



# Ruth's Reflexion

## Our CHRISTMAS ANGEL

By Lillian Sparks



In 1984 my husband, Stephen, and I were living in Rhode Island with our four children. We enjoyed full-time teaching positions on the staff of Zion Bible Institute, our Alma Mater. We felt a certain kinship about returning to New England. I was born in Hyannis, Mass., and Stephen was born in the potato farmlands of Caribou, Maine.

Classes had ended for the fall semester, and the 350 students joyously packed their belongings to rush home for the holidays. For the first time in four months we were enveloped with a welcome peacefulness. Forgetting the stacks of finals that had to be corrected, Stephen and I determined to spend some quality time with our children. Bryon, age 10, was put in charge of unwrapping and sorting all the handmade tree decorations. Leann and Jenell, ages 6 and 4, each donned one of Mommy's large aprons and helped to roll out, cut and decorate Christmas cookies. Brent, a bubbling 1-year-old, kept busy by licking doughy beaters and taking ornaments off the tree.

Part of the uniqueness of Zion was the "faith policy" that was instilled in the students and exemplified by the faculty. The faculty and staff did not receive a salary, but a small "sharing" after all the school bills had been paid. With our four children, that "sharing" was never enough. Yet, we knew that inside each child's heart was the longing for some of those "wished for" items under the tree. The children had presented us with personalized lists. That year we passed by aisles of toys, dolls, and athletic equipment, glancing at our list and checking the price tags. Disheartened, we chose a few small gifts within our budget.

On Sunday evening, December 23, at exactly 6 p.m., one hour before the candlelight service, we heard a diligent pounding on our front door. Caught in the middle of dressing, I ran down the hallway in my housecoat. I threw open the front door and a frozen gust of air blew into my face. It had been snowing heavily all afternoon. The wintry blanket covered the campus like a picture postcard.

The woman standing in front of me was warmly dressed in a wool coat and a scarf pulled over her gray hair. Her eyes sparkled and her gentle smile warmed my heart. In each gloved hand she held shopping bags filled with beautifully wrapped gifts. She inquired, "Do you know where the Sparks children live? Their names are Bryon, Leann, Jenell, and Brent." I swallowed hard with disbelief and replied, "Yes, well...they...I mean...they live right here!" "Wonderful!" she exclaimed. "These gifts are for your children!" Frozen with astonishment, I finally choked out, "Well, who are you? Who can we thank?" Shaking her head, she firmly replied, "No...that's not important. Look at a gift tag...this will tell you who to thank."

I picked up a gift and peeked at the card—"Love, from Jesus!" I trembled with excitement and begged her to wait while I ran to get my husband. He was shaving his face and wasn't anxious to go to the cold doorway. With some difficulty, I dragged a half-shaven, bare-chested man down the hall. He stepped in front of me and looked out into the cold. "Honey, there is no one here," he said.

As we stood together peering into the quiet night with the bags of gifts at the doorstep, we noticed that there were no footprints on the stairs or sidewalk...no tire tracks in the street. The snow lay untouched by human presence. A holy hush and divine wonder filled our hearts. Suddenly, we knew that we had been visited by a Christmas angel. I like to think it was one of the angels who announced the Savior's birth some 2,000 years before. I wished our visitor could have stayed and watched our youngsters on Christmas morning as they opened those packages and found the exact things they had wished for. Even now, years later, we fondly recall that Christmas. At times, when we have experienced a financial need, someone always reminds us that God will take care of us.

Lillian is a staff pastor at Faith Assembly in Uniontown, PA where her husband, Stephen is the lead pastor. She is the author of three books - *Tough Cookie*, *Parents Cry Too* and *Don't Cry for Me*. Lillian ministers in churches, at conferences and as a missionary evangelist. She is my big sister and I am so proud of her.



