

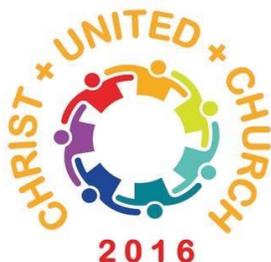
December 2017

The Good News

The monthly newsletter of Christ United Church

Christ United Church

A federated church
affiliated with the
Presbyterian Church
(USA)
and the
United Church of
Christ



Advent Is Arriving!

Pastor Allan's Message

Advent is coming! It's a bit funny to say that, because the word Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "arrival." The arrival is coming! Weird. So what's arriving? The Christmas season? The biggest sales of the year? No! It's not what's arriving, it's who! It's Jesus, of course.

The four gospel writers go about announcing the arrival of Jesus the Messiah in very different ways. Mark gets right into it: "The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God." There are no angels here, no birth stories, and no mystery. This is about Jesus, and he's the Messiah, and he's the Son of God. Boom! Before you have even started, you already know a lot from chapter 1, verse 1!

Then Mark goes right into a prophecy from Isaiah. Want to know more about Jesus? Good! The prophets already told us to expect him – preceded by John the Baptist, and, boom, here's John the Baptist out roaring in the wilderness. By verse 9 of chapter 1, Jesus is baptized by John, and, in verse 10, the voice of God from heaven announces to Jesus coming up out of the water, "You are my Son. With you I am well pleased." In case you missed it in verse 1, Mark seems to be saying, Jesus is the Son. Of. God. He has arrived.

Matthew is very different. He starts off with a genealogy. How thrilling! Snore. Okay, he does say it's the genealogy of "Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham." And then he lists names. Way to draw people in, Matthew! But in the ancient world, who you are was determined by who you came from. Jesus is a son of Abraham, so Jewish. Also a son of David, so in the royal line. Matthew has a scheme of history where everything is divided up into sections of fourteen generations: fourteen from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the Exile in Babylon, and fourteen from the Exile to Jesus. Abraham-David-Exile-Jesus. Another critical moment in history is here: Jesus has arrived.

Luke starts his narrative in the style of the Greek historians, and frames it as a letter to someone interested in the faith, a man named Theophilus. Now, Theophilus is Greek for "Lover of God". It might be an actual person's name, or it might be that Luke is addressing every person who is a lover of God and wants to know more about Jesus.

Luke lets the angels tell what is going on: an angel announces to Zechariah that his wife will give birth to the forerunner of the Messiah, whom he should name John. This is John the Baptist.

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Advent Is Arriving!

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Then the angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she is going to become pregnant by the Holy Spirit with a child who will be called the Son of God. Then an angel appears to shepherds in the fields telling them that the Savior has been born. The forerunner has arrived, then the Holy Spirit has arrived, and now, finally, Jesus the Messiah has arrived!

Finally, John the evangelist (a completely different person from John the Baptist) begins his story with an echo of Genesis 1: "In the beginning...." In Genesis, God speaks. But in John, "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

In Genesis, everything that is made is made because God speaks and it is so: "God said "Let there be" In John, everything is made through the Word: "through him all things were made; without him, nothing was made." What, or who is this mysterious Word? John tells us: "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The Word is none other than Jesus! He is God in the flesh walking among us as God once walked in the garden in the midst of God's creation in Genesis. In Jesus, God has arrived!

Each evangelist points to a decisive moment in time, when God's Messiah, the Word made flesh, the Son of David, the Son of God, appeared in history to save the world. They frame it differently, but underlying it all is the same message: Jesus has arrived! ✚

Dates to Remember

December 2 – Greening the Church
December 2 – Dinners for Eight
December 3 – First Sunday in Advent
December 3 – Potluck after worship
December 10 – Christmas Pageant
December 17 – Caroling to Shut-ins
December 22 – Live Nativity
December 23 – Live Nativity
December 24 – Morning and evening worship
January 7 – Epiphany Star Sunday
January 21 – Congregational Meeting
January 27 – Liar's Club

Advent, Christmas and Epiphany!

The season of Advent is just around the corner and all friends and members are invited to gather on Saturday, December 2, 10 am to 1 pm to help with the **Greening of the Church** as we decorate our sanctuary and church building for the season. Donuts and hot chocolate will be provided; all are welcome! We will begin our advent worship services the following day with our first **Sunday of Advent, December 3**.



