

December 2011

Senior Pastor: Bradford G. Olson Associate: Rick Tettau, Deacon
Director of Christian Education: Jeanne Mills

SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:30 & 11:00 (Traditional in Sanctuary)
9:45 (Praise Celebration in Community Center)
9:45 & 11:00 Sunday School



Worship Notes

December 4 – 2nd Sun. Advent
Communion in pews
“Symbols of Christmas:
Christmas Cards”
Isaiah 40:1-11; Luke 2:8-12
Pastor Rick

December 11- 3rd Sun. Advent
Coins
“Symbols of Christmas: Santa”
Pastor Brad

December 18- 4th Sun. Advent
“Symbols of Christmas: The
Christmas Tree” – Pastor Brad

December 24
6:30 P.M. – Family Christmas
Eve Service
10:00 P.M. – Traditional
Christmas Eve Service
“Symbols of Christmas:
The Star” – Pastor Brad

December 25-
Christmas Day
10:30 A.M. – One service in the
Sanctuary - “Symbols of Christ-
mas: The Nativity”
Hebrews 1:1-12; John 1:1-14
Pastor Rick

Sunday Participation

Date	Worship	S.S.
Oct. 23	280	88
Oct. 30	272	88
Nov. 6	294	106
Nov. 13	254	95
Nov. 20	264	101

From Pastor Rick

*The true light, which en-
lightens everyone, was
coming into the world.*
John 1:9

I was talking to Jeanne Mills, our new Director of Christian Education, about what we could do for the children in worship on Christmas Day since it falls on a Sunday this year. If you were to ask my children, “What is the true meaning of Christmas?”, they would tell you that it is Jesus’ birthday. I suggested to Jeanne having a birthday party for Jesus in

our worship celebration on Christmas Day. I think Jeanne is planning to have cake and crafts to celebrate Jesus' birthday with the kids. The true meaning of Christmas is a celebration of Jesus' birth.

Now if you were to ask my kids what they are most looking forward to at Christmas, I am fully confident in what their answer would be. Now don't get me wrong. They like many things about Christmas. Being a part of the Christmas Eve family service, decorating the tree, counting the days down on their Advent calendar, baking cookies, singing carols, eating Candy canes, and setting up the nativity are among their favorite things. However, none of these things brings as much joy as does opening presents. I can't argue. When I was a kid I couldn't wait until Christmas Eve when the family gathered in grandma's living room and the gift opening commenced. The thought of opening presents reminds me of joyful times in my childhood and brings bright smiles to my kids' faces.

Does it sometimes feel like the true meaning of Christmas gets lost in the hustle and bustle of our Christmas traditions? I want to teach my kids the true meaning of Christmas more, but I know that many hours of my time will be spent getting things ready for Christmas. A lot of work goes into decorating the house, preparing meals, sending cards, shopping, and wrapping gifts. This is why I am especially looking forward to our Advent sermon series on the symbols of Christmas. This sermon series is an invitation to see Jesus not as a separate part of our Christmas traditions, but right in the middle of them. It is an opportunity to explore the true meaning of Christmas in the symbols of our tradition. For example, the act of giving gifts on Christmas goes back to the wise men who came bearing gifts for the newborn king. Giving and receiving gifts is at the very heart of the Christmas story. The story of Jesus' birth can be found in other symbols too like the candy cane, Christmas cards, Santa, Christmas tree, the

star, and in the Nativity. These are the symbols we will focus on in worship.

So hopefully this season, when you are busy with holiday preparations, you will pause and reflect on the meaning of our Christmas symbols, and there behind the symbol you will find Jesus, the true meaning of Christmas. Just think, as you are stringing those twinkling lights on your house and around the tree, the *true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.*

Merry Christmas,
Pastor Rick

Family Christmas Eve Service



As in years past, there will again be a family Christmas Eve Service, but this year we are going to try to do things a little differently. One change is that the service will be at 6:30. A second change is that we are going to have it in the Sanctuary. Much of the service will follow the carols, scriptures, and candles pattern of the later service. The mes-

sage will be a presentation called, "There is room at the manger for you," which Lynn Engle and Jeanne Mills are working on.

Christmas Day & New Year's Day

Every seventh year it happens...Christmas and New Year's fall on a Sunday. This is the year! As a result, we are going to worship as one congregation at 10:30 on both days. For Christmas we will be in the Sanctuary; New Year's will be in the Community Center. Both will be great opportunities to celebrate the Holy Days with your church family!

Consultation Weekend

For the last year and a half you have heard it said that we are a part of a 'Bishop's Consultation Process.' We have been selected as one of 10 churches in the West Ohio Conference that Bishop Ough has prayerfully chosen because he believes we are ready for a breakthrough movement of the Holy Spirit.

