

St. James United Church of Christ

9008 Meisner Road, Casco, MI 48064 / www.ourstjameschurch.org/

News from Pastor Ken

Newsletter
December 2017
Volume 2, Issue 12

Greetings to all! Happy New Year and Merry Christmas!

I realize that it sounds odd hearing these well wishes in this order but that is how it goes in the church world. According to the Liturgical calendar the church New Year officially begins the first Sunday in December this year with the first Sunday in Advent. For all of you keeping score this begins year B.

My understanding and appreciation for Advent continues to grow with every passing year. When I think of Advent is all about it is helpful for us to consider that Advent is to Christmas what Lent is to Easter. It is a time of spiritual preparation and discernment. It is that time when we can consider this incredible gift that we are about to receive and how we would like to use it. I like to think of the gift of Christmas as an unlimited gift card that we can use anytime and anyplace to shape and guide our lives. But like all gift cards, they only give us benefit if we use them.

I think my Christmas' have become richer and more fulfilling as my Advent practices become richer and more intentional. I use Advent as a time of spiritual centering, reflection and preparation for the year to come so when Christmas gets here I am really ready. Not necessarily on the outside but on the inside. I think part of what use to (and still can) make me crazy about Christmas is that I thought everything needed to be just right on the outside in order to be right on the inside, including gifts, decorating the house, the tree, the lights, the dishes, the...the..., the.... You see, I can make myself stressed just thinking about it. And in the course of potentially becoming overwhelmed about the outside, it becomes easier to forget to prepare and make ready the inside. The heart and the spirit of Christmas.

So for the past few years it is first things first. Heart and spirit first and then allow some time to put up a little tree, a few decorations and a little bit of shopping. Just as a note, I don't buy things people won't use just because I don't know what they need. Ah.... Christmas

So once again I have gathered my meditation materials and have been making my short list of any specific things I am seeking God's direction about in my life. I have also printed my sunrise/sunset

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Upcoming Events

- ◆ December 3 - Communion Sunday, Discretionary Fund &
- ◆ December 12 - Council Meeting
- ◆ December 14 - Women's Christmas Party
- ◆ December 16 - Euchre
- ◆ December 17 - Communion Sunday
- ◆ December 21 - Blue Christmas Service
- ◆ December 24 - Sunday Service 9am, 7pm, & 11pm
- ◆ December 31 - Healing Service

The Discretionary Fund December 3, 2017

Did you know this fund is utilized to aid with rent, utilities, medical supplies, food and transportation to doctors, etc.?

This is generated from the loose change collected the first Sunday of each month. Please empty your pockets and change purses that day to meet the needs of our church

calendar and stuck it to the refrigerator in preparation for fasting. As many of you know I fast (nothing to eat or drink from sunrise to sunset) the purple seasons of the church calendar. Please don't do this without discussing it. However, if you would like to join me in spirit for a day in prayer, meditation or whatever practice you use to center your spirit, I would enjoy sharing that with you. I continue to be excited about the journey ahead. This year I invite you to join me in re-arranging our priorities and sharing with me in ways to more fully enjoy Advent and therefore Christmas.

First, slow down and take time to remember what this season is truly about. It is time for thinking about our individual relationships with God and listening for what it is God would have us to do and who it is that God would have us to be. It is a time of prayer, reflection and discerning. It is a time for considering and acting on how it is you want God to impact your life. I also want to remind you to expect the unexpected.

Secondly, Advent is the beginning of the new church year. It is a season for appreciating what is, together with the hope of what is to come. I look with anticipation toward this New Year both in my personal life as well as our life together as a community of faith. This has been an exciting year of growth and transition for me and our church family. There continues to be an exciting sense of energy and anticipation. I invite you to pray and prepare for what God is calling you individually and we as a community, to be and to do in the year ahead.

Third, Advent is the gateway to Christmas and all the joy and anticipation that comes with it. As I stated earlier, I am aware that during the holidays we are sometimes consumed with trying to do life perfectly. It seems that no matter how much we do or how hard we work there will always be a couple things more we could have done. Is not that the way life is. I think the key to happiness during the holidays as well as throughout life is to slow down, plan for what you can plan, do what you can do, and then relax and take time to enjoy the ride, knowing that things are always going to turn out a little differently than the plan. Make sure to leave room for the Spirit to do its thing.

During this time of Advent, I invite you to follow that simple formula, plan a little, do a little, and enjoy, remembering that the biggest gift that you will receive is not under the tree. It is the gift of God's unending love for you, the gift of boundless, unconditional, unearned, mercy, grace and forgiveness. So, sit a moment, wait a while, take a deep breath, expect the unexpected and then prepare to open the Gift that will transform your life forever. Expect a miracle.

Pastor Ken Newsletter Continued

Remember that whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are held in God's unconditional love, boundless mercy, and unending grace. And there is a place for you here.

May you know the love and grace of God in your life. May your heart and life be filled with the Spirit. Merry Christmas!!

Take care and be well, Peace
Ken



Military Prayer List

I will be including a list in the newsletter of our men and women in the military, to acknowledge those who serve and to pray for their safety. Please submit your love one's, family member or friend's name, rank and branch of service to Roberta Fisher to be placed on the list.

Free Electric Stove & Water Heater

St. James is replacing one of the electric stoves in the church basement with a newer model. Anyone in need of an older working electric stove or a standard propane water heater. Please contact any member of church council if interested and to arrange pick up. Please pick-up by December 17th!

Adopting A Family for Christmas

St. James has adopted a family for Christmas. We have a Christmas tree in the basement on the sign-up table for gift tags of items needed. Buy the item on the tag, wrap and return to St. James with your tag loosely attached to package by December 17th. This is a family of three children and their Dad. If you would like to donate food items in addition to the tag items please bring those on Sunday, December 17th as well.

★
GOD
ROCK
SAVIOR
MESSIAH
IMMANUEL
HOLY • CHILD
MIGHTY • GOD
LORD • OF • ALL
LAMB • OF • GOD
CHRIST • OF • GOD
KING • OF • KINGS
THE • WORD • OF • GOD
ALPHA • AND • OMEGA
PRINCE • OF • PEACE
LIGHT • OF • THE • WORLD
HEAD • OF • THE • CHURCH
SON • OF • THE • HIGHEST
EVERLASTING • FATHER
RESURRECTION • AND • LIFE
JESUS

Prayers for....



Karen Marie
Sue
Scott
Mimi
Dan
Rich
Maraleen
Dale
Irene
Clark Russell
Tony

George
David
Deborah
Lynn
Johnnie
Paul
Peggy
Marion
Rev. Perkins
Roslynn
Joanne
Mike

Outreach Ministry

Kids in Distress

Current needs are as follows:

Diapers Size 5, Bath Towels, Twin Sheets
Pots Pans/ Dishes/ Silverware, Fabric
Softener Sheets, HE Laundry Soap

St. Augustine Richmond Food Pantry

In need of... Stuffing mix (turkey, chicken or cornbread), boxed potatoes, paper towel, condiments (pickles, olives, salad dressing, mustard, ketchup, mayonnaise, etc.) jello, rice (one-pound bags), cream of mushroom soup, coffee, tea, desert mixes (cake, muffin, etc., frosting), gravy jar (turkey, chicken, brown or mushroom), gift cards to Kroger or Meijer

Blue Water Area Rescue Mission - B-WARM

B-WARM NEEDS

Cleaning supplies: Toilet bowl cleaner, bleach, laundry soap, dish washing detergent, bathroom cleansers.

Men's clothing: sweatshirts, coats, and jackets.

Paper supplies: paper towels, napkins, toilet tissue, kleenex.

Miscellaneous: deodorants, shaving cream, shampoo, disposable razors.

B-WARM still has a need for volunteers to cook part time, make phone calls, and do some sewing. They are also looking for someone who specializes in writing grants. If anyone is especially generous and has a van they don't drive anymore, they could use one of those too.

Happy Birthdays in December

1 - Mark Beattie
3 - Frank Tringali
3 - Jerry Maedel
6 - Kim LaDuke
9 - Rusty Stover
11 - Ashley Beattie
19 - Shirley Teltow
25 - Jeff Bandlow
25 - Ken Gadd
27 - Jim Robertson
28 - Jeff LaDuke
28 - Robin Meldrum
31 - Steph Bacheldor

Worship Ministry

Volunteers Needed Please sign-up

Please consider signing up for the ministries of Usher/Greeter, Liturgists and Altar Care. We need Advent Readers for this upcoming Advent Season, there are a few Sundays left to cover. Sign-up sheets for each are provided in the basement.

Christmas Service Schedule

- *Thursday, December 21 – Blue Christmas Service – 7pm
- *Sunday, December 24 – Sunday Service 9am
- *Sunday, December 24 – Family Christmas Service 7pm
- *Sunday, December 24 – Christmas Eve Communion Service 11pm
- *Monday, December 25 – Christmas Service at St. Paul's 10:00am
- *Sunday, December 31 – Lessons 7 Carol & Healing Service 9am

Happy Anniversary's in December

16 - Kris and Wally Dombrowski

Mitten Tree

There will be a mitten tree set up in the church basement to hang hats, scarfs, mittens and socks on. It will be set up by Sunday, November 19th. We will then distribute them to Kids in Distress or any other organizations that could use them before Christmas.

Spiritual Growth Ministry

We need volunteers to assist with Sunday School, please let Sue Tews know if you can assist.

Earthy Gifts Ministry

Financial Goal Report November Financial Goal Report

The November financial goal was \$5,750.00. Total donations collected including last Sunday and \$310.50 Euchre brings our donation to \$2,901.50 with only today to meet our goal.

Council Members Needed!!!!

St. James will need five members of the church to volunteer by January 1st for three years to be a member of the church council. Please notify Pastor Ken or one of the council members if you are interested in the rewarding service.



Fellowship

Celebrate the Season

Women's Annual Christmas Party

Thursday, December 14th at 6:30 p.m.

Church Fellowship Hall (Basement)

Come for fun and fellowship and enjoy the Holiday Spirit!

Potluck dinner with a short program and Secret Pal reveal.

The free-will offering from the evening will go toward the new church roof.

Please bring a dish to share

Guests are welcome

If you bring a guest, remember to bring a gift for them too.

Bring a gift for your Secret Pal and be choose another for next year.

Christmas Shoeboxes

We collect the below items for boys and girls from the age of 2 to 14 years old. Our goal is to fill 100 boxes by November 2018 without running out of items. December 2017 collection is for hats, gloves or mittens (all sizes), socks (all sizes). Items accepted anytime are: toys, school supplies (pens, pencils, erasers, pencil sharpeners, small note books, glue, crayons), hygiene items (soap, washcloths, combs, toothbrushes, floss), headbands, barrettes and bows.

We can no longer provide toothpaste, toy guns or army men, paint sets and glue bottles.

If you are not a shopper, you can still donate to this worthy cause by providing a cash donation or **monies to cover the \$9.00 mailing costs.**

Community Outreach for Local Family

St. James has adopted a family for Christmas. The family consist of Dad, Mom and three children. We are supplying gifts for all according to each of their needs and food for a Christmas meal. Just pick an ornament(s) off the Christmas tree board located in the basement, buy the item listed and return present wrapped to church. If supplying food items just bring to church

Roof Collection



The Roof Fund received another donation from the Euchre Evening of \$251.25 bringing the total of \$6,319.25 towards the goal of \$25,000.00. Giving is easy just place it in your regular giving envelope and mark how much goes to the roof fund or use the small envelope in the pew and put your name on it or envelope number. No donation is too small. If you have any questions, please contact Ralph or Wayne.

UCAWQWEBWLMJRQECOIIVHDOUIGKGFHU
 YPOSFVDNLISHYENNZUOBRPKRAZUFLS
 TCRPJLKOQNSWLMPUQJALEIKUYTATVA
 HKZCNOCIHVNEONUEGZNAHWGPRSRQSH
 CPJXYPNQARLRMKUSERACPPDSYLNVOA
 MSERMYAZE EHBTEMSEK SVEGBSGBMDAU
 LIXSDRMEGLMEYTNBEGNJHWZDRZPRGD
 WBRXOCJNHFNOWFLBVKVNSDZWTSTNTAI
 PAEAMJANGOGYDRALOYRDIQNXWKKSJH
 WIVHCCG P VCMHTVIYINARZLXGTSJILC
 PKