



**BETHEL GROVE BIBLE CHURCH**  
1763 Slaterville Rd, Ithaca, NY, 14850

# THE MESSENGER

Nov. - Dec. 2010

## THE WONDER OF CHRISTMAS: INCARNATIONAL QUESTIONS FOR TODAY!

Listen to the Christmas Carols and you hear a message of hope and joy that arises from the coming of Jesus Christ in our world. Joy to the World, Good Christian Men Rejoice, and Angels from the Realms of Glory announce the good news of the Gospel with strident confidence in God's grace. They are to be sung with gusto and join our hearts and thoughts!

Other songs ask singers to reflect on the wonder of the incarnation. Anthems like: Mary Did You Know?, Do you Hear What I Hear?, and What Child Is This? engage our hearts and minds with the amazing truth that God came to us in Christ Jesus!

During these days of Advent, pray that the Lord will restore to us the wonder of His incarnation. This glorious truth is transformative and frankly we daily need to be transformed by His grace and truth in our lives. Advent stirs our hope and brings us joy because it announces to us that we do not live on an abandoned planet. God was with us and He still is! Lord, restore our wonder in you!

*DAVE JONES*

### Sermons Series for Advent

- Nov. 28 - How Can I Be Sure of This? - Zechariah's Story
- Dec. 5 - How Can This Be? - Mary's Story
- Dec. 12 - What Does This Mean For Me? - Joseph's Story
- Dec. 19 - Where Do I Find Him? - The Shepherd's Story
- Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve - What Child Is This?
- Dec. 26 - The Wonder of Christmas

Please see the back of the Messenger for services times on each of these Sundays



The word Advent has Latin roots, meaning "the coming." It can be traced back as early as AD 350. For centuries, Advent has been a time of spiritual reflection and preparation leading up to the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, in much the same way that lent serves to prepare the believer for the resurrection and Easter. Advent is also a reminder of the Second Coming and the church's current state of anticipation and expectation.

Advent wreaths probably origi-

nated with the folk traditions of northern Europe. During the dark winter months, people lit candles on wheel-shaped bundles of evergreen. The evergreen and the circular shape of the wreath symbolized everlasting life. The candlelight gave comfort. The imagery of light and life recalled the message of the Gospel of Christ. Traditionally, the wreath contains four candles; three purple and one pink. Purple dyes were rare and associated with royalty, so that

colors was used to honor Jesus as Lord and King. The Advent candles symbolize hope, peace, love, and joy. A fifth white candle located in the center of the wreath is lit on Christmas Day, and is called the "Christ Candle." In some traditions the four candles represent Bethlehem, the prophets, shepherds, and angels. No matter what, the candles are called, they are used to tell the story of the nativity.

*Lynn Adams, 2006*

## An afternoon with Karen Benjamin

by Anita Richards

When the storms of life find us, it is comforting to remember that Jesus too was a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. He has not left us to face the world alone. When life bites back hard, it is then we discover the depths of God's mercy. He has not left us as orphans, but has sent His Spirit to move in the hearts of the merciful to care for those who are suffering.

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*Sensitive to the suffering of others, whether children or their parents, Karen's compassion, training, and calling led her to deliver the love and effective care needed.*

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I recently had the opportunity to spend part of an afternoon with Karen Benjamin. Karen and her husband Jack have been working with the Navigators in Latin America for seventeen years. They are presently back in the States for a three month Sabbatical before assuming new leadership responsibilities to a global Navigator enterprise network. I was impressed by Karen's warmth and graciousness, and how God has uniquely gifted her to serve her family and her community whether here or in Columbia, Brazil, or Chile.

Karen was born in Boston, but grew up in Panama, where her father worked for a multinational corporation. A friend brought Karen to a church retreat when she was in the ninth grade. Karen then decided to follow Jesus, and began attending an English-

speaking church on a military base. Her pastor had been led to Christ through the work of the Navigators during the Second World War. Karen attended Syracuse University and graduated with a degree in special education. After graduation, she worked for the Syracuse school district and with the Navigators in campus ministry.



**The Benjamins**  
Leah, Jack, Joshua, Karen, and Michelle

gift of mercy came from a heart always ready with something to give. In her work at a small international school in Brazil, she developed a program for children with learning disabilities. Sensitive to the suffering of others, whether children or their parents, Karen's compassion, training, and calling led her to deliver the love and effective care needed.

