

The Seminary News

Edition 12

Wednesday, December 8, 1993

NOTICE TO SENIORS

AN IMPORTANT MEETING FOR PROSPECTIVE GRADUATES HAS BEEN CALLED BY PRESIDENT PETER SCHMIECHEN FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 12:00 NOON, IN LARK 206. PLEASE ATTEND TO DISCUSS DETAILS FOR THIS YEAR'S GRADUATION.

UCC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES EXECUTIVES ON CAMPUS 12/8

Leaders from United Church of Christ-related nursing homes, homes for children, hospitals and other health and human service institutions will be meeting on campus Wednesday, December 8. All of these are representatives from member institutions of the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries of the United Church of Christ (CHHSM). The meeting is sponsored jointly by Lancaster Seminary and CHHSM.

The CHHSM representatives will attend chapel service, followed by a luncheon meeting. Chief item for discussion is how seminaries of the UCC can cooperate with CHHSM to develop clergy leadership for church-related health and human service agencies. Possible areas for cooperation range from field education placement to a full joint degree program in institutional administration.

Representatives from CHHSM who will attend the meeting include the Rev. Bryan W. Sickbert, executive director, and Ms. Norma S. Mengel, who is associate for program.

SEMINARY REACHES OUT INTO COMMUNITY

"I've lived here all my life and never knew there was a Lancaster Seminary." "I've passed by here a lot and always wondered what the buildings looked like inside."

These were two comments made by townspeople as they trooped in the rain from the Refectory to the Campus Center to Hafer Center during last weekend's AAUW

(American Association of University Women) Holly Bazaar. During the event, local craftpersons sold handmade items, and food vendors provided delicious treats with the proceeds to benefit scholarships and community projects. AAUW members were pleased to hold this annual event at Lancaster Seminary. The bazaar is part of Holly Trail, a tour of homes, a church and a museum decorated for the holidays by local merchants and florists.

The Seminary's involvement in the Holly Trail was part of Campus 100, the year-long centennial celebration of our location at James Street and College Avenue. Many people in our Seminary community helped to make things run smoothly for our guests on campus. A special thank you goes to Brigitte Putnam, Victor Wright, Bob Cook, Don McKinney, Gerry Stetter, Ann Winter, Jay Ellison and Trustee Susan Adams. Thank you also to departments that shared their work space; resident seminarians and their families and staff who supported the event by purchasing gifts and goodies, quality used books and compact disks for themselves, friends and families.

SEMINARY AND PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF MUSIC HOST CONCERT

The next event in the celebration of Campus 100 is a musical concert scheduled for Sunday, January 30, at 4:00 p.m. in Santee Chapel. Local soprano Anne Webber and accompanist and pianist Scott Drackley will provide music for the concert, which is free and open to the public.

Anne Webber is on the faculty of the Pennsylvania Academy of Music. Persons who have been with the Seminary for several years will remember that the Academy used our facility for awhile before acquiring their own building.

JAN SCHMIECHEN, THE POINSETTIA PROVIDER

If you have been enjoying the radiance and cheeriness of the poinsettia-graced chancel in Santee Chapel, give thanks for the enthusiasm of Jan Schmiechen, wife of president Peter Schmiechen. She has checked out greenhouses and plant sellers around the county and has found these special Christmas flowers.

CRISPUS ATTUCKS NEEDS OUR HELP

Crispus Attucks Community Center, 407 Howard Avenue in Lancaster, has recently opened an Emergency Shelter in its basement to house homeless men and women from 8:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. on a temporary basis from November to March. Persons needing this service can be referred by calling 394-6604. Items needed by the Center to help these short-term residents (there is a five night limit) are bed linens and toiletries such as disposable razors, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, deodorant and shaving cream. For more information, call Karna Burkeen, extension 32, Office of Development and Seminary Relations.

COME FOR HEALING

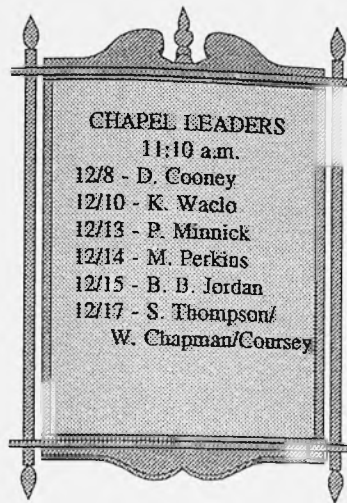
On Tuesday evening, December 14, 1993, at 7:00 p.m., in Santee Chapel, there will be a service of prayer for healing and anointing with oil. You are invited to participate. Come to pray and/or be anointed for your own healing and/or for someone else. If you meet with a group for prayer, this special service will be blessed by your intercessory prayers for its ministry. Sponsored by the chapel support committee, this service is being planned by Wenonah Chapman-Coursey, Allen Kroehler and Stephanie Thompson. If you have suggestions or requests, please contact one of them.

THANKS TO GERRY STETTER

Allen Kroehler, dean of the chapel, deciding to be innovative in incorporating the traditional Advent candles into Santee Chapel worship services in a non-traditional way, designed a candelabrum for special candles. He asked Gerry Stetter, maintenance supervisor, if he had any wood to make candelabra or something similar that could be used. Within two hours, Gerry had found recyclable wood which he cut to length by hand. He added a few improvements to the design and had the candelabra in the chancel for the community's use. Thank you, Gerry, for your skill and gracious, willing cooperation.

LIGHTING ADVENT CANDLES

Advent is the first season of the church year. November 28 was the first Sunday in Advent this year (the four Sundays before Christmas are celebrated as the Advent season. Many churches have a custom of lighting a wreath of four Advent candles, one more each week, until, at Christmas, the white Christ candle is lighted. It is a tradition that helps Christians focus attention on the coming of the Christ at Bethlehem and at the close of history. The theme of light is often used in the northern hemisphere because Advent is experienced at the darkest time of the



year. It is similar to the Jewish Festival of Lights. The themes of hope, peace, love and joy may also be variously highlighted.

Lighting the Advent candles will be a part of our worship this season. Please join in worship at 11:10 a.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

UCC PREPARES NEW HYMNAL

In the spring of 1995, the United Church of Christ will publish a new hymnal, *The New Century Hymnal*. Published after a long and creative process of preparation, the new hymnal will contain 650 hymns and worship resources. Copies of a sampler containing 51 of the hymns which will be in the new hymnal, introduction to a new Psalter and a few selected worship resources have been received from the hymnal office for use in our chapel. Please consider using the sampler as a resource when you are leading chapel and as an opportunity to catch some of the excitement of this new publication.

THANKS TO WORSHIP LEADERS

Almost 100 different persons have helped with the leadership of seminary worship in Santee Chapel this fall! "There are probably more," says Allen Kroehler, dean of the chapel, "because I haven't kept good records. Can you believe it? I have 80 in my first draft list, and it is still growing. But the important thing is to celebrate the beauty of this outpouring of praise and thanksgiving! Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!"



President's Page

Looking to Christmas

Halfway through Advent it becomes clear that Christmas is coming. I say Christmas is coming, rather than speaking of our moving toward Christmas, because my sense is always that Christmas comes to us. I am never ready for it, nor do I expect all that it brings. Christmas is always the subject; I receive it and react to it. For the same reason I don't feel I prepare for Christmas--at least not in any adequate sense. How can we prepare for Christmas? We hardly understand the world or ourselves; how can we understand what God has done and will do at Christmas.

For me Christmas continually astounds me, with its many and varied themes. This Advent I have been thinking about the way Christmas gives more than we deserve. In one sense this is unfair. We have been raised from childhood on the idea that we should get what we deserve. We are to be rewarded when we are good and punished when we are bad. Even Santa has moral standards: gifts are for good little boys and girls. The fact that the world does not operate on this principle, but allows the good to suffer and evil prosper, does not justify the unfairness. It only makes us mad. Now even Christmas contributes to the injustice of it all. We celebrate a gift given to people (including me) who do not deserve it. And we are supposed to follow by giving gifts without regard to whether the recipients deserve them. But that stands the moral standards of the world upside down. So how am I supposed to prepare for that?

