

# Valley Voice

Charles (Buck) Bunner, Pastor  
856-4368 (office)  
856-7846 (home)

email: pastor@vmfriends.org  
web page: www.vmfriends.org



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Newsletter of Valley Mills Friends Meeting

## Some Thoughts from the Pastor

I finished listening to an audio version of the book How the Irish Saved Civilization by Thomas Cahill. It is worth taking the time to read or listen to.

Toward the end of the book, reference is made to what the author calls the “sensibilities” of the time. The time was the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Essentially, two Christian religions had developed: the Roman version and the Irish version.

The Christianity of Rome tended to stick to its beliefs that the church was superior to the ways of humans, and there must always be a separation between the two. For example, it was not a good idea to spend time reading the writings of the culture one was born into; instead, one should only read the writings of the church.

The Christianity of the Irish (I write “Irish” instead of Ireland because the Irish had taken their religion to Britain and the European continent) was not

concerned with maintaining a strict separation between the church and the culture of the people. For example, the Irish were lovers of literature, all literature—even that which was considered pagan, and they had no problem reading it, copying and saving it, singing praises about it, and recognizing elements of spirituality in it.

So, there were two Christian sensibilities during the 6<sup>th</sup> century: one that remained aloof of a people’s culture and one that embraced it. We live in time in which there are two sensibilities: the modern and the anti-modern. And, just like the people of the past who had to make a choice, we too have to make a choice (and yes, we have to be willing to live with the consequences).

I personally choose to embrace a “modern sensibility.” To do otherwise would be to cut myself off from the truth of myself. For example, I was raised in a

public school. I was taught to read, write and do arithmetic. I learned these skills reading American and World literature, writing essays of self-expression, and studying algebra and geometry. I studied American and World history and learned many different politics and philosophies, and I studied biology and evolution. I had a thoroughly modern high school education.

And, that was over 35 years ago. Today’s children are studying even more advanced math, reading more sophisticated literature, learning more science, discovering more philosophies of life, and studying psychology and sociology. Their modern sensibilities are much more advanced than mine.

As we all know, a number of churchgoers have become uncomfortable with modern sensibilities.

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**“The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity. And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”**

**James 3: 17,18**



## Broaden Your Horizons

- Interfaith Alliance Indianapolis will sponsor another Butler Seminar on Religion and World Civilization Program on Wed., January 30. The title is “Is India Still a Secular Country?” It will be at

- the Krannert Room in Clowes Memorial Hall.
- West Newton Friends will be hosting a Simple Meal on Sun., Jan. 6 at 11:15 am. Valley Mills Friends are welcome to come after Meeting for

Worship. Steve Rink, Decatur Township Trustee will be present to talk about needs in the township and will be available to answer any questions you may have.

## Thoughts (cont. from p.1)

They are rejecting this mindset and returning to an anti-modern stance. This trend is going to continue to grow and may someday even dominate our culture-- not a promising prospect.

If you have been listening closely to my sermons, you will know that I am all about modern sensibilities. I plan to continue preaching this mindset in the upcoming year. This, of course, can become controversial, but it is a risk I feel called to take. We are all in the same boat. Whether we like it or not, we are being called to take a stand: will we continue to embrace our modern sensibilities or will we reject them?

I fear that if we reject them, we will reject the truth of ourselves and fail to fully enjoy the blessings of God.

— Buck

## A Note of Interest

The following are the eight points of **The Center for Progressive Christianity**:

1. By calling ourselves progressive, we mean that we are Christians who have found an approach to God through the life and teachings of Jesus.

2. By calling ourselves progressive, we mean that we are Christians who recognize the faithfulness of other people who have other names for the way to God's realm, and acknowledge that their ways are true for them, as our ways are true for us.

3. By calling ourselves progressive, we mean that we are Christians who understand the sharing of bread and wine in Jesus' name to be a representation of an ancient vision of God's feast for all peoples.

4. By calling ourselves progressive, we mean that we are Christians who invite all people to participate in our community and worship life without insisting that they become like us in order to be acceptable (including but not limited to): believers and agnostics, conventional Christians and questioning skeptics, women and men, those of all sexual orientations and gender identities, those of all races and cultures,

those of all classes and abilities, those who hope for a better world and those who have lost hope; without imposing on them the necessity of becoming like us.

5. By calling ourselves progressive, we mean that we are Christians who know that the way we behave toward one another and toward other people is the fullest expression of what we believe.

6. By calling ourselves progressive, we mean that we are Christians who find more grace in the search for meaning than in absolute certainty, in the questions than in the answers.

7. By calling ourselves progressive, we mean that we are Christians who form ourselves into communities dedicated to equipping one another for the work we feel called to do: striving for peace and justice among all people, protecting and restoring the integrity of all God's creation, and bringing hope to those Jesus called the least of his sisters and brothers.

8. By calling ourselves progressive, we mean that we are Christians who recognize that being followers of Jesus is costly, and entails selfless love, conscientious resistance to evil, and renunciation of privilege.

## Thank You

“Thank you so much for the donation to our **Stephen Decatur Angel Fund**. This donation will help provide assistance to our families in need. We truly appreciate your committee's work and dedication to making our community stronger. We cannot thank you enough for your support.”  
Sincerely,  
Robert E. Kehrein, Principal  
Stephen Decatur Elementary

Please check out the Christmas Card Thank You that the students from **Lynwood Elementary School** sent us. It is located on the bulletin board at the Meetinghouse.

