
THE LINK



STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH...PUT IT IN TO PRACTICE

First United Methodist Church

December 2016

A Little Closer to Home... David A. Weesner

Let me clear the air a bit of the Advent/Christmas fog. I am consistently hearing from good Christian folks that Advent, these precious days leading toward Christmas when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, are special days to "get busy by preparing ourselves." While I understand the logic, too often it feels like a "Santa Clause religion." You know the drill, Santa is going to find out who is naughty and nice and then there will be a sort of judgment day on Christmas Eve, so you better be good. I hear the church echoing some of the same insights such as; you better get busy and be productive for Christ, you better prepare the way of the Lord, you better forgive, attend, witness, and offer or else you might miss the "real" Christmas. In a strange humorous way, as a pastor for many years, I can appreciate the guilt path of "you better be good," because many times it works.

However, as a theologian and child of God, I am here to proclaim it just isn't so. Christmas doesn't need our good works, our good gifts, or our good anything to be powerful and full of wonder. Truth is you/we do not deserve Christmas, not a bit. Truth is by ourselves we cannot seem to do much of anything worthy of God's love, never have. And this is the power of the season. Christmas is something God is doing and we cannot change a single thing about it. It will be what God wants it to be. Period. And that is grace so large and so amazing my eyes begin to leak water.

I do not give myself to the season because God needs me to do so. I give myself because I believe in Jesus Christ as the Lord of the entire world. My faith is secure that Jesus came to save all people, those who care and those who do not; those who sing in choirs and those who curse in darkness; those who give with all their hearts and those who have yet to find their hearts, let alone their ability to give.

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First United Methodist Church 313 East Montgomery Street Knoxville, Iowa 50138 www.knoxvillemethodist.org FUMCHURCH@IOWATELECOM.NET www.facebook.com/firstchurchknoxville	

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My heart tells me to sit quietly and listen for the voice of God during this season. My soul wants to sing praise to God because of what God is doing in our lives, not of my need to act. "Get busy or miss the season"; sounds like more Santa talk to me.

"Come and sit here by me Mary. Sit and listen to what your heart is telling you. Martha, come quickly and join your sister Mary. She has chosen the better path which will never be taken away from her." My paraphrase of Luke 10:38 FF

CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE



The Christmas Giving Tree is now decorated with names tags in the Narthex. Please help our church give some Christmas joy for less fortunate families. Your generosity in the past has been greatly appreciated. Gifts need to be returned to the church office by **December 19th**, with the tags attached. Contact Bev Sterling if you have questions at 842-5286.

SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGING

The bell ringing has begun and **will continue throughout the Christmas season.** You

can help again this year in two ways: 1) Sign-up sheets



and schedules are in the Narthex to share your gift of time for those in need this

Christmas Season or you can contact Merna Furney at 641-842-3072 or 641-218-8026. She keeps the master list and will gladly add your name to the list. 2) Give generously. Every penny adds up. Marion County keeps 90% of the funds raised by the Marion County Salvation Army Bell Ringers to assist those in need.

LESSONS AND CAROLS/PAGEANT SERVICE



During the December 18th Sunday worship service, Grace Notes will be presenting the Christmas story in readings and songs. This will include a time for the congregation to join in singing Christmas hymns and songs of faith. We are also bringing back a long tradition of the Christmas Pageant acted out by families from the congregation during the

presentation. We believe you will find wonder and appreciation of the Advent season. Please make your plans to worship together on the 18th.

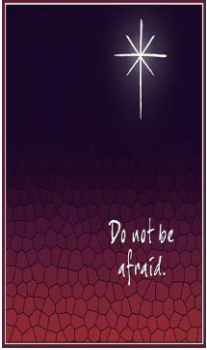
COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER



The First United Methodist Church will be hosting their annual community Christmas Birthday party at noon on Sunday, December 25. We are inviting people without a place to go on Christmas Day to come celebrate with us. Don't dine alone come as our guest as all the food will be furnished! We will need help on Saturday starting around 8:00 am to prepare the turkeys, hams and all the trimmings, set up WFH and decorate. We really get into the Christmas Spirit with lots of fellowship and fun! Sunday morning before church we could use help in getting the food ready, and Sunday after church we need help serving and cleaning up – God always provides! We will also need drivers to pick-up those without transportation and deliver meals to shut ins. We plan on serving up to 100 guests and 50 carryouts to shut ins for a Christmas Dinner. Signup sheets for the individual volunteer jobs will be in the Narthex.