# Spring Celebrations 2009

## Delmarva

Date: March 21 - Saturday  
Place: Wilmington Christian School  
825 Loveville Road, Hockessin DE  
Speaker: Gwen Moulert  
Time: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
Meal: Salad and Sandwich Bar  
Price: \$14.00  
Contact: Pam Willis  
302.998.1555  
soblessedbyGod@msn.com

## East Central

Date: March 21 - Saturday  
Place: Morning Star Fellowship,  
Bechtelsville  
Speaker: Evelyn Klingler  
Time: 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM  
Meal: Brunch “Coffee with a  
Purpose” and Fashion Show  
Price: \$15.00  
Contact: Liz DeFrain  
610.369.1960  
liz@mstar.org

## North Central

Date: May 2 - Saturday  
Place: River of Life - Sunbury  
Speaker: Evelyn Klingler  
Time: 8:30 AM – 3:00 :M  
Meal: Lunch & Continental  
Breakfast  
Price: \$25 – includes meal  
Contact: Lily Bingaman  
570.286.5329  
armor.bearer1@yahoo.com

## North Central West

Date: March 28 - Saturday  
Place: Glad Tidings A/G, Clearfield  
Speaker: Cindy Aronson of  
Girlfriend Gatherings  
Time: 9:30 AM registration  
10:00 AM – 3:00 PM service  
Meal: Roast Beef dinner  
Price: \$20.00 includes meal  
Contact: Sandy Lanza  
814.723.5445  
Shepherd77@atlanticbb.net

## South Central West

Date: March 28 - Saturday  
Place: The Casino Restaurant of  
Altoona  
Speaker: Angela Coon  
Time: 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM  
Meal: Brunch  
Price: \$25.00  
Contact: Karen Maher  
814.942.1595  
Klmaher777@atlanticbb.net

## North East

Date: May 2 - Saturday  
Place: Berwick A/G, Berwick  
Worship – Stephanie Peters  
Speaker/Soloist: Damaris Carbaugh  
Time: 9:30 AM – 4:00 PM  
Meal: Catered Lunch  
Price: \$22.00 includes meal  
Contact: Kathy Rex  
570.752.5191  
snkrex@ptd.net

## South East

Date: March 28 - Saturday  
Place: Northeast Assembly,  
Philadelphia.  
Speaker: Dr. Deborah Brown  
Time: 10:00 AM – 1:30 PM  
Meal: Brunch  
Price: \$20.00  
Contact: Kirsten Torrado  
215.447.8442  
kirstentorradocomcast.net

## South Central

Date: May 16 - Saturday  
Place: Philip Bongiorno  
Conference Center  
Speaker: Marjie Tourville  
Time: 9:30 AM  
Meal: Breakfast  
Price: \$20.00 pre-reg.  
\$23.00 on site  
Contact: Annette Noel  
717.243.6947  
indianwantab@embarqmail.com

## North West

Date: April 25 - Saturday  
Place: First Assembly,  
New Castle  
Theme: Garden Tea Party  
Speaker: Angela Coon  
Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM  
Meal: Catered Lunch  
Price: \$25.00  
Contact: Gloria Critchfield  
814.774.9254  
Gloria1957@roadrunner.com

## South Central East

Date: April 25 - Saturday  
Place: Glad Tidings  
Middletown  
Speaker/Soloist: Dana Fields  
Time: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM  
Meal: TBA  
Price: \$20.00 plus meal  
Contact: Gloria Budzowski  
717.540.5912  
scwomenofpurpose@verizon.net

## South West Metro

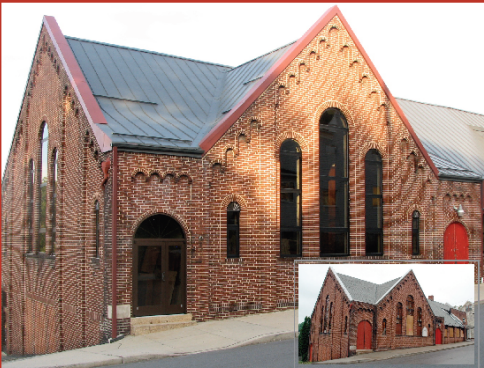
Date: April 25 - Saturday  
Place: Riverside Community  
Church at the Pittsburgh  
Mills Mall  
Speaker: Laverne Weber  
Time: 9:00 AM - 1:30 PM  
Lunch: Food Court available  
Price: \$20.00 (\$25 after April 16)  
Contact: Patti Carver  
724.845.7437  
pattiacarver@yahoo.com

## South West Suburban

Date: April 25 - Saturday  
Place: Christian Life Church  
Trafford  
Speaker: Sue Willis  
Time: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM  
Meal: Catered lunch  
Price: \$20.00 plus meal  
Contact: Robin Pugh  
412.896.5743 or  
412-759-7297  
rpughrn@mac.com

## Penn-DeI Women of Purpose 2009 US Mission Project THE 11TH STREET PROJECT

Ministering Kingdom Principles to City Issues *So there was great joy in the city. Acts 8:8*



The 11th Street Project is a church plant in the Lower Fairview section of Altoona, PA. Pleasant Valley Assembly of God has taken the task of restoring this former house of worship. With an estimated cost of \$1.9 million the project was a step of faith. The congregation of PVAAG committed to \$671,000.00 by November 9th, 2009. The 11th Street Project will be more than a church plant, as it will also be a multi-focused ministry center, designed to meet the needs of a distressed neighborhood. For more information contact:

Pleasant Valley Assembly of God 801 Pleasant Valley Blvd, Altoona, PA 16602.  
Phone: 814-944-1948 Email: info@pvag.org Websites: www.pvag.org



## THE 11TH STREET PROJECT

This inner-city, historic church building in Altoona is being renovated by the Pleasant Valley Assembly of God with the purpose of providing a place of worship, a state of the art computer lab for after-school programs and a place to feed the hungry and clothe the poor. Promo DVD's are available to show to your church or ministry group. For more information see [www.pvag.org](http://www.pvag.org).

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Kay Arthur



Kate Gosselin



Ladies shopping



Sue Dodge



Dana Fields



3,000 women worshipping



Ruth's welcome



Sue Duffield and her team



Dannah Gresh



Celebrating Ruth's 10 years as director

Café Book Club

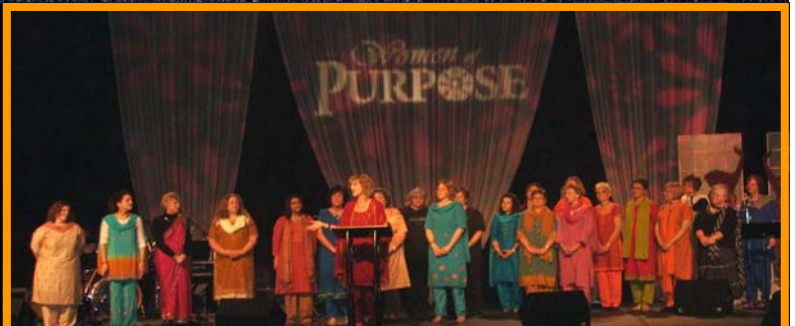
Book of the month:

The Shack

- \* read the whole book
- \* look for new insights
- \* share it with others
- \* let God speak to your heart
- \* allow the healing to come



It is deep  
 It is divine love  
 It is God revealed  
 It is a great book  
 It is life changing



India Project Offering

Our goal was \$20,000

YOU gave

\$28,000

Women of Purpose & Girls Ministries



Penn-Del District Council of the Assemblies of God

## Women of Purpose

112 E Northview Avenue  
New Castle, PA 16105-2123  
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Fax: 724-658-7625

Email: [pdwomenofpurpose@verizon.net](mailto:pdwomenofpurpose@verizon.net)  
[www.penndelwomenofpurpose.org](http://www.penndelwomenofpurpose.org)



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Save The Date  
Women of Purpose Conference

# November 13 & 14, 2009

## Happy Birthday

Kirsten Torrado, SE Rep - December 27

Ruth Puleo, Director - January 11

Liz Defrain, EC Rep - January 13

Annette Noel, SC Rep - February 27

*Merry Christmas and a  
Blessed New Year*

