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From the Pastor's Desk



What a delight our Advent and Christmas season at Blymire's UCC has been! Many thanks to you who organized and implemented the Christmas Marketplace, Cookie Walk, Family Christmas Party Mingle and Jingle, the caroling at nursing homes, the Christmas Eve cantata, the Christmas Day sharing of the backgrounds of several well-loved carols, and the celebrating of Epiphany.

As we ring in the New Year, let's take a few moments to ponder the spiritual meaning of the Advent and Christmas season that we have just been through. 1 John 1:7 says:....if we walk in the light as God Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. What an awesome God we have who came in the flesh and whose birthday we have just celebrated! One of the great wonders of Christmas is that His birth can be in us, too. If we let Him, Jesus enters our lives with love, purpose, meaning, comfort in our sufferings, strength for our perseverance, kindness in our reaching out (especially those in need), hope in the midst of all life's circumstances, and salvation from all that would take us away from God's presence. We receive these gifts as we develop a close relationship with Jesus through prayer and meditation, Bible reading, worship, and reaching out in love to all. God then can draw us close to Himself and we can truly walk in the light, peace, and truth – not the light, peace, or truth of our own or that of the world – but of God!

Happy New Year to you all! As we begin the new year, we also assess how we're doing with the interim tasks of my interim ministry with you. We have some interim tasks to do that will help us produce our updated church profile, which is an important step as we prepare for our search for a new permanent pastor for Blymire's Church. Many of these tasks are things that we would want to do, anyway, as we discern, plan, and implement the future that God is calling us into. Three of these interim tasks are MissionInsite, Diversity Survey, and Administrative Tasks, which we will be diving into during the next couple of months.

MissionInsite is a demographic report of the area around Blymire's Church which our UCC conference provides for us. It is a way that we can determine how God is calling us to reach out and to make an impact on people's lives in our area, particularly people who are unchurched and who may be spiritually searching and who may or may not, in turn, become active members at our church. There are three things that we are currently looking into for us to make an impact on people in our area and beyond:



1) Stage Masters is currently working up a proposal for us to purchase the equipment we need to livestream our worship services on the internet and thus potentially reach many more people than we are current reaching.

2) Jen May is coming on January 7 to walk us through the “why’s” and “how’s” of starting a Messy Church program here at Blymire’s where we invite local youngsters and their parents/grandparents to a monthly weekday program of Bible stories, crafts, drama, games, music, and food.

3) Rev. Brenda Marin Enders is coming on January 14 to share with us about “Dementia Friends PA” and how we as individuals and as a church can become more dementia-friendly. This is an issue that increasingly is affecting many of our families and friends.

There is a Diversity Survey from the UCC or we can develop one of our own to determine how God is calling us to embrace the diversity of God’s creation by truly welcoming all people in today’s world into our church. Our plans at the moment are for Val Dennis, a member of Heidelberg UCC/York and a recently retired educator who is an expert and is experienced in diversity and inclusion, to preach and lead us in an after-worship activity on diversity and inclusion in late February. This will launch our congregational survey on diversity and will follow up our MissionInsite efforts.

Administratively, we have two interim tasks that we are doing simultaneously with the MissionInsite and Diversity tasks:

1) A small group is currently starting to go over our membership rolls to determine who wants to remain affiliated and continuing (inactive) members and who are currently contributing and participating (active) members. One of our sister York Association UCC churches has members re-up each year as Covenant Participants (hmmm.. perhaps to think about for the future).

2) A small group yet to be formed who will determine how we need to revise our current church’s Constitution and By-Laws to reflect current realities of church life at Blymire’s.

I realize that this all may sound a bit daunting. But I also know that we are up to the task here at Blymire’s as we tap folks who are gifted in each of these areas to help us with these tasks. No one of us can do all of them. But together, we can help Blymire’s church remain vital and vigorous and poised to thrive in the future.

As I have said before, these tasks are all done to help us answer the all-important questions: **Who are we as St. John’s Blymire’s United Church of Christ? Who are our neighbors? Who is God calling us to become as we journey into God’s future? What is our unique niche here in Dallastown?**

In closing, let me repeat the words that I shared on Christmas Day in worship from Howard Thurman’s poem “The Work of Christmas”:

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings and princes are home,
When the shepherds are back with their flock,
The work of Christmas begins:
To find the lost,
To heal the broken,
To feed the hungry,
To release the prisoner,
To rebuild the nations,
To bring peace among others,
To make music in the heart.