As part of the process, a leadership team from Faith Community has been preparing. A prayer team has been bathing the process and

the church in prayer. Pastor Brad has been meeting with the pastors of the other churches. A key part of this process is a Consultation Weekend when a team of outside people will meet with leaders and staff and then share their insights. This team is tentatively scheduled to share their insights on Sunday, January 22.

A Note from Christian Education

Hello Everyone,

I am thankful for all the love and support that I have been shown with my new position as Director of Christian Education. This journey God has given to me is a journey we all are on. How we choose to support our church will affect the many paths of Christian Education. Are we being called to attend a bible study, or maybe to help lead a Sunday school class, or could God be guiding you to another role in Christian Education? Listen to your heart...Our Father is a great leader; just ask Moses!

As I prepare for Christmas, the gifts, the tree, and worldly activities, I am also preparing my heart for the celebration of the birth of Christ. How do others in their worldly activities see us prepare for Christmas as

Christians? Do we show the reverence of this Holy season or do we get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the holidays? I hope the love of Christ shines through all of us this blessed season.

This year I would like to invite you to our Family Christmas Service held in the sanctuary at 6:30, Christmas Eve night. The program includes music, scriptures and the Christmas Story play. Christmas Sunday the service will be at 10:30 in the Community Center. After the "Especially for Children" time, they will enjoy Jesus' birthday cake and work on a craft project.

Please come and join us at the Well, also known as Kids Club, which meets Wednesday nights from 6:30-8:00. Enjoy spending time with friends and learning about the bible. There are also adult and children Sunday school classes for the 9:45 and 11:00 services. I hope you look for and find a class that suits your needs. As one year ends and another begins, I pray that 2012 will be a year full of joy, peace, happiness, and love.

May these blessings shower upon all of us.

In Christ,
Jeanne Mills

The Shepherding Program

Please pray for our home-bound and especially around the holidays as this is a very hard time for them. We still need a few people to make visitations. Please contact Laurie Krakowiak at 694-8114 if you are interested. Thank you!

Higher Education

Please pray for our kids in college even in the next couple of months as they will be taking their end of quarter/semester exams. Don't forget to pick up a card with one of the names on it to send a card or pray for them. The cards have moved to the hallway across from the Fellowship Hall. Thank you.

Higher Education Chair,
Laurie Krakowiak.

Christmas Band Concert



The Community Christmas Concert Band will present a program of

Christmas music on December 18, 2011 at 3:00 P.M. in the Sanctuary of Faith Community.

The band is under the direction of Glen Shaw. The

group is made up of musicians from all over the Miami Valley area.

The program will include both sacred and secular music and will last approximately one hour. Admission is free and all are welcome to attend.

Please consider spending time with us to celebrate the birth of our Savior.

Special Offerings in December

The Missions & Evangelism Committee invite you to participate in the church's two special offerings during the month of December. Our Advent Special Offering which we will collect between December 4 – 18 will benefit Interfaith Hospitality Network, YMCA, Red Cross, and Habitat for Humanity. Our Christmas Offering which we will collect on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day will benefit the 2012 Summer Youth Mission Trips. Thank you for giving to others in Christ's name during this holy season.

Stephen Ministry

Morning Will Come



Where can we find hope during difficult times? Brenda Humfleet of Hospice of Dayton Foundation shares this account of her visit with one of their patients, the father of a friend of hers. Encouraged by his daughter he said, "When I was a little boy, I learned a Bible verse that has sustained me throughout my life." He quoted Psalm 30:5, "Weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning." He proceeded to explain that when his son was killed in the Vietnam War, for a while he was unable to feel hopeful, but as his grandchildren gathered around to comfort him, he realized that there may be sadness for a time but even in sadness, "morning" comes in the form of the concern and comfort others share with us. When he was first diagnosed with cancer and given the prognosis of a short time to live, he truly felt

that "night had come" for him. He was grieving the loss of his own life. Then he witnessed the love, compassion, concern, and gentle care he received from his family, the hospice nurses, and physi-

cians. At that point he reported that he knew "morning had come" for him. He continued, "Morning in Psalm 30:5 is just another word for 'hope.'" For him hope was present because he was not alone. He concluded his conversation by saying, "No matter how dark it may get, if you have others who care for you in your time of need, *morning will come*."

Not everyone has a strong support system. Family members may live too far away. Some individuals may have outlived their loved ones. There are those within our church family who are willing to walk alongside with anyone who is wondering if "morning will come." Stephen Ministers are ready to share in helping others find hope during difficult times. Contact Brenda Boroff at 937-453-2485 to learn more.

Ways of Coping: How to Deal with the Holiday Blues

Charlie Brown reveals his feelings about Christmas in *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, "I think there's something wrong with me. I just don't

understand Christmas. I like getting presents, sending cards, decorating trees and all that. But I always end up feeling sad.”

