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From the Pastor's Desk



I feel so humbled and blessed to be your interim pastor, as long as my tenure here lasts, and to follow the pastorates of Rev. Curt Weber and Rev. Lou Ann Jones who had wonderful impacts on you all. You people continue to show a vibrant Christian spirit of commitment, faithfulness, service, cooperation and collaboration, and an openness to God's Spirit. You show friendliness, helpfulness, humor, and reverence in all that we do at Blymire's Church – worship; Sunday School; choir rehearsals; outdoor concerts; chicken barbecues; special events that are open to the community such as the ASAPH concert, the Christmas Marketplace, and Cookie Walk; fellowship opportunities such as card and game afternoons, Family Christmas Party Mingle and Jingle, Back Room Books, Men's Group, and Circle of Grace; opening of the church building to outside groups such as the Gentle Chair Yoga; and things that are in the planning stages such as Book Club, Mid-Week Bible Study, and Messy Church. Your individual spirits and your collective spirit enliven and energize things here at St. John's Blymire's Church for Christ's glory – for which I am so thankful!

We, of course, have entered the season of Advent, which is a special time when we look back at what God has already done in the Incarnation of Jesus in the birth of Christ, when we remember that the love of God is spelled out on the cross and that that was the reason Jesus came into our world, and when we look ahead to what God will do in the future in the final coming of Christ in power and glory to rule the world. As we approach Christmas, I am reminded that many pastors say it is difficult to come up with fresh ideas to present the meaning of Christmas each year. With that in mind, here is my Christmas offering to you, adapted from King Duncan and Angela Akers:

Christmas is a time of peace and good will on earth. What is there about Christmas that makes us think of peace? Maybe it's because Christmas is a time when we honor the lowly things of the world, the little things, the little town of Bethlehem, the little stable, the little manger, the shepherds, the overcoming of selfish pride and 'drawing a line in the sand.'

I heard about one young fellow who was bothered by the school bully and who finally drew a line on the playground. He said to the bully, "I dare you to step across that line." The bully did, and the young fellow said, "Now we're both on the same side."

If we want peace on earth, we are going to have to be humble people, like the shepherds, who bowed in front of the tiny babe. Can you imagine that? Not bowing in front of a mighty king on a throne, but in front of a tiny babe. That's the secret of peace in the world. When we humble ourselves and realize that we are all God's children, then there will be peace in the world.

To that I say Amen! Don't forget what's coming up for our Advent and Christmas celebrations: Sunday, December 4, during the Sunday School hour, Family Christmas Party Mingle and Jingle;

Saturday, December 10, 9:00 AM – 12 NOON, Cookie Walk; Saturday, Christmas Eve, December 24, 7:00 PM, Christmas Eve worship with cantata and Sacrament of Holy Communion and candlelight; and Sunday, December 25, 9:00 AM – Short and informal worship and birthday party for the baby Jesus following worship.

As we have discussed before, we continue with our interim tasks. What I have heard over and over again in the cottage meetings we held the last couple of months is that we are proud and thankful for the ways God moves in our midst with what we do with and for each other. But many of you also said that you felt God is calling us to do more in reaching out to the community with the message of the gospel, whether folks who hear our witness end up as members of Blymire's or not. With that in mind, we have three opportunities coming up in the next two or three months:

(1) On Saturday, December 3, at 1:00 PM, Jen May, a local woman and nationally known in the Messy Church arena, will be here to present to us the "why's" and "how's" of possibly starting a Messy Church program here, a program where we'd invite local youngsters and their parents/grandparents to a monthly weekday program of Bible stories, crafts, drama, games, music, and food. All are welcome to attend since if we start this program, we will need the help of many of you, even those who can help out from your home.

(2) 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". In preparation for this presentation, Pastor Brenda is asking those of us who can, to watch the Hallmark Christmas movie, that is streamed, entitled "Italian Christmas" with Beau Bridges who plays the key character who realistically depicts one who is developing Alzheimer's and how folks around him respond.

(3) In February or March, Val Dennis, a member of Heidelberg UCC/York and a recently retired educator who is an expert and experienced at diversity and inclusion, will preach at Blymire's and lead us in an after-worship activity on diversity and inclusion. This will launch our congregational survey on diversity and will be a follow-up to the Mission Insight report that are both necessary for our church profile preparation.

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?**

I will see you around this month of December. God's continued blessings on you, Pastor Rick

YORK ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING ON NOVEMBER 13, 2022

Peggie Free, Pastor Curt, and Pastor Rick attended this meeting.

The following is Peggie's report to the congregation on November 20th:

The theme of this year's annual meeting of the UCC York Association was "Connected and Connecting". Members were told that the Association has a Google business account through which member churches can access their church's website and Facebook page. The account is YorkAssociation UCC.org. The Facebook page is a social and event filled venue. The website is a more static opportunity for facts, such as the times for church worship services, directions to the churches, hours, etc. Sue Barnes, Association newsletter editor, encouraged all churches to share their news, activities, and special announcements with everyone through the newsletter and through this account. Here at Blymire's we have our own website and Facebook page, but apparently some churches do not.

Hartman Center, which many of us are familiar with, was sold a couple of years ago. We in the UCC are engaged now in joint camping and retreat experiences with the Lutherans in Pennsylvania. Noteworthy for me, though, is that the new owners of Hartman Center, who have refurbished several parts of it, are opening it up this year for a few church retreat experiences.

In addition, we were reminded that churches need to update their statistical information, such as their number of members and average worship attendance, early each year. That information is sent into the Penn Central Conference who, in turn, sends that information on to the national church for its records and to our York Association for its records. The annual recommended contribution of each church to the York Association is based on that statistical information. Currently, the figures for St. John's Blymire's seem inaccurate.

There are two vacancies on the Community Outreach Committee and one on the Committee on Ministry. They can be filled by lay people. Talk to Pastor Curt if you are interested. After some discussion about work camps that are supported by the association, and after new officers and committee members were installed, the meeting was adjourned.

SPECIAL SERVICES in DECEMBER

Dec. 4 - 2nd Sunday of Advent—UCC Vision of Peace-Family Christmas Party following Worship

Scripture: Matthew 3:1-12

Message: “Much Love, Hope Sent”

Theme: The promise and hope of Christmas is that we have a new King, new life, and new purpose

Family Christmas Party Mingle and Jingle

Dec. 11 - 3rd Sunday of Advent—UCC Heartbeat of Justice

Scripture: Matthew 11:2-11

Message: “Tarzan and John the Baptist”

Theme: Jesus wants John, and us, to know that God is establishing God’s Kingdom for all people, God is restoring our broken relationship with God, and Jesus accepts the penalty of our sins and shows us the extent of God’s love for us.

Sunday School: Advent series, Pastor Curt teaching

Dec. 18 - 4th Sunday of Advent—UCC Christmas Fund Offering

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

Message: “What We Learn From Love”

Theme: From the birth of Jesus, we learn that love makes a plan, that love keeps its promises, and love becomes a Person.

Sunday School: Advent series, Pastor Curt teaching

Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Service at 7:00 PM

Christmas Eve Service including “Carols: A Cantata for Congregation and Choir”, Sacrament of Holy Communion, and Candlelight

Dec. 25 - Christmas Day

Scripture: John 1:1-14

Informal Worship: Carol Sing and Background of the carols by Nelson Leader

Brief Birthday Party for Jesus following worship

No Sunday School

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!

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



*May God
Bless You on
Your
Birthday!*

- | | | | |
|-----|---------------------|-----|----------------|
| 2. | Sundi Neuhaus | 26. | Thomas Miller |
| | Judy Bishop | 27. | Donna Sleeth |
| 5. | Natasha Brenner | | Sylvia Kohler |
| 6. | Cindy Luckenbaugh | 28. | Jessica Giese |
| 7. | Jamie Klyeman | 31. | Herbert Bosley |
| 10. | Kevin Myers | | |
| 12. | Carl Criswell | | |
| | Jennifer Roelke | | |
| | Katie Stoops | | |
| 14. | Jennifer Knickel | | |
| 16. | Lori Corso | | |
| 17. | Hannah Marshall | | |
| | W. Edwin Bishop | | |
| 18. | Brett Innerst | | |
| | Kortney Troop | | |
| 19. | Danielle Marshall | | |
| | Zachery Luckenbaugh | | |
| 22. | Carol Barnhart | | |

CELEBRATING DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Dec. 16 - Rod and Linda Eichelberger - 55 years

Dec. 18 - Pastor Curt and Ginny Weber - 51 years

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						
December						
Total	\$183,186.82	\$109,813.43	\$5,185.23	\$19,285.09	\$4,491.64	\$18,722.37

Balance of Undesignated General Fund @ November 1, 2022

\$26,131.46

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

\$55,750.35

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

\$764,712.83

Financial Assistance Given through Hand of Hope Fund - 2022

	#	Total	Monthly	Available
	Families	\$\$\$	Donations	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				
December				
Total	7	\$ 400.00	\$ 1318.48	

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

PRAYER VINE UPDATE

Our church's prayer group originally began in the church sanctuary after the service with five members praying for others whose names were in the Prayer Bowl. Postcards were mailed out letting them know we were praying for them. With Covid, this prayer group morphed into the Prayer Vine with prayer requests and prayers being texted between members. Those we pray for have given their permission and most importantly they know that others care and are praying for them.

The current members are: Diana Myers, Sue Myers, Carol Barnhart, Beth March, Kathi Sterling, Jane Picking, Janie Montgomery, Ginny Weber and we welcome our newest member, Pastor Rick. If you would like to be a member of the Prayer Vine, have questions, or have a prayer request, just text Ginny Weber at 202-549-4358.

HOMEWOOD HOMES

This year we are once again helping Homewood Homes make Christmas special for their residents. We are collecting boxes of tissues, unscented body lotion and Christmas cards. You may put your donations in the Christmas box set up in Fellowship Hall. The last day we will be collecting is Sunday, December 4.

WEEKDAY BIBLE STUDY

There is a sign-up sheet for during-the-week Bible study with Pastor Rick. Please sign if you are interested in attending and indicate the days of the week and times that you are available. Folks want to start this soon, so don't delay in signing up.



Would you like to help your church without spending any extra money? For every card sold we earn a profit from 1½% all the way to 16%, depending on the merchant. To get your cards, just fill out an order form and attach a check or cash. Checks should be made payable to St. John's Blymire's UCC. You may drop the orders in the offering plate or place them on Wanda's desk in the office. Payment must be included with your order. Orders will be sent to the Great Lakes Scrip Center each Monday morning. You may pick up your gift cards from Sandy Innerst at church the following Sunday. This is a great way to do your Christmas shopping!! **(Note: Because of Wanda's vacation, no orders will be taken the week of December 4)**

MINGLE and JINGLE

Our annual family Christmas Party will be held on Sunday, December 4, immediately after church. There will be no Sunday school that day. Guests are asked to bring a covered (brunch style) dish. Lunch will be followed by games, Make it, take it ornaments, a sing along and a visit from Santa. Invite your family and friends for a fun day. If you plan to attend, please sign up on the sheet in the Gathering Room.



It's hard to believe this year is almost over. I hope everyone that took part in Secret Pal this year enjoyed their gifts. On Sunday, December 11, we will be pulling new Secret Pals for 2023. Everyone is invited to participate. New forms are available on the Welcome Table. If you participate, you are asked to buy your Secret Pal a gift every month, spending at least \$15.00 or more each month (January thru December). If you mail something to them, do not include your name or address. The idea is to not let your Secret Pal know who has their name throughout the year. If you have any questions, please contact Diana Myers at (717) 855-4752.

Book Club has returned! I am so happy to announce that Book Club is back! We will be getting together on the last 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 first meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 29. 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.



Cookie Walk

Our annual Cookie Walk will be held on Saturday, December 10, from 9:00 AM until noon (or sold out). A large selection of all types of homemade cookies will be available. Buy as many as you like, mix and match flavors, all for just \$12.00 per pound.



In order for this to be a success we need lots of cookies, so get out your cookbooks, mixing bowls and cookie sheets. With the cost of ingredients rising, this year we are asking those who are unable to bake to help by donating the following supplies: fresh all purpose flour, sugar (white and brown), fresh butter, eggs, chocolate chips, coconut, nuts, sprinkles, peanut butter or monetary donations.

Cookies may be dropped off at the church that week from 8:00AM—11:00AM on Wednesday, 8:00AM-1:30PM on Thursday and Friday, also Friday evening from 6:00-8:00PM. In addition to bakers, volunteers are also needed to help set up Friday evening and with the sales on Saturday morning. Any questions, call Marti Leader or Diana Myers.

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!

Our Circle of Grace Women's Group will hold their next meeting on Sunday, December 11, at 11:30 AM (after Sunday school) in the Gathering Room. Join us and bring a friend. Lunch will be ordered in.



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.

EMMANUEL'S CLOSET

December 2022

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 in January 2023.

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.



Christmas Project

Because it worked out well the past few years, we have decided to continue the practice of giving \$50 in gift cards to each eligible child or teen rather than buying them specific gifts. In order to do this we are asking for cash donations in any amount to help purchase the cards. The cards will be given out to the parents on December 10 and December 17.

We will also be giving out grocery gift cards to each family to be used to buy meat and other perishable items for holiday meals.

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





Tree Lighting Service
Friday, December 24th
Christmas Eve Service
St. John's Blymire's United Church of Christ
1009 Blymire Road
Dallastown, PA 17313

Tree of Lights 2021

*Proceeds benefit the Current Expense Budget of
St. John's Blymire's UCC*

- You may sponsor a light on the Christmas Tree:
- In memory of a loved one
- To honor a family member, mentor or friend
- As a gift to help support church programs

Please join us on Friday, December 24th
in the Church Sanctuary

Please Note! – In order to be listed on the Scroll of Honor in the Christmas Eve bulletin,
light sponsorships must be received by December 19th

\$500 = Red Light
\$100 = Blue Light
\$ 50 = Green Light
\$ 25 = Gold Light
\$ 10 = White Light

(Sponsorship form on back)

Sponsorship Form

Person giving the Light _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

TYPE OF GIFT:

IN HONOR OF: _____

(list name as you would like it displayed on the Scroll of Honor)

IN MEMORY OF: _____

(list name as you would like it displayed on the Scroll of Honor)

YEAR-END GIFT to St. John's Blymire's UCC _____

TYPE OF LIGHT: _____ \$500 Red Light
_____ \$100 Blue Light
_____ \$ 50 Green Light
_____ \$ 25 Gold Light
_____ \$ 10 White Light

If you would also like to have an **Acknowledgement Letter** sent to the family of the person you are honoring, please tell us who you would like the Acknowledgement Letter sent to: (please supply complete mailing information as you know it so we can direct it to this person or family correctly. Thank you).

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please drop your form and check in the offering plate or mail them to:

St. John's Blymire's UCC
1009 Blymire Rd.
Dallastown, PA 17313

In order to be listed in the Christmas Eve bulletin, forms must be received no later than December 19th

Questions? Please call the church office @ 717-244-0655



December 2022

The most important gifts you can give are your love, time and attention. Slow down, take time to smile and enjoy your loved ones... life goes by way too fast!



Hollywood would recast the Christmas story. Joseph's collar is way too blue, Mary is green from inexperience. The couple's star power doesn't match the bill. Too obscure, too simple. The story warrants some headliners. And what about the shepherds?

Do they sing? A good public relations firm would move the birth to a big city.

The Son of God deserves a royal entry. Less peasant, more pizzaz.

But we didn't design the hour. God did. And God was content to enter the world in the presence of sleepy sheep and a wide-eyed carpenter. No spotlights, just candlelight.

No crowns, just cows chewing cud. If God was willing to wrap himself in rags, then all questions about his love for you are off the table. When Christ was born, so was our hope. That's why I love Christmas.

Max Lucado

THE NATIVITY— KIDS VERSION!

WHAT GIFTS DID THE WISEMEN BRING?

William, 7, "I don't know what presents the wise men brought Jesus but a Lego set would have been better."

Ellie, 5, "The three wise men brought Jesus gold, frankincense and myrrh - no real presents. I feel sorry for him."

WHO WAS THE ANGEL GABRIEL?

Erin, 6, "The Angel Gabriel is a big white fairy. He helped Mary & Joseph look after the baby, kind of like a doctor."

Katherine, 9, "Gabriel was this herald angel. He was a boy but he's played by a girl in Christmas plays."

WHO WAS JESUS?

Antonia, 7, "Jesus is Mary and God's little boy."

Zoe, 6, "Jesus is really old and his birthday was on Christmas 2007 years ago."

WHAT ANIMALS WERE IN THE STABLE?

Matthew, 6, "There were sheep, horses and a crocodile outside the stable."

Hannah, 7, "There was a donkey, a sheep and cow there as well as Mary and Joseph. It sounds quite crowded."

WHO WERE JESUS' PARENTS?

Charlie, 4, "Jesus's mommy and daddy are called Jovis and Mary."

Archie, 7, "His parents were Mary and Joseph. That's easy because I was Joseph in the play."

WINTER PRAYER

May you grow still enough to hear the small noises earth makes in preparing for the long sleep of winter, so that you yourself may grow calm and grounded deep within.

May you grow still enough to hear the trickling of water seeping into the ground, so that your soul may be softened and healed, and guided in its flow.

May you grow still enough to hear the splintering of starlight in the winter sky and the roar at earth's fiery core.

May you grow still enough to hear the stir of a single snowflake in the air, so that your inner silence may turn into hushed expectation.

Brother David Steindl-Rast



If every single person who has liked you in your lifetime, were to light up a map, it would create the most glitteringly beautiful network you could imagine. Throw in the strangers you've been kind to, the people you've made laugh, or inspired along the way and that star-bright network of you would be an impressive sight to behold. You're so much more than you think you are. You have done so much more than you realize. You're trailing a bright pathway that you don't even know about.

Donna Asworth



TRUE LOVE WAS BORN IN A STABLE

GOD'S INVISIBLE GIFTS

IN ADDITION TO THE GIFT OF HIS SON TAKE TIME TO CONSIDER SOME OTHER AMAZING GIFTS FROM GOD

"Whenever you receive a beautifully wrapped gift, you are eager to open it and you are well aware that the wrapping — no matter how attractive it is — is not the gift. The gift itself is invisible to the eyes and the receiver of the gift will eagerly remove the wrapping in order to reveal its content; the lovingly wrapped gift brings the assurance that the gift has been carefully chosen just for you.

"Aren't you curious to see what has been lovingly 'wrapped' within your soul? Your personality is your first amazing gift — a unique edition. This gift comes with many accessories, including your talents. The Divine Spirit of God who indwells your soul is your second priceless gift — a fragment of the Creator lives within you! Can you fathom how blessed you are? The Father is an anonymous Giver and does not blow His own horn. He lovingly endows you with potentials and leaves it up to you to develop them so as to bring forth your own soul beauty, as a heartfelt acknowledgment that His gifts have not been taken for granted and have been put to good use.

"The Father does not gift you with the finished product. In His wisdom, He gifts you with kits that will require you to put your God-given intelligence, your God-given energy, your God-given intuition and your God-given imagination to good use. The Father provides you with all the parts and all the tools needed to put the gift together. He also lives within you to read to you the owner's manual whenever needed. There is a constant hotline that is accessible to you whenever you find yourself at a loss. All that you have to do is to turn to Him and clearly ask for His help. The Father is truly your enduring friend — unconditionally loving, inspiring, understanding, and encouraging.

11:11 Progress Group



I AM Helen Mellicost

I was regretting the past and fearing the future. Suddenly God was speaking.

"My name is 'I Am.'"

I waited. God continued.

"When you live in the past, with its mistakes and regrets, it is hard.

I am not there. My name is not 'I was.'

"When you live in the future, with its problems and fears, it is hard. I am not there.

My name is not 'I will be.'

"When you live in this moment, it is not hard.

I am here. My name is 'I Am.'"

I AM— WE ARE

I'm really glad that Helen wrote these words because they definitely help me to envision the concept of living in the "now" in a completely different way. I am. Right here, right now. I may have dreams and desires of how things will be, but those ideas are caught somewhere in the future. I've been with many people who are so wrapped up in what they want to be "someday" that they don't focus much on what they are right now. I've watched them go through much surprise and dismay as time rolled on and they haven't become what they were sure they would be.

There are many things that have happened in everyone's past that could cause them to be resentful and unhappy if they let them. But if I were to focus on what was, it's very hard to see what is. I've known people who are able to talk only of their pasts--every conversation is about what happened in the ago. They aren't able to learn well the lessons that life is giving to them right now because their minds are still on yesterday or yesteryear.

"I am." That's not just the name of God in the Bible--that's a description of each one of us who lives on this planet *right now*. I don't want to live my life focusing on what I will be, or what I was. I am. Here and now.

Here I am. What am I going to do with that?

Tom Walsh

GOD
ROCK
SAVIOR
MESSIAH
IMMANUEL
HOLY • CHILD
MIGHTY • GOD
LORD • OF • ALL
LAMB • OF • GOD
CHRIST • OF • GOD
KING • OF • KINGS
THE • WORD • OF • GOD
ALPHA • AND • OMEGA
PRINCE • OF • PEACE
LIGHT • OF • THE • WORLD
HEAD • OF • THE • CHURCH
SON • OF • THE • HIGHEST
EVERLASTING • FATHER
RESURRECTION • AND • LIFE
JESUS

The first to
apologize is the
bravest.
The first to
forgive is the
strongest.
The first to forget
is the happiest.

Author Unknown



Revelations for December from “Bly Mire” Mouse

We overheard you folks wishing each other “Happy Thanksgiving” after worship this last Sunday. Can it really be Thanksgiving? We also overheard you talking about setting up the Advent and Christmas decorations. Wow! That’s one of our favorite times of the year from our mouse hole! You may see us peeking out from our corners as you bring down the decorations from the attic and set them up. We really love the way our whole building is decked out this time of the year.

And we know that that means that there will be a bit more excitement and energy (Is that possible?) than usual around here during the next month or so. We really don’t mind all of the hubbub during the Christmas season. It kind of gets Mire and me and the little ones in the mood for Christmas. After all, from what we have heard you folks read from the Bible, God did so many wonders with little things and seemingly unimportant people – Mary and Joseph, the little town of Bethlehem, the little stable, the little manger, the shepherds, and the little baby. It all makes us think that we little ones are important to God, too. Don’t you think?

In addition to our regular activities around here – Sunday worship, Sunday School (isn’t Pastor Curt doing a wonderful job with the “Journey” these Sundays?), Men’s Group, Women’s Circle of Grace, choir rehearsals, Card and Game Club, and of course Wanda waking us up bright and early each weekday – we look forward to all of the special holiday events that we will so happily watch and listen to, such as the Christmas Marketplace, Christmas Party Mingle and Jingle, the Cookie Walk, and our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services with the Tree of Lights.

Here’s looking at you and our bright future together. See you around in December!

Love,

Bly and Mire and the excited little ones



Christmas Humor:

I passed one of those lots that sells Christmas trees. You know the kind. They’re dedicated to the proposition that only God can make a tree and only humans can make a buck!

“For Christmas,” a woman remarked to her friend, “I was visited by a jolly, bearded fellow with a big bag over his shoulder. My son came home from college with his laundry.”

Story stones



Share the good news of Jesus' birth in a creative way.



What you need:

- Newspaper
- Bible
- Smooth, clean stones
- Pencil
- Oil paint pens
- Adult help



What you do:

1. In a well-ventilated area, cover a work surface with newspaper.
2. Read Luke 2:1-20 and choose key people and places to draw.
3. In pencil, sketch one drawing on each stone.
4. Follow directions on paint pens to fill drawings with color. Let dry.
5. Hide stones for younger siblings to find, set out a new stone each day or order them in a row and tell the Nativity story.

PUZZLE



Seeking the story

Angels joyfully announced a special arrival in Bethlehem at Christmas.

Directions: Find the words listed below. Then unscramble the intersecting letters to complete Luke 2:11, NIV.



WORD BANK

Shepherds
Child
Nazareth
Census
Baby
David
Mary
Travel
Town
Register
Born
Night

T	B	W	Y	A	Z	K	E	S	H	N	G	D	J	K
Q	O	Y	A	P	R	A	L	B	F	P	I	C	Q	L
N	R	W	X	B	E	Y	R	M	B	D	M	O	E	E
S	N	O	N	W	G	A	I	B	A	C	D	O	T	D
R	G	X	J	F	I	W	M	V	B	R	R	C	E	O
P	S	C	E	N	S	U	S	H	Y	U	Y	F	P	N
O	T	P	I	G	T	Q	C	N	T	G	M	U	S	T
O	A	N	D	B	E	C	H	I	L	D	N	Z	F	A
A	T	B	A	U	R	W	H	G	F	V	A	B	U	M
T	R	A	V	E	L	J	C	H	V	O	Z	G	N	H
F	B	Q	I	W	D	X	P	T	E	N	A	O	L	Q
Z	C	R	D	Q	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	S	V
R	U	V	Y	K	N	I	R	T	K	G	E	Y	I	R
K	V	A	Z	X	L	S	H	Y	T	P	T	J	S	K
L	L	E	S	M	J	Z	L	Q	R	U	H	V	W	X

"Today in the town of David a _____
has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."

LUKE 2:11, NIV

Answer: Savior