



Deacon's written by Brenda Thompson Davis

**C
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The Very First Christmas Day

His parents had no money, although He was a King-
An angel came to Joseph one night as he dreamed.

“Don’t be afraid to marry her, this child is
God’s own Son,”

And with these words from God’s messenger,
their journey had begun.

They traveled to the city, their taxes to be paid-
But when Christ was born they found no place
for the baby to be laid.

So they wrapped Him up and used a lowly manger
for His bed,

With nothing else but straw to place
beneath the Christ-child’s head.

The shepherds came to worship Him,
the wise men traveled too-

Led by a star up in the sky, they found the baby new.

They gave him gifts so wondrous,
their incense, myrrh, and gold,

Thus completes the greatest story of a birth ‘twas ever told.

He was just a tiny baby, born in a stable far away-
They had no reservations, and nowhere else to stay.
But His birth was so majestic, in a simple sort of way,
A baby born in Bethlehem on a very special day.

It was the Savior born in Bethlehem, on the very first
Christmas Day.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas, John & Robin Wolski

Twelve Bells of Christmas



We are pleased to announce that Geneva will be hosting the Capital City Ringers, a Lansing-based handbell choir, for a Christmas concert on Friday, December 9th at 7:00pm. Under the direction of Jane C. Wright, CCR’s fall 2011 program is entitled “Twelve Bells of Christmas.” You can see more than handbells, hear more than music notes, and experience a meaningful journey through the time and space of musical performance. CCR’s scripted 75-minute program has something for everyone. In addition to more than 145 Malmark handbells and handchimes, CCR’s family-oriented concert includes a variety of other instruments. Come and enjoy the opportunity to hear, watch, feel and experience music the CCR way. A free-will offering will be received.

HOLIDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

**CHRISTMAS EVE
4:00**

**AN JOYFUL RETELLING
OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY**

7:00 AND 9:00

**SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS
WITH CANDLELIGHT AND COMMUNION**

**CHRISTMAS DAY
10:00 WORSHIP**

A BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS

**NEW YEAR’S DAY
10:00 WORSHIP**

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 8
10:00 WORSHIP**



We've got big plans!

The Senior High youth are starting to think about our annual Boxing Night tradition on December 26. In case you aren't familiar with this event, each year on the night after Christmas, the Senior High youth gather in the Geneva Church parking lot to spend the night outside. Why do we do this? First, by spending a cold winter's night outside, our awareness is raised of what it might be like to be homeless. While we usually have warm coats, hats, blankets and a fire to keep us warm, we understand that there are too many people, especially in

the Detroit area, who face this situation every night who do NOT have these basics for warmth. Ben Ogden, the director of the Open Door Ministry at Fort Street Presbyterian church comes to visit us that night and tells us about his ministry, the plight of homelessness in Detroit and how we can help. The second mission of our Boxing Night tradition is to collect blankets, coats, boots and clothing for the Open Door Ministry. We will have large collection boxes located at the front of Geneva that we hope to fill several times between December 26 and January 13, when we deliver the collected necessities to Fort Street. If you are in the area on the night of December 26, I encourage you to stop by and say hello to us in the parking lot. We'd love to see you!

Even with the cold winter wind beginning to blow, both the Middle School and High School youth groups are beginning to think about summer and our mission trips to Cincinnati and Washington, DC. We've collected deposits and signed covenants to help us prepare and now we're thinking about paying for the trips. We're starting to collect donations and make other preparations for our big fundraising dinner and auction. This year the event will be held on Saturday, March 31. I hope you will mark your calendars and start thinking about how you can help support our youth by attending the dinner and/or donating an item or service to be auctioned off. Look for more information at the beginning of January.



Have you checked us out online?

Did you know that you are more than welcome to check out the Senior High and Middle School blog whether or not you have a student in those programs? Come see what we're all about!

Visit the Senior High blog at www.genevaseniorhighs.blogspot.com and visit the Middle School blog at www.genevami-dhighs.blogspot.com

As we approach this most holy season of Christmas, I am always reminded of my childhood memories. We lived in a farming area and many of the fences were hung with lights and garland on the way to our Christmas Eve service. Luminaries lined the narrow roads leading to our church on the hill. Road after road of lighted pathways led to a beautiful nativity scene outside the church.