We will celebrate a special **Sunday of Advent and Christmas music, art and pageantry** on Sunday, December 10, during our 10:00 am worship service in the sanctuary. Share the date with your small friends, children and grandchildren, as it is sure to be a special holiday service to remember. Participants in the Sunday activities should arrive at the church by no later than 9:00 am.

The church will celebrate the birth of Christ on **Christmas Eve**, Sunday, December 24, with our fourth Advent worship service at 10:00 am and with a 7:00 pm service (*note the updated time*) including candlelight, communion and choir. A 30-minute musical prelude will precede the service beginning at 6:30 pm. The Christmas Eve service will include traditional elements but also be appropriate for families with children.



Our **Sunday, December 31, 10:00 am** worship service will mark the new calendar year with a special worship service in Friendship Hall and our worship service on Sunday, January 7 will celebrate **Epiphany** and include receiving Epiphany stars during the service.



Mark your calendar and plan to join us on the Advent and Christmas journey as we remember and celebrate Jesus' birth. ✚

Special Offerings Thank You

During October, members of our congregation made gifts totaling \$1,267 for the two denominational offerings. \$545 was received for the PCUSA Peace and Global Witness offering and \$722 for the UCC Neighbors in Need offering. Both of these special offerings are used to advocate for peace and justice through collaborative projects of education and Christian witness

Special Offerings to be received on December 24

Four times a year, each of our denominations sponsors a special offering to support specific mission areas. The next opportunity arrives at Christmas time. The Stewardship Committee encourages you to consider supporting one of these offerings, and perhaps both. You may put your offering in a special envelope or simply include it in your normal envelope. If you use your regular envelope, indicate the amount and the name of the offering. You may also just write "special offering" and it will be evenly split between the two.

Christmas Fund is a special offering of the United Church of Christ. Your gift to the Christmas Fund (sometimes called Veterans of the Cross) is an expression of appreciation and caring to those who served as clergy (and certain lay employees) who are now retired or disabled and financially strained. Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low-income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care.

Christmas Joy is a special mission offering of the Presbyterian Church (USA). By giving to the Christmas Joy offering, you provide assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and assist in the development of future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. Your gifts support the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, Racial Ethnic Schools and Colleges, and Racial Ethnic Leadership Development. †

Alternative Gift Giving

Looking for a unique idea for someone hard to buy for on your Christmas list? Mission is offering a gift for you to give AND a chance to make a difference! The gifts available through the Presbyterian Gift Catalogue range from livestock to clean water supplies to farm tools to educational supplies. These presents have life changing results! Please contact Hugh Patterson or Karla Zilch for a form and instructions. (This year we will not be offering Heifer International.) †



December Dinners for 8

Dinners for 8 will be held on **Saturday, December 2 at 6:30 pm** (to avoid Thanksgiving weekend) in Friendship Hall at the church.

This is a great way to get to know people in a relaxed atmosphere. Tired of Thanksgiving leftovers, then this is a great way to try a new dish plus enjoy each other's company. A sign-up sheet is available across from the office. Everyone is welcomed! If you need transportation, please contact Andi Allen 440-655-6074. †



A Caroling We Will Go

Once again this year, we will gather to bring song and greetings to our shut-ins through caroling. We will go on **Sunday, December 17**. Meet at the church at 1:30 pm. Anyone interested (choir experience is NOT required) is welcome to join in. Contact Amy Marke for questions and to let her know if you plan to attend. †

Larry Scudder Memorial

Some of you have probably noticed the new guest book stand in the east entry at the sanctuary end of the building. This stand was designed and built as a memorial to Larry Scudder, made available by friends Rose Farmer, Joan Laing, Dick Poyer and former St. Andrew's members Barbara and Earle Boyer.



Larry was a woodworker who produced some of our fine wooden music stands used regularly by instrumentalists and soloist in our worship services. This new handsome piece of furniture was commissioned to honor one woodworker from another. The memorial plaque on the stand reads "in memory of our friend Larry R. Scudder." ☩

Faith & Film

Come **Friday, Dec. 1 at 6:30 pm** for a screening of the 2016 biographical film *Lion* based on the non-fiction book *A Long Way Home*. Five year old Saroo gets lost on a train, traveling away from his home and family. Frightened and bewildered, he survives on the streets and ends up in an orphanage. He's adopted by a loving couple who give him a good life, but as an adult, he longs to find his birth family. Armed with a handful of memories, dogged determination, and technology known as Google Earth, he sets out to find his lost family and first home. We will enjoy pizza, popcorn, and desserts as we discuss this memorable film in Friendship Hall.

Martha Circle to Package Christmas Cookies

Martha Circle meets at **10 am on Wednesday, December 13**, to package cookies for our church staff and homebound members. Bring a batch of cookies to Friendship Hall and join in this happy holiday tradition. All are welcome! ☩



October Financial Report

	October	YTD	Budget	YTD
Regular Offering	\$24,969	\$212,982	\$223,861	
Building Use	\$1,625	\$10,931	\$10,000	
Total Income	\$29,360	\$249,709	\$250,547	
Total Expenses	\$24,011	\$244,012	\$255,670	

Through the month of October Christ United Church is in the black, even though our pledge giving is down 4.9%. Total giving year to date is just .3% below budget. Expenses for the month were below budget by \$1,100.

Extra Giving

During the month of October, one of our mission offerings went to disaster relief funds. Due to the hurricanes that hit the US and its territories this fall, we changed our mission offering to be given to our Disaster Relief Agencies. Each of our denominations will receive 50% of the amount given. To date the total amount received is \$600.

Request from the Financial Secretary.

When giving to Church Street Ministries (CSM), please note there are two CSM accounts. One for the CSM Food Pantry and money donated to this fund will be used by CSM in their food pantry program. The other CSM account is for CSM General Expenses. Monies donated to this fund can be used to help run and operate the food bank as well as the furniture store. Please specify to which account you wish to direct your donations. ☩

Pastor Changes

The Governing Board has asked the Nominating Committee to have a slate for the Pastor Nominating Committee ready for election at our January 21 congregation meeting.

As a reminder, our interim pastor is not eligible to become our installed pastor. Allan was aware of this when he applied for the position. We ask for your prayers for the process and people who will be at our side to help us and for patience as we move forward together in this new adventure.

Happy Birthday

December

- 1 Jessie Hinojosa
- 5 Dennis Fannin
- 7 KC Koester
- 9 Jane James
- 10 Jon Wiborg
- 10 Marie Reyes
- 16 Joseph Lehky
- 17 Muriel Halstead
- 21 Don Michaelson
- 22 Carol Campbell
- 28 Kate Stocker
- 31 Nancy Van Ness



2018 Flower Chart

The 2018 pages for the Flower Dedication Chart have been added to the Fellowship bulletin board across from the church office. Sponsor flowers in worship as a dedication, which is a great way to honor, celebrate or memorialize someone - and beautify the worship space. The chart has space to add your dedication and indicate whether you are providing your own flowers or having the church office purchase them for you (for a \$30 fee). Please include your contact information in case of questions. A pencil is available to complete all information.



The Good News

The monthly publication of

Christ United Church

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Sunday Worship 10:00 am

Friendship Time 11:00 am

Judy Mitchell, Editor

Betsy Clark, Associate Editor

Fellowship and Discuss

“For where two or three come together in my name there am I with them.”

Matthew 18:20

Join us on **Thursday, December 7 at 7:00 pm at the Crall home in Brook Park.** The topic of the evening will be *Reclaiming Christmas*. People of faith can celebrate Christmas in a way that will bring more joy, peace, and connection to the message of Christ! Join us in discussion of elements of the Christian holiday that we find more spiritually meaningful.



Contact Bonnie through a phone call (440-234-2202) or email bcrall@ameritech.net to let her know you plan to attend. Bring your Bible and a light refreshment to share (optional). Beverages are provided.

The Crall's home is at 6459 East Vancey Dr., Brook Park (off Sheldon Rd, two streets west of Donte's Restaurant, located on the corner of St. Rt. 237 and Sheldon). †

Rules for Children in the Worship Service

- 1) If you find you're sitting in front of a child and they can't see, lean to the side.
- 2) If the children seated behind you are rustling papers, hand them a crayon.
- 3) If there is a baby crying, offer to take it from its parent and walk to the back of the church and rock it for a while. The parent really needs a break.
- 4) If teenagers are whispering, give them some Smarties. The rustling and crinkling will replace their whispering.
- 5) If an adult complains to an usher about the noisy children near them, offer to trade seats with that adult and then apologize to the parents of the children.
- 6) When a child runs around giving everyone high-fives during the time of passing the peace/greeting your neighbor, make sure to give them an extra fun high-five, and then high-five the next five adults that you see. (cont.)

