

# The Harbinger

December 2008

## In this Issue:

Memory Verse .....	1
From the Pastor .....	1
Helps for Worship .....	2
Outreach Ministry.....	2
Women's Activities....	6
Hymn Corner .....	7
From the Den.....	8
Compassion.....	9
Women's Fellowship.	10
WF Schedule of Events	11
Calendar .....	Insert



Next  
**HARBINGER**  
**DEADLINE**  
**December**  
**21st**

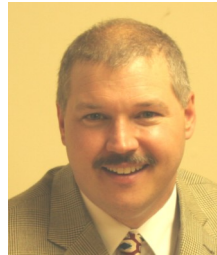
## MEMORY VERSE



## OF THE MONTH!

Jesus answered,  
"I am the way and  
the truth and the life,  
No one comes to the Father  
except through me."

John 14:6



## The Smell of Humility

We live in a culture very much removed from many of the realities of life. Take for instance the meat aisle in our local grocery stores. We walk down the aisle and all the meat is nicely packaged in white styrofoam and shiny cellophane and the meat looks bright and attractive. They have even placed a little sponge-like poach under the meat to soak up any excess blood which could possibly detract from its attractiveness. This is all well and good, but it truly removes us from the reality of the slaughterhouse.

It is there that the animals are dispatched, processed and packaged. We are so far removed from this that when we see images from movies like "Supersize Me" we are repulsed! Now, I write this not to encourage anyone to join PETA, but to give us a slight wake up call when it comes to Christmas.

This is the time of year when we celebrate Jesus Christ being born. God himself taking on human flesh. The creator becoming like what He created! The one who was and is and is to come stepping into time. The Great "I Am" humbling himself and being born as a helpless little baby. And, as the Scriptures teach us, that baby was placed into a sweet, little, warm, golden straw-lined, perfectly constructed wooden manger...Right?

We even sing wonderful little songs that evoke this image like "Away in a Manger"

Away in a manger,  
No crib for His bed  
The little Lord Jesus  
Laid down His sweet head

Have you ever really stopped to think about where Christ actually laid his sweet head? I put it to us that we are removed from this reality as well. A manger was a feed trough for animals. In it, various feeds were placed as well as leftovers and "slop". It was not regularly cleaned, thus rotting remnants of food were present at various levels of decomposition. Dried animal spittle and regurgitation probably were to be found in and around the manger. It was most likely made out of stone and was rudimentary at best. The smell that was probably present would not bring to mind an EMMC delivery room.



I flesh this picture out for one reason and one reason only, to highlight Christ's humility. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords did not ordain that he come to us in the majesty that he so deserves, but in humility. His first throne here on earth was a stinking manger.

Let us reflect on this throughout the Christmas season. Let us meditate on this as we go about our lives. **Humility**, that is the example Jesus gave us from His first breath taken, inhaling the stink of a barn, to His last breath exhaled, filled with blood.

**Pastor Blake Brown**

## HELPS FOR WORSHIP #12: CORPORATE CONFESSION OF FAITH

William Shishko



*"You have come ... to the general assembly and the church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven." (Heb. 12:22-23)*

There is so much more to corporate worship than what meets the eye!

One of the profound truths revealed in the New Testament is that, when we worship, we join our hearts and our voices with those of all other saints, living and dead, who are also worshiping the Lord. This is mind-boggling! The Scriptures even teach us that, when we worship, Jesus Christ himself is with us, singing his own praise and declaring his own name in the midst of his brothers and sisters (see Heb. 2:12).

That is another reason why our corporate confession of faith is so important in the early part of our worship. We join with the saints of all ages and those alive today in confessing the basic truths about God and what he has done for us by Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit. We confess that we are not alone in our faith, but part of a whole heritage of believers in the name of the Lord.

For our corporate confession of faith, we sometimes use basic biblical statements such as the Ten Commandments or Philippians 2:1-11 (which some biblical scholars believe was the first "corporate confession of faith" of the Christian church). At other times we use creeds of the early church, such as those commonly known as the Apostles' Creed (which was not written by the apostles), the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed. When we confess our faith using these statements, we demonstrate our unity with the catholic church, that is, the universal Christian church. At other times we use portions of the Westminster Confession of Faith or Catechisms or the Heidelberg Catechism to confess our faith. These demonstrate our unity with the Reformed churches of the Protestant Reformation.

What a joy it is that we begin our worship praising and confessing the God of our fathers, the God whom our children and children's children shall also, by his grace, confess!

### For Reflection

1. Can you imagine Christ himself and other believers who have passed on to glory confessing his name the same as you do in the corporate confession?
2. What difference does that make in this portion of your worship?

*The author is pastor of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Franklin Square, New York. Reprinted from New Horizons, November 2006.*

## The Outreach Ministry

Recent news from our outreach partners:

2. **John Rankin**—Theological Education Institute, Connecticut

John recently held a forum with Dr. Jeremiah Wright. Here's some information from a recent email:

We now have a 6 minute clip from the Jeremiah Wright & John Rankin forum: The Bible, Race, and American History up on [YouTube](#) and [GodTube](#)

Please view the clip and pass it along to all your email contacts.

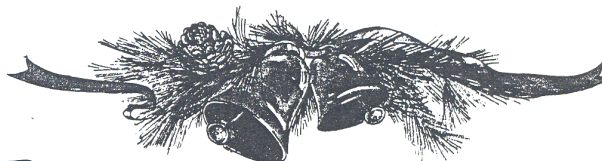
We will have more and more clips from different forums going up in the near future, so please subscribe to our videos.

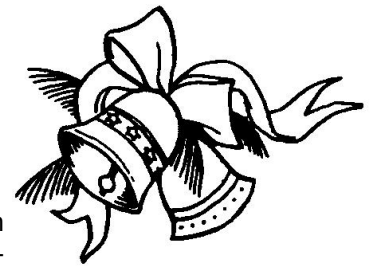
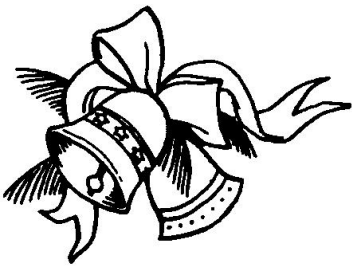
Please rate the video and please leave a comment.

As well, please check out my updated blog: "My Forum with Jeremiah Wright," at: [www.johnrankin.org](http://www.johnrankin.org) in the upper left or directly at: <http://revjohnrankin.blogspot.com/> as it deals specifically with the question of why we invited Dr. Wright.

## MISSIONS EVENTS TO WATCH FOR IN NOVEMBER

1. We had a very successful outreach on November 9th, cooking the evening meal for approximately 25 at the Emmaus Shelter. A GREAT BIG THANKS to Eric and Dianna Novella who guided us through the whole planning and cooking process. We served meatloaf, mashed red potatoes, mixed vegetables, and a peach cobbler-type cake. The meal received rave reviews from the Emmaus residents, and we were blessed to be able to pray before sitting down, and then stay to eat and talk with them. We plan to do this quarterly, especially now that Eric and Dianna have shown us by their enthusiasm and willingness, that it IS possible! If you'd like to help out in February, see a Missions Ministry member.





2. It was exciting to take part in Samaritan's Purse's Operation Christmas Child project again this year. Even in these hard economic times, this congregation is full of "givers", and we collected 35 gift-full boxes for needy children overseas. Thanks to Janet and Greg Trobridge, who took our boxes (and some from Cornerstone Baptist Church) to the collection center at Calvary Chapel in Orrington.

3. For the next couple of Sundays, Christmas cards for our eight missionaries will be available for you to sign downstairs during Coffee Fellowship. Please send your greetings to these faithful people who serve the Lord in challenging ministries—and pray for them all year long!



