Preparing Our Lives

2 The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned. 3 You have made the nation great; you have increased its joy. They rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest, as those who divide plunder rejoice. 4 As on the day of Midian, you’ve shattered the yoke that burdened them, the staff on their shoulders, and the rod of their oppressor. 5 Because every boot of the thundering warriors, and every garment rolled in blood will be burned, fuel for the fire. 6 A child is born to us, a son is given to us, and authority will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. 7 There will be vast authority and endless peace for David’s throne and for his kingdom, establishing and sustaining it with justice and righteousness now and forever. The zeal of the Lord of heavenly forces will do this. Isaiah 9:2-7 CEB

We are in the season of Advent in the Christian year. The Christian year is not the same as our calendar year, it begins with the first Sunday of Advent. This year that was November 29. Advent is a 4-week season in which we prepare for the coming of Christ. The Christmas season lasts from Christmas Eve through January 6, the day of Epiphany. Why does this matter? It matters because the Christian year gives us a guide for our daily living as followers of Jesus. In this 4 week season of Advent, we purposefully take time to prepare and wait for the coming of Christ. We don’t celebrate the birth of Jesus until Christmas Eve, but what we do celebrate in Advent is the promise that God made to us. That promise was to send a Savior, a Messiah that would bring the people back into right relationship with God. A Savior that would usher in a new Kingdom. The prophet Isaiah tells of the coming Messiah and what the Kingdom will look like in his arrival.

Light will shine in the darkest places. War will be no more and peace will reign. Justice and righteousness will be what sustains this nation. This is the promise of God for the people, for us. This is the hope we hold onto when we prepare during Advent, and we anticipate its arrival with every ounce of who we are. With the birth of Jesus God’s promise was fulfilled. Jesus ushered in the Kingdom of God and its reign in the lives of those who would follow him. Advent is more than anticipating the birth of Jesus. Advent is also a time for anticipating the coming of Jesus again. We prepare our hearts and our lives for the full reign of God’s Kingdom on Earth, and in that preparation our lives transformed.

Four weeks cannot transform us, but it is a start if we will slow down and make time for the Spirit to move. Each day we have the opportunity to further God’s Kingdom on Earth. When we show compassion to those who are hurting; when we hold our tongues, or our Facebook posts, when we disagree with someone; when we look beyond the color of someone’s skin or the religion they profess, or the nation they come from; when we set aside our judgement of those who live differently than we do. In all these ways and so much more we help further God’s Kingdom. This kind of living is what Jesus calls us to every day—he calls us to a life of love and grace. The compassion we show during the holiday season is the same compassion we are to show throughout the year. This Advent season can we open our hearts wide enough to welcome the babe in the manger and the Prince of Peace? The babe in the manger who grew into the man who taught us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, and to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, and welcome the stranger. I pray that we are able to move beyond the rush that moves us to Christmas and prepare our lives through prayer and worship to receive peace, to offer grace, and to live as Jesus calls us to live.

See you Sunday,

Pastor Amy
BRING CHANGE FOR MISSIONS

This month we are collecting loose change for The Bishop's Christmas Offering. Each year, Bishop Coyner receives a special offering to help children in need in our state. The offering is collected in United Methodist Churches across the state and given to multiple agencies in the state that help make the lives of children better.

As in the past, Christmas offering funds received this year will be allocated by percentages. The offering will be divided to help meet the needs of these ministry areas:

- Indiana Conference Outdoor Ministries will receive 20 percent to support first-time campers and children in need;

- The three Indiana United Methodist-related children and youth homes will receive 20 percent;
  - Local outreach projects will receive 20 percent;

- United Methodist Advance Projects (national and global) will receive 20 percent;

Bishop’s fund for emergency children’s projects and the promotion of this offering will receive 20 percent

Thank you in advance for BRINGING CHANGE FOR MISSIONS!
As you are making out your Christmas gift lists, please remember our staff at FUMC. They do an awesome job for us! Staff Parish Committee will be collecting money for gifts through December 13. Contributions can be given to any member of the committee below.

Clint Knaub           Vicky Koning
LeAnna Noble          Ian Gilbert
Phyllis Irwin         Mike Boyd
Jeff McIntosh

Happy Holidays!
From the Staff Parish Committee

Christmas Poinsettias/
Flower Garden Fund

If you would like to order a Christmas poinsettia or make a donation to the Flower Garden Fund “In Memory of” or “In Honor of”, please fill out the form below. Poinsettias are $15.00 each. After filling out the form, please return it to the offering plate or the Church office by **Sunday, December 6**. A list of those who purchased a poinsettia or donated to the Flower Garden Fund will be in the bulletin Sunday, December 20.

* * * * * *

Please check one:

___ Poinsettia(s)  How many red ______
            white ______
            “fancy” ______

(If you order poinsettias, you may pick them up
After the Christmas Eve service or Sun., Dec. 27.)