Rules for children in the worship service

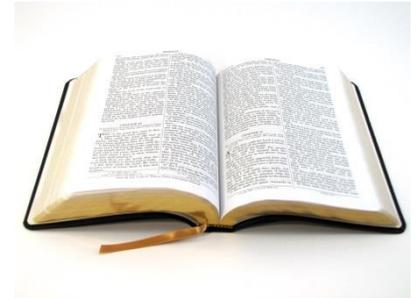
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- 7) If a child has worn tap shoes to church and is dancing on the wood portion of the floor, slip the sheet music for "The Entertainer" to the pianist and roll with it.
- 8) When the children can't hear because an adult around them won't take off their puffy jacket and it keeps squeaking and distracting the children, offer to help them off with their jacket and hang it up for them where it goes.
- 9) When the three-year-old insists on standing on the front pew turned backwards looking at the rest of the people, give the child a pair of very dark glasses. That will prevent the child from catching any adult's eye, which would lead to distracting them. This will protect the adults who as we know have very short attention spans and are easily distracted.
- 10) When a child in front of you is very squirmy, and then they finally turn around and you realize suddenly, "Oh, it's Jesus!" take it in stride and play "Got Your Nose" till he turns around to the front again. †



Would You Like to Read in Our Worship Services?

If reading in public is something you enjoy, you can sign up to be a liturgist in Sunday worship. Commitment is about four Sundays a year. You are given scriptures, intros and a script to follow. Contact Betsy in the church office **before December 10** if you are interested.



Not Too Early To Save The Date!

After the huge success of our previous "Family Feud" evening, you, your family and friends are invited to chase away the winter blahs and winter doldrums with the brand new *Liar's Club*.

This event will take place right here at Christ United Church on Saturday evening, **January 27, 2018 at 7:00 pm.** in Friendship Hall.

Each table will become a team that will decide who is lying and who is telling the truth, so **all ages** can be involved. Light refreshments will be served and the evening promises to reveal the hidden talents of our own panel of Liars. †



Processed Meats and Colorectal Cancer Risk

Healthy Connections

By Shirley M. Gerecke

A new report by the American Institute of Cancer Research (AICR) and the World Cancer Research Fund (WCRF) finds that diet and lifestyle play an important role in protecting against colorectal cancer. The report, an analysis of the global research, adds to the evidence that eating hot dogs, bacon and other processed meats daily increases the risk of colorectal cancer, with the more you eat the greater the risk.



Hot dogs, Alcohol and Red Meat For processed meat, every 50 grams consumed daily – about one hot dog – linked to a 16% increased risk of this cancer. Other factors found to increase colorectal cancer risk include: (1) *Being overweight or obese*. Previous reports from AICR and WCRF have found that excess body fat also increases risk for ovarian, post-menopausal breast, esophageal, colorectal, gallbladder, liver, endometrial, kidney, stomach cardia, pancreatic, and advanced prostate cancers.

Consuming 2 or more daily alcoholic drinks (30 grams of alcohol), such as wine or beer.

There was also strong evidence that *eating high amounts of red meat* (beef and pork) regularly (above 18 oz. cooked, weekly) increases risk.

Lowering Risk with Fiber, Activity and Grains The report concluded that eating approximately 3 servings (90 grams) of *whole grains* daily reduces the risk of colorectal cancer by 17%. It adds to previous evidence showing that foods containing fiber decreases the risk of this cancer. For *physical activity*, people who are more physically active have a lower risk of colon cancer compared to those who do very little physical activity. In the US, colorectal cancer is the 3rd most common cancer among both men and women, with an estimated 371 cases diagnosed each day. AICR estimates that 47 percent of US colorectal cancer cases could be prevented each year through healthy lifestyle changes. AICR estimates that 4% of US colorectal cancers could be prevented if all adults

were to get to a healthy weight and follow other healthy lifestyle habits. Other established lifestyle links to colorectal cancer include inflammatory bowel disease and smoking. Screening is also an important part of colorectal cancer prevention.

Fish, Fruits and Vegetables

There was limited evidence that risk increases with low intake of both non-starchy vegetables and fruit. A higher risk was observed for intakes of less than 100 grams per day (about a cup) of each. Evidence also showed links to lowering risk of colorectal cancer with fish and foods containing vitamin C. Oranges, strawberries and spinach are all foods high in vitamin C. The research continues to emerge for these factors, but it all points to the power of a plant-based diet eating mostly plant foods, such as fruits, vegetables and beans, will give you a diet packed with cancer-protective compounds and help you manage your weight, which is so important to lower risk.

There are choices you can make and steps you can take to lower your risk of colorectal and other cancers. †

Information taken from www.aicr.org