



For our Readers...

This is the **REGULAR EDITION** of the Forecaster. A special edition featuring our recently announced Christmas Fundraising Campaign and our plans for expansion was mailed out this week as well.

theForecaster

Wednesday, December 1, 2010 - Volume 63, Number 46



A **WOW** Trip

A REPORT FROM MOUNTAIN MISSION SCHOOL

MESSIAH

New Sermon series beginning this week.

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TO THE FUTURE
Details in a Special Forecaster coming this week.

FEATURE: December 1, 2010

A “WOW” trip

Report from Mountain Mission School

By: George Koger

On October 13, eight of us left the church parking lot headed to Mountain Mission School (MMS) in Grundy, VA. This was our second work trip of the year. Work trips at MMS are always an adventure because, even with a predetermined list of work assignments, we are never actually sure what we will encounter. Likewise, we are never sure if our talents will meet the school needs. On a trip where I heard a lot of “Wows”, the “Wows” started as we got off 64W and started down 81S. This is always a scenic drive but the pot-pourri of colors made it especially grand this time.

We arrived at MMS in time for Mr. Peter’s Bible Study with the middle school children. We each took teams to play a game where you look up verses to answer questions. Jeff Lynn showed up the rest of us with his Bible scholarship and leadership skills when his group of boys won the Bible verse contest.

The win brought forth a “Wow” from Mr. Hardin and Mr. Peters, neither of whom could remember the last time the boys had won.

Following dinner in the cafeteria, some of us strolled over to Toddler Hall where the pre-kindergarten children reside. This is always a “Wow” moment for me as the children are so loving and forthcoming.

The next big “Wow” came when we first entered the old school building. Since our last visit in April the walls had been painted, tile had been added around the water fountains, new security systems were going on the doors and, as we were about to find out over the next two days, there were many more changes—of which we were going to be a part.

Allow me to digress from the work trip for a moment to talk about the biggest “Wow” of all. On June 8 of this year The Big Three came together to raise \$15,149,183.98 for Mountain Mission School. Three of the greatest golfers of all time—Arnold Palmer, Gary Player, and Jack Nicholson—used their fame to host a golf tournament. Thanks to a generous local philanthropist, Jim McLaugh-

lin, a lawyer, coal mine owner, and golf courses investor, who had already obtained corporate sponsorship to build a new addition to the school building, The Big Three came together for the tournament.

When we visited MMS in the spring, the addition was but an iron and metal shell. MMS Newsletters told us that it would be ready for some classes in September, but we were wowed by the progress that had been made. Classrooms were in use. The new gym and the weight room were not yet completed. The addition is very nice and the work that has been completed on the updates and improvements was impressive.

Of course, not all of the millions went into the building addition. The remaining money will go into a trust. Revenues from the trust will provide enough to pay for about one month of expenses each year (approximately 8.3% of annual expenses). This will help to offset the 23% drop in annual giving which has occurred as the economy has gotten worse.

On Thursday, we got down to the serious business of working. Working is an important element of a work trip at MMS; there is never a shortage of work to be done.

We followed a crew of 24 Mennonites who replaced the roof on Toddler Hall and our follow-up was from two Church



New Sermon Series Begins Sunday



Fairmount is a church that focuses on Jesus year 'round. But at Christmas time, we always take a concerted look at the blessing of that Baby born in Bethlehem. In our Christmas worship series this December, we will go back to the Book of Isaiah and see how his prophecy pointed to Jesus over 700 years before He ever arrived. Some have referred to Isaiah as the fifth gospel, he says so much about Jesus.

For centuries, the Jews had waited for their Messiah. That Anointed One of God would come and bring blessings beyond comparison. They were not looking for their Messiah to be born to peasants in a tiny little village. Yet that Messiah was just what they needed then – and exactly what we need today.

Be sure to be at Fairmount each Sunday in December as we celebrate the gift of our Messiah: a Wonderful Counselor, a Mighty God, an Everlasting Father, and a Prince of Peace.

Mountain Mission Gifts Due Sunday

A reminder that gifts for Mountain Mission School are due by Sunday, December 5th. Gifts from children and teens can be placed at the Christmas tree in the Sanctuary. Gifts from the adult Bible School Classes are to be taken to Trailer 3. All gifts will be packed and shipped to Grundy, VA on Monday, December 6th.



OUR CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

Editor's Note: In October we asked for you to submit your family's Christmas traditions that you currently do or from long ago. The hope being that others in our church community may be inspired to start a family tradition of their own.

A Polish Christmas Tradition

I grew up in a large Polish family in the outskirts of Chicago, IL. One of the traditions I remember most vividly is our Wigilia (Christmas Eve meal) every year. My mother normally hosted the meal at our small house and aunts and uncles from both sides of the family would come. A place would be set at the table for the "unexpected guest" - the Christ child who was on His way - and straw would be placed under the tablecloth to symbolize His birth in a stable. The Wigilia is a 12-course meatless meal and we enjoyed all sorts of great Polish foods like homemade mushroom soup and pierogi which we would all help assemble that afternoon. Our house was always stuffed with people and there was a lot of noise, laughter and fun. But my favorite memory is of sharing oplatki just before the meal was served. Oplatki are thin wafers with different Christian Christmas scenes stamped into them and every person at the meal would have their own. We'd then go around and break off a small piece of each other's oplatek and exchange a Christmas blessing such as "Good health", "Blessings in your new marriage", or simply "Merry Christmas". I recently learned that this tradition of breaking off and exchanging the *oplatek* is "a symbol of forgiveness between two people and is meant to remind participants of the importance of Christmas, God, and family" which are certainly things we all need to be reminded of during the hectic and busy Christmas season.

- *Chris (Skubiszewski) Branch*



Is Xmas taking Christ out of Christmas?

By: Larry Haake, IV

Ever had your Christmas card or seen a sign in front of a business read, “Merry Xmas”? Did you get offended? Should you have?

Lately, it’s become something of a debate on social media sites about whether or not it is acceptable to say “Xmas” or is it an attempt to remove Christ from Christmas.

Obviously, we’ve seen attempts to remove the true meaning of Christmas from our schools, our courthouses and some businesses wrongly assumed the general public would be okay with a “Holiday Tree” and wishing each other “Happy Holidays”...they were mistaken and now specifically tell us they will wish us a “Merry Christmas”.

But what about “Xmas”? Is it sacrilegious? The answer is no.

I’d like to draw your attention to the

picture on the right side of the page. It is a Christmas card from 1910 reading, “I bring you a Merry Xmas from...” Back in 1910, there wasn’t any concern for sponging away Christ from our society as there is now. Yet they used “Xmas”.

Using the term, “Xmas” is acceptable abbreviation if you know your history. The “X” in “Xmas” is from the first letter of the Greek spelling for Christ (Χριστός). If you come from a Catholic background, you may even have seen a symbol of an “X” and “P” together. That is the symbol for Christ.

Now, like so many things we hold sacred, “Xmas” has been taken and secularized by those who wish to ignore the true meaning of Christmas. I don’t typically use the term “Xmas” when writing, but if you see it used, whether by your Christian



brothers or sisters or someone who has no idea, be joyous that Christ’s name is being proclaimed...whether they know it or not as we proudly proclaim the real reason for celebrating Christmas, the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. ■



Another Christmas Movie Tradition

The Science Museum of Virginia is showing the 2004 film “The Polar Express” daily at 2pm in the Ethyl Imax Dome (except December 6 & 13). Tickets are \$9.50. The Science Museum is located at 2500 West Broad Street in Richmond. (www.smv.org)



Byrd Theater announces “It’s a Wonderful Life” showing.

The Byrd Theater will be showing the 1946 classic “It’s a Wonderful Life” on Friday, December 24th at 7:15pm and again on Saturday, December 25th at 7:15pm & 9:45pm. (2908 West Cary Street, Richmond)

of Christ/Christian churches out of Indiana.