“Thank you so much for the donation of \$1,000.00. We appreciate all of our partners; we know that alone we could not do what we do all year long with out their help. It does take all of us working together. We wish you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Again thank you for your donation, it is greatly appreciated.”  
Sincerely,  
Maggie Phipps, **Community Caring and Sharing**

### Important Dates for January

Sun., Jan. 6 - **West Newton Friends Meeting** will host a Simple Meal at 11:15 a.m. Steve Rink, Decatur Township Trustee will be present to discuss issues of need in the township. All are welcome.

Wed., Jan. 9 - **Ministry and Counsel** will meet at the meetinghouse at 7:00 pm.

Sun., Jan 13— **Monthly Meeting for Business** will meet at the rise of worship. Please do not forget to bring your donations for **Community Caring & Sharing!**

Tues., Jan. 22—Deadline to submit information to the **Valley Voice**.

## Notes from Ministry and Counsel—December 5, 2007

– The clerk opened with a brief period of open worship.  
– In light of recent discussions of “progressive Quakers” in our region, the clerk asked each member to read the description of The Center for Progressive Christianity and to consider the query: “Is Valley Mills Friends Meeting a Progressive Christian Church?” The committee will ask the Monthly Meeting for Business to consider the same points and query. Some felt that it would be good for Valley Mills to define itself clearly as a home of “Progressive Christianity and Traditional Quakerism.” Such a defining statement and subscription as an affiliate -- as with tpc.org -- could assist with attracting visitors and attenders.  
– Bob Havens reported that we are waiting for Jeff the

Chimney Doctor to evaluate the parsonage chimney. Bob confirmed the leak under the commode in the basement women’s room, and will pull it to evaluate it more fully.  
-- Buck pointed out that the Almon’s 50th Anniversary reception demonstrated once again that our parking lot does not provide enough spaces for crowds on a number of occasions, and that expansion of parking should be considered in 2008.  
-- Bill and Buck described the meeting that was held Sunday, December 2, at Irvington, to consider the query “Are there reasons for progressive pastoral meetings to form an association for encouragement and mutual ministry?” Many people attended from three yearly meetings and perhaps a dozen monthly meetings. A follow-up meeting will be convened on the first Sunday in March,

by which time individual meetings will have had time to consider such an association.  
-- M&C will invite April Vanlonden-Degner to speak at Sunday school and worship in April, 2008, on the trip she took to Ramallah this fall. The members and attenders of Fountain City Friends will also be invited to worship with us and share a meal, in return for the joint worship we had at Fountain City in 2006. The committee agreed that it should not be on a Sunday on which a meeting for business is scheduled.  
-- Buck shared lists of people who were organized into three groups based on their residential regions. A gathering and pitch-in of each group is being planned for the winter months of 2008. Yo and Mike McCormick will host the “North of

Rockville Rd.” group. Hosts for the Plainfield/Mooresville and Decatur Township groups are needed.  
-- It was approved by M&C through email discussions during November 15 to 20, 2007, for Buck to pursue the possibility of sharing the pastorate with Valley Mills and West Newton Friends. Angie Boss, the pastor of West Newton, resigned at the end of December.

*Bill Downall  
(presiding clerk)*

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**Hosts for the Plainfield/Mooresville and Decatur Township groups are needed.**

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## News from Western Yearly Meeting

- Western Yearly Meeting will be having its annual **Winter Retreat** on Saturday, Feb. 16, from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm. The deadline to register is February 1. There are registration forms in the office. The theme this year is “Healthy Congregations,” and it will be led by the Lombard Peace Center.
- The Quaker Men will have its annual **Groundhog Retreat** at Quaker Haven Camp on **Feb. 1-2**. It will begin with dinner on Friday evening and end with lunch on Saturday. The cost for 3 meals and overnight is \$46.85.

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**“If the only prayer you said in your whole life was, ‘Thank you,’ that would suffice.”**

**Meister Eckhart**

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## Mentoring Opportunity!

The **ESC** (Experience Serves the Community) **Programs of Junior Achievement** is teaming up with **MSD of Decatur Township** to provide a mentoring program at **Decatur Central High School**. They are hoping to recruit concerned business professionals and others active in the community who want to help make a difference in

the lives of students one child at a time. Training will be provided. A time commitment of two hours a month for at least a year is required. Please contact **Trecia Holloway** at [www.escindy.org](http://www.escindy.org) or **317.252.5900 ext. 402**.





# January 2008

## Valley Mills Friends Meeting

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
<b>6 W. Newton Friends Simple Meal 11:15 am</b>	7	8	<b>9 M &amp; C 7:00 pm</b>	10	11	12
<b>13 Monthly Mtg for Business Food donations for CC &amp; S</b>	14	15	16	17	18	19
20 <i>Ken Almon</i>	21 	<b>22 Valley Voice deadline</b>	23 <i>Laura Jay</i>	24 <i>Julie Downall</i>	25 <i>Chris Downall</i>	26 <i>Trevor Bunner</i>
27	28 <i>Jacquie Jay</i>	29	30	31		

### Child Care Schedule

- Jan. 6 - Miriam Bunner and Elizabeth Baker
- Jan. 13 - Mike McCormick and Chris Mills
- Jan. 20 - Kathleen Jay and Johnny Jay
- Jan. 27 - Nelson Jay and Emma Jay