___ Flower Garden Fund
     (to help with summer outside flowers)
     I/We would like to donate ________.

In Memory of ________________________________
In Memory of ________________________________
In Honor of ________________________________
In Honor of ________________________________
Given by __________________________________

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December Birthdays

12/01   Rich Collier
12/01   Ashley Cook
12/01   Robin Everett
12/02   Payton Boyd
12/02   Jon Stevens
12/03   Sawyer Boyd
12/03   Unity Gower
12/04   Kate Brickley
12/04   Barb Minnich
12/04   Brooke Noble
12/04   Gerald Ulman
12/05   Randy Hisner
12/05   Nancy Thompson
12/07   Cathy Basham
12/07   Scott Bassett
12/07   Fred Soldner
12/08   Larry Jones
12/10   Scott Porter
12/11   Jessica Jones
12/11   Lowell Martin
12/11   Jeanne Raver
12/11   Jon A. Stevens
12/12   David Collier
12/12   Carrie Seitz
12/15   Michael Clark
12/15   Nancy Collier
12/20   Rod Simon
12/22   Ryan Brune
12/22   Bob Gent
12/22   Annabelle Heller
12/22   Alex Lee
12/23   Grant Porter
12/23   Luke Snyder
12/24   Nancy Anderson
12/24   Mary Jean Meyer
12/26   Kevin Cook
12/27   Adam Eichhorn
12/28   Greg Andrews
12/29   Kathy Howe
12/29   Libby Miller
12/30   Esther Lister
12/31   Jacob Briede
12/31   Ian Gilbert
12/31   Carol Grimm
12/31   Brandon Pickens

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December Anniversaries

12/07   Roger & Jolie Lee
12/11   Greg & Ann Andrews
12/14   James & Nancy Laucks
12/16   Doug & Penny Hinsky
12/18   Joe & Sarah Heller
12/18   Larry & Gerri Jones
12/22   Scott & Shelley Porter
12/27   Justin & Jessica Grant
12/28   David & Tammy Smith
Have your kiddos missed Jr. Church? Well, it’s back! Kids are invited to join teachers downstairs for Kids Own Worship where they’ll hear and experience an age appropriate story. Then, during discipleship hour we’ll kick the fun up a notch while we explore the same story in tons of more ways to solidify our learning.

Donations needed! Watch your email and check for sign-up sheets in the Narthex if you are willing to provide cookies, punch, candles, icing, graham crackers and other goodies!

Sunday, December 13th at 10am will be the Christmas musical production put on by the children and youth. After worship you are invited to join in the fun at a family Jesus birthday party in the Fellowship Hall!
The Christmas Jar program is in full swing. We have the Christmas Jars placed in various businesses in our Community until December 15th. Money collected will go again to families in our community who are less fortunate in hopes it will help them have a little better Christmas. Last year, with your support, we were able to help 30 families.

Thank you for your continued support in all our fund raising projects.

The Hope Chest Board, Management and Volunteers wish everyone A Blessed Christmas and New Year
TANA’S COLORFUL WORDS!
Highlighting Music & Movement Center

Music & Movement provides music appreciation and learning. Music helps children to following directions, develop listening skills, rhythmic sense and imitation of rhythmic patterns, and develop eye and hand coordination. Music is natural, spontaneous, and fun for young children. Music helps children to develop the following skills:

- Create and share sounds
- Use body motion (large and small muscle movements) to make sounds or dance
- Use contrasting terms such as loud & soft, high & low, fast & slow, pleasant & unpleasant to the ears.
- Sing along to familiar songs
- Smiles or laughs when music is played
- Treats instruments with care
- Expresses emotion through music
- Finds objects and creates own instruments
- Moderates movements to tempo

You might, Sing, sing a song... or Whistle while you work... If you’re happy and you know it... Jesus loves me... Music, like a fragrance, lets us relive a life time memory. Want to feel good, sing a happy tune. With a song in your heart let the music flow from your lips while making a joyful noise unto the Lord, daily!

A Special “Thank YOU!” To Judy Martin who assisted with music centers in all the classrooms. Judy supplied instruments, sheets of music, and headphones for children’s individual listening!

Until the holidays come out again!

THAT’S A FACT!
Learning Never STOPS

As adults grow, we learn there are a few defining words children need in their lives! As learning adults you may have heard “Look it up in the dictionary or check your Thesaurus.” As child care providers we refer to the dictionary in sharing this month’s newsletter words that start with the letter “I”:

Independence - Children need to be allowed to become self-sufficient. We can help create a future society capable of making good decisions. Your child needs to be allowed the freedom in making proper choices and to experience the consequences. Allowing a child to make their choice of what to wear is a great start. Being a “Good Decision” maker, does take time and practice while learning the cause and effect.

Individuality – Children need to be respected for their uniqueness and developing their individual qualities will help to make each child a distinct individual.

Involvement – Children need to feel they’re an important part of their family and classroom. Which enables them to be positive and active in their family and classroom!

In conclusion children learn to be adults, from those adults who share in their young lives each and every day!