As you will see below, this is an impressive “Wow” list. We had some ideal conditions under which to work, the right talent, proper tools, good leadership, and we worked hard. It all came together for one of our most successful trips:

- Solved and corrected a multi-circuit wiring problem in the staff lodge
- Assisted with the design and construction of a classroom sliding Smart Board (computerized interactive whiteboard and projection system) that is serving as a model for an idea the administration is considering for other classrooms (Glenn Thacker returned for three days to complete this project.)
- Card reader mounting plates for electric door locks installed and ran CAT5 cable
- Relocated communication junction center from wall of teachers’ resource room to above ceiling and restored wall
- Media speaker systems installed in 20 classrooms
- Conduit and wall boxes for classroom computer centers installed and CAT5 run
- Wall mounted media projector arms installed in classrooms

- Bundled, hung, and fire chucked massive CAT5 cabling in fourth floor mechanical room
- Repaired apartment water closet
- Replaced faulty dryer breaker
- Categorized and tabulated labels
- CAT5 run and attached to media speakers
- Waterproofed outdoor bleachers at athletic field
- Conduit and junction box for science lab computer center reassembled and CAT5 run
- Cleaned dining hall windows inside and out
- Replaced a broken hood release cable and housing on a teacher’s Nissan
- Cleared out school building flower bed and Hurley Hall flower bed
- Removed old supporting structure and projector mount from ceiling of science lab
- Delivered coupons from Fairmount and a box of school supplies from Chesterfield Church of Christ

Mountain Mission School work trips are a way in which we can go out into the Mission Field that doesn’t cost much, requires no flying or shots, only takes three work days, and will give you a wonderful feeling of satisfaction. I know these are some of the things that may stop people

from going on foreign mission trips. Please give prayerful consideration to joining us on a Mountain Mission School work trip.

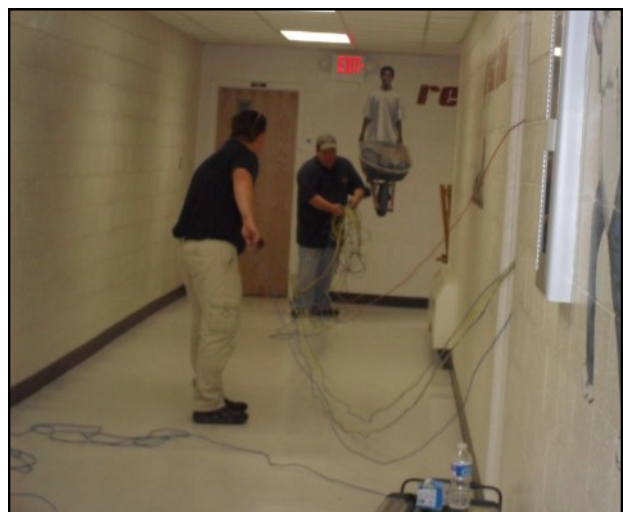
Listed below are the dates for the next four trips:

- 5/18-21/2011
- 9/26-29/2011
- 9/28-10/1/2011
- 4/25-28/2012

If you cannot go on a MMS work trip, please consider these ways of supporting, if you do not already:

- Collect coupons to help with educational needs
- Participate in the annual Christmas Gift Program
- Make a direct donation to the school or consider the school in your will

For more information, please visit mountainmissionschool.com.





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The mission of Fairmount Christian Church:

To develop followers of Jesus who:

Love God,
Love People and
Introduce the world
 to **Christ**

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The Forecaster is
 best viewed online @
www.fairmountchristian.org

Our Church: Sunday, November 28, 2010

Thanksgiving Offering Helps Mechanicsville Food Pantry

This year's special Thanksgiving offering went to the Mechanicsville Food Pantry operated by Mechanicsville Churches Emergency Functions (MCEF). In all, \$2,206.57 was given.

Remember that this coming Sunday is Manna Sunday at Fairmount and all are asked to bring in non-perishable food items to restock the shelves at the Mechanicsville Food Pantry.

Attendance & Giving.

8:15 Worship Service: 127
 Children's Worship: 6

9:30 Worship Service: 440
 Children's Worship: 57

11:00 Worship Service: 244
 Children's Worship: 116
 Breakaway: 63

Total: 1053
Bible School: 607
Budget Requirements: \$34,405.00
Budget Receipts: \$26,003.18



Begins this Sunday | Details, Page 3

Your Church Staff:

Rick Raines - Senior Minister
Chris Santasiere - Associate Minister
Mike Langley - Associate Minister
Tracy Thomas - Worship/Music Minister
Joe Thompson - Youth Minister
Rose Williams - Children's Ministry Director
Larry Haake, IV - Child Care Program Director
Jef Powell - Facilities & Grounds Manager
Barry Will - Technology Director
Veronica Brewster - Office Manager
Bob Massey - Business Administrator