In the mid-eighties, Karen and Jack were on staff with the Navigators at Cornell and attended Bethel Grove with their growing family. Jack attended business school in Arizona, and subsequently they moved to Columbia. Jack's job was to create a sustainable business, living and working closely with nonbelievers in obedience to Christ's command to make disciples of all nations. Karen's ministry evolved organically through her involvement with the moms of her children's friends.

It was during their tenure in Columbia that they discovered that their son, Josh, had some learning issues. Karen received training as an educational therapist, and was able to work with Josh and other children at the missionary school. Karen's exercise of her

Referring to her battle with breast cancer, Karen believes that "to get to the light faster, you have to run through the darkness." Living in Chile after her cancer journey, Karen again focused on working with kids with special needs. She led support groups for their moms, offering hope and encouragement and sharing her own perspective from her experience with similar struggles.

Pastor Mark Driscoll defines the gift of mercy as "the capacity to feel and express unusual compassion and sympathy for those in difficult or crisis situations and provide them with the necessary help and support to see them through tough times." Karen walks in her gift with grace and cheerfulness. She is a joy to know.

## 2010 Thank Offering

Each year at Thanksgiving, we at Bethel Grove Bible Church like to turn our thankfulness into practical blessing for others. We do this by contributing from the abundance of God's goodness to us, to help others locally and globally. This year we will be encouraging two ministries. **Loaves and Fishes** is a Christian ministry which serves the Ithaca area by providing free meals, hospitality and companionship for those in need. They do this for all in the community regardless of faith, beliefs, or circumstances. **World**

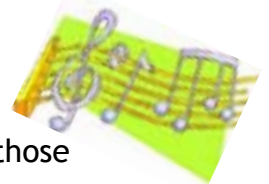
World Vision®



**Vision** is an international Christian relief ministry that distributed aid to more than 1.8 million people this past year and are currently on the ground and offering aid in Haiti. Last year's earthquake and this year's storms have brought an unprecedented disaster to this area. The cholera outbreaks have been of paramount significance lately. Please prayerfully consider how you might support these ministries and the people they serve.

*Additional information about these ministries is available in the foyer and on-line.*

### A Night of Hymns, Pipes and Pedals



A number of people have inquired about the possibility of our having a recital on the new Allen organ. It is our



pleasure to announce that we have "heard you". However, the "recital" we are planning will be a little different and one we hope you will enjoy. It will be an informal time when we can demonstrate to you the very unique features of this marvelous instrument. We will play some pieces that will highlight those features and some that will be just for your enjoyment. We will sing some of your favorite hymns.

We will explain and demonstrate things such as:

Why are there three keyboards?

What are all those buttons for?

What is a "stop"?

Will it really play itself?

Where do all those unusual sounds come from?







The "recital" is scheduled for Sunday evening, November 28 at 7:00 p.m. in the BG sanctuary. Put this on your calendar. We hope to see you there.

The BG Organists

### baby news



Below is a list of babies born in the last few months to families who attend Bethel Grove. That infant room sure is busy on Sunday mornings!

-  **Bennett** born to Eric and Sonja Needs on August 31st.
-  **Bruce** born to Rob and Adriana Rightmyer on September 7th
-  **Rozlyn Joyce** born to Jason and Cynthia Cuykendall on September 21st
-  **Caedence Bethany** born to Nick and Amber Reynolds on October 5th
-  **Hannah Kate** born to Brian and Cecilia Long on October 28
-  **Emeline Joy** born to Jon and Christine Butcher on November 5th



# Children's Ministry News!

## THREE NIGHTS OF NARNIA!



Join us on December 5 and 12 at 5 p.m. in the lower level of the church for a simple supper and introduction to Voyage of the Dawn Treader. This movie will be released on December 10, however, we plan to attend a matinee together as a group on December 19, which will also include a Narnia event sponsored by Regal Cinemas. Contact Amy Bach, amy@bg.org if you have questions.



## Christmas Caroling At The McGraw House

Saturday, December 11

Come share the Christmas joy with other Bethel Grove families! We will meet in the living room area from 3:00-4:30pm at the McGraw House, located at 221 Geneva Street, Ithaca. Please come a few minutes early and bring a dozen cookies to share with residents. If your child would like to share a special musical or other talent, or if you have questions please contact Amy Bach (Amy@bg.org).