## POSSIBLE FUTURE WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

Elise Palmer has discussed with several women the possibility of having a bi-monthly (at least) meeting of single women for fellowship and mutual support. Elise is happy to meet at her house—possible at about 5:30/6:00 pm and have a light supper. We will have a prayer time and discuss issues that concern us. The meeting is for ALL single women, not just widows and maidens! This is not to take the place of opportunities to meet with the wider fellowship, but we who are single have concerns of special interest to us—for example just having someone check that you're well and awake in the morning! This is still being planned—see Elise if you're interested.

Also, Elaine Jenkins has offered to lead a Bible study for those interested in serious, in-depth pursuit of the Word of God. This is also still in the planning stage. Details will be forthcoming, but speak to Elaine if you're interested.

# Merry Christmas!





**FROM THE HYMN CORNER**  
BY SANDY JOHNSON

**“GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN”**

**JOHN W. WORK, JR**  
**(1872-1925)**  
**BORN AND DIED IN**  
**NASHVILLE, TN**



Looking at the different Christmas carols sung each season, I was particularly impressed with **“Go Tell It On The Mountain”** because of our call as believers to do just that—not just ‘on the mountain’, but ‘over the hills and everywhere’. Also, the 11/3 devotional from **“Our Daily Bread”** touched my heart concerning Christmas catalogs arriving daily at our houses advertising things that we may not even need, but persuading us to buy now! The article stated that “Christians are God’s catalogs as His illustrations to the world of what He has to offer. His work in our lives makes us a picture of qualities that people may not know they need or want until they see them at work in us.”

With that in mind, let us pray for courage as God’s ‘catalogs’, ‘going and telling’ God’s true message of Christmas ‘on the mountain, over the fields and everywhere’ on MDI and beyond! (I need to ask God for courage to do just that!)

Beginning in the 18th century, spirituals were popular in camp meetings throughout the South, even in active evangelical ministries through African-American people. Many of the traditional songs were never published prior to 1840. John W. Work, Jr. was actively pursuing writing, collecting, performing and preserving these wonderful spirituals we have today. His brother, Frederick J. Work, also helped him, and together, they were early leaders in arranging and promoting the cause for spirituals.

John W. Work Jr., was a singer, folksong collector and professor of music, Latin and history at Fisk University, Nashville, TN, where his mother, Agnes Haynes Work, was a singer who helped train singers at Fisk. Son of a church choir director, Work graduated from Fisk University (AB 1906, MA 1908) in 1906. From 1923 until his death, he served as president of Roger Williams University in Nashville, Tennessee.

Interestingly, there were three generations in his family who contributed to writing and singing at Fisk, John Wesley Work III, the last, dying in 1967.

**“Go Tell It on the Mountain”**  
**“Go, tell it on the mountain,**  
**Over the hills and everywhere**  
**Go, tell it on the mountain,**  
**That Jesus Christ is born.”**  
**“While shepherds kept their watching**  
**Over silent flocks by night**  
**Behold throughout the heavens**  
**There shone a holy light.”**

**Refrain**

**“The shepherds feared and trembled,**  
**When lo! above the earth,**  
**Rang out the angels chorus**  
**That hailed the Savior’s birth.”**

**Refrain**

**“Down in a lowly manger**  
**The humble Christ was born**  
**And God sent us salvation**  
**That blessed Christmas morn.”**

**Refrain**



**Merry Christmas to all**  
**from Rich & Sandy Johnson**





## News from The Den

by Chaz Reed



*"Spreading a passion for the supremacy of GOD in all things for the joy of all area youth and their families through Jesus Christ"*

I'm taking a slight detour from our philosophy of youth ministry series to take a brief look at the state of the youth ministry.

We are part of a great evangelistic work. The youth, who are coming here in droves for our gourmet pizza, are almost exclusively non-Christian. Many, if not all, don't even know the stock Sunday School stories of Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, David and Goliath – they don't even know the story of Jesus.

So what should we do about this? Should we teach them Systematic Theology so they know the doctrines of Reprobation, Election, and Last Things? Would that make any sense to kids who have no context for this great learning? Probably not. But we have to start somewhere...

