Into the Neighborhood

The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

John 1:14 The Message

I absolutely love Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase of John 1:14! The Word of God, moved into the neighborhood, what a great image for us who follow Jesus! In the season of Advent we are preparing our lives for the coming of Jesus and the redemption he brings. What does it mean that God put on flesh and moved into the neighborhood? It means that God deeply cares about us, his creation.

So who is it that moved into the neighborhood? First and foremost, it is the God who created us and who desires good for us. But it is also the God who desires more for us and for His created world than we could ever dream or imagine. If we look at the man the Word became, we can see what God moving into the neighborhood means for the world. Jesus was not content to see people being oppressed by a system that set them outside of God’s love and grace. The following of the law became an obsession of the religious and excluded so many who needed to know the love of God. Jesus showed people who God was and loved them where they were, restoring them to relationship with God. His death was the ultimate restoration, when through his sacrifice we are forgiven and made right with God.

Jesus was also not content to see people cast off another. He spoke love and grace into the lives of people who were physically ill, healing them and giving them hope again. He spoke love and grace into the lives of people who were seen as traitors by others. Look at Matthew and Zaccheaus. These were men who had money, power, and place in society, and yet they had been cast off because the collected taxes from the Jews. These men were shown love and grace by Jesus and they were able to see the world differently. The people who were possessed or struggling with mental illness, Jesus spoke to with love and grace and their lives were changed. The Word that moved in the neighborhood cared about the needs of people and worked to meet those needs.

Jesus also showed the people a new way to relate to God, to be in relationship with him. Look at Matthew chapters 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus taught his followers a new way to live. He taught his followers to see others as God sees them and then to act toward them as God would. His teaching was radical because it went against almost everything they knew to be “right.” The God who moved into the neighborhood wanted our lives to be different than those around us. Jesus taught that a right relationship with God was based in loving God and others. The Word who moved into the neighborhood taught his followers to see people and to treat them with love and grace.

Jesus lifted people from their situations and pointed them to a God who loves them and to a way of love. Jesus showed his followers that the Kingdom of God was a Kingdom they could be part of as they gave their lives fully to God and to others as God called them. This Kingdom was so great a man would sell everything he had to have it. This Kingdom was a kingdom where people were treated fairly and justly, and everyone was invited to sit at the table for a feast. This is who moved into the neighborhood. A God who desires followers whose lives are filled with love and grace, who seek to lift up those that others have cast off, to heal those who are sick, to make room at the table for all of God’s people, and to seek justice.

Jesus came to restore right relationship with God and to show us how that relationship is lived out here on earth. This is who moved into the neighborhood. This season of Advent we will prepare our hearts and lives to receive this neighbor and the restoration he brings. Are you prepared for your life to be changed because of who has moved in?

See you Sunday,
Pastor Amy
Worship in December

God Bless Us Everyone Advent Series
December 4, 11, 18

What can the redemption of Ebenezer Scrooge and the blessing he became teach us about God’s love and redemption for us?

The Animals First Christmas
December 11
ONE SERVICE @ 10:00 am
Children’s Christmas Program

Christmas Day Worship
ONE SERVICE @ 10:00 am
Come as you are after waking up to celebrate Christ’s birth. We will worship with carol singing, lifting our praise to God!
Present: Chairperson Mike Pettibone, Pastor Amy Covington, Jo Bollinger, Carol Pettibone, Clint Knaub, Aaron Gower, Annette Gower, Leanna Noble, John Stevens, Penny Hinsky, Beverly Stuck

1. Opening Thought: Mike Pettibone asked, “If our church were to close would it be noticed by our community?” Consensus, was “Yes” no longer Kids First Childcare, Hope Chest, Fishes & Loaves, children’s activities, Mama Talk, and much much more. Much is happening within our small world, serving others and finding the beauty in every human being’s spirit.

Communion & Prayer: Pastor Amy

2. Approved Minutes: August 16, 2016 Minutes motion made by Penny Hinsky seconded by Carol Pettibone, approved by all.

3. Approved 2017 Ministry Budget: Aaron Gower reported, Conference was paid up to August. Financial Committee passed line by line budget total $319,832.00 for 2017 fiscal year. Helen Walters motioned Ad Council accept budget, Jo Bollinger seconded and approved by all.

4. Approved 2017 First UMC Lay Leadership/Nominations: Pastor Amy shared a couple places need yet to be filled. Jo Bollinger made the motion to accept Pastor Amy’s recommendations, seconded by Leanna Noble and approved by all.

5. Leadership Training/Planning Event: To discuss plans for 2017, discuss new events, with action plan for calendar scheduling. Pastor Amy & Mike Pettibone with collaborate and set date.

