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# NURSERY SCHOOL

# NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL NURSERY SCHOOL



## December 2008

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

**December 6 - Santa Breakfast**

**December 19 - Last Day of School  
Christmas Break**



## January 2009

Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

**January 5**

**First Day Back After Christmas  
Break**

## ✕ Director's Dialogue ✕ by Jane Adams

We have a fairly recent tradition in our family at Christmas of a gift exchange. I'm not sure why it took us almost 40 years of marriage to conclude that this might be a good idea for our extended family, but it did. At the risk of sounding like Scrooge, it is such an incredible relief to not feel compelled to go out and buy lots of stuff that nobody needs or wants simply because our culture dictates gifts for everyone during the Christmas season. Also, on the positive side of gift giving, when I only have to think about purchasing one gift (grandchildren NOT included in the one gift rule), I can really put some thought and enjoyment into buying something that I think the other person will truly enjoy.

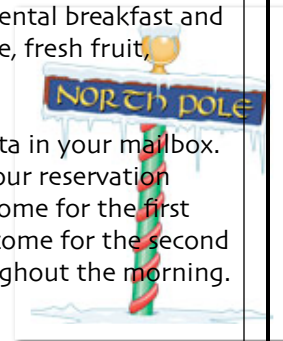
That being said, along with our nations' recent economic woes compounded by confusion about possible solutions, I thought I would again reprint a beautiful Christmas message written by The Rev. Nancy Chalfont-Walker that I put in my December newsletter a couple of years ago. In it she reflects on the subject of the gifts of simplicity and freedom, and the importance of not cluttering our lives with unnecessary material possessions and too much busyness.

*continued pg 4.*

## Santa Breakfast Open House - Saturday, December 6

You have all received your Santa Breakfast reservation form in your mailbox by now. Santa Breakfast will be Saturday, December 6<sup>th</sup> from 9:30 – 11:30. We will have a sing along with Margaret, puppets, continental breakfast and of course Santa himself. Come for bagels, Starbucks coffee, fresh fruit, muffins, and juice.

You will all receive a notice of your child's time to see Santa in your mailbox. The times are given out in the order that you turned in your reservation form. Those with times between 9:30 and 10:30 should come for the first hour and those with times between 10:30 – 11:30 should come for the second hour. There will be food, entertainment, and crafts throughout the morning. Don't forget your camera!



# Playground Clean-up

Thanks so much to Kristi Tranquilli for organizing a parent playground clean up in early November. Her crew included:

Bob Andrews

Jim and Kristin Archbold

Mel and Jeff Woods

Stephanie Fedro Byrom and Brad Byrom

Elizabeth and Krister Schwertfuehrer

Rome Alcantara

Kiri Rising



Thanks again to all who helped, the playground looked great at the end of the day!

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## FALL FUNDRAISER 2008

This year's Fall Fundraiser was a live art auction, which was a change from years past. It was a fun and interesting evening as we bid on a wide assortment of framed art prints and enjoyed delicious food and beverages.

Many thanks go to Jeanne Basse and Melissa Stalder who did a fantastic job of chairing the event. Also many thanks go to Debbie Wiles - food chair, Nate Herring – beverage chair, Melissa Bailey - invitations chair, and Becky Sutherland - decorations chair. Thanks to the “walkers” who spent the entire evening carrying art up to the easel - Tracy Adams, Marianne DeVito, Joan and Elyse Easton, Eileen Sharbaugh, Diane Sweeney, and Stephanie Woodruff. Also thanks to Erin and Sean Rutter who sold 50/50 tickets all evening.

Thanks to all of the children who helped create the beautiful children's water color art piece and especially to our art teacher, Heather Herbay, who guided the children in their work and pieced the final product together.

Finally, thanks to Melinda Berdyck for designing the beautiful basket raffle bulletin board, and to everyone who bought items to add to the baskets. The baskets looked fabulous thanks to Nicke Manning, Mel Woods and Stephanie Ross who helped put them together.

It is important to remember that we have the fundraiser each year for the children. All of the money that we raise goes back into the school in order to continue to offer the best possible early childhood program for all of your children.

## Registration for 2009 -2010 School Year

Registration for currently enrolled children and their siblings will be the week of January 19 – 23, 2009. Forms will be placed in everyone's mailbox prior to January 19<sup>th</sup>. Forms can be handed in or mailed in any time during that week in order to maintain your priority during that time period for currently enrolled students and their siblings.

The deadline for earliest date that all other priorities may be mailed in or handed in will be Monday, January 26, 2009.

Typical progression for students will be as follows:

Children enrolled in AM sessions will remain in the morning.

Children enrolled in PM sessions will remain in the afternoon.

Children will have the choice of remaining at the same days per week or adding 1 day per week- eg. Tuesday/Thursday children may remain in 2 day per week classes or move up to 3 days per week (MWF) classes. 3 day per week children may remain in 3-day classes or move up to 4 day per week classes.

If a parent desires to switch their child from morning to afternoon or vice versa they may request to do so and if space is available we will grant the request. If a child desires to move from a 2 day per week class to a 4-day per week class, or a 1-day per week class to a 3 day if space is available we will grant the request.

All currently enrolled children are guaranteed a space following the typical progression. Other requests will be granted only if space permits.

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## St. Paul's Episcopal Nursery School Christmas Outreach Project

Each year St. Paul's Episcopal Nursery School chooses an outreach project for the children to participate in. this year we are asking the children to ring in food to help stock the South Hills Food Pantry.

The South Hills Food Pantry responds to hunger in communities stretching from downtown Pittsburgh to the Washington County line. You and your child can help by bringing in a non-perishable food item and placing it under our Christmas tree in the Big Room. Standard sizes are preferred. The last week of school before Christmas break the children will go upstairs with their teachers and place the food items in the South Hills Food Pantry bin so that the church can deliver the food items. This is a wonderful way for your child to learn about helping others in need during this Christmas season.

Here is a list of suggested items:



Canned tuna  
Pork and beans  
Pasta  
Jelly  
Tea bags

Canned soup  
Macaroni and cheese mix  
Canned spaghetti sauce  
Canned vegetables  
Cereal baby food

Noodles  
Jello and Pudding mixes  
Tomato paste  
Canned fruit  
Crackers



## Director's Dialogue continued from pg 1.

### SIMPLICITY

'Tis a gift to be simple,  
'Tis a gift to be free,  
'Tis a gift to come down where we ought to be,  
And when we find ourselves in the place just right,  
It will be in the valley of love and delight.

The lyrics and tune of this Shaker hymn are familiar to many of us, not least because of the beautiful setting of the melody in Aaron Copeland's *Appalachian Spring*. The Shakers themselves are – to us – an odd Christian sect that practiced communal living, strict segregation of the sexes and celibacy, and ecstatic spiritual worship (the shaking for which they are named). They also practiced the art of simplicity – and even today their lovely, simple furniture, houses and barns remain strikingly beautiful in their spare, elegant lines.

I've been pondering the link between simplicity and freedom, as we approach the season of Advent and look ahead to our celebration of Christmas. Advent, the first season of our church year, is intended to be a season in which we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Christ, not just his first coming as the baby in the stable, but also for his promised second coming in which all that is broken will be mended, one way or another. We Americans who tend to be thing-rich and time-poor often "prepare" for Christmas by getting even richer in things and even poorer in time.

What if we consciously chose simplicity this season? Simplicity in the kind and number of gifts we give. Simplicity in the number and elaborateness of the events we participate in. It would mean things like less debt and less harriedness. We would have more freedom to enjoy the presence of those we love, more freedom to be generous, and more freedom to welcome the transforming presence of Jesus.

Choosing greater simplicity in our lives, though, is a very conscious decision. We'll have to say "no" to some lovely things or events or even traditions. It will take careful attention. But, if we do, I bet we will find ourselves a home "in the valley of love and delight."

MAY THE PRESENCE AND  
LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST BE  
WITH YOU THIS SEASON.



## *PAEYC Conference - Reconnecting Children to Nature*

The keynote speaker at the Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children Conference this past October was Sheryl Charles Ph.D., who has spent the last 30 years advocating and writing about the importance of allowing children to stay connected to the outdoors and nature.

She explained that for many children today, there is very little time spent outdoors. For the most part today, when they are allowed to be outside it is generally for organized sports or some other “safe” adult supervised activity. She believes that changes in society and child rearing practices, such as the increased amount of time spent indoors watching TV, the use of computers for children’s entertainment, as well as all sorts of fears surrounding children’s safety outdoors are the reason for the tremendously decreased time that children spend outside in nature today.

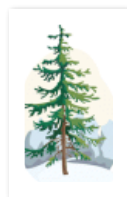
The results of children not going outdoors are not good. For starters there are more than 20% of children who suffer from obesity today as compared to 4% in 1960. This is true for children of all socio-economic levels as well as children from all regions in US, and all ethnic groups. Along with the increase of obesity and lack of exercise, is an epidemic increase of type II diabetes among children. This is also the first generation of children who may not live as long as their parents.

She pointed out the large increase of children suffering from attention deficit disorder as well as the fact that this is the most medicated generation of children for a wide assortment of all types of mental health problems. According to Dr. Charles many studies have reported that with even a small increase of time spent in free play outdoors these grim statistics are tremendously lessened. Research also shows us that children who spend more time in unstructured outside activities are better focused in all areas and have fewer overall discipline problems in school.

In her opinion playgrounds for children should be primarily sand, water, natural landscaping, and have few if any pieces of formal play equipment. Dr. Charles mentioned that risk management is simply a part of life. She believes that a balance of common sense around risk has been lost due to heightened anxieties about child abductions, fear of germs, and parents who want their children to look like “Gap Kids” and never get messy.

Thirty years ago school aged children were often told to “go outside and play and don’t come home until dark.” This sort of approach would be considered outrageous if not almost abusive today. She pointed out that the world has changed, in many ways for the better. But as far as children staying in doors too much, and not being free to play outdoors on their own where they can have the opportunity to make up their own rules about games, and solve their own problems amongst themselves, these things are being denied to many children in our world today.

After listening to her talk, I felt good about the fact that we have a beautiful natural playground that backs up to a large green space. We have many opportunities to take the children outdoors, to allow them to enjoy nature, and to learn about their natural world. These things are important not only for our children’s physical and cognitive development, but also for their creativity, spirituality, and overall mental health. These are all extremely important areas of development that are often too easily overlooked in our anxious, safety conscious world today.





**ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL  
NURSERY SCHOOL**

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