Michael Novelli, the author of **"Shaped by the Story"**, gives 5 reasons why he thinks we should start with stories.

### **1. STORIES are the language of our world... everyone connects with stories!**

We are each born with the innate ability to learn and share through stories. Stories are the most natural and powerful way we have to communicate. Good stories capture our imaginations...they draw us in... we begin to feel what the characters feel... their pain becomes our pain... their victory becomes our victory. We enter stories and make them part of our experience.

### **2. STORIES relate to a media-literate society**

A shift has taken place in North America over the past couple of decades. The source of learning and information is no longer centered on printed words, but on visual and auditory media. While most learners still have a base of literacy, they only rely on it to access media.

### **3. STORIES reach people of all learning styles**

This shift in communication is influencing the way we learn. Students today are multi-model learners; they communicate in a way that engages multiple learning channels. Educators have seen this shift, and teaching methods in North America have been drastically changed over the last 15 years to accommodate multiple learning styles and methods.

A big emphasis on narrative and stories is now being used in teaching. Educators have noticed that storytelling sparks creativity and participation, develops listening skills, and improves vocabulary and reading. No other medium addresses varied learning styles like storytelling.

### **4. STORIES are the chosen medium to pass on faith and culture**

The religious beliefs and cultural traditions of every people group are contained in and passed on through stories. For thousands of years, stories were the key means for Jewish and Christian people to learn and experience God.

Most of the Old and New Testament Scriptures first existed as oral stories and were later committed to written form. In fact, 75% of the Bible is still in the form of stories and poetry. The Biblical texts were recorded with the intent that they would be read aloud and passed down to each family.

Jesus was known as a powerful storyteller. He taught in parables, which are stories that draw a parallel to our lives.

*With many stories like these, Jesus presented his message to them, fitting the stories to their experience and maturity. He was never without a story when he spoke. When he was alone with his disciples, he went over everything, sorting out the tangles, untying the knots. – Mark 4:33-34 (The Message)*

### **5. STORIES have power to transform our lives**

Stories do more than give us external answers; they shape our internal lives and values. When we talk about God's Story from the Bible, we regard this as a living story... a true account that is illuminated and brought to life by the Spirit of God. This amazing story is intended to form our identity and give us direction as God's people.

Each week, we'll be chronologically adding to the youth's base of biblical stories. **Pray for us as we draw them into the greater Christian narrative.**

*"Our lives must find their place in a greater story... or they will find their place in a lesser story."*

**- H. STEPHEN SHOEMAKER**



## From our Compassion Advocate

Mary Anna Fox

I was blessed to be able to attend a Compassion New England Regional Advocates Retreat held in Kennebunkport, ME. I was able to go with an advocate from Kenduskeag. It was held at the Franciscan Guest House. What a charming town! There were about twenty attendees—some had come from the headquarters in Colorado.

The big treat was to have Tony Beltran—the first LDP (Leadership Development Program) college scholarship student to graduate in the Dominican Republic! I had met him last January, in the Dominican Republic! He is a very enthusiastic, committed Christian and extremely bright. He was sponsored by a family in Illinois as a child, and then for LDP through college in the D.R. Now he is thrilled to be on a Wes Stafford scholarship from Moody at Moody Bible College. He told us his story from childhood growing up in a poor family. He showed how they made a baseball from white socks! The D.R. has the fastest growing economy in the Caribbean and yet 40% of the people live below the poverty level. There is much corruption and immorality. Tony's goal is to return to his country as a youth pastor and earn money fixing computers—at which he is a "whiz"! On hearing our stories, Tony was very touched to learn why we are advocates!

The retreat was spiritually uplifting and gave me many ideas for advocacy. It was thrilling to hear how God is working in people's lives.

This is from an email by Mark Pellingra, an advocate.

