



# Koinonia *focus*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER | THUMC | DECEMBER 2020

## SEASONS GREETINGS!

(We're never too mature to learn something new)

I was recently in a conversation that called for a little more research to explore a question regarding the season of Advent. Let me share the particular answer shortly while beginning with the basics. The season of Advent, which comes from the Latin word *adventus* meaning "coming" or "visit", begins four Sundays before Christmas and concludes on Christmas Eve. Advent marks the beginning of the church's Christian year and calendar.

During the season of Advent, we prepare for and look ahead to the coming of Christ. We also remember the desire of Jews for a Messiah and our own longing for and need of salvation, forgiveness and fresh starts. While looking back with celebration on the birth of our Lord and Savior in a humble stable in Bethlehem, we also are compelled to look forward. We can anticipate the second coming of Christ as the ultimate fulfillment of all that was foretold and promised by his first coming.

It is our custom to celebrate Christmas on a single day. If we look more closely into our Christian tradition and on the church calendar, we'll find the Christmas season really begins at sundown on Christmas Eve

and lasts through the Epiphany of the Lord on January 6th. Hence the term or reference to "the 12 days of Christmas."

Now to that question and conversation mentioned earlier. The color of Advent has traditionally been purple, a color associated with royalty. Some churches have now adopted Sarum Blue from the Medieval Sarum Rite at Salisbury Cathedral in England. **WHY?** Blue is the color most associated with Mary, the mother of Jesus. I was not aware of this origin.

Let me invite you once again to join us on the journey from Advent to Christmas to Epiphany in seeking to find the star that leads us to the manger in Bethlehem. COVID-19 has changed a lot of things this year. Let's celebrate that we can and will still sing songs of our faith and worship the newborn King!

Read Luke 2: 8-12 as if you are hearing it for the very first time. *O Come Let Us Adore Him*

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, Pastor Ken

## Church Events

- **Dec. 6th - UMW Unit Meeting (following 11am service)**
- **Dec 6th - Baby Shower for Caroline Reed 2-4pm**
- **Dec 10th - Teen Challenge Banquet**
- **Dec 13th - Christmas Cards due for hospitalized veterans**
- **Dec 24th - Christmas Eve services at 4pm, 7pm and 9pm.**

## GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME!!

What a gorgeous day today! The sun is shining, the air is cool, there is a light breeze blowing and I can see the river from where I sit. I can't think of a more enjoyable place to be. As the pleasure of the moment fills my heart, I am reminded that God's presence is everywhere through the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is the moving power of the living Christ - right now today. Not just in the Old Testament, not just in the New Testament, but here and now. We know that is true, through faith.

"Faith is the unshakable belief that you are loved and that you will realize all your expectations. It is not just a possibility, but a certainty. Faith operative through love must be identical with, or involve, the keeping of the commandments of God. Faith works by love. It is energized by love. Faith is put in motion by love. The purpose of faith is to lead us to know the heart of God." (*Excerpt from Crosswalk.com re faith*).

In 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:13 Paul tells us, *"Three things will last forever: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of these is love."* Love is overpowering, all-consuming, empowering and it lives in each of us through the gift of Christ Jesus and the grace of God. We have faith in God's plans for us and for the world around us. We start by making the decision to trust in God, to believe that He loves us. We proceed by building a relationship with God through prayer and Bible study. We continue by following the principles outlined in the Bible. As we learn, we take time to pause and pray. We review our past efforts in our talks with Him and we strengthen our faith in our goal, which is to know the heart of God.

We experience the love of God daily through the gift of His grace, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the companionship of the Holy Spirit. Love is magnified by our trust in the Trinity. Through that trust, we bolster our faith in God and in His concern for our wellbeing.

So, I can enjoy my beautiful day despite Covid-19, despite political wrangling, despite hurricanes, despite a decreased income, despite loss of close family contact. Because with faith, I know that I am loved by God and that He has sent: First, Christ to take my sins and send them beyond recovery; Second, the Holy Spirit to be with me wherever I am; Third, the richness of the Bible which presents expert testimony by those who have lived by faith in biblical history. Faith keeps me grounded in God's universe, regardless of the circumstances of my earthly life because I know that the heart of God is boundless, unquenchable love.