As I think about those rides, I think of my life in general. God has given me a lighted path to follow to live the abundant life we all strive for. I know that at times the wind would blow these tiny lights out, but the farmers constantly relit them. God too is always there to do the same thing. It doesn't mean we won't have dark times or feel like we can't see the light. But just as in those memories of long ago, our job is to keep looking for this light as we travel all these roads no matter how dark they may be at times.

Sandy Stoecklein Local Missions Elder



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The Geneva Gems is published 11 times a year to keep members and friends informed of programs and events of the church. Article submissions should be received by the 25th of the month. E-mail articles to Denise Barkume at genevagems@genevachurch.org or place it in the Geneva Gems mailbox.

COLA Gets Underway

by Dave Bunch

Some of you might recall a series of articles I ran in the Gems nearly four years ago, as I began preparing to serve as an elder commissioner to the 218th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) in San Jose. As noted in the *Book of Order*, "The General Assembly is the council of the whole church and it is representative of the unity of the synods, presbyteries, sessions and congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). . . . The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love and witness. (*Book of Order*, G-3.0501)

One of the actions that we took in San Jose, was to accept the invitation of the Detroit Presbytery to have the 221st GA meet in Detroit in 2014. So, from June 14-21 of that year (a mere 30 months from now) about 3,500 – 4,000 Presbyterians will descend on downtown Detroit for what is sometimes referred to as our biennial church "family reunion".

Then, about a year ago, I saw that the Detroit Presbytery had appointed Peter Jackson, pastor of the Jefferson Ave. Church in Detroit, and Sue Melrose, pastor of First Church in Farmington, as chair and vice-chair respectively, of a "Committee on Local Arrangements" (or "COLA") to host the 2014 GA on behalf of the Detroit Presbytery. I knew Sue Melrose pretty well, as she also had gone to San Jose as a commissioner. So I contacted Sue and said, "Hey, I'm a retired project manager, and of course, having been to a GA, I'm able to visualize how it all goes down, so I'd like to help on the Detroit COLA."

Much of the organizing work for a GA is done by the Office of the General Assembly (OGA), out of the Louisville, KY, headquarters of PC(USA). They have long since worked through the Detroit Convention and Visitors Bureau to block out time and space at Cobo Center and surrounding hotels. But the COLA plays an important supporting role, as I learned at our kick-off meeting at Jefferson Ave. Church on November 29. As outlined in the 70-some page **COLA Manual**, which we received in October, the COLA has the following responsibilities:

- Recruiting, training and overseeing hundreds of volunteers to accomplish dozens of tasks: These include: communion servers and ushers for the worship services, airport and hotel greeters, registration and information center volunteers, mission tour planners/leaders, and many others, perhaps as many as 1,500 volunteer shifts.
- Communicating with churches in the host presbytery or presbyteries: This includes, publicizing the General Assembly schedule with an invitation to visit the

Assembly, asking for prayers, financial support and volunteers, and maintaining an informative website with on-line registration for volunteers.

- Welcoming attendees to the city and meeting places of the assembly: Beginning at the airport, local volunteers are a constant presence of hospitality and help.
- In conjunction with OGA and the PC(USA) Moderator, assisting in the logistical aspects of planning for assembly worship experiences.
- Offering practical guides and information about the city and meeting places, including disability concerns and special needs.
- Planning special events (including the Moderator's Reception) and appropriate regional tours.
- Gathering information of interest to the local press and the PC(USA) Communication Office.

The OGA's responsibilities, also according to the **COLA Manual**, include:

- Arrangements with the convention center, including meeting space and meals.
- Arrangements with assembly hotels.
- Coordinating audio-visual services.
- Management of the exhibit hall.
- Recommending the assembly docket.
- Assembly registration and ticket sales.
- Assembly Information Center (with assistance from COLA)
- Arrangements for: shuttle busing, security, equipment and furniture, printers, copiers, telephones, and other goods & services.
- Most assembly publications, including: *Reports to the General Assembly*, registration information and forms; worship bulletins, *Assembly Program*, etc.

The Stated Clerk is also responsible for planning the Ecumenical Service of Worship, which ordinarily is delegated to staff in the Department of Ecumenical and Agency Relations. It is also the prerogative of the Stated Clerk to develop the theme and logo for each General Assembly.

The COLA has established a structure of Committees and Work Groups to plan and accomplish our assigned responsibilities. I will serve as Vice-Chair, along with Elder Harold Ellis of Detroit St. John's Church, Chair, of the Hospitality Committee. We will be organizing the following Work Groups over the coming months: Airport Welcome, Hotel Welcome, Convention Center Welcome, Ecumenical and Inter-Faith Guests Welcome, and Special Needs.

There is much work to do, and many hands will be needed. I would ask that you all please keep the COLA in your prayers!

DECEMBER

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
27 8:30am Worship 8:46am Education Hour 11am Worship	28 8:30pm Handbell Choir (F)	29	30 8pm Advent Dinner Series 7:46pm Men's Group	Dec 1 8pm Prayz Team 7pm AA (F)	2 8:30pm First Frida (WA)	3 8am Dance Team 1pm Middle School Cookie Baki
4 Middle School Christmas Coo 8:30am Worship 8:46am Education Hour 11am Worship 12:30pm High School Fellowship 8pm Bowling	5 8pm Girl Scouts (LH) 8:30pm Handbell Choir (F) 7pm CHEPA (WA)	6 10am Staff Meeting (L)	7 8pm Advent Dinner Series 7:46pm Men's Group	8 8pm Prayz Team 7pm AA (F)	9 7pm Handbell Concert	10 8am Dance Team 11am Setup for Alternative Chr
11 8:30am Worship 8:46am Education Hour 11am Worship 12:30pm Middle School Christm 6:30pm High School Christmas	12 8:30pm Handbell Choir (F) 8:30pm Session/ Deacons/ Staff	13 7pm Deacons	14 12pm Lunch Bunch 8pm Advent Dinner Series 7:46pm Men's Group	15 8pm Prayz Team 7pm AA (F)	16 8am Dance Team	17
18 8:30am Worship 8:46am Education Hour 11am Worship 12:30pm Rehearsal for Christm 12:30pm Rehearsal for Christm 8pm Bowling	19 8:30pm Handbell Choir (F)	20 10am Staff Meeting (L)	21 8pm Prayz Team	22 7pm AA (F) 7:46pm Men's Group	23 Christmas Eve Dress Rehears Christmas Eve Dress Rehears	24 4:30pm Christmas Eve Service 7pm Christmas Eve Service 8pm Christmas Eve Service
25 10am Worship	26 Boxing Night	27 7:46pm Men's Group	28 8pm Prayz Team 7pm AA (F)	29	30 8am Dance Team	31



Current Elders on Session

Worship / Education

Children - Cindy Revezzo

Youth - Dan Degener

Adult Discipleship- Dave McCreedy

Worship - Cindy Thomas

Clerk of Session - Cindy Thomas

Local Mission - Sandy Stoecklein

Global Mission - Bill Stuart

Fellowship - Jackie Van Netta

Hospitality - Keith Christenson

Stewardship - Chuck Ten Broeck

Membership - Cindy Foley

Property - Stu Delaney



DEACONS

JULIE GRAUNSTADT -

MARILYN GARDNER -

SARAH CLAY -

MARILYN HOREN -

JACKIE MARCHEWKA -

DAVE & ROSEMARY -
LESLIE

JOHN & ROBIN WOLSKI-

ALAN & LINDA PRINCE -

VIRGINIA KENNEDY -

FAMILIES

ADEDEJI-BRUSKI

BUNCH- DAUBENMEYER

DEGENER-FRANKS

FRIEDOW-HARRIS

HARRY-LESLIE

LOWMASTER-OSTASIEWICZ

PASKIEWICZ-SANTTI

SCHENKEL-TERRILL/SPRAGUE

THOMAS-YANG/BUU

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**Place Mailing Label
Here**