I will see you around the month of January. God’s continued blessings on you, Pastor Rick



TOWN MEETING

On Sunday, January 8, there will be a Town Meeting immediately after the worship service to discuss and approve the budget and the members of the Coordinating Ministry Team for 2023. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend!

SPECIAL SERVICES in JANUARY

January 1 - First Sunday after Christmas-New Year's Day-Celebrating Epiphany

Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12

Message: "Searching" - Rev. Curt Weber guest preaching

Theme: The Magi have been misunderstood for millennia. They made a journey that was as much a journey of the heart as it was a journey of terrain. The Magi were more attentive to the meaning of Jesus' presence in the world than were most who knew him best.

January 8 - First Sunday after Epiphany-The Baptism of Christ-Sacrament of Holy Communion-Town (Annual Congregational) Meeting after Worship

Scripture: Matthew 13:13-17

Message: "Stop, In the Name of Love"

Theme: Jesus did not have to be baptized. But when He said "Yes" to baptism, Jesus accepted His role as our Savior, gave us access to the fullness of God, and welcomed us into a new spiritual family.

Sunday School: Archeology of Bible series, Jeri Jones teaching

January 15 - Second Sunday after Epiphany

Scripture: John 1:29-42

Message: "If It Had Been a Snake . . ."

Theme: Do we miss things right in front of us? Right after Jesus' baptism, John saw that Jesus is the hope of the world, brings peace to the world, and shows us the sacrificial love of God.

Sunday School: Archeology of Bible series, Jeri Jones teaching

January 22 - Third Sunday after Epiphany-Ecumenical Sunday

Scripture: Matthew 4:12-23

Message: "Finding Your Dream Job, Whatever Your Age"

Theme: What made Jesus' disciples leave their families, homes, and jobs to follow the humble carpenter and rabbi? How would our lives change when we answer the call to follow Jesus? The first disciples followed Jesus because they understood that that means living an abundant life and because Jesus was offering them the opportunity to lead others to both abundant and eternal life.

Sunday School: Archeology of Bible series, Jeri Jones teaching

January 29 - Fourth Sunday after Epiphany-UCC Health & Human Service Sunday

Scripture and Message to be announced-Cindy Innerst-Axe will be guest preaching

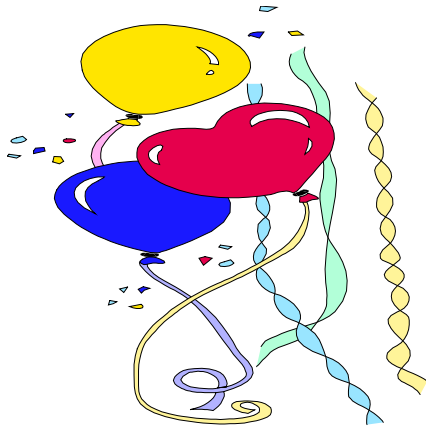
Sunday School: Archeology of Bible series, Jeri Jones teaching



NEW WORSHIP TIME

Our organist, Brenda Kerchner, has taken a position as organist at Christ Lutheran Church in Spry in addition to continuing as organist here each Sunday morning. In order to give her time to travel from one church to the other, we have decided to move the start time of our worship service to **8:45 AM** instead of 9:00 AM, effective Sunday, January 8. This will allow Brenda to spend more time with us before leaving for her other position. Thank you for understanding.

JANUARY
BIRTHDAYS



*May God
Bless You on
Your
Birthday!*

1. Jared Miller
Todd Miller
Derek Troop
2. Chet Wise
3. Keith Markey
Delores Noll
4. Tracey Dilling
John Sterling
7. Nicholas Innerst
Morgan Keller
8. Nancy Myers
9. Paige Barley
11. Damion Albright
Steven Knickel
12. Tina Leader
13. Hannah Leader
14. Benjamin Barley
John Herbst
16. Brooks Barley
18. Silvia Knickel
20. Rick Sipe
21. Ed Adams
Gwen Wise
26. Cindie McKinsey
Renne Myers

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS and those in need of PRAYER

