

First United Presbyterian Church

The Alliance PRES

December 2014

Pastor's Letter

The Christmas Season

The Christmas Season of Advent takes us to the day of Christmas. As it leads us forward we go through remembering that at one time the people of the world looked forward to seeing the Savior. Some people do not know why they would look forward to seeing Jesus when he already came? But these people would also be people who on anniversaries remember what it was like before they met their spouse or close friend! They rejoice and remember that until they met this friend they didn't know the need they had in their heart for their friend's presence.

In the season of Advent we remember what life was like before Jesus came into our lives. We recall the hunger that Jesus filled in our lives. We remember the need that we felt in our lives when we had no one that we could turn to and no place to go for help.

In the songs and scriptures of the Jewish people we understand their desire to find God and to know what God would do in their lives. We hear this in the traditional song "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel." In this single line we hear the mournful request of God who is with the people to ransom and save them. Sometimes we do not know what we have been missing until we find that person or truth that opens up all of our lives.

If we take this real journey that remembers what it was like before Jesus came into our lives we will even more celebrate this Christmas Day. We will joyously sing of the babe that came to earth to die for our sins. The babe that came to do die did this before we ever knew about him. God did this before we ever knew about God. This great gift is given with love and understanding that that we cannot do this for ourselves.

So join us these Sundays in December in the season of Advent and remember how we missed our Lord before we ever found him. And then join us as we celebrate on Christmas Eve the joy that is ours because Jesus was sent to us!

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How to Keep Christ in Christmas This Year

A Note From : Ann Melick



We all notice. We all wish it was different. We all know it's a problem. The way we celebrate the holidays makes it hard to find Christ in Christmas. So, let's do something about it. Let's make some choices this year to truly experience Advent and *Christmas*. Here are some ways I hope to keep my focus on Christ this year:

1. Read your Bible. The Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John each tell about Jesus Christ coming to live among us. Just start at the beginning of the book.
2. Pray. Pray for each person you buy gifts for or receive gifts from. Pray for everyone you send a card to or receive a card from. Be silent and listen for God's voice.
3. Prioritize the traditions. In order to have more peace in your life, keep it simple. Prioritize which traditions are most meaningful and do those.
4. Remind yourself and your children that we give gifts because God the Father gave us the gift of his son, Jesus. Even writing something on your gift tags about Jesus will help keep the focus.
5. Have a weekly family devotion time. Look online for ideas for advent wreaths. Let me know if you need ideas! If you live alone, invite someone to join you or make it special for yourself by lighting a candle.
6. Do something that inspires you: go to a concert or show, hike and observe God's creation, create something, help someone less fortunate.
7. Forgive and seek forgiveness. Resolve your broken relationships as much as you are able and forgive those who won't reconcile with you. Do it in the name of Christ.





Join us on Christmas Eve at 11 pm for our Tenebrae service. This is the service that adults and children enjoy so much. It is filled with classic hymns and beautiful liturgy. And as we gather with family and friends in song we feel the warmth of God through our church family. Not warmth that is based on any heating system but is grounded in the presence of Christ, our Lord.

So come and sing and if you cannot sing come and let the songs of the congregation have your heart sing. Let your heart sing to God.



You can make a difference for a family this Christmas. You can do this by donating to the Christmas dinner that the church will have this Christmas. Volunteer to serve those who will come to the church to have a Christmas dinner or deliver meals or help with the clean up or donate to the meal. Green beans, sweet potatoes and donations of money can really make a difference. So be part of the blessing that God would give to those who need a real blessing. We can be God's hands this holiday.



Thank you all for the "90" Birthday Card. I'm still trying to connect names. So Thoughtful.

Bill & Kathy Saltsman





Dear Friends,

I hope that you and yours are feeling well, and that you are blessed with Jesus Christ who is a comfort in every situation.

I am writing to you to invite you to an initial meeting of my Christian Discipleship program. In this program we will learn to walk closer with Jesus Christ and to love this life that we have been given. This is accomplished by the work of the Holy Spirit in our study of Scripture and biblical patterns of faithfulness.

I truly believe that anyone can understand the scriptures. I also believe that the scriptures were not given to us so that we may study them for their knowledge. I believe that we are to study them so that the scriptures can master us rather than for us to master them. This process takes time but is worth it.

I would like you to come to this meeting to learn more and to begin this journey. Please pray about this and please respond with a week. The first meeting will be Saturday December 13th, 9-10 am.

God be with You!