Then there is the fact that I receive far more than I deserve or expect. The Christmas story is so extravagant. Nothing is held back. Children are promised (John and Jesus), parents are overwhelmed, joyful, terrified and struck speechless. Women and men prophesy and sing, stars shine in

heaven, poor folk and wise men visit a child, and angels rejoice. Such excess even provokes unhappy results, as a fearful ruler kills children. Through it all a vision of a new earth begins to take place and we are prompted to wonder what it would be like to have peace on earth. It overwhelms me so that I feel undone. I can prepare for getting one more red tie; how am I supposed to prepare for a rebirth of my spirit, or a rebirth of the entire creation? (By the way, actually no one gives me red ties, I buy them myself.)

What usually happens is that by the time I get started at preparing, Christmas arrives. It again exceeds what I expected or deserved. So get ready one more time for God to confound all the expectations, rules and regulations of the world. One more time, in spite of our moral principles and attempts to control all that is good, Christmas will make clear that we don't get what we deserve, that grace exceeds our plans and expectations, and that the glory of God will be revealed to all people. Have a blessed Christmas, but don't let your preparations get in the way.

Peter Schmiechen





Next week's edition of the Seminary News, to be distributed on Wednesday, December 15, will be the last newsletter until February 9, 1994. Please have copy for stories in Barbara Stephens' mailbox by Monday afternoon, December 13.

ONLY 19 SHOPPING DAYS 'TIL CHRISTMAS

Have you purchased your ceramic ornament of the Lark Building? These works of art make a wonderful gift for a graduate or current Seminary student. Perhaps you would like to give one to someone in your local church who has been particularly supportive of your studies at Lancaster Seminary. Maybe you would like to purchase several and put them away for a favorite '94 Seminary graduate. The ceramic ornaments are available in the Development Office (Room 206, Schaff). Cost is \$15.00 for the ornament in a gift box. Buy now! Time is running out!

ATTENTION POETS

The National Library of Poetry has announced that \$12,000 in prizes will be awarded this year to over 250 poets in the North American Open Poetry Contest. The deadline for the contest is December 31, 1993. The contest is open to everyone, and entry is free. Any poet, whether previously published or not, can be a winner. Every poem entered also has a chance to be published in a deluxe, hardbound anthology.

To enter, send one original poem, any subject and any style, to The National Library of Poetry, 11419 Cronridge Drive, P.O. Box 704-ZT, Owings Mills, MD 21117. Poems should be no more than 20 lines, and the poet's name and address should appear on the top of the page. Entries must be postmarked by December 31, 1993. A new contest opens January 1, 1994.

INTERVIEWEES NEEDED

John Zachry, a DMin candidate, is doing research on awakening experiences (defined as "the earliest mystical-spiritual experience a person can remember") and requests your participation in an interview process. Please see Donna Kaplan, the faculty secretary before December 10, if you are able to participate in this project.

Professor Freeman

CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE TO TOYS FOR TOTS?

Victor Wright and Bob Cook are providing an opportunity for the Seminary Community to contribute to Toys for Tots. Please put new or old toys (even items that need repair are welcome) in the "old copy room," Lower Level Lark (#31) any weekday between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. between now and December 13. If you need pickup for toys, talk to Bob or Vic. Of course, cash to buy toys is also welcome. Bob and Vic hope this project will bring smiles to the faces of some local youngsters at the holiday season.

CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

Do you want to ensure the freshness of this year's Christmas tree? You can cut your own for only \$10.00 at Bob Crane's farm (215-384-1818). Hundreds of pines, firs and spruces are available for your choice. Please come on Saturdays only, during daylight hours. Saws will be provided. Directions: take King Street east out of Lancaster. Turn left onto Route 340 East (at Weis Market). Stay on Route 340 East through Bird-in-Hand, Intercourse, White Horse and Compass. Don't miss the turn when Route 340 turns left at the blinking yellow light in Compass. Proceed four miles after the turn and look for mailbox #282 on the right. Make this a family outing!