Coming To  
BG This  
Winter &  
Spring:

## *A Kid's Musical*

Starting in early January, Sandy Sorensen and Zach Adams will be heading up a children's musical that will be presented in April, 2011. Kids in grades 4-8 are invited and encouraged to be a part. Rehearsals will start in January at 10:30 a.m. on Sundays and be of varying lengths. Needed are adults/college students who can assist. If you have some abilities in playing the piano or singing, doing choreography, working the sound system, helping a small group of kids to learn their parts, or assisting with transitions and have a few hours to share, please let us know. Having even occasional help would be appreciated. Please inquire and we can talk about schedules and the fun to be had/shared!

Call or e-mail:

**Sandy Sorensen**

sandra.sorensen@gmail.com  
503 459-9154

**Zach Adams**

zacharygadams@gmail.com  
607 273-5347

For more information, please pick up the half sheet in the foyer with more details.

# Coming Up Soon!

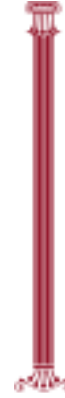


## Institute of Biblical Studies

"The Way It's Suppose to Be: A Breviary of Christian Virtue"

Dr. Cornelius Plantiga Jr.  
President of Calvin Theological Seminary

February 4 @ Cornell  
February 5-6 @ BG





## Bethel Grove Bible Church

Loving God • Loving Others • Engaging the World



# Events For Your Calendar

## *Songs of Advent - December 1, 8, 15*

Please plan to join us at 7 pm in the Family Center for joyful singing of carols and meditation on Christmas. Dates are listed below. All are welcome!

### **November 21 - November 27**

21<sup>th</sup> - **Worship Services** 9 and 10:45 a.m.  
(Childcare for both services)  
(Regular Sunday School Program / Adult Ed.)

25<sup>th</sup> - Office closed for Thanksgiving

26<sup>th</sup> - Office closed for Thanksgiving

### **November 28 - December 4**

28<sup>th</sup> - **First Sunday In Advent**  
10 am Coffee Fellowship  
(No Education Programs or Childcare)  
10:45 am - One Service  
***"How Can I Be Sure of This?"***  
Zechariah's Story from Luke 1:1-25  
(Childcare/Children's Church Offered)

1<sup>st</sup> - **Songs of Advent** -7 p.m.  
***"Groaning with Anticipation"***

### **December 5 - December 11**

5<sup>th</sup> - **Second Sunday in Advent**  
9 and 10:45 am Services with Communion  
***"How Can This Be?"***  
Mary's Story from Luke 1:26-45  
(Childcare for both services)  
(Regular Sunday School Program / Adult Ed.)

**Narnia Night** - 5 p.m. in Fellowship Room

8<sup>th</sup> - **Songs of Advent** - 7 p.m.  
***"Joy! Incarnation"***

11<sup>th</sup> - **Caroling at McGraw House** - 3 p.m.

### **December 12 - December 18**

12<sup>th</sup> - **Third Sunday in Advent**  
9 and 10:45 a.m. Services  
***"What Does This Mean For Me?"***  
Joseph's story in Matthew 1:18-25  
(Childcare for both Services)  
(Regular Sunday School Program / Adult Ed.)

**Narnia Night** - 5 p.m. in Fellowship Room  
**High School Christmas Party** - 5 p.m.

15<sup>th</sup> - **Songs of Advent** -7 p.m.  
***"Future Hope"*** with Children's Pageant

### **December 19 - December 25**

19<sup>th</sup> - **Fourth Sunday in Advent**  
10 a.m. Coffee Fellowship  
(No Education Programs or Child Care)  
10:45 a.m. One Service  
***"Where Do I Find Him?"***  
The Shepherd's Story from Luke 2: 8-20  
(Childcare and Children's Church Offered)

**Narnia Event at Regal Cinema-12** - 5 p.m.

**Middle School Christmas Party** - 5 p.m.

24<sup>th</sup> - **Christmas Eve Services**  
4 p.m. - Family service  
6:30 p.m. - Candlelight Service

### **December 26 - January 1**

26<sup>th</sup> - **One Worship Service**  
10 a.m. Coffee Fellowship  
(No Child Care)  
10:45 a.m. Service  
(Childcare and Children's Church Offered)  
(No Adult Ed.)

31<sup>st</sup> - Office closes at 1 p.m.