Inviting everyone to “Keep Christ in Christmas” during this blessed season of our Savior’s birth. We send you our love with best wishes for a “Very Merry Christmas!”

THAT’S A FACT!
A big “thank you” goes to everyone who wrote and turned in a devotion for our 175th devotional book! We are preparing it for publication and will meet with our publisher soon. If you still have a devotion, we can take it until **Sun., Dec. 6**. Turn it in to Bev Stuck, Nancy Thompson, or the church office.

Thank you also for the great response in ordering anniversary shirts. The plan for pick up is between services in the narthex on Sundays, **Dec. 6** (hopefully they will be ready) and **Dec. 13**. See Carol and Mike Pettibone with any questions.

Remember to mark your calendars for **Sunday, April 10**, when we will celebrate by having **Bishop Michael Covner** bring us the morning message in one service followed by a catered dinner. You might want to be thinking of former members you would like to invite back for that day.

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**At this time of year we focus on “giving thanks”**

Every day at First United Methodist Church we say “Thanks” for God’s provision through people like you.

Because of your generous contributions, the church is able to do what we do – take the Word of God to Decatur and through out the World.

**Here are some helpful pointers for your 2015 tax planning:**

- Contributions need to be written, dated, or postmarked on or before December 31, 2015.
- We will hold our books open until January 6, 2016 for your convenience so that we may receipt any mailed contributions postmarked on or before December 31, 2015.
- Because First United Methodist Church is a “Qualified Charitable Organization” cash contributions of up to 50% of your adjusted gross income may be deducted.
- If you plan to itemize your deductions, you will need a written acknowledgment from the charitable organization for contributions in the amount of $250 or more. Include your Church receipts in your records since your cancelled checks alone are not adequate.

If you have any questions, call Aaron Gower, treasurer, at 724-6067, or Lowell Martin at 724-7409 they will be happy to help you.
## December 2015

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<th>Sun</th>
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<td>8:15 &amp; 10:00-Worship</td>
<td>6:30 pm-Boy Scouts &amp; Cub Scouts</td>
<td>2 pm-Bible Study</td>
<td>5-6 pm-Community Meal</td>
<td>6:30 pm-Board of Trustees</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:15 &amp; 11:15 am-Discipleship Groups</td>
<td>6:30 pm-Boy Scouts &amp; Cub Scouts</td>
<td>6 pm-Finance Committee</td>
<td>6:30 pm-Prayer in Chapel</td>
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<td>9 am-Noon-Emmanuel Project Distribution</td>
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<td>5-7 pm-Youth</td>
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<td>7 pm-Administrative Council</td>
<td>7 pm-A.A.</td>
<td>6:30 pm-Board of Trustees</td>
<td>5 pm-Hope Chest / Kids First Christmas Party</td>
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<td>8:15 &amp; 10:00-Worship</td>
<td>6:30 pm-Boy Scouts &amp; Cub Scouts</td>
<td>9-11 am-MOPS</td>
<td>5-6 pm-Community Meal</td>
<td>Newsletter Deadline</td>
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<td>9:15 &amp; 11:15 Discipleship Groups, 10 am-Children's Christmas Program, 11:15 am-Family Jesus Birthday Party, 5-7 pm-Youth</td>
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<td>8:15 &amp; 10:00-Worship</td>
<td>2 pm-Bible Study</td>
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<td>24 Christmas Eve Church office hours-8 am-12:00 noon</td>
<td>25 Christmas Day (Church office closed)</td>
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<td>9:15 &amp; 11:15 am-Discipleship Groups</td>
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<td>9 pm-Christmas Eve Worship Service</td>
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<td>6 pm-Agape Puppets</td>
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<td>Dec 27-Jan 1 Pastor Amy on vacation</td>
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First United Methodist Church
502 W. Monroe Street
Decatur, IN 46733
Phone:
260-724-3158
Web Site:
www.firstumcdecatur.org
Email:
office@firstumcdecatur.org
Senior Pastor:
Amy Covington
Visitation Pastor:
Harold Klinker
Children’s Ministry:
Annette Gower
Youth Director:
Chris Covington
Administrative Assistant:
Janet Frauhiger
Music Coordinator:
Judy Martin
Small Group Coordinator:
Mike Snyder
Kid’s First Child Care Director:
Tana Sheets
Hope Chest Manager:
Dot Vanhorn

Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ
for the transformation of the world
CONNECT—GROW—SERVE

SPECIAL HOLIDAY EVENTS

“The Lord Is Coming” Advent Series
Starts Sunday, November 29
Worship Times 8:15 & 10:00 am

Children’s Christmas Program
Sunday, December 13 at 10 am
Family Happy Birthday Jesus Party at 11:15 am

“Journey to the Heart of Christmas”
Sunday, December 20 at 6:00 pm
Agape Express Family Puppet Show

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Thursday, December 24 at 9:00 pm
Celebrate and receive the gift of God’s love with
Christmas carols, scripture and candle lighting