6. Safe Sanctuaries Policy: Pastor Amy, made reference to policy and training she will secure date.

7. Mission Team: Leanna reported. There have been 2 laundry days, cookout, and painting at CountryBrooke. Continued support for missionary Steve Newnum. Caring Covers are still available. Newborn Ministry has been reactivated. Fishes & Loaves serving 160 to 170 meals each week.

8. Community Outreach Ministries: October, various church groups reached out touching others. Positive comments were shared, Safety Village treated 888 children with adults possible 2000 people. First UMC had 2 areas. Thanks to organizers Janet Torson, Jeff and Jimmy Sheet. Annette reported, Trunk or Treat success with over 700 people. Also the Glow Party was a hit. Over 50 people took part in Callithumpian Parade. Extended Thank You to float driver Jim Taylor and his co driver Gail Taylor. Golden Meadows, requested Sunday pick up. Four residents are attending 9:15 Alpha & Omega and 10:00 Worship service.

9. Review Charge Conference: Held at St. Marks. This was the first time Adams/Wells counties held a joint, well-attended meeting. District Superintendent Dave Neckers and Associate Superintendent Kathie Jones were very informative, all churches having concern about memberships. Message of HOPE was given by D.S. Neckers.

Closing Prayer: Leanna Noble

Submitted by: Beverly Stuck
Discipleship Offerings for December

The Redemption of Scrooge

4 Week Advent Study

Multiple Groups begin meeting the week of November 27

Sunday morning @ 11:15, Monday evening @ 6:30,
Tuesday afternoon @ 2:00

Cost: $12.00 (if you can make a donation)

Sign up and Books @ Connection Center in Church Lobby
Thank You Notes...
Thank you for all the kind words and thoughtful deeds you extended to Beverly’s sickness and passing. Thank you also for all the prayers that you offered on Beverly and her family’s behalf. God answered them by granting her a holy peace as she fearlessly walked through the valley of death. God is granting me a peace in the face of this extreme loss.

In Christ I remain,
Roy Ehrsam

To the family of First United Methodist Church,
Thank you for all the prayers and cards. I truly believe in the power of prayer. I also want to thank all doctors, nurses and professional people that have given me excellent care along the way. We truly have skilled people helping with the work of the Lord. I truly feel blessed. With the prayers and God’s help I will be fine.

Thank You,
Max & Pam Fuelling

To Whom It May Concern:
It was a good meal, and I thank you. Thanks to David Haggard for delivering it. The right word at the right time is like precious gold set in silver. Proverbs 25: 11. Do what makes you happy. Be with those who make you smile. Laugh as much as you breathe. Love as long as you live.

Good Luck while we’re living!
James Hackman

First United Methodist Church
Funeral Dinners
With the year of 2016 ending soon, it seems like a good time to say, “Thank YOU” for your help, with funeral dinners over the past 6 months.

“So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of household of faith.” Galatians 6:10

When you received a call, your positive response of donating desserts, fruit bowls, and your time has been deeply appreciated. Your compassion has helped our church families share stories, memories, laugh and begin to heal after losing a family member. Doing good helps keep us all, smiling.

Thank YOU,
Beverly Stuck

Callithumpian Parade Thanks Yous
Thank you, God, for the perfect fall night to be outside at the parade. Thank you to all who came to walk, ride, and hand out card invitations and candy. Special thank yous to Jim Taylor for the wagon and for pulling it in the parade, to Doug Rieth for the use of his building to store and decorate the wagon, and to Charlie Brune for the signs. God bless you all!

175th Anniversary Thank Yous
Heartfelt thank yous go out to everyone who helped with our 175th Anniversary celebration. Special thank you to the committee who has worked faithfully for 2 years. God bless you!

Happy Holidays!
~from the Staff Parish Committee

December Birthdays
12/01 Rich Collier
12/01 Ashley Cook
12/01 Robin Everett
12/02 Payton Boyd (16)
12/02 Jon Stevens
12/03 Sawyer Boyd
12/03 Unity Gower (6)
12/04 Barb Minnich
12/04 Brooke Noble
12/04 Gerald Ulman
12/05 Randy Hisner
12/05 Kyllim Myers (5)
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

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
12/22 Scott & Shelley Porter
12/27 Justin & Jessica Grant
12/28 David & Tammy Smith

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 18. Contributions can be given to any member of the committee below.

Mike Boyd
LeAnna Noble
Phyllis Irwin
Jeff McIntosh
Vicky Koning
Ian Gilbert
What's Taking Root: Look for the Serving Tree, Monroe Street entrance, become colorful with leaves of service. Choose a colored leaf, write a brief sentence how you served 175 minutes (3 hours), then placed on the tree. The Serving Tree growing colorful will show our caring ways for others as we go forth making disciples for Jesus Christ.

Please remember to add your leaf (leaves) to the Serving Tree by the Monroe St. door. One leaf represents 175 minutes of service. Our goal is 175 hours of service represented by 58 leaves by Christmas.