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

Advent is (November 27 – December 24)
Reclaim the spiritual dimensions of the Advent season this year with Do Not Be Afraid, a timely devotional booklet from the Society of St. Andrew, as relevant as today's news. Make room in your heart and in your busy days



throughout the month for a few minutes each day reading scripture, reflecting on a brief meditation, and praying, in preparation for the Savior who is to come. These daily meditations—all-new for 2016—are the words of people of faith, both pastors and laypersons, from all walks of life. A booklet copy will be

available sometime in November in the Narthex for you to pick up or for an electronic version

go to <http://endhunger.org/advent> to download a copy.

COMMUNITY CHORUS CONCERT



The Knoxville Community Chorus Christmas concert will take place at FUMC on Sunday, December 11th at 2:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

3rd ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF THE NATIVITIES



Share your Christmas traditions by bringing one or more nativity scenes to share with our members and the public. They may be brought here December 10th or 11th for the displays to be set up, but the open-house viewing is held on December 17th from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m. in East Fellowship Hall and December 18th after church. Nativities may be picked up from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. on December 19th.

ADVENT FAMILY FUN NIGHT

The 3rd annual Family Advent Night will be held on Sunday, December 11 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. A light meal will be served before we begin our advent activities. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend, as it is fun for all ages!

Where:
Knoxville First United Methodist Church
313 E. Montgomery Street
Knoxville

When:
Sunday, December 11
5 to 7 pm
Light Meal will be served

F.U.N. PLANNING MEETING



If you are interested in helping with the Christmas baskets for those in need in the community the FUN group will be meeting at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday evening, December 7 in EFH. We will be working out details for the Christmas Baskets & plans for 2017 activities. If you are interested in helping with the annual Christmas Birthday party for Jesus join us around 6:15, as we will be finalizing plans for that as well.

**HOW DO I JOIN THE
MEMBERSHIP OF FIRST UMC
HERE IN KNOXVILLE?**



Great question and here is the answer. Rev. Weesner is planning four new member sessions, one in each season for 2017. The next session will begin with meetings on Wednesday evenings January 4th and 11th. Both meetings will last about 90 minutes and we will cover subject like the theology and administration of the United Methodist Church. The focus will also be to help us get to know one another. We plan to receive the new members during the worship service on Sunday January 15th.

Following sessions are also planned for spring, summer and fall if the January dates do not work for you. Call the office and let us know you are interested.

**MONTGOMERY STREET
PRESCHOOL CHRISTMAS
PROGRAM**

Please join us for the MSPS Christmas Program on Tuesday, Dec. 20 at 9:00 a.m. The students will be performing in the sanctuary at 9:00 a.m. and then a reception will follow in West Fellowship Hall.



YOUTH GROUP



Calling all students in 7th to 12th grade to come be a part of FUMC Youth!

The schedule for December is listed below:

- December 4 - 4 to 6 at the church
- December 11- Advent Family Night (Youth to Help)
- December 18 - 4 to 7 meet at the church (Christmas Party)

CONDOLENCES



Condolences to the family of John Kamerick on his passing.

THANK YOU

I wish to convey my sincere thanks to so many of my church family who sent cards, made phone calls, and visited during my 2 months in "Locust Hill". Thank you to Pastor Dave who also visited me at Locust Hill. I am now home receiving physical therapy. Thank you to the "food committee for a cause" who remembered me generously and to the members of Rebecca Circle



who thoughtfully shared their recent delicious potluck "goodies" with me. I am blessed to belong to such a loving church family! Christa Belknap

Thank you for all of the prayers and notes received during my recovery. Gloria Miles

The family of Melvin Eugene Dennison would like to express their deepest gratitude to everyone for their love, support, prayers, flowers, cards, food, and sympathy messages. They would especially like to thank the VA for all of the care and compassion they provided, Knoxville Raceway and the Marion County Fair board for allowing one last tribute to Mel, all of the amazing people at the church who provided services and food, the American Legion Baty-Tucker Post No. 168, VFH John Myers Post #3519 and the United States Navy for the military services at the cemetery, Pastor Brent Hanna for the heartfelt service and lastly, Paul and Joyce Dennison for the flowers on the casket. Mel will always be remembered for his positive attitude, loving personality and that contagious laugh.

