



mahomet ✦ united ✦ methodist ✦ church

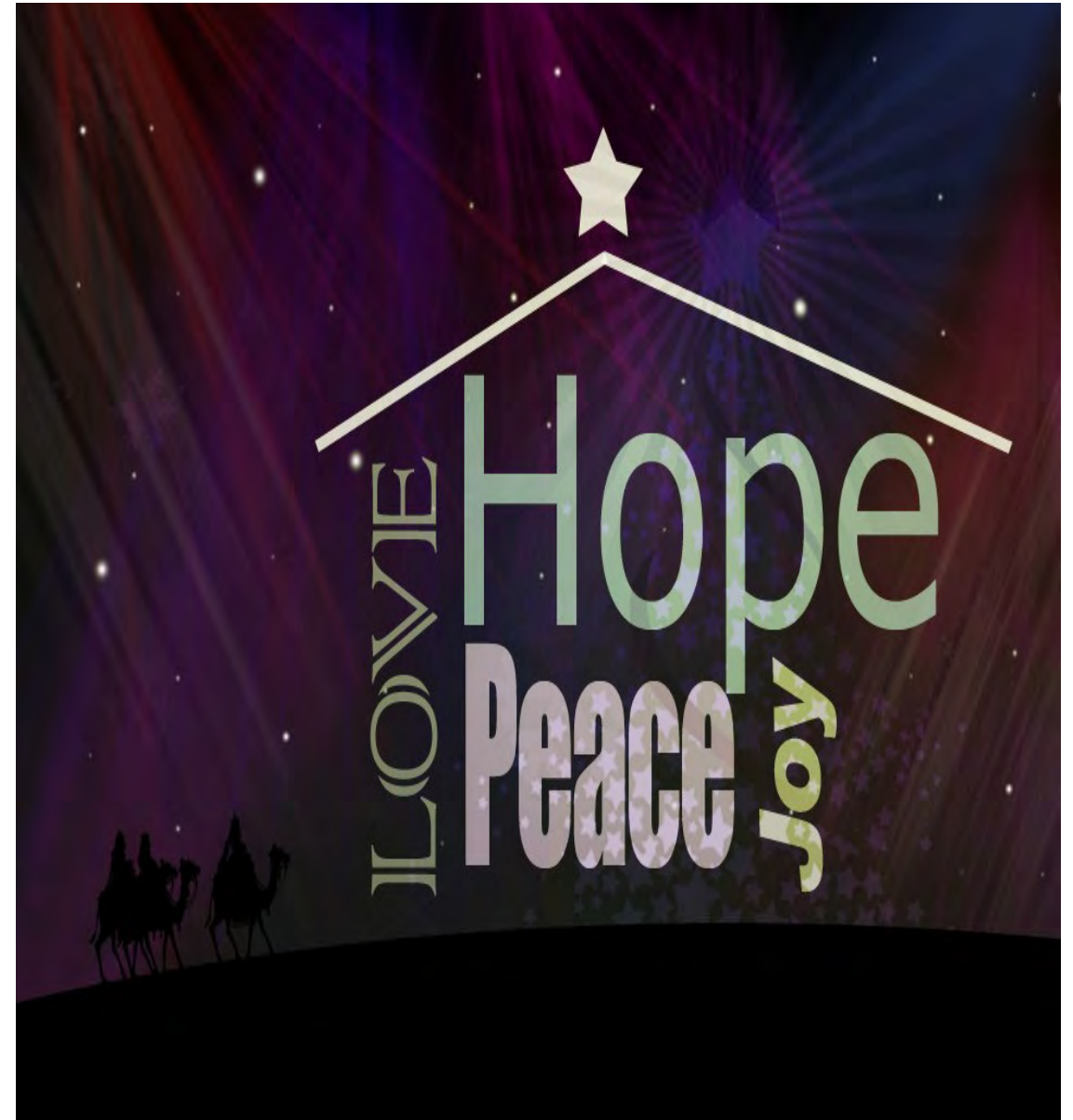
Our Mission: To lead people to Jesus and help them grow as disciples



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## *Our 2020 Advent Devotional*



Sunday, November 29

From Stabler Family

### Take Time to be Aware

"Take time to be aware that in the very midst of our busy preparations for the celebration of Christ's birth in ancient Bethlehem, Christ is reborn in the Bethlehems of our homes and daily lives. Take time, slow down, be still, be awake to the Divine Mystery that looks so common and so ordinary yet is wondrously present." Edward Hays, A Pilgrim's Almanac p. 196

### THE TRADITION OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The Advent wreath has been a part of the Christmas tradition since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Its circle represents the eternal love of God; the four candles, each lit in succession, anticipate the glorious feast of Christmas...the birth of the Lord of Light, the Christ child.