God is good all the time! All the time, God is good!!

BY Sandy Kelly



## Reverse Advent Calendar

In the days leading up to Christmas, draw closer to the Lord by reading a chapter of Luke each day and love your neighbors by adding the suggested food item to a gift box. Bring the filled box to Church on December 27th as a donation to Farm Share.

December 1 -	Read Luke 1	Canned Stew
December 2 -	Read Luke 2	Jar of Peanut Butter
December 3 -	Read Luke 3	Canned Meat
December 4 -	Read Luke 4	Package of Elbow Macaroni
December 5 -	Read Luke 5	Macaroni and Cheese
December 6 -	Read Luke 6	Canned Fruit
December 7 -	Read Luke 7	Canned Pasta - (Chef Boyardee)
December 8 -	Read Luke 8	Canned Tuna
December 9 -	Read Luke 9	Bag of Beans
December 10 -	Read Luke 10	Jar of Applesauce
December 11 -	Read Luke 11	Canned Sweet Potatoes
December 12 -	Read Luke 12	Canned Vegetables
December 13 -	Read Luke 13	Can Bake Beans
December 14 -	Read Luke 14	Canned Meat
December 15 -	Read Luke 15	Package of Rice
December 16 -	Read Luke 16	Package of Oatmeal
December 17 -	Read Luke 17	Package of Pasta
December 18 -	Read Luke 18	Spaghetti Sauce
December 19 -	Read Luke 19	Chicken Noodle Soup
December 20 -	Read Luke 20	Tomato Soup
December 21 -	Read Luke 21	Can of Corn
December 22 -	Read Luke 22	Canned Meat
December 23 -	Read Luke 23	Jelly
December 24 -	Read Luke 24	Can of Green Beans





# TO MY SECOND CHURCH FAMILY

It is hard to believe that I have been working at THUMC for four years now. Time truly does go faster as we get older!

My husband and I are retiring at the end of this month and I wanted to take this opportunity to say goodbye and to say thanks to so many of you.

Our two youngest were entering 9th grade at Christ Classical the year I started working here. Pastor Ken, Cindy, and many others, politely listened to the normal teenage struggles and challenges. **Thanks** to all for listening.

To those who filled in for me while I was out and about - I **appreciate** you sharing your time.

To the faithful Farm Share volunteers - you are the hands and feet of Jesus, even when you don't hear "thank you". Your **reward** is waiting for you...

To the kitchen angels - That really is an appropriate name for your ministry. Your hard work in that kitchen is obviously an **act of love**.

To the Monday morning prayer warriors - Each week I feel your commitment to our Lord and to others. What a **difference** you

have made and continue to make in so many lives.

To the pumpkin patch "faithfuls" - Whenever I call an individual or company and try to identify the church, more times than not they reply "Oh - the pumpkin church". You have made a name for the church in this community; and through your **hard work** have blessed the clients of so many worthy non profits. Your work creates waves that continue to bless in the name of the Lord.

To the Operation Christmas Child team - Your year round devotion to this program places **Jesus's name and message** in every corner of this world. How many programs can say that!

Most of us understand how wonderful it is to be an integral part of a loving and supportive church family. I feel doubly blessed to have been a part of two churches for the past 4 years.

Thanks for allowing me to, not just work here, but to share in your joyful times as well as your sad ones.

Your sister in Christ, Marta



# HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO

# HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO

Stephanie McAllister	1st
Olivia Lashley	2nd
Elaine Barrow	3rd
Debbie Keeling	4th
Rebecca Stuimbaugh	4th
Kay Kelly	6th
Don Bizzell	8th
Jack Adkins	9th
Lily Forsman	10th
Alyssa McKinnon	10th
Zach McAllister	12th
Noah McKinnon III	13th
Kay Szigeti	14th
Clint Milner	14th
Daniel Warren	16th
Bobbie Prine	20th
Carol Lee Billups	22nd
Phillip Harman	24th
Sabrina Ballew	26th
Diana Mason	27th
Maurice Watson	29th
Ken Hamilton	29th
Alyssa Ledon	29th
Mallory Jackson	30th

Noah & Debbie McKinnon	3rd
Russell & Amy Clark	6th
Dennis & Kaye Nye	30th