Recent shifts in our economy have caused concern and even fear in many people particularly the more elderly who have saved and built the proverbial nest egg only to see large sums being drained from savings. I want to share a story with you about being involved recently in a conversation on this topic with two other individuals that I had met at a coffee shop. On one side there were accusations made out of anger toward various people and institutions and a definite sense of fear while on the other the person seemed concerned but he seemed calm and unmoved by the current economic situation. As you can imagine I was intrigued by the odd behavior of this man who appeared to be impervious. Being hesitant to join the conversation, I listened...

First person: "Aren't you at all concerned?"

Other man: "Why, yes I am! I can understand why you have such a great concern."

The first man snapped back: "Don't you have any personal concern?"

"A little!" The man replied.

"Well it must be nice to have so much that you have such little concern"

"Well, I'm concerned mostly for people who have very little to begin with and now have even less, but as for myself... I consider myself very fortunate! I'm not very well to do financially but I have enough to get by, and I'm not starving. Are you starving?"

"No! I'm not starving, but Lord knows that I'm not well off either!"

By now I can see that others are eaves dropping to hear this conversation. It continued for a few minutes until they both made comments about their faith in God and I'm thinking, "now THIS is getting interesting!"

First person: "Well I expect that God isn't interested in my finances! If He was I would have won the lottery by now!" (Laughing)

Other man: "I bet He's more interested than we think He is". I read that Jesus talks more about finances and treasure in the Good Book than most anything else. Sometimes I think we forget that."

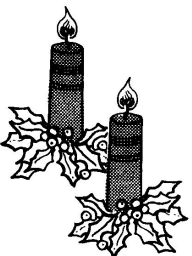
"Did He give some winning numbers to play?"

"No! 'chuckling' He gave financial advice though."

"Oh! Do tell!"

Well, He says that we should not be preoccupied and worried about what we want but that we should be more concerned about what He treasures and what we will bring when we reach our destiny."

Fast forward... the first person had left and the other man asked me if I'd learned how to solve the world's problems. I chuckled. Then he asked what I did for a living. I thought, "here's a six lane on ramp if I ever saw one!" and I began to tell him about Compassion. He smiled and said..."save the pitch! I already sponsor several children with Compassion." I said, "OK, truthfully, you made quite an argument. It may stand up in Sunday School BUT how bad do things get before you consider dropping some of the children you sponsor?" The man looked at me for a few moments and gave this reply: "God did not say that we're to give only when the economy is favorable, nor do I believe that His work should take a break because my bank account doesn't look as good as I figure it should look. Before we stop giving to the church or to the needy we'll need to remember that won't we?" I can't say that I felt brilliant for asking him that question.



What is Jesus saying when He speaks of having Treasure in Heaven? Obviously treasure in the material form, money or possessions really won't be worth much compared to living in the Presence of God and being heirs of His wealth. So what is this Treasure Jesus speaks of? Pondering this always brings up the question; what does God treasure above everything? The answer HAS to be His creation! John said it this way; "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16-17 NIV)



The man in the coffee shop summed it up very eloquently for me, **"we should not be pre-occupied and worried about what we want but we should be more concerned about what He treasures and what we will bring when we reach our destiny."** What a great reminder and faith lesson!

Consider giving to a charity like Compassion instead of giving gifts this Christmas. If you need ideas, ask MaryAnna.



## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Women of the Southwest Harbor Congregational Church and beyond—put on your Pink Hats\* and ASPIRE to increased and dedicated outreach and fellowship!

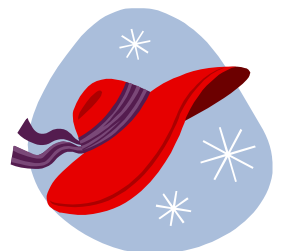
After many years of leading Women's Fellowship, Elaine Jenkins has retired from leadership and has handed the reins to a volunteer steering committee, Mary Beal, Elise Palmer, Kari Reed, and Kay Woody, who have enthusiastically begun to develop a new program that we hope will have broad appeal. We want to particularly assure young women with children that they are welcome. Indeed, we invite everyone of all ages to taste and see!

