.

The holidays can also remind us of our many blessings: family, friends, and the power of prayer to unite and calm. Let our thank-yous resound and counter our fears.

Please send good news or prayer concerns to Jen Saffron, jensaffron@comcast.net, or Bobbi Donovan, bobbilee@comcast.net.

Wednesdays Jan. 23, Feb. 27 and March 26 at Community House

6 PM -- Potluck meal 7 PM -- Program 8:30 PM -- Coffee, dessert and conversation

On the minds and hearts of our members

Race: The Power of An Illusion

Join us (and bring your friends) on the fourth Wednesday of January to view Episode I -- "The Differences Between Us" from the provocative documentary series, "Race -- The Power of an Illusion." Episode II and III will follow in February and March. Come for one evening or see all three!

"Race -- The Power of an Illusion" is a three-hour series that questions the very idea of race as biology. Scientists tell us that believing in biological races is no more sound than believing the sun revolves around the earth. So if race is a biological myth, where did the idea come from? And why should it matter today? Our viewing of the series will provide an eye-opening tool to help us examine our beliefs about race, privilege, policy and justice.

Would you like to join in planning and preparing for these events at Community House? The committee for this program is currently made up of Darlene Durrwachter Rushing (chair), Cheryl Lowitzer and Susan Shira Nilsen. More volunteers are welcome!

Our Stewardship Progress

Our year-to-date total contribution of treasure is \$91,387.00. We set a goal of \$115,000 at the beginning of 2007. Thanks to those who submitted pledge cards for 2008. If you are still in the process of prayerfully considering your level of giving for 2008, please know your pledge is still welcomed. Thank you to all who are helping to keep Community House a vital part of the worshiping community in the Presbyterian Church.

What's coming up at Community House?

Wed., Dec. 19 -- Southwest Christmas Dinner, follows Space for Grace, *sponsored by James Buczynski*

Fri., Dec. 28 -- The Kwanzaa Celebration has been postponed till February. Please keep an eye open for details in January's Unity News

Please see the event sponsor to volunteer.

Space for Grace Corner

DATE	PRESIDER	CHOIR PRACTICE
December 12	Nancy	yes
December 19 Southwest Christmas	Wayne	no
December 26	Rest week	no

In Our Neighborhood -- The Aeberli Gets Some Love,

The sad, dilapidated building located the corner of Sandusky and E. North, known as the Aeberli Building, will see a partial exterior restoration/renovation and an interior structural stabilization, starting this month.

Owned by Allegheny General Hospital since 1974 and left in a state of blight for many years, AGH intends to clean up the building and then find a developer to complete the interior rehabilitation. Bridges Construction will be the contractor and, winter weather permitting, the project should take about six months to complete.

This project is well appreciated and will undoubtedly and positively change the appearance of E. North Avenue, including the approach to Community House Church and the AGH Emergency entrance.

The Aeberli Building is comprised of two former Victorian townhouses and was converted into a single structure by William Aeberli in the mid-1920s, for use as a funeral home. The funeral home director had the townhouse joined by punching interior door openings and constructing a common porch to visually tie the two structures together.

Matching brick and stone work was also installed around the first floor windows under the porch to further make the visual connection. A look above the porch roof shows the distinct structures: to the right (124 East North Ave.), a high Victorian townhouse with a mansard roof and to the left (122 E. North Ave.), a more stately three-story Victorian structure with a pressed metal cornice.

The exterior renovation calls for stripping the paint, cleaning and pointing the masonry, constructing new porches, and restoring the existing windows, mansard roof, cornices and hoods.

To bring back the autonomy of the two houses, distinct porches will be constructed, appropriate to the styles each house. 124 E. North will have a porch with wood columns and pickets with a slightly lower cornice line. 122 E. North will retain its brick columns with a restored iron railing; it will have a taller and more ornamental cornice line. The interior renovation calls for clean out and demolition of fallen floors and ceilings. New floors and structures will be constructed to stabilize the masonry shell. No additional work will be performed.

by Bob Baumbach

Making new friends and a little cash

On December 1 we hosted Handmade for the Holidays, our community art and craft fair. Vendors (including our very own members Jonathon Springer, the Explorers, Clare and Curran O'Neill, Darlene Durrwachter Rushing and Rick St. John) showcased wonderful handmade items such as glass beads, felted slippers, blankets, photography, jewelry, knit items, cookbooks, and more.

The fair partnered CH with neighbors and supported the local economy -one of the artists lives on Boyle

Street while others are from Mexican War Streets. Darlene marshaled the craft community, Jen Saffron promoted the event, and Joyce Baskins ran a smokin' red hot bake sale, which raised about \$200 for the church!

Special thanks to everyone who baked for the sale, Cheryl Lowitzer, Derwin Rushing, Mike and Ines Brady, Kim Kunkel, David Perkins, Rick St. John, Gina Spangenberg, Betsy O'Neill, the Explorers and their parents - and, a special shout out to Jan and Wayne!

Just a reminder,

Shelter Meals -

I went to Pleasant Valley Shelter on Tuesday night and the guys wished us a THANK YOU and said we did a "great job" this year - so I'm passing that on to everyone who made a meal, or donated food and clothing. You make a difference! To sign up for a Shelter Meal, call me at 412-322-2110 or email jensaffron@comcast.net.

To drop off food or clothing, please place it in the box in the vestibule. It's also an opportunity for you to

share and experience people who are committed to turning their lives around.

Community House family members cook up and serve these fabulous meals, the first Tuesday of the month - a reminder of the grace God grants to us, and an expression of hospitality to our neighbors in need. It's also a great opportunity for a family to serve together, or for a cub or girl scout pack to earn merit badges. P.S. I have a lot of recipes, so don't be shy.

from Jen Saffron