James K. McCurdy

James K. McCurdy

The value of all biblical study is in how much we know but in how we live. –John Calvin-

MINI SPIRITUAL RETREAT

On Thursday, December 4 from 10am until noon, join us for a mini spiritual retreat. We will meet in the Sanctuary at 10:00 where you will receive materials to guide you through a time of prayer and reflection. For more information, contact Annie Melick.





INVITE SOME FRIENDS TO COME TO FX!

On Sunday, December 7 at 1:00 we will host our second Family Experience (FX) for families with children. The event is a variety show format with music, videos, drama, audience participation games, and more! The theme is Jingle Jam. This is our biggest outreach event for the year, so think about a family with children that you can invite!

For our church family, if you plan to stay for the show, there will be soup and sandwiches for lunch. The show is in Eastminster Hall.

For participants, the final dress rehearsal is Saturday, December 6 at 10:00am.

YOUTH GROUP

December 7	5-7pm	Christmas Shopping at Walmart for Adopt a Child
December 14	5-7pm	Christmas Caroling
December 21	5-7pm	Christmas Party

SUNDAY SCHOOL

December 2014 TEACHER SCHEDULE

	Elementary	Middle School	High School	Pathfinders
Dec. 7	Kelly/Jen/Amy	Sarah	Sandy	Annie
Dec. 14	Bob/Matt/Carmen	Annie	Jim	Gina
Dec. 21	Denise/Shar/Beth	Amy	Matt	Annie
Dec. 28	Christmas break – no Sunday School	-----	-----	-----



December 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3 Session Meeting 7pm	4	5 Office Closed	6
7 9 Sunday school 10:15 Worship/ Communion 1pm FX Show 5-7 Youth Group	8 7pm Girls Night Out	9 4pm Kids Club & Kids Choir	10	11 7pm Yoga 7pm Choir	12 Office Closed	13
14 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship *Congr. Meeting 5-7 Youth Group	15 7pm Girls Night Out	16 4pm Kids Club & Kids Choir	17 Session Meeting at McCurdy House 7pm	18 7pm Yoga 7pm Choir	19 Office Closed	20
21 9 Sunday School 10:15 Worship 5-7 Youth Group	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Worship Service *Office closes at noon	25 Christmas Dinner	26 Office Closed	27
28 10:15 Worship	29	30	31 New Year's Eve *Office closes at noon	Office closed New Years Day		

**Happy
Birthday!**



December Birthdays

12/03 Judy Kosiba	12/15 Noel Hughes
12/05 Mary Ellen Lipely	12/18 Jason McNutt
12/05 Debbie Maxwell	12/19 Dan McCurdy
12/06 Heidi Heuer	12/20 Margaret Ament
12/07 John Clark	12/20 Mark Brown
12/08 Nick Streza	12/21 Joanne Leeman
12/08 Sue Berlin	12/22 Louise Brown
12/11 Ruth Jones	12/24 Shelby Wittway
12/12 Anna Brady	12/29 Barb Blake
12/14 Joe Grabiell	

Christmas Dinner

Volunteers Needed!

Below are ways you can help with Christmas Dinner.

Please Check the items you would be willing to help with and return this form to the church office or put in the collection plate on Sunday morning.

_____ Make a dessert Pies, cakes, desserts, cookies. Please place in South Hall

by 9:30am on Christmas Day.

_____ Deliver meals Be at church by 10:00am

_____ Pick up guests Report to church office at 10:30am for your assignments

_____ Serve food Report to kitchen at 10:00am

_____ Cut & Serve Desserts Report at 10:00am

_____ Work in kitchen Hours are from 9:00am-1:00pm

_____ Greeters Hours are from 10:00am-12:30pm

_____ Clean Up Starting at 12:30pm

_____ Donate money for one ham

_____ Enclosed is \$ _____ to help with general expenses.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Poinsettia Order Form 2014

Poinsettias for Christmas will be on sale

Sunday mornings at a cost of \$8.50.

The deadline for placing an order is Monday morning, December 15th.

You may order poinsettias on the following Sunday mornings: November 30th, December 7th and December 14th. If you prefer, you may complete this form and return it **with payment** to the church office. The flowers will decorate the sanctuary for our Christmas services. **Please indicate whether you will be taking your poinsettia or donating it to a Christmas dinner guest.**

Given in memory of

Or Given in honor of

Flowers are given by

Will pick up on Christmas Eve _____

Give to dinner guest _____



Merry Christmas

From

The Staff at First United
Presbyterian Church

Rev. Dr. James McCurdy

Annie Melick

Amy Maxwell

Melissa Brand

Kelly Douglas

John Reeder

Pam Reeder

Linda Moulin

Amber Drake

Brian Whitaker

Church Office Hours: Monday– Thursday 9:00– 2:00 (330)821-5340