175th Anniversary Year-End Thoughts

As I reflect on our year-long celebration these are some ways we attempted to follow our vision.

We Connected in Community both past and present through History Moments, the Mini History Book, John Wesley Day, the Birthday Party honoring our 50 year members, the dinner with Bishop Coyner, being in the parade and even wearing our shirts.

We Grew in Faith as we shared our testimonies in the devotional book “Our Story”, were taught by Bishop Coyner and by Rev. Kite portraying John Wesley, by the testimonies of our UMW members and of our 50 year members at the Birthday Party.

We are Serving in Love as we fill out our Serving Tree with leaves telling of how we are giving 175 minutes of service. Our prayer for the future is that as followers of Jesus Christ we continue to put our vision into action.
Please join us on **Sunday, December 11th** during 10am Worship for a Christmas play put on by the children and youth.

**“The Animals”**

Step into the stable and hear the excitement and commotion of the animals, as they learn about and welcome the newborn Savior.

Everyone is invited to join us after worship for an intergenerational time of fellowship, snacks and games at our Jesus Birthday Party!

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Agape Express Puppets’ present...

**Dr. Newheart’s CHRISTMAS**

It starts at 6pm on Sunday, December 18th.
Everyone is welcome and it’s completely free!
Poinsettias
Flower Garden Fund
Spring Mulch Project
If you would like to order a beautiful poinsettia, make a donation to the Flower Garden Fund or the Spring Mulch Project, please fill out the form below. After filling out the form, please return it to the offering plate or the Church office by **December 4th**. Honorees and donors will be listed in the bulletin on Christmas Day and flowers can be picked up after services.

**Poinsettias**

- Medium 6 ½” pot $15.00
- Circle one
  - Red
  - white
  - pink
  - burgundy
  - fancy

- Large 8 ½” pot $30.00
- Red
- white

***************

**Spring Mulch or Donation**

- per Scoop of mulch $18.00
- Garden Fund $_______

**TOTAL** $_______

*In Memory of* ________________________________

*In Honor of* ________________________________

*Given by* ________________________________
The Christmas Jar program is in full swing. We have the Christmas Jars in various businesses in the community until December 12th. Money collected will go to families in the community who are less fortunate to help them have nicer Christmas. Last year we were able to help 25 families.

This year we received another large donation of coats and money from the UUC church in Magley. With this donation and others throughout the year, we have helped many families who were in need. Thank you for your continued support with all our projects.

The Hope Chest Board, Management and Volunteers wish everyone A Blessed Christmas and New Year.
Tana’s Colorful Words
Christmas Memories

The first Christmas, was the Christ child birth given the name, Jesus! Today, Christmas is a time to create wonderful lifelong memories for all God’s children. When you think of Christmas past, are there certain memories or traditions that have become a permanent part of your family’s celebration? One of life’s sweetest gift is creating warm and happy memories for our family and friends. Christmas, is a wondrous, magical, and fun time for children of all ages. Here at Kid’s First we try our best to make it memorable, for the children in our care. We celebrate the birthday of Baby Jesus in various ways. Creating art projections, decorating trees and much more.

This is a wonderful time for family to share and read to children about His greatest Gift named Jesus! Luke 2: 1-20

Let’s all keep Christ in Christmas creating family memories with traditions that will continue to go forth into our tomorrows.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

Until the Come out Again!

That’s A Fact
Santa Claus

We know only God is eternal and He gave us his son, the Baby Jesus. But who’s this guy Santa Claus? Where did this jolly Christmas character come from? A made up character or was he real? It all began with Saint Nicholas, whose name has changed, becoming Santa Claus. Yes, he was a real person, during the fourth century, the Bishop of Myra. Because of his faith, this good man spent several years in prison. Yet while in prison, many prisoners were converted to the Christian faith by his witness.

Jesus, the Christ (Messiah) is the most important person during the Advent or Christmas season. However, Saint Nicholas conveys a spirit of generosity and love, and remembered for giving gifts. Because Saint Nicholas gave us such a good example of helping the poor, today Santa Claus can be a healthy part of our celebrations. If Santa Claus has become too commercial or too popular, perhaps we’ve forgotten his historical origin as the beloved Bishop of Myra who obeyed Christ’s command. We too are to express love, caring, and giving help to all those who are in need.

Merry Christmas to All
and to all a Good Night!

That’s A Fact
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Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world

CONNECT—GROW—SERVE

SPECIAL HOLIDAY EVENTS

Children’s Christmas Program
Sunday, December 11 at 10:00 am (One Service)
“Happy Birthday Jesus” Family Party at 11:00 am

Agape Express Puppet Show – “Dr. Newheart”
Sunday, December 18 at 6:00 pm

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Saturday, December 24 at 9:00 pm

Christmas Praise and Worship
Sunday, December 25 at 10:00 am (One Service)