



THE VISITOR

December/Advent 2018

Christ Church Traditions

Sunday, December 9-Hanging of the Greens

Come prepared for a time of special music, readings, and scripture as this service reminds us of the Advent preparing to which we are called.

Sunday, December 16-Christmas Program and Breakfast

Calling all stars! The official word has come from Heavenly Headquarters: Jesus will soon be born in Bethlehem and a special star is needed to help light the way for shepherds, wise men and all others who would come to worship the Newborn King. Stanley wants the job...but his fellow shiners think he is one size too small. They're all about to learn that God can accomplish big things through all kinds of people and events.



Our annual Sunday School Christmas Program is Sunday, December 16th. Please join us for breakfast before the program downstairs in the Fellowship Hall at 8:45am. The program will take place at 9:30 am upstairs in the Sanctuary.



Sunday, December 16-Cookie Exchange

Just in time for Christmas celebrations, the Fellowship Committee is hosting their 10th annual cookie exchange following worship. Bring 1 or 2 dozen of your favorite Christmas cookies or treats to the Conference Room before service where the cookies will be arranged for eating and packing. After the service, come and enjoy a cookie, hot chocolate, or milk, then package a dozen or two to take home with you. Containers will be available or bring your own!

Sunday, December 16-Caroling

Meet at Brenn-Field at 6 p.m. for a brief service of scripture and carols, then we'll split up to carol to some of our members. Afterwards, gather at the church for food and fun. Bring a finger food to share and any card or board games to play.



Coming Sundays

Advent 1 - December 2, 2018

The Hope of the Prophets
Jeremiah 33:14-16

Advent 2 - December 9, 2018

The Faith of the Forerunner
Luke 1:67, 76-79
Luke 3:2-6

Advent 3 - December 16, 2018

The Joy of the Redeemed
Zephaniah 3:14-17
Isaiah 12:1-6

Advent 4 - December 23, 2018

The Love of a Mother
Luke 1:39-45
Luke 1:46-55

Christmas Eve - December 24, 2018

The Birth of Our Savior
Luke 2:1-20

7:30 & 11:00 Candlelight Service

(musical preludes beginning 30-40 minutes prior)

First Sunday after Christmas - December 30, 2018

New Clothes
Psalm 148
I Samuel 2:18-20

Advent Family Night

Advent Family Night will be held Sunday, Dec. 2, 5-7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. All are invited! The theme is 'Christmas Around the World.' Families will have the chance to travel the world and hear about Christmas traditions in different countries. Dinner will also be served.



From the Pastor's Pen

'Tis the season...for cleaning house!

From the Wednesday before Thanksgiving to the day after our New Year's Eve party, we spend more time getting the house in order this season than we do any other time of the year. Even the children help with the dusting and general pickup – setting our homes in a state of order rarely seen the rest of the year.

In her book, *The Uncluttered Heart*, Beth Richardson tells us that Advent is like house-cleaning.

I wouldn't invite people over for dinner without cleaning the house. And I ready myself for the birth of Christ by getting rid of the clutter in my heart. Advent is about making room in my life – my heart, mind, and spirit – for God's blessing through Jesus' birth. When that holy day comes, I want to have a spacious heart ready for God's gift of love.

During these four weeks preceding Christmas, we prepare our "outside lives." We buy gifts, make family plans, attend special church services, and clean house. We also prepare our hearts, minds, and spirits by sweeping out the corners of our hearts, cleaning up the clutter in order to make space for God's hope, peace, joy, love, and presence.¹

How do we unclutter our hearts? First, let me encourage you to commit yourself and your family to nightly devotions during Advent. The church offers these at no cost, and there are a number of good resources available online and at the bookstore. Get one and get started. You'll be glad you did.

Second, I would encourage you to take an inventory of the relationships that matter most. Look seriously at how you treat yourself and ask, "Would I let anyone treat someone I love that way?" Be sure to take a moment before family comes over (or you go to their house) to ask, "What am I still holding onto that I need to let go of?" And, most importantly, find a quiet spot sometime very soon to sit in stillness and ask, "Lord, how is it between us? When did I talk to you last and what has happened since?"

Unclutter your heart this season and enjoy the presence of Christ who comes as a guest invited.

From my family to yours, a most joyous Advent and Christmas season!

Pastor Mike

¹Beth A. Richardson, *The Uncluttered Heart: Making Room for God During Advent and Christmas* (Upper Room, 2009), 12f.

Youth News

Youth Fellowship (6th-12th grades)

December 2: No Youth Fellowship: Please come to Advent Family Night

December 9: Unlocked Escape Room/White Elephant Gift Exchange: 11:30am-3:30pm

December 16th: Caroling: Please meet at Brennfield at 5:50pm

December 23: No Youth Fellowship

December 30: No Youth Fellowship

We will resume our meetings after the holidays on Sunday, January 6th

Kids Club (K-5th grades)

December 5 & 12: We will continue to practice for our annual Christmas program on December 5th and 12th from 5:15-7:30pm. All Kids Club kids NOT participating in the Christmas program will have normal Kids Club (5:15-6:30pm).