A pull-out sheet listing the programs for the year is included in this Harbinger, but to outline the new Women's Fellowship plan:

1. We'll meet once a month on the second Wednesday of the month (with the third Wednesday as a back-up date in case of bad weather).
2. We plan to meet in people's homes and already have several volunteers to be a 'Home Hostess.' Some meetings are planned for outdoors in the summer (for example, Psalms by the Sea in August!)
3. The meetings, for the most part, will be in the daytime from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. For those who can stay later, we will have a time of prayer and a "bagged" lunch, so there is no responsibility on the part of the hostess of the month to do any catering, unless of course she feels inspired!
4. From time to time an evening meeting is planned with a guest speaker, such as September's discussion with Diehl Snyder about dealing with depression as a Christian. We'll even have a fun overnight retreat and movie night in the fall!
5. We are tossing around some great ideas for activities in addition to our regular meetings. For example, we plan to resurrect our spring tea party, a very popular event of the past for ladies of our community—a chance to dress up and enjoy a real old-fashioned afternoon tea! We have talked about the idea of getting to work on a SWH Congregational Church Cookbook (with so many good cooks, it could be a best-seller!). We will probably plan a once-a-year kitchen cleanup, with maybe some in-depth cleaning of other areas of the church. And we hope to begin making some knitted or sewn items for people in a needy village in India that our missionaries the Phillips's know about. These activities will not take the place of our monthly meetings, but will be our gift of service to the church and the community. We'd like to include the community in as many church activities as possible and reach out to those who don't know us or our Lord.

Our goal is to encourage serious Bible study, a committed prayer life, steady Christian growth, and a deeply meaningful and supportive fellowship with our Christian sisters, while still serving the church and having fun together. Sounds impossible? We invite you to come and see on January 14th!

[\*The Pink Hat is a fridge magnet which was designed by Elise a couple of years ago, inspired by a wonderful pink hat that Carrie Brown wore to the Harvest Party that year. There is the group of Red Hats—but the Pink Hat had a message, "ASPIRE," which was meant to remind all of us that we should aspire to devotion and loving service to God and to our fellow man. As women singly we can do much; together we can do more! If you would like to have a pink hat magnet, it appears that Elaine has some extras. As Mary Beal said at one of our planning meetings...."let's aspire to inspire 'till we expire!"]



## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP 2009

Month	Date/Time	Topic	Location
JANUARY	14th @ 10 AM	New Years "Revolution"/ Devotional Book Swap	Kay Woody's Home
FEBRUARY	11th @ 10 AM	Be An Encourager/ Card Making	Elise Palmer's
MARCH	11th @ 10 AM	"LOL" - Christian Humor for Mud Season	Kay Woody's
APRIL	8th @ 10 AM	Book Discussion—with Pastor Brown	Joan Alexander's
MAY	13th @ 10 AM	"Honor Thy Mother" (pictures and stories of our Moms) Cookie Decoration—"Bless a Single Mom" Food Basket	Mary Beal's
JUNE	10th @ 10 AM	Amy Carmichael Video—Optional Azalea Garden tour after lunch	Sandy Johnson's
JULY	8th @ 10 AM	The "Pray For Our Country" Challenge	Elaine Jenkins's
AUGUST	12th @ 10 AM	Psalms By the Sea and Picnic	Beach site (TBA)
SEPTEMBER	9th @ 7:30 PM	"Who Does Depression Hurt?" Discussion with Dr. Diehl Snyder	Church
OCTOBER	16th (Friday) @ 6:00 PM	Potluck Supper and Overnight Retreat Games and Movie	Elise Palmer's
NOVEMBER	11th @ 10 AM	Panel Discussion on Christian Discipline	Joan Alexander's
DECEMBER	9th @ 10 AM	Christmas—Themed Talent Show, Carol Sing, Cookie swap	Kay Woody's

\*Programs and locations subject to change—notices will be in Harbinger, bulletin, church phone, web site.

\*\*Rain/Snow dates will be the 3rd Wednesday of the month.