Peggy Luckenbaugh
Room 704B
Colonial Manor Nursing Home
970 Colonial Avenue
York, PA 17403



Keeping in our prayers
Dolores Barley
Jeanette Black
Cindie McKinsey
Ginny Weber
Friends battling cancer
Covid 19 patients

Linda Trone
Room 604
Colonial Manor Nursing Home
970 Colonial Avenue
York, PA 17403

Carolyn Innerst
Room 123
Senior Commons@Powder
Mill
1775 Powder Mill Road
York, PA 17403



Remember
and pray for
Our Members
in the
Military

A1C Ness, Brandon
6907 S. Camino de la Humanidad
Tucson, AZ 85756

WORDS FROM A JEWISH RABBI THAT APPLY TO US, AS WELL

Rabbi Esther L. Lederman, who is the Union for Reform Judaism's director of congregational innovation and who sits on the Central Conference of American Rabbi's task force on the experience of women in the rabbinate, recently wrote some words for her Jewish sisters and brothers about how to proceed with a new year. What she says is certainly applicable to us in the Christian church, too:

Sometimes, to embrace new possibilities, or new futures, we need to clear out the old. If I want to change and become a better spouse, daughter, and parent, I need to get rid of old habits and behaviors. If I want to forgive someone, I must clear out my previous experience with them.

I believe this applies not just to individuals but also to institutions. If we in the organized and institutional Jewish world want to transform and imagine new ways of Jewish living, we have to let go of things that may no longer be working. If we're going to embrace a multi-access world, in which Jewish experiences and teachings can be found the minute you log onto a device, what do we stop doing and what do we start doing? And in a world in which we are working towards greater racial equity, diversity, and inclusion, what old habits, mindsets, attitudes, and behaviors need clearing out, so we can adopt new ways of being and behaving?

Gloria Steinem once described nostalgia as disempowering. Those who are comforted by the embrace of nostalgia, defined as a sentimental longing or affection for the past, might ponder in what ways our sentimental longing for the past impedes our ability to move forward.

Clearing out the old to make room for the new is also the blessing of Shabbat. Once a week, we are given a gift - the opportunity to clear out the baggage and detritus from the week and make room for freshness and renewal. As the sun sets and the stars begin to appear on Friday night, that is our opportunity to say "good riddance" to anything we no longer need. Think of the Sabbath as a chance to say: "Hello. What am I open to? What new things can I see or sense? What new possibilities await?"

The next time you find yourself saying, "but I've always done it this way," ask yourself: Is it still working for you? It might just be time to make some space for ... anything else that may come in.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Undesignated General Fund

Red Brick Chapel

Cemetery

Month-2022	Income	Expense	Income	Expense	Income	Expense
January	\$9,995.00	\$10,580.71	\$0.46	\$254.37	\$915.03	\$0.00
February	\$8,570.74	\$11,555.09	\$1,000.48	\$390.39	\$0.23	\$294.90
March	\$96,036.48	\$15,958.44	\$0.41	\$563.73	\$0.19	\$845.18
April	\$9,517.87	\$14,766.40	\$1,000.35	\$16,785.27	\$200.20	\$2,370.60
May	\$13,730.24	\$11,108.47	\$808.06	\$153.57	\$818.22	\$2,683.03
June	\$7,499.35	\$14,787.98	\$250.07	\$362.50	\$900.09	\$3,277.10
July	\$8,468.00	\$5,755.87	\$1000.07	\$132.08	\$7.20	\$2,188.88
August	\$10,506.24	\$7,061.85	\$1000.10	\$169.56	\$900.18	\$2,836.40
September	\$8,270.00	\$10,713.23	\$0.11	\$365.24	\$0.18	\$2,624.63
October	\$10,592.90	\$7,525.39	\$125.12	\$108.38	\$750.12	\$2,601.65
November	\$9,103.28	\$7,361.44	\$0.17	\$134.96	\$500.11	\$1,268.88
December						
Total	\$192,290.10	\$117,174.87	\$5,185.40	\$19,420.05	\$4,992.75	\$20,991.25

Balance of Undesignated General Fund @ December 1, 2022

\$15,873.30

Balance of Red Brick Chapel Fund @ December 1, 2022
(Includes \$51,668.66 Endowment)

\$55,615.56

Balance of Cemetery Fund @ December 1, 2022
(Includes \$762,066.16 CD's, Trusts, UCC Foundation)

\$763,944.06

Financial Assistance Given through Hand of Hope Fund - 2022

	# Families	Total \$\$\$	Monthly Donations	Available Balance
Beginning				\$ 162.74
January			\$ 80.00	\$ 242.74
February	1	\$ 25.00	\$ 35.00	\$ 252.74
March	1	\$ 25.00	\$ 11.00	\$ 238.74
April			\$ 59.00	\$ 297.74
May			\$ 35.20	\$ 332.94
June	3	\$ 75.00	\$ 12.00	\$ 269.94
July		\$ 200.00	\$ 1045.03	\$ 1114.97
August			\$ 12.00	\$ 1126.97
September	1	\$ 25.00	\$ 21.25	\$ 1123.22
October	1	\$ 50.00	\$ 8.00	\$ 1081.22
November	1	\$ 500.00	\$ 25.60	\$ 606.82
December				
Total	8	\$ 900.00	\$ 1344.08	



MEN'S GROUP



We will be holding our next meeting Tuesday, January 10, at 7:00 PM with a mystery guest attending. The meeting is open to anyone. If you are interested in conversing with the mystery guest, we will meet at Parma's Italian shop on East Main Street in Dallastown at 5:30 PM for supper.

Messy Church

The program about Messy Church with Jen May that was cancelled due to illness has been re-scheduled for Saturday, January 7 at 1:00 PM.



Book Club has returned! I am so happy to announce that Book Club is back! We will be getting together on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 11:00 AM in Fellowship Hall. Each person will tell about a book they have read or are currently reading. It is also a time of fellowship and support. Lunch will be ordered in. Come join us and bring a friend! Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 24. Questions? Text or call Ginny Weber at (202) 549-4358.



CARD and GAME CLUB



We have started a group to play card and board games here at the church. Everyone is welcome, and if you don't know how to play certain games, there will be someone who can teach you. You can bring lunch or order in.

We will meet the second Wednesday of each month starting at 11:00 AM and playing until people are ready to stop.

If you have any questions, please call Janie Montgomery at (717) 891-3607 or Diana Myers at (717) 855-4752.

CHAIR YOGA

Looking for some gentle, easy exercise? Come check out our Chair Yoga classes! These classes are especially good for beginners. No equipment is necessary. Yoga is one of the most highly recommended forms of exercise for seniors! You can come occasionally, once a week, or twice a week. Just come and give it a try! It's easy! Men, this is not for women only! Classes are Mondays and Wednesdays from 10-11 am here at the church. There is a \$10 fee for each class. Hope to see you there!

Pastor Rick's Bible study will resume at 10:00 AM on Tuesday, January 10, and continue each Tuesday thereafter. Anyone who is interested is invited to join us.



During the Sunday School hour beginning January 8, Jeri Jones will be teaching a series on the archeology of the Bible. All are welcome.

Dementia Presentation

On Saturday, January 14, at 10:00 AM, Pastor Brenda Marin Enders, known to many of us because of being our student pastor several years ago, will be presenting here on how we as individuals and as a church can be more "dementia friendly".



Book Room News

Have you checked out our Book Room lately? Remember that you have access to the room every weekday from 9:00-11:00 AM. That money is to be placed in the plastic container on the round table. We are pleased to offer hobby and craft books, health books, and religious literature in addition to children's books, puzzles and games. Thanks for your support.

FRAGRANCES

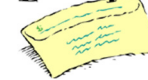
We ask that you please minimize the use of fragrances, perfumes, or colognes when you come to church. These strong odors are dangerous irritants that can trigger asthma attacks in some of our members. Thank you for your consideration.



Funeral & Celebration of Life Service

Rev. David Roe, a former member and friend of our church, passed away a few weeks ago. A Funeral Service and Celebration of Life, followed by an ice cream social, will be held at St. John's UCC, 161 North Main St., Red Lion, on Sunday, January 15, at 1:00 PM.

Offering Envelopes



Offering envelopes for 2023 are now ready to be picked up from the Welcome Table in the Gathering Room. If you did not use envelopes in 2022, but would like some for 2023, there are extras available for you to take. If you take one of the unmarked boxes, please write your name and envelope number on the attached sheet so you can be given credit for your offerings.

EMMANUEL'S CLOSET

January 2023



Christmas Project

We would again like to thank everyone who contributed money to buy gift cards for 81 children and teens at Emmanuel's Closet. This may have been the only gift some of those children received for Christmas. They were distributed on December 10th and 17th.

On those same days we gave out grocery gift cards for perishable food to 56 families to help provide them with a special Christmas dinner. Thank you to everyone who donated food or extra funds to help buy them.

Clothing and Household Room

Many of our clients have been asking for clothing and household goods, so we have decided to open up that room again beginning January 21.

While we were closed, we thoroughly cleaned that section and gave the items that we had in stock to other charitable organizations. Thus, we will be starting from scratch. We are now accepting the following items for our Clothing and Household room:

Stain free clothing (any size)

Toys

Books (kids, teens, adult)

Small household goods

We are also still accepting donations of food, cleaning products and toiletries. Items may be dropped off at Blymire's church on Sunday mornings or weekdays during office hours. They may also be taken directly to Emmanuel's Closet at St. Paul's UCC, Dallastown on Saturday mornings between 9:00AM-Noon. If you have a large quantity of donations, this would be the best option. Please DO NOT leave anything outside the doors at St. Paul's when no one is there. Thank you for helping your neighbors in this time of need.

THANKS FOR CARING!

E.C. Continuing Needs

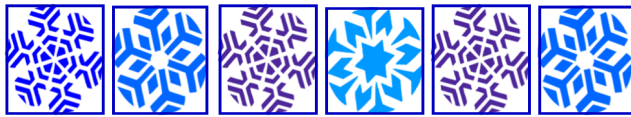
Juice
Cereal/Oatmeal
Peanut Butter/Jelly
Pancake Mix
Spaghetti Sauce
Boxed Dry Pastas
Helper Meals
Dessert Items
Condiment Items
Canned Tuna/Meats
Canned Fruit/Vegetables
Soap
Shampoo
Toilet Paper
Paper Towels
Dish Washing Liquid
Laundry Detergent
All-Purpose Cleaners

Please, NO Expired Food Items

Below is a list of items that we are especially in need of right now:

Peanut Butter/Jelly
Chili w/meat
Dinner kits (tacos, pizza, etc)
Hot cocoa mix
Beef Stew
Cookie Mix





January 2023

Knowledge speaks But wisdom listens..

Jimi Hendrix

I AM THE NEW YEAR

I Am the New Year. I am unused, unspotted, and without blemish. I stretch before you 365 days long. I will present each day in its turn, a new leaf in the book of life for you to place upon It, your imprint

I AM THE NEW YEAR

Each hour of every day, I will give you 60 minutes that have never known the use of man. White and pure I present them; It remains for you to fill each of them with 60 jeweled seconds of love, hope, patience and trust in God.

I AM THE NEW YEAR.

I am coming -- But once past, I can never be recalled, Make me your best!

God didn't tell me, "Clean up before you come in." He offered, "Come in and I'll clean you up." It's not my grip on him that matters but his grip on me. And his grip is sure. So is his presence in my life. Christmas presents from Santa? That's nice. But the perpetual presence of Christ? That's life changing.

God is always near us. Always for us. Always in us. We may forget him, but God will never forget us. We are forever on his mind and in his plans. He called himself "Immanuel" which means 'God with us' (Matthew 1:23). Not just "God made us." Not just "God thinks of us." But God *with* us. God where we are: at the office, in the kitchen, on the plane. He breathed our air and walked this earth. God...with...us!

Max Lucado

ICICLE EPIPHANY

It was the simplest epiphany. A thick icicle hung from the porch eave above the front steps. I knocked it down so it wouldn't fall on anyone in the unpredictable winter thaw. A waft of whimsy prompted me to bring it in and prop it on the kitchen windowsill. I posted a photo on social media asking, "How long can I keep this crystal lady on my nature shelf?"

A friend replied, "It's gonna make a natural lake for your shelf."

An idea was born. I set it in a bread pan to melt. How much water was really in that icicle?

I poured the liquid in a glass measuring cup. A second photo showing the measuring cup said,

"And if the recipe calls for one medium icicle you know that's 3/4 cup!"

I was surprised by how small the puddle was for the size of the icicle. I learned water expands by 9 percent when frozen. No wonder the icicle seemed more than it was.

That's when my epiphany occurred. Problems can seem threatening, like icicles spiking from the eaves, anxiety expanding them. I'd recently had some heart arrhythmia and I understood how worry could increase a problem. Jesus called those who are "heavy laden" to come to Him for rest (Matthew 11:28)

My icicle experiment showed me if I will bring my weighted burdens "inside" to the warmth and love of God's care, what seems overwhelming can be reduced to a manageable measure.

Carol Knapp

CHANGE THE WAY YOU SEE!

I don't have crow's feet, I have happy memories of laughing with friends until the tears flowed.

I don't have frown lines, I have the marks of frustration and confusion, which I battled through, smiling in the end.

I am not going grey, I have shimmering highlights of wisdom, dashed throughout my silver hair.

I don't have scars, I have symbols of the strength I was able to find, when life got tough.

I am not fat, I bear the evidence of a life filled with abundance, blessings and good times.

I am not forgetful, I have a mind so full of stories, memories and moments there is scarce room to hold much else.

I am not old, I am blessed, with a life of great length, something not everyone can say.

Don't change the way you look my friend, change the way you see.



Donna Ashworth

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

1. Christ is perfect but "Christianity" is not. Don't mistake Christian Culture as God, they aren't the same thing. Churches, pastors, theologians, and other believers can inevitably fail you, but Jesus never will.
2. It's OK to change your beliefs. You'll never have Christianity fully figured out. You won't have an answer for everything. Theology is a journey, a Pilgrim's Progress. Life, relationships, and experiences form, shape, and change the way you see, experience, and understand God. The disciples didn't understand God much of the time, and you probably won't either.
3. Christianity Isn't Easy. It doesn't magically fix things, make you more popular, wealthy, or healthier. In reality, it's not a form of escapism but a lifelong process of dedication, service, sacrifice, and humbly loving others. It's very hard, and not for the faint of heart.
4. Christianity Is Complex. Nobody believes the same thing. There are hundreds of denominations. Doctrines, practices, and traditions are as varied as the people that represent them. This diversity of faith should be appreciated and celebrated. The goal of Christianity isn't conformity, but an honest and intimate relationship with God.
5. Christianity is ultimately about loving God and loving others. It should never be co-opted by a political movement, a religious institution, gaining power, obtaining control, spreading influence, enforcing laws, or becoming rich and famous. It's about a loving relationship with God, and loving all humanity created in God's divine image—never let anything supersede this.

Stephen Mattson

A blind boy sat on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet. He held up a sign which said: "I am blind, please help." There were only a few coins in the hat. A man was walking by. He took a few coins from his pocket and dropped them into the hat. He then took the sign, turned it around, and wrote some words. He put the sign back so that everyone who walked by would see the new words.

Soon the hat began to fill up. A lot more people were giving money to the blind boy. That afternoon the man who had changed the sign came to see how things were. The boy recognized his footsteps and asked, "Were you the one who changed my sign this morning? What did you write?"

The man said, "I only wrote the truth. I said what you said but in a different way." What he had written was: "Today is a beautiful day and I cannot see it." Both signs told people the boy was blind. While the first sign simply said the boy was blind, the second sign pointed the fortunate ones to their positive possibilities.

Moral of the Story: Be thankful for what you have. Be creative. Be innovative. Think differently and positively.

Invite the people toward good with wisdom.

Source Unknown



"And so, if you want to experience more love from people, start with loving people more, because love is contagious. Let love be something more than good intentions, and beautiful words; make it attitude, action, decisions, and choices that really will impact upon people and will change situations."

Source Unknown

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Thanks to Marcus

12-17-1997

LET HE WHO IS WITHOUT SIN CAST THE FIRST SNOW



One kind word can warm three winter months.

Japanese Proverb





Revelations for January from “Bly Mire” Mouse

Wow! How many times did we hear “Merry Christmas” the last few weeks? But it’s all good because every time we heard that greeting, it gave us such a nice feeling. And man, all the Advent and Christmas decorations that have been up the last month have been a feast for our eyes! We will be sorry to see them come down, but we know that they must every year. And speaking of feasts, you may not know. But we had SO MANY crumbs to feast on with all the holiday gatherings’ left-over food.

The little ones had such fun eating the crumbs from so many goodies from the Christmas Marketplace, the Christmas Mingle and Jingle, the Cookie Walk, and the Birthday Party for Jesus. You folks love to eat at these events. And that’s good; we like to eat your left-over crumbs!

Speaking of events, it’s always so much fun for us to watch you have fun at groups and meetings here at Blymire’s Church – regular Yoga classes, the newly-formed Women’s Circle of Grace and Bible Study groups, the Card and Game Club, FUN team, choir rehearsals, all the people coming in and out of the office, and even your Trustees and CMT and PRT meetings. This month, we especially enjoyed eavesdropping on the “extra’s” of seeing you leave for Christmas caroling, the Christmas Eve cantata and communion, and Nelson’s explanations of the Christmas carols for the Christmas Day worship. We know that there are big things coming up in January, too. Your excitement about things going on here at Blymire’s Church spills over to us and makes us excited, too.

But even with all of this excitement, we still were able to spend our Christmas Day celebrating with each other and with the little ones. Christmas means so much to us because it points to the fact that even seemingly small and unimportant creatures, like mice, are lifted up by God since farm animals and lowly shepherds played such important roles in Jesus’ birth.

Happy New Year to you all!

Love, Bly and Mire and the always-growing and always-hungry little ones



January humor:

New Year’s Resolutions:

As the couple sat with a marriage counselor for their first session, the good doctor asked them to identify what seemed to be the root of their problems. The wife responded, “It all started when we thought it would be cute to think up each other’s New Year’s resolutions.”

Noah Syndrome:

The doctor told a bloated man that he had what was commonly called the “Noah Syndrome.” The horrified patient relaxed his expression when the doctor told him there was a cure. “When you sit down to eat, stop taking two of everything.”

Both humor comments are from The Best of In Other Words, Raymond McHenry, author and publisher, 1996

Thank You Note from the Pastor

Thank you so much for your generous financial and time contributions to our church during 2022 – a year of transition for all of us with Pastor Lou Ann’s retirement and my starting at your interim pastor. I appreciate all of your faithfulness and commitment to the ministries and missions of St. John’s Blymire’s United Church of Christ. You support and encourage each other with your walks of faith and with the trials and joys of life. You lift up Jesus Christ for the community and have hope for your promising future as a congregation.

Thank you also for the church Christmas gifts to me of the replica of the church building and the \$100 gift card to restaurants, as well as the several cards and gifts I received from many of you. You are a wonderful congregation with whom to serve!

A joyous and peace-filled new year to all, Pastor Rick

TASTY CREATIONS

Make this yummy treat to remember what happened on each day of Creation.

What you need:

- 6 large pretzel rods
- Candy melts (white, chocolate and blue)
- Green sprinkles
- White or star-shaped sprinkles
- Fish crackers
- Animal crackers
- Adult help



What you do:

1. With help, melt the three colors of candy melts in separate dishes. Microwave for 30 seconds at a time, stirring until soft.
2. Decorate one pretzel for each day of Creation:
 - Dip half in white and half in chocolate to show light and darkness.
 - Dip half in white and half in blue to show separation of the atmosphere.
 - Dip half in chocolate, add green sprinkles and dip half in blue to show land, plants and water.
 - Dip in chocolate and add white or star sprinkles to show the stars.
 - Dip in blue and add fish crackers to show sea life.
 - Dip in chocolate and add animal crackers to show land animals.
3. Share the Creation story — and the snack — with a friend!



Ordering the days

God spoke and created all that exists. He separated and ordered his creation. What did God say about all he made?

Directions: Write the correct day of creation next to each clue. Then fill in the circled letters in order below to complete Genesis 1:31, NIV.

FIRST SECOND THIRD FOURTH FIFTH SIXTH

God made wild animals and livestock.

God said, "Let there be light."

God gathered the waters under the sky into one place.

God made a vault to separate the waters and called it "sky."

God created plants and trees.

God separated the light from the darkness.

God made the water teem with living creatures.

God made the sun and moon.

God made birds fly above the earth.

God made stars.

God created mankind in his own image.

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—	—	—	—	—	—
—	—	—	—	—	—

God _aw all tha_ he _ad ma_e, an_ _t was ve_y g_od.

GENESIS 1:31, NIV

Answer: sixth, first, third, second, third, first, fifth, fourth, fifth, fourth, sixth, God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.