December 16: Christmas Program : Please be in the Fellowship Hall for breakfast at 8:30 am.

December 19: Regular Kids Club meeting

There will be no Kids Club on December 26, or January 2nd due to the holiday break. We will resume on January 9.

Save the Date: Youth & Mentor Retreat: January 4-5:

All our youth & mentor pairs are invited to our annual Youth & Mentor retreat on January 4th-5th. More details will be coming home in the mail.

Christ Church 150th Year Anniversary

Starting in January Christ Church will start celebrating the 150th Anniversary of our church congregation here in Orrville. As we prepare special events for 2019 we are looking for family stories about our church history which has been passed down through the generations. You may have memories, pictures, or spoken history passed down to you about Christ Reformed Church on Mill St. in Orrville and the known congregational walk to Christ Church at 301 N. Main St. Maybe you were married by Rev. Otto Gerber or another early pastor. Maybe you were baptized or confirmed in the Christ Evangelical and Reformed Church with Rev. Lahr. If you have accounts of written or verbal church history that you would like to share please contact us. We would love to hear from you. It will make our celebration even more fascinating.

We will be decorating the bulletin boards in the educational building with historical photos and information through present day. We will also be collecting artifacts to put on display in our showcase. If you have items such as old church dishes, plates, Bibles, etc., we would love to include them. Vicki Anderson and Linda McHenry

Christmas Gifts for a Cause

Suzanne Jelinek will be selling felted figures and ornaments in the gathering area for the first 3 Sundays in December. These items are made by hand by a group of women in Kyrgyzstan. Prices range from \$10 to \$25. Profits will directly support the community of women who support their families by making these unique pieces.

YMCA Lunch & Learn

The Orrville YMCA is holding its monthly Lunch and Learn for seniors on Friday, December 14, 11:30-1. "Ringing In the Holidays" will have 25 organizations sharing their latest news. That means 25 door prizes! Glendora is providing the hor d'oeuvres. Please register by Friday, December 7 by calling 330-683-2153.

Christmas Study

The Adventures in Faith Sunday School class is starting new series called, "The Christmas Experience" by Kyle Idleman. The series tells the story from the point of view of Mary. All are invited to join them for this special study. They meet in the Lower Room at 9:00, Sunday mornings.



Thank you to all the participants and those who brought animals for the Living Nativity. It was a sight to behold.

Consistory Notes – November meeting

- Christian Education Committee is working on holiday events - Home for the Holidays, with the Bridging Team providing help with refreshments, and Advent Family Night.
- Fellowship Committee announced that the annual Cookie Exchange will be held on December 16.
- Property Committee reports that snow equipment is ready to go.
- Policy and Personnel Committee has welcomed Henry Durden as custodian following the retirement of Vonseng Luangraj.
- Stewardship Committee announced that stewardship packets are available. The budget will be presented at the next Consistory meeting, followed by a congregational meeting on December 16 to approve the budget.
- Worship Committee reported that the Hanging of the Greens will be on December 9. Communion will be served at the late Christmas Eve service.
- Ideas are being generated for the 150th anniversary celebration.
- Bridging Team will have welcome bags ready for Home for the Holidays, along with brochures. Nametags for worship have been ordered.

Treasurer's Report

Oct. 31, 2018

	Month of Oct. '18	YTD	Last Year
Current Fund			
Income	\$14,430	\$190,886	\$213,984
Expenses	\$12,296	\$191,966	\$233,834
Net Surplus (Deficit)	\$ 2,296	\$ (1,080)	\$ (19,850)
Benevolent Fund	\$ 1,890	\$ 34,676	\$ 37,402
Pastor's Emergency Fund	\$ 374	\$ 6,249	\$ 6,139
Neighbors In Need	\$ 773	\$ 773	\$ 635

2018 Contributions

For contributions to be counted as a gift in 2018 it must be in the church office by Monday, December 31, 2018.

Please review your 2018 giving statement for accuracy when you receive it in January. The 2019 envelopes will be available in the gathering area on December 9. If you did not have envelopes for 2018 but would like a set for 2019 please let me or Elizabeth know.

Again, thank you for your generous giving this past year for current expenses, benevolent and special offerings.

Brian Amstutz, Treasurer

Thank You

We want to thank Lisa, Elizabeth, and the Bonfire and Hayride committee along with Bill Arnold and his tractor for all of their hard work. The crisp night air was perfect for the tree stump bonfires and roasting hot dogs and making S'mores. The hayride was a real treat for young and old alike. It was a joy to see so many people in attendance enjoying our church fellowship. We only hope that this event will be able to continue in the years ahead. We feel thankful and blessed to be a part of Christ Church.

Mary Lou Bupp & Linda McHenry

On behalf of my family and I, I want to thank everyone and express my sincere appreciation for the retirement reception. It means a lot that everyone was there with my family and me to celebrate.

Thank you for all the love and support throughout the 35 years that my husband and I have worked here.