On the first Sunday of Advent, the first purple candle is lit. Purple is a royal color and the liturgical color symbolizing humility and reflection...for Advent is a quiet time of waiting. This candle is considered the prophecy candle, or the candle of *hope*.

On the second Sunday of Advent, the second purple candle is lit and represents *peace* on the path to Christmas.

On the third Sunday of Advent, the pink candle is lit as a symbol of *joy* and happiness as we move closer to the Christmas.

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, the third purple candle is lit as a symbol of *love*.

Finally, we light the center white candle - the Christ candle on Christmas Eve as we celebrate the long-awaited birth of Christ.







Our 2020 Advent Devotional is designed to be used by individuals, family, or friends as part of our offerings of praise and prayer as we each prepare for God with us in Jesus this new year. This booklet contains

readings, written or shared for our Advent preparations for Christmas by people in our Mahomet United Methodist Church family.

May Jesus come into your life and living all over again or for the very first time this Christmas.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Lori



***King James, Luke chapter 1: 26-35***

**This is where Mary is visited by the angel Gabriel. “Do not be afraid. You have found favor with God. You shall conceive and bring forth a son and call his name Jesus. When she asked, how can this be? Gabriel says the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall over shadow thee, and the Holy thing born to thee shall be called the Son of God.”**

Wow! I think of this teen age girl who surely was overcome with this news. Yet she was accepting of what lie ahead and pondered it. I would hope and pray that I could accept what God lays on my heart and conscience. As a woman and mother, I can relate to the joy and responsibility of having and raising a child. Let us be like Mary and accept what God plans for us.

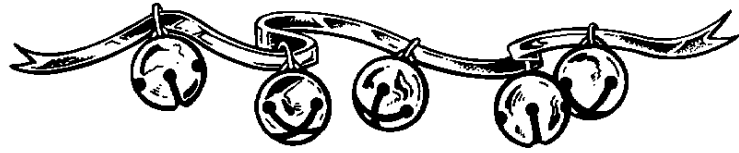
**Let us pray: Oh God, grant us courage to accept your plan for us. May the Holy Spirit equip us to carry out Gods plan for us. Then with acceptance and with the help of the Holy Spirit, we surely will experience great joy. Amen**

Carol Bunting



Tuesday, December 1

From Stabler Family



**Mark 1:1-3 NRSV**

**1 The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.**

**2 As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,**

**“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way;**

**3 the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:**

**‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight,’”**

It was December 24, 1983 and the snow and wind were not letting up. It had been snowy all week and now the temperatures were below zero. All the Christmas Eve services were cancelled and worse yet many highways and interstates were closed. I desperately wanted to get to my mom’s home an hour away as it was my first Christmas without my dad. After much discussion between my brother, Terry and I we decided we would load up the car with kids, gifts, blankets and suitcases and follow one another through the snow packed roads and subzero weather. Slowly we made our way toward my mom’s house, but seven miles from home we were faced with the highway blockaded and unpassable. Tears began forming as I felt helpless thinking we’d have to turn back when we were so close yet so far away. I said a little prayer asking God to help us find the right path. My brother who was leading the way told us he knew of some country roads that might be open. So he began leading the way through back roads and we finally arrived all in one piece ready to celebrate Christmas.

**God of hope, we thank you for helping us find the right path and for giving us hope when none seems possible. Your guidance gives us peace of mind and our love for you is forever. As we prepare for this season we thank you for the gift of your son. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.**

Cindy Dodd



Friday, December 25, Christmas Day

**Deck the Halls**

**Isaiah 9:2 “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.”**

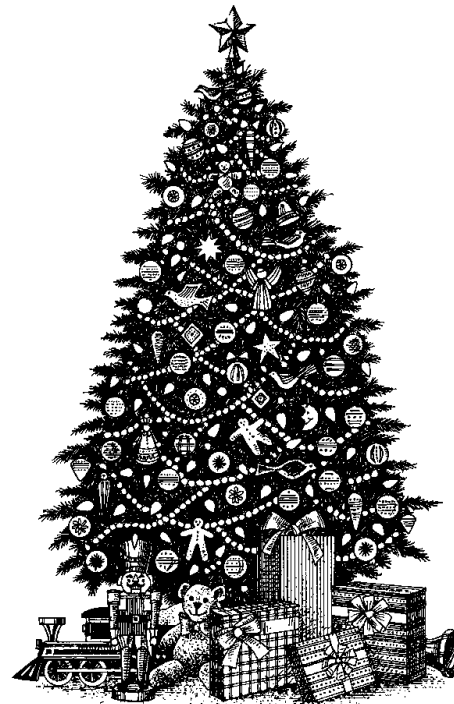
We decorate our houses for Christmas with lights outside to brighten the darkness from our shorter days. Some people put up a tree with lights that blink on and off. I remember one season my mother had a silver tree and there was a rotating light that shined on it. Lights of red, blue, and green in turn sparkled on the foil shaped tree.

On Christmas Eve, I look forward to the end of the worship service when we turn off the overhead lights and every person lights a candle. We lift these lit candles as we sing Silent Night. From the front, where I stand, it is so glorious to see people joyfully singing, the soft candle light and the knowledge that Christ is the light for our lives.

We may be celebrating Christmas in a different way this year. The lights on our house or Christmas tree may still be up but our gatherings will be smaller. The worlds' darkness may be hard to cast out. However, we will continue to share Christ who came into our world and continues to come into our lives to cast out darkness. I am the light of the world, Jesus said then said, You are the light of the world. (Matthew 5:14) So beyond our Christmas celebrations, share the light of Christ with all people.

**God of the Light, may we reflect you into our world. Thank you for your Son, Jesus. Thank you for our celebrations. When we see Christmas lights, may we be reminded of your love for us. Amen.**

Rev. Lori



Wednesday, December 2

**Go, eat your food with gladness and drink your wine with a joyful heart.  
Ecclesiastes 9:7**

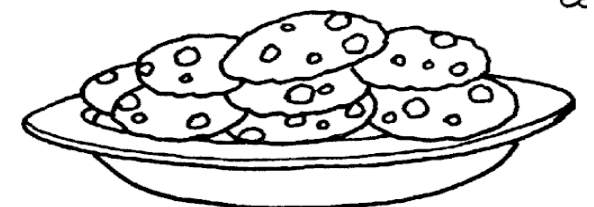
As I prepare for the coming holiday season, I'll spend one afternoon with my cookbooks and baking folders, planning the cookies and candies that I'll make. (I think that this is my husband Gary's happiest time of the year as well!) In a good year, I'll bake five to ten different types of cookies and two or three types of candies, often tripling or quadrupling the recipe. I have already bought most of the ingredients in advance.

It can turn into a major undertaking. Why take on such a huge task at one of the busiest times of the year? I do this because I love the response of the people I share the cookies with. They are genuinely happy to be remembered during these 'Holy Days'. I gift the neighbors, make plates of cookies to take up north to my parent's home now that it's getting difficult for them to make their own cookies. (My brothers and I all bring cookies so that they will have desserts to offer when their friends come over.) We take them along when we are invited to parties.

A gift of a cookie plate is essentially a gift of yourself, and a way to tell the people around you that you care about them, and want them to be happy. In a small way, it's like how Jesus loves us and wants us to know that we are cared about, and that he wants us to be happy. That's why he came into our world. Christmas Blessings!

**Dearest Lord God,  
Thank you for loving us and caring for us. Thank you for wanting the best for us; including our happiness. Thank you for sending us the Baby Jesus, to remind us, and save us from our sins.  
Amen**

Joan Kling



Thursday, December 3

Matthew 7:11-12

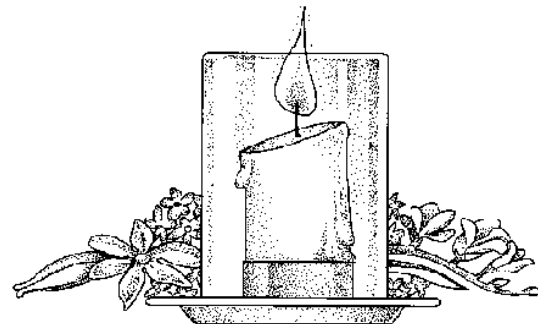
"If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the Father in Heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him. So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the law and the Prophets."

Our God is more loving and generous than we can humanly imagine. He cares for us, comforts us and shows us mercy. He desires us to have a relationship with Him through prayer.

Matthew 7:12 is often referred to as The Golden Rule... In these anxious and trying times, and with the coming of Christmas, we need to reach out to those around us with love & kindness, with our words and our actions. Who will you reach out to this holiday season?

Heavenly Father,  
We know you are a kind & loving God! We praise you for the blessings you have granted us, and we ask you to remind us to treat others around us with respect & kindness, just as we would like to be treated. Let the goodness of Jesus shine through us every day!

Amen Stacy Schroeder



Thursday, December 24, Christmas Eve

**"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10-11 KJV**

My favorite Christmas memory growing up is of my family attending and participating in the Sunday School Christmas Eve program each year at our church located only about half a mile from the farm where I grew up. I still remember the beauty of the church lights shining through the stained-glass windows as we drove up the hill to the church, especially when the ground was covered with snow. The traditional program was presented by Sunday School students of all ages, including adults. Sunday afternoons in December were reserved for rehearsals for the program. Children memorized and gave recitations, and soloists and groups sang. The Christmas story in the Bible was read and the living nativity was presented with shepherds and wise men entering down the aisle. Christmas hymns were sung by the congregation accompanied by the music of the beautiful pipe organ. That was how my family always began our celebration of Christmas on Christmas Eve. I chose the King James version for our scripture because those are the familiar words I heard each year as the Christmas story was read at our church Christmas program.

After the program, Santa would arrive at the church to give each of the Sunday School students a bag filled with peanuts, an orange, and some candy. Candy was sometimes limited because some of those years were during World War II when sugar was rationed.

My family, sometimes joined by Grandparents, would then return home and continue our family celebration of Christmas.

**Prayer: Our Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of your Son to us. May we always remember your gift of Jesus as the reason we celebrate Christmas each year. Help us to share your love and the joy of Christmas with others. Amen**

Carolyn Scott



Wednesday, December 23

Friday, December 4

**Percy Grainger - "The Sussex Mummers' Christmas Carol"**

*O mortal man, remember well  
When Christ our Lord was born;  
He was crucified betwixt two thieves,  
And crownèd with the thorn.*

*O mortal man, remember well  
When Christ died on the rood;  
It was for we and our wickedness  
Christ shed His precious blood.*

*God bless the mistress of this house  
With a gold chain round her breast;  
It's whether she sleeps, or whether she wakes,  
Lord send her soul to rest.*

*God bless the master of this house  
With happiness beside;  
It's whether he walks, or whether he rides,  
Lord Jesus be his guide.*

*God bless your house, your children too,  
Your cattle and your store;  
The Lord increase you day by day,  
And send you more and more.*



*We encourage you to  
listen to this on line.  
It is a favorite of  
ours. Kathy and  
Terry Roush*

*For me Christmas is about love, trust, and forgiveness.*

**13 "How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding.  
14 For its profit is better than the profit of silver, and the gain than fine gold. "**

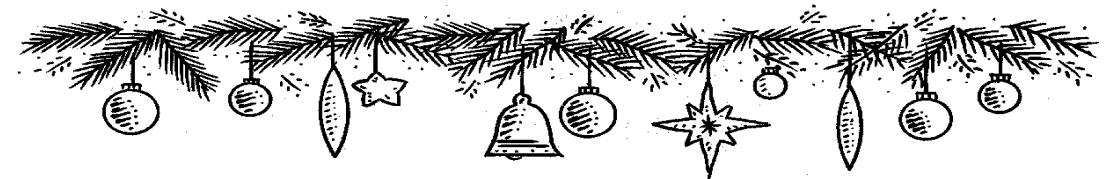
**Proverbs 3:13-14 New American Standard Translation**

When I was sixteen, I worked after school doing janitorial work at the school. I became friends with the young man who was the janitor. He had a .22 caliber rifle, and we went rabbit hunting together sometimes. He told me to take the rifle home with me so I could hunt at times when he was too busy. One day I was on our closed-in back porch trying to imitate the cowboys I had seen in movies. I had emptied the tubular magazine and then would cock the rifle, bring it up to my shoulder and aim at a coat hook on the opposite wall and pull the trigger. After a half dozen times of that, to my surprise a bullet had lodged in the magazine and then came loose and the rifle fired. (The bullet hit the coat hook, by the way). I had to go into the house and explain to my Mom what happened. I was *strongly encouraged* to return the rifle to my friend.

I guess my parents saw that I had found some wisdom and gained some understanding about not doing foolish things, because at Christmas I received a new .22 caliber rifle. That showed me that my parents loved me and trusted that I had learned a lesson.

**Prayer: Thank you God for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us to love, and family who love us enough to forgive us when we make mistakes. Give us the wisdom to forgive others and not judge them for the things they do. In Jesus' name, Amen**

Wiley Scott



Saturday, December 5

Tuesday, December 22

“Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simon who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not die before he had seen the Lord Christ. Moved by the spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the law required, Simon took him in his arms and praised God saying: Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation.”

--Luke 2:25-30 NIV

We get ready for Christmas by sharing with others - Toys for Tots, goodie trays for many, Cunningham Children's Home, St. Jude and more. We gather as a family on Christmas Eve for Church, Christmas Dinner and gift exchange.

It is the most joyous time of the year!

**Prayer: Thank you, God, for everything you have given us. This Advent season and all year long, help us pass on to the people who need it most some of what you have given us. Amen**

Gary Dalton



Thank You

Doctors, Nurses, Other Medical Professionals, Ambulance Drivers, Fire Fighters, Police Officers, Teachers and School Administrators, Grocery and Other Retail Workers, Truck Drivers, Tradesmen, Restaurant Workers, Generous Neighbors, Charity Workers, Sanitation Workers, Clergy, Postal Workers, Delivery Drivers, Warehouse Workers, and all the other '**ESSENTIAL**' workers not listed here.





Monday, December 21

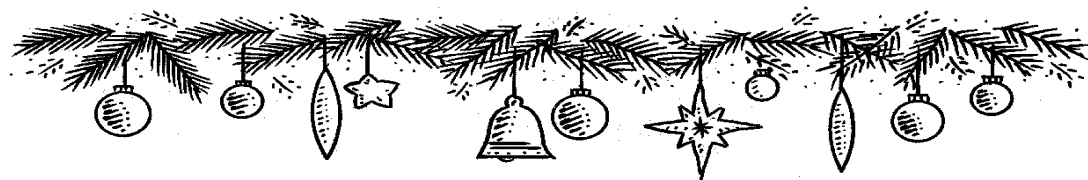
**The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Psalm 27 : 1 NIV**

2020 has been a very rough year for many around the world. I'm thinking of the pandemic and all of the far reaching effects it has had — loss of loved ones, loss of income, loss of companionship. In times of fear, Psalm 27 reminds us from where our strength comes.

**What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Romans 8:31 NIV**

Today please pray for all people affected directly or indirectly by COVID 19.

Terry and Kathy Roush



Sunday, December 6

**“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”**

**-- Colossians 3:12-14 NIV**

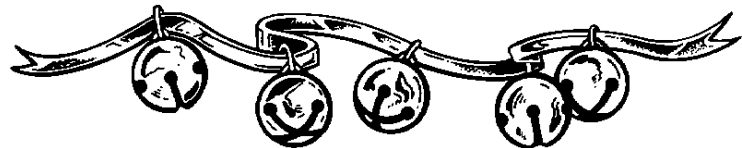
At our house we get ready for Christmas by having our kids and their spouses over to our home for a nice Christmas Eve dinner. Sometimes they bring food to share. We have a nice grace said by daughter Karen, eat and cleanup. Then we exchange gifts. This usually takes a few hours and then we end the night by all going to church to bring in Christmas.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we thank you with all our hearts for making us your family. Thank you for watching over us and blessing us. Amen

Rae Dalton



Monday, December 7



We would like to share with you a devotional written by Pastor Joy Caschetta in 2006 that still speaks to us:

“The Season of Advent means there is something on the horizon the likes of which we have never seen before... What is possible is to not see it, to miss it, to turn just as it brushes past you. And you begin to grasp what it was you missed, like Moses in the cleft of the rock, watching God’s [back] fade in the distance. So stay. Sit. Linger. Tarry. Ponder.. Wait. Behold. Wonder. There will be time enough for running, for rushing, for worrying, for pushing. For now, stay, wait. Something is on the horizon”.

Terry & Kathy Roush



Sunday, December 20

Luke 2: 8-12

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

One of the Christmas carols found in the Methodist Hymnal is “*There’s a Song in the Air*”. You may not be familiar with this song but it is one of my favorites. It was a poem written by Josiah Holland, an American poet and novelist, in 1874 for a Sunday School Journal. The poem was set to music by Karl P. Harrington in 1904 and was added to the Methodist Hymnal in 1905. I would like to share the first and last verse of the song with you.

*There’s a song in the air! There’s a star in the sky!  
There’s a mother’s deep prayer and a baby’s low cry!  
And the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,  
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a King!*



*We rejoice in the light , and we echo the song  
That comes down through the night from the heavenly throng.  
Ay! We shout to the lovely evangel they bring,  
And we greet in His cradle our Savior and King!*

I hope you will take time to read the other 2 verses of this song in the hymnal or look it up on line. Share the good news and have a joyful and blessed Christmas

Janet Thompson

Saturday, December 19

Tuesday, December 8

### The Innkeeper

Luke 2: 1-7

**“And she gave birth to her first-born son; and she wrapped Him cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn”.**

I chose this scripture because it speaks about the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem and how Joseph pleaded with the innkeeper for a place to stay the night in the busy city.

The first year our son was teaching at Neoga High School, the Christmas music program included the song *Innkeeper* by Roger Emerson. The words to the song reflect how Joseph felt as he pleaded for the innkeeper to make room for them. I was in tears when the song ended as I felt the urgency of the young couple conveyed in the sweet voices of the students. I want to share the lyrics with you and perhaps you can look up the song on the internet – there are several examples.

The last verse says we are *all* innkeepers and asks simply -- will we make room in our hearts for the Christ Child? Blessings to you and yours as we journey through Advent and to Bethlehem. Please take with you on your travels the lyrics to Roger Emerson’s *Innkeeper*:

Kathy Roush



*Oh Mary, I know you're tired  
But there's no room at the Inn  
Oh Mary, I'll try once more  
Maybe he'll fit us in*

*Innkeeper, Innkeeper, do you have room?  
For my wife with child?  
Innkeeper, Innkeeper, can you make room?  
For the meek and mild?*

*Oh Mary, sorry is he  
There is no room today  
Oh Mary, I'll try once more  
You wait behind and pray*

*Innkeeper, Innkeeper, please don't say no  
We've traveled far you see  
Innkeeper, Innkeeper, how could you know  
A King He's destined to be*

*Innkeeper, Innkeeper, what's that you say?  
“A stable lined with straw”  
Innkeeper, Innkeeper, where will He lay?  
With friendly beast in awe!*

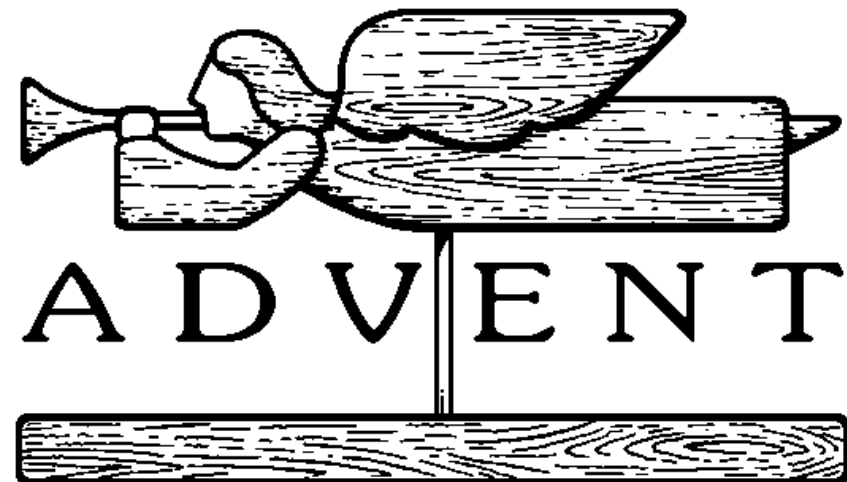
*Innkeepers, Innkeepers, Innkeepers all,  
Do you have room for the child?  
Innkeepers, Innkeepers, won't you make room?  
For the Holy Child?*

*Innkeepers, Innkeepers, Innkeepers all  
Do you have room for the child?*



Question: Christmas can so often be about ‘me’ – even if we’re doing lots of things for other people, it’s sometimes about creating the Christmas I want. What can you do today that shows real love for those around you?

Fun Fact: The original Saint Nicholas lived in the 4th century. He inherited great wealth, but gave it all away. Eventually he became bishop in the town of Myra and one day he learned of a family so poor that they were going to have to sell their three daughters into slavery. Saint Nick took bags of gold from the church offerings and slipped them in the family’s window when no one was looking. That’s a much better story than reindeer and chimneys.



Wednesday, December 9

The true meaning of Christmas is Love which is simply put from the words spoken in **John 3:16-17** says,

**"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."**



This includes the love of all things Christmas - the holiday cookies, the lights, the Christmas carols, the family gatherings, the time spent with friends, and the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. This is my favorite time of the year! Growing up, I remember the various experiences of dressing up to get that annual picture on Christmas Eve before church – wasn't my favorite thing, Christmas Eve service, anticipation of the gifts under the tree on Christmas morning – in a family of five that didn't take long and looked like a tornado came through the living room, and then the family gatherings throughout the day. The highlight being the Christmas Eve service with the lights turned off, the peaceful feeling of the birth of Jesus, and the singing of Silent Night with the light of Christ in your hand. There was nothing like it, the calming feeling, the sense of fulfillment, and the traditions that continue today with my family – with the sole purpose is to never forget the spirit and meaning of the season...the birth of Jesus Christ. Christmas is a time to share our blessings with one another, and to be surrounded by the people we love. It is a time for giving, and a time for forgiving. A time for reflecting, but most importantly, it is a reminder of how much God loves us.

Today, remember the price God paid for you, because of how much He loves you. Remember what true love is, and share that love, God's love, with all.

Jeff Bunting

Friday, December 18



Luke 2: 8-14

"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, 'Fear not: for behold, I bring you tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.'"

That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown.

– Linus Van Pelt (1965)



Thursday, December 17

Dear God,

Thank you for the gift of your son. Thank you for the opportunity to share time with our family, our friends and those people in our lives.

We are grateful for other and their intentions and fore-sight.

We are grateful for the opportunity, to grow and love.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus we with a open heart very grateful for your love & Grace.

From Stabler Family

Thursday, December 10

Read: John 1:1-14 God is... What? Why? Where? How? All these questions throw themselves at us, individually and corporately as church members. As more and more people seek other answers, or simply avoid the question, it seems even more important for each of us to have a position we can share when it is needed by questions and situations arising inside the social fabric in which we live. There is an ever-growing need for answers to so many situations facing all of us today. And, frankly, the answers being offered by political leaders around the world are often failing to provide anything of substance.

The qualities of God are spiritual qualities having no existence in the non-spiritual world. Those qualities can only be manifested by human beings giving life and breath to them. Grace can only exist if we show it to others who have or are doing us wrong. Forgiveness gets wings when we practice it in all we do. Hatred dies when we begin to show love for other people in ways benefiting people around us and not ourselves. Resentments can no longer be part of us, any of us, as they only feed the hatred driving us apart and destroys the love holding us together. Politics, armed might, creedal assertions, are of no value in the quest for God. Our quest for God ends when we simply turn our will and our lives over to the goal of showing love to all we meet.

Prayer: God, grant the strength to love everyone, regardless of everything else. Amen!



Friday, December 11



“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing!” was written by Charles Wesley, the younger brother of John Wesley. Charles wrote more than 6,000 hymns. His goal in writing hymns was to teach the poor and illiterate sound doctrine.

The original hymn text was written as a "Hymn for Christmas-Day" and was included in the **1739** John Wesley collection *Hymns and Sacred Poems*. Wesley's original hymn began with the opening line "Hark how all the Welkin rings / Glory to the King of Kings". This was changed to the familiar "Hark! the Herald Angels sing / Glory to the new-born King" by George Whitefield, a minister and friend of the Wesley brothers, in his **1754** *Collection of hymns for social worship*.

Wesley envisioned the song being sung to the same tune as his Easter song “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” In **1855**, British musician William H. Cummings adapted Felix Mendelssohn’s secular music from *Festgesang* to fit the lyrics of "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" .

Wednesday, December 16



**Do not store up treasures for yourself on earth, where moth and woodworm destroy them and thieves can break in and steal. But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth nor woodworm destroys them and thieves cannot break in and steal. For wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be too.**

**New Jerusalem Bible, Std. Ed. Matthew 6:19-21**

I chose a Bible that once belonged to my mother. When she moved from her home to a senior apartment complex, the bible disappeared from her shelves. My mom asked the many family members that had helped her move, and none of us seemed to know anything about it, me included. I found the bible on my own bookshelf a few years later, without a good recollection of how it got there. Perhaps it got mixed in with the many other books that I received from her, perhaps she gave it to me and I simply forgot. My mother has since passed away, but her trusty bible seems to call to me at this time of year. Perhaps it is the true call of Christmas – the call to unite family members.

Christmas is the time of year when we give of our gifts and talents to make others happy. Whether we have members that are close by or at a distance, as Christians we can't help but think of what will make them happy and ask for God's blessing upon them. The pandemic is putting our visions of Christmas and our Advent preparation for it to the real test. Can we keep the spirit of Christmas alive when we are no longer gathered under the same roof? If we take the time and let God speak to us, we will find a way. “For wherever your treasure is, there will your heart be too.”

Prayer:

Dear Lord, at this special time of year, please guide our thoughts as we prepare to celebrate your coming. In the hectic preparation time before Christmas, help us to remember that the most important treasure in our lives is the gift of Jesus. He is our treasure and there is where our heart should be too.

Gary Kling

Tuesday, December 15

**Mark 10: 13-16 NIV**

**<sup>13</sup>People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. <sup>14</sup>When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. <sup>15</sup>Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." <sup>16</sup>And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.**

There are so many lessons we can teach children during Advent; lessons Jesus taught us during his ministry. The reward we get, the joy we feel, when we help others less fortunate. Peace on Earth and good will to all people regardless of race, gender, or religion. We are all children of God and God loves us all the same. It seems to me the Advent season is the closest we come to the way God wants us to be. In Mark 10: 15 Jesus says, 'anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will not enter it'. To me this means accepting what God tells us throughout the Bible purely on faith or belief, no analysis, no science, no cynicism, no skepticism, the way a little child believes things. If we teach children these lessons when they are small, and we live these lessons as they grow up, they will not forget them when they are adults, and they will teach them to their children.

**Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending your Son down to Earth to live with us and to teach us. Be with us and in us to live the lessons he taught us throughout the year and not just at Christmas. From the prayer that Jesus taught us, 'thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on Earth, as it is in Heaven'. Amen.**

Terry Roush



Saturday, December 12

**1 Thessalonians 1:2 Berean Study Bible**

**“We always thank God for all of you, remembering you in our prayers .“**

My mother sent stacks and stacks of Christmas cards to neighbors and friends each year. When I was small, my job was to place the colorful Christmas Seals on each card that went out. We received many in return from near and far and the trip to the mailbox was always fun.



This year seems particularly important to reach the people we normally see at the holidays, but will not because of COVID. Someone recently told me that sending a card is like sending a bit of ourselves to the person. I like to think that is true — and probably the reason I have saved so many cards I have received over the years! The letters and signature of those who mean so much to me is something I cherish. I love to keep the tradition going!

Kathy Roush





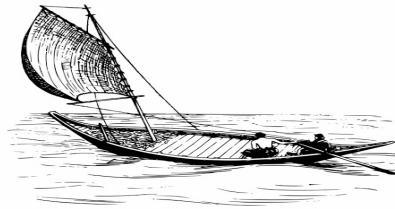
Sunday, December 13

**"Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." — Philippians 4:4-7 (NIV)**

What is this peace of God that we long to feel and how do we get to experience it? According to Max Lucado, "Believing prayer ushers in God's peace. Not a random, nebulous, earthly peace, but His peace. Imported from heaven. The same tranquility that marks the throne room, God offers to you."

When we give our problems to God, He gives us peace in return....God has designed this and makes His peace available to each of us when we reach out to Him. "God's peace is not the calmness after the storm, it's the steadfastness during it." Dr. Michelle Bengtson The chorus of Ryan Stevenson's song *Eye Of The Storm* says this very well:

*In the eye of the storm  
You remain in control  
And in the middle of the war  
You guard my soul  
You alone are the anchor  
When my sails are torn  
Your love surrounds me  
In the eye of the storm*



On the morning my sister went to the hospital for cancer surgery, she had told me that she felt such a sense of peace, unlike anything she had ever experienced before. She had been praying but she had countless others also praying for her. She knew when she faced surgery that morning that the peace of God had filled her heart and mind and she was not anxious as she handed her concerns over to God.

As we prepare our hearts for Christmas during this season of Advent, may we be reminded that God offers us a peace, "His peace imported from Heaven", our anchor amidst any storm.

**"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." JOHN 14:27**

**Dear God, when the weight of anxiety, fear and worry start to take control of our lives, remind us to come to You. You are just waiting to lift our heavy burdens from our hearts...our concerns are safe within your hands. Bring peace into our souls and make us a light for others to see your strength.  
Amen**

Connie Hinkle

Monday, December 14



Phil 4:8

**"Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything is worthy of praise, dwell on these things."**

I was walking out of church the weekend we moved our clocks back one hour. Jack Dollahon commented we sure didn't need to add one more hour to 2020. This has been a tough year and most of us want to put 2020 in the rear view mirror and move on. The sentiment is we should quit dwelling on 2020, so what should we dwell on?

Paul clearly spells out what we should dwell on. We should dwell on those things true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, good repute, excellence, and finally worthy of praise. Sounds like Jesus to me. Let's not be in too big a hurry to usher out 2020, rather let us dwell on Jesus, especially this Christmas.

Doug Schroeder