People experience different emotions during the holidays. Some look forward to this time of the year. Others find the holiday season a difficult time—a time of sadness and loneliness. For those who have lost a loved one or experienced a significant loss or change during the year, it is normal to feel subdued and reflective like Charlie Brown. Laughter and happiness are viewed as sentiments for others, not for someone grieving a loss. Memories of holidays past may surface for them as well as thoughts of what will never be. It’s not unusual for feelings of stress, sadness, and loneliness to be exaggerated.

Charlie Brown realized he needed to be around people and to have a trusted friend, Linus, to support him during this time. His spirits lifted after he became involved in the Christmas play and listened to Linus explain what Christmas is all about.

If you anticipate that this Christmas may be a difficult one for you, look for the Care Notes that are available in the narthex. These short pamphlets are yet another resource to help those who anticipate having a tough time facing the holidays. Some of the titles available are “Getting Through the Holidays When You’ve Lost a Loved One,” “Living with Loss While Others Are Celebrating,” “Sad Isn’t Bad,” and “Your First Christmas After a Loved One Dies.” Come to the Blue Christmas Service in the chapel on December 7th at 6:30 or Grief Support in the parlor on December 8th. Contact Brenda Boroff at 453-2485 if you have questions about Stephen Ministry or about the Blue Christmas service.

****Fish Food Pantry
Needs Your Help****

The federal government allotment to the Xenia FISH Pantry was reduced severely this year due to national budget cuts. We depend on that monthly amount to keep the pantry shelves full. This year we may have to draw funds from our investment savings just to buy food for Christmas dinner for Greene County families. In past years we have been able to offer this for them, allowing us not to deplete our working capital. Also, food donations from stores, churches and food banks are down.

Please help us by bringing in nonperishable food items and put them in the narthex, not just for the Christmas season, but to keep the pantry going. Thanks for your support. Our hands are God in action.

~~Mary Short

**United Methodist
Women**

Mary Rebecca: Tuesday, December 13, Hammell House; meet at church approximately 12:00 PM

Dorcas: Tuesday, December 13, 1:00 PM – Parlor

Lydia: Wednesday, December 14, 7:00 PM-Parlor – Christmas Gathering

Priscilla: Monday, December 19, 7:00 PM - Parlor

United Methodist Men

Monday, December 19,
6:30-9:00 PM – Carol singing and communion – Fellowship Hall

Prayers and Sympathy

to Rich and Susan Fellie and their family on the death of Rich's grandmother, **Henrietta van derr Kooy.**

Address: 2769 Kearney Lane, Xenia, OH 45385;

to the family of **Pauline (Polly) Wilson** on her death.

Address: Nicki Selegan, 75 E. Stonequarry Rd., Vandalia, OH 45377;

to Nancy Hornick on the death of her brother **Jerry**

Martin; Address: 1001 Yellowstone Rd., Xenia, OH 45385;

and to Sarah Branham and family on the death of her mother, **Berneida Heisey;** Address: Sarah Branham, 502 Woodlea Ct., Asheville, N.C. 28806.

Baptism

Ava Theresa Kapfhammer was baptized Saturday, October 29, 2011. Ava was born September 30, 2010 and is the daughter of Edward and Astrid Kapfhammer. She has one sister Ella Kapfhammer. Grandparents are Peter and Ingrid Stephan and Edward & Theresa Kapfhammer. Great-grandmother is Jane Stephan.

Poinsettias

It is time to order your poinsettias for the Christmas services. Order forms will be included in the bulletins through December 4. Please return orders with the payment to the church by Friday, December 9th. Cost is \$10.00 each.



Thanks to Joyce Smith, Joe and Flo Harner, and David and Mary Ann Spahr for the "hanging of the greens."

Holiday Hours for Church Office

To give our dedicated volunteers some much deserved time off, the church office will close at noon Friday December 23, 2011 and will re-

open Tuesday January 3, 2012. If you need anything from the staff, many of them will be working during this week, but irregular hours. We will be checking the outside mail slot, voicemail and email during this week. Have a wonderful and safe holiday.

Contribution

Envelopes for 2012

Envelopes will be available for pick up in the Narthex beginning Sunday, December 4th through Sunday December 25th. Any envelopes not picked up by December 26th will be mailed. When picking up your envelopes, if you see a name of someone that you know will not be able to pick them up and you will be seeing them, it will be a cost saving to the church if you could deliver them. We will also be re-aligning the numbers, to fill in missing numbers this year so that we can reduce the amount that we currently order. It would be appreciated if everyone would use the envelopes with their contribution number so that proper credit can be given when processing in the computer system. An envelope has to be made up when the numbered envelope is not used.

Thank you for your cooperation and support with this process.

***HAVE A BLESSED
CHRISTMAS
AND
A HAPPY NEW YEAR***

**Deadline for January Faith Links:
Tuesday, December 13.**