Blessings to all, Vongseng Luangraj

Thank you to Lisa Yeagley and the work crew of Christ Church youth and adults who did a great job in gathering the leaves in our yard and in piling them near the road.

Jim and Sharon Nelson

I would like to thank the ICU teams and members who have sent cards following my fall and subsequent surgery. I have been enjoying them.

Sincerely, Linda Madigan

Advent Offering (December 9) – California Wildfires

Our 2018 Christ Church Advent Offering is earmarked for the victims of the recent California wildfires. At last count, 88 people have perished. Almost 300 are still unaccounted for and are still missing. 17,000 are homeless and 50,000 have been displaced from their communities for an uncertain amount of time. One-quarter of a million acres have burned. Almost 19,000 buildings have been destroyed, including homes, schools, churches and relief agencies. And while the fires are now controlled, the conditions have been created for mudflows and rockslides – the danger continues.

The United Church of Christ Disaster Ministries program has been coordinating short-term relief and long-term recovery efforts in the area with local UCC Conferences since the wildfires of early 2018. Disaster funds have transformed churches into sanctuaries and temporary shelters. Gift cards, including holiday gift card packages, are now being distributed. UCC funds are purchasing toiletries, blankets, food, and sturdy tents. Supplies are being provided to impacted school districts and students. Pet food and supplies have been provided to overwhelmed animal shelters.

UCC Disaster Ministries Executive Zach Wolgemuth has explained that long-term recovery will be the costliest and most under supported phase of the overall relief effort. Giving for such efforts is the most effective, efficient, and impactful support individuals can provide.

The UCC Disaster Ministries framework is already in place because of the One Great Hour of Sharing and Church World Service funds. This means 100% of funds designated for UCC Wildfire Relief will be used for Wildfire Relief – there is no diversion of contributions for administrative costs.

This Christmas please share with those who have lost everything through our Advent Offering.

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

12/01 Dana Keirstead
Jack Wallace
Beau Stocker
12/02 Elise Troyer
12/03 Marty Johnson
12/04 John Swinehart
Jena Jones
12/06 Al Yeagley
12/07 John Curtis
Tyler Bates
Olivia Weeman
Sean Smith
12/08 Betty Kohler
Scott Falb
12/10 Carrie LeFever
Kayla Bumgardner
12/11 Florence Duemmel
Bob Duemmel
Joe Hranko
Rebecca Sigler
Jaxon Curie
Charlotte Curie
12/12 Suzanne Stocker
Jayne McGrew
Michaela Donley

12/13 Dennis Landaw
12/14 Joan Vance
Laura Brownlee
12/15 Bob Landis
Sith Luangraj
Allison Gresser
Molly Hostetler
Finn Smith
12/16 Sara Shaffer
12/17 Katherine Blasingame
12/18 Sheila Bricker
Carole Hahn
Gunner Curtis
12/19 Craig Keirstead
12/23 William Stocker
Wanda Falb
Jacob Weyrauch
12/24 Heather Tompkins
Josh Hershey
Meredith Landis
12/27 Karen Gresser
12/28 Maryalice Roush
Elliot Wagers

12/30 John Berkey
Linda Madigan
Jeanne Orosz
Caleb Maupin
Jayne Wallace
12/31 Donald Grimes
Margaret Mangano
Jim Swinehart

Anniversaries

12/03 John and Marty Johnson, Jr.
12/09 Jason and Lori Ayers
12/12 Ben and Robin Stocker
12/17 Josh and Mollie Curie
12/18 Bill and Jennifer Georges
12/22 Gene and Judie Pouly
12/27 Kevin and Meredith Kropf
12/31 Gordon and Margaret Maupin



Sun**Mon****Tue****Wed****Thu****Fri****Sat**

December 2018

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2 9:00a Sunday School 10:15a Worship; Communion 11:30a Parish Nurses—BP's 5-7p Advent Family Night	3 7:00p Spiritual Council	4 8a-8p Bell Ringing at Buehler's 6:30p Youth Ministries Council	5 5:15p Kid's Club 6:30p Carol Choir 6:30p Bell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir	6	7	8
9 9:00a Sunday School 10:15a Worship; Hanging of the Greens 11:30a Youth Fellowship 4:00p Confirmation	10 7:00p Consistory Office Closed	11	12 5:15p Kid's Club 6:30p Carol Choir 6:30p Bell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir	13	14	15
16 8:45a Breakfast 9:30a Sunday School Christmas Program in Sanctuary 10:15a Worship 11:30a Cookie Exchange 6:00p Brenn-Field Service, Caroling & Party	17	18 11:30a Golden Singles 6:30p Bridging Team	19 5:15p Kid's Club 6:30p Carol Choir 6:30p Bell Choir 7:30p Chancel Choir	20	21	22
23 9:00a Sunday School 10:15a Worship	24 Candlelight Christmas Eve Services 7:30 & 11:00 (musical preludes beginning 30-40 minutes prior) Office Closed	25 Office Closed	26 Office Closed	27	28	29
30 9:00a Sunday School 10:15a Worship	31 Office Closed					