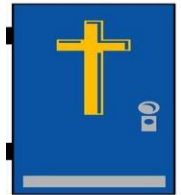
ALMOST FREE SHOP HOURS

The new Monday hours for the Almost Free Shop are 2:00-5:00 p.m.



CHURCH OFFICE CLOSURES

The Church Office



Will Be Closed:

Holiday. The church office will also be closed Thursday, December 29th and Friday, December 30th for the New Year Holiday.

The church office will be closed, Thursday, December 22nd and Friday, December 23rd for the Christmas

I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE

The Lord said to Ananias, "Saul is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized. --Acts 9:15-19

By December, in Marion County, most of the tree

leaves have fallen. Now bare tree limbs are exposed against gray skies. On my bus route, I am beginning to see things that have always existed but I never realized were there. With the foliage gone, I can see an eagle's nest along Red Rock Lake that was previously hidden. I can see beyond the trees and discover farm ponds and homes, other buildings, railroad tracks and roads. They have been there all the time. I just never saw them.

This makes me wonder about God and about our Redeemer, Jesus the Christ. God and Jesus are always with us, ever present. And sadly, some days, we just don't see them. How can we be blind to a loving and caring God? God desires a relationship with us. Until we acknowledge that God is in our presence, we don't give God much of a chance.

It is unfortunate to say that, at times, God's blessings go unnoticed. May our prayers include that we become aware of our surroundings and that we can see how God continues to work in our lives. We are blessed with family members who nurture us. We are blessed with friends who support us and people who serve us. We need to take time to observe, to see the beauty of nature around us and to appreciate God's creation.

We should not take for granted the events in our lives that seem to "fall into line." Instead, we need to remember that God has a plan for us. We are called to

minister unto others and to be God's hands. Open our eyes, Lord, that we may see You and Your wonders around us each and every day. When you see God at work in your midst, you can declare, "I spy with my little eye." God's peace, *Pastor Brent*

December 2016 LECTIONARY SCRIPTURE



December 3-4, 2016

Isa. 11:1-10 Ps. 72:1-7, 18-19 (UMH 795) Rom. 15:4-13
Matt. 3:1-12

December 10-11, 2016

Isa. 35:1-10 Luke 1:47-55 (UMH 199) Jas. 5:7-10 Matt 11:2-11

December 17-18, 2016

Isa. 7:10-16 Ps. 80:1-7, 17-19 (UMH 801) Rom. 1:1-7
Matt. 1:18-25

December 24-25, 2016

Isa. 52:7-10 Ps. 98 (UMH 818) Heb. 1:1-4 (5-12) John 1:1-14

DECEMBER 2016

Thursday December 1, 2016

1:00p John Kamerick
Funeral – Sanc
1:45p Funeral Luncheon
3:00-4:00p BB Academy
Snacks – WFH
6:00-7:00p Girl Scouts – EFH

Friday December 2, 2016

9:00a-4:00p Almost Free Shop
Noon AA – Act Cntr

Saturday December 3, 2016

COMMUNION/FOOD DONATION

7:30a Methodist Men –
Mr C's
5:30p Chapel Service
7:30p AA – Act Cntr

Sunday December 4, 2016

POINSETTIA SUNDAY/
COMMUNION/FOOD DONATION

8:30a Homebuilders
Sunday School –
Homebuilders Rm
9:30a Worship Service
10:00-10:30a Children's Church
10:30a Faith Forum
Sunday School –
EFH
10:35-11:35a Emergent Faith
Sunday School –
Choir Rm
1:00-4:00p Sorority Mtg – Act
Cntr
4:00-6:00p Youth Group –
YR/WFH
5:30-6:30p NA – Act Cntr

Monday December 5, 2016

7:30-9:45a MMP Program
1:00-3:00p NHN – Act Cntr
2:00-5:00p Almost Free
Shop
3:00-4:00p BB Academy
Snacks – WFH
6:00-7:00p Cub Scouts –
WFH, EFH,
Homebuilders,
Youth Meeting Rm
7:00p Junior Opt – YR

Tuesday December 6, 2016

7:00a Earlybirds –

9:00a-Noon Hardees
Almost Free Shop
9:30a Staff Mtg – Conf
3:00-4:00p BB Academy
Snacks – WFH
6:00-7:00p Cub Scouts –
Choir Rm
6:30-9:30p Community
Chorus Practice –
Sanctuary

Wednesday December 7, 2016

7:30p AA – Act Cntr
Noon Wings – Library
1:00-3:00p NHN- Act Cntr
3:00-4:00p BB Academy
Snacks – WFH
5:30-6:30p NA – Act Cntr
6:30p MSPS Board – Lib
6:30p Choir Practice –
Choir Room
7:00p F.U.N. Mtg – EFH
7:30p AI-Anon – Act Cntr

Thursday December 8, 2016

9:00a Rachel Circle –
EFH
12:30-2:30p UMW Gen & Exec
Mtg – EFH & WFH
3:00-4:00p BB Academy
Snacks – WFH
6:00-7:00p Girl Scouts – EFH

Friday December 9, 2016

9:00a-4:00p Almost Free Shop
Noon AA – Act Cntr

Saturday December 10, 2016

NEIGHBOR HELPING NEIGHBOR
5:30p Chapel Service
7:30p AA – Act Cntr

Sunday December 11, 2016

NEIGHBOR HELPING NEIGHBOR
8:30a Homebuilders
Sunday School –
Homebuilders Rm
9:30a Worship Service
10:00-10:30a Children's Church
10:30a Faith Forum
Sunday School –
EFH
10:35-11:35a Emergent Faith
Sunday School –

1:00-5:00p Choir Rm
Narthex &
Sanctuary
Reserved
2:00p Community
Chorus –
Sanctuary
5:00-7:00p Advent Family
Night – Downstairs
& Sanctuary
5:30-6:30p NA – Act Cntr

Monday December 12, 2016

7:30-9:45a MMP Program
1:00-3:00p NHN – Act Cntr
2:00-5:00p Almost Free
Shop
3:00-4:00p BB Academy
Snacks – WFH
6:00-7:00p Cub Scouts –
WFH, EFH,
Homebuilders &
Youth Mtg Rm
6:00-7:30p Free Clinic – Act
Cntr
7:00p Junior Opt – YR

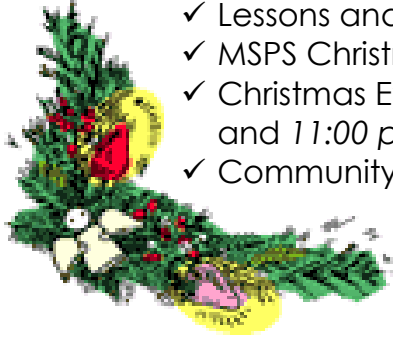
Tuesday December 13, 2016

7:00a Earlybirds –
Hardees
9:00a-Noon Almost Free Shop
9:30a Staff Mtg – Conf
3:00-4:00p BB Academy
Snacks – WFH
6:00-7:00p Cub Scouts –
Choir Rm
6:00-7:30p Girl Scouts – EFH
6:30p Cub Scout Leader
Mtg – Library
7:30p AA – Act Cntr

Wednesday December 14, 2016

9:30a Naomi Circle –
Homestead
Assisted Living
Noon Wings – Library
1:00-3:00p NHN- Act Cntr
3:00-4:00p BB Academy
Snacks – WFH
5:30-6:30p NA – Act Cntr
6:00p Finance – EFH
6:30p Trustees – Conf

6:30p	Rm Choir Practice – Choir Room		Baskets/Cub Scouts – WFH	10:00-10:30a	Children's Church
7:30p	Board Mtg – WFH	7:00p	Junior Opt – YR	10:30a	Faith Forum
7:30p	Al-Anon – Act Cntr	7:30p	Historical Society – Act Cntr		Sunday School – EFH
Thursday December 15, 2016		Tuesday December 20, 2016		10:35-11:35a	Emergent Faith Sunday School – Choir Rm
3:00-4:00p	BB Academy Snacks – WFH	7:00a	Earlybirds – Hardees	Noon	Christmas Dinner – WFH
6:00-7:00p	Girl Scouts – EFH	8:00-11:00a	MSPS Christmas Program – WFH & Sanctuary	5:30-6:30p	NA – Act Cntr
Friday December 16, 2016				Monday December 26, 2016	
9:00a-4:00p	Almost Free Shop	9:00a-Noon	Almost Free Shop	1:00-3:00p	NHN – Act Cntr
Noon	AA – Act Cntr	9:30a	Staff Mtg – Conf	2:00-5:00p	Almost Free Shop
Saturday December 17, 2016		3:00-4:00p	BB Academy Snacks – WFH	6:00-7:00p	Cub Scouts – WFH, EFH, Homebuilders, Youth Meeting Rm
8:00a-6:00p	WFH Reserved – WFH	4:30-6:00p	Distribution of Christmas Baskets – WFH	6:00-7:30p	Free Clinic – Act Cntr
Noon-5:00p	Festival of Nativities - EFH	6:00-7:00p	Cub Scouts –Choir RM	6:30p	SPRC – Library
5:30p	Chapel Service	6:00-7:30p	Girl Scouts – EFH	7:00p	Junior Opt – YR
7:30p	AA – Act Cntr	7:30p	AA – Act Cntr	Tuesday December 27, 2016	
Sunday December 18, 2016		Wednesday December 21, 2016		7:00a	Earlybirds – Hardees
8:30a	Homebuilders Sunday School – Homebuilders Rm	Noon	Wings – Library	9:00a-Noon	Almost Free Shop
9:30a	Worship Service	1:00-3:00p	NHN- Act Cntr	9:30a	Staff Mtg – Conf
10:00-10:30a	Children's Church	5:30-6:30p	NA – Act Cntr	6:00-7:00p	Cub Scouts –Choir RM
10:30a-3:00p	Festival of Nativities – EFH	6:00p	Finance – EFH	7:30p	AA – Act Cntr
10:30a	Faith Forum Sunday School – EFH	6:30p	Choir Practice – Choir Room	Wednesday December 28, 2016	
11:30a-4:00p	WFH Reserved – WFH	7:30p	Al-Anon – Act Cntr	Heather Vacation	
10:35-11:35a	Emergent Faith Sunday School – Choir Rm	Thursday December 22, 2016		Noon	Wings – Library
4:00-7:00p	Youth Christmas Party – WFH/Chapel	CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED		1:00-3:00p	NHN- Act Cntr
5:30-6:30p	NA – Act Cntr	6:00-7:00p	Girl Scouts – EFH	5:30-6:30p	NA – Act Cntr
7:00-9:00p	Jr. Optimists Christmas Party – WFH	Friday December 23, 2016		6:30p	Choir Practice – Choir Room
Monday December 19, 2016		CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED		7:30p	Al-Anon – Act Cntr
7:30-9:45a	MMP Program	Saturday December 24, 2016		Thursday December 29, 2016	
1:00-3:00p	NHN – Act Cntr	CHRISTMAS EVE		CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	
2:00-5:00p	Almost Free Shop	7:00p	Christmas Eve Service – Sanctuary	1:00p	UMW Exec Board - EFH
3:00-4:00p	BB Academy Snacks – WFH	7:30p	AA – Act Cntr	6:00-7:00p	Girl Scouts – EFH
6:00-8:00p	Assembly of Christmas	11:00p	Christmas Eve Service – Sanctuary	Friday December 30, 2016	
		Sunday December 25, 2016		CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED	
		CHRISTMAS DAY		Noon	AA – Act Cntr
		8:30a	Homebuilders Sunday School – Homebuilders Rm	Saturday December 31, 2016	
		9:30a	Worship Service	New Year's Eve	
				5:30p	Chapel Service
				7:30p	AA – Act Cntr



2016 HOLIDAY CHECKLIST

- ✓ Advent The Light Before Christmas with play, activities & supper **December 11th** from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. in WFH and Sanctuary
- ✓ Festival of Nativities **December 17th** from Noon to 5:00 p.m. and **December 18th** from 10:30 to 3:00 p.m. in EFH.
- ✓ Lessons and Carols Service **December 18th** at 9:30 a.m. in Sanctuary.
- ✓ MSPS Christmas Program **December 20th** at 9:00 a.m. in Sanctuary
- ✓ Christmas Eve Candlelight Services **December 24th** at 7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. in Sanctuary.
- ✓ Community Christmas Dinner **December 25th** at Noon in WFH.

Name
Address
City, State Zip

ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED

BULK RATE
US
POSTAGE
PAID
Non-Profit
Knoxville,
Iowa
PERMIT NO.
108

First United Methodist Church
313 E. Montgomery Street
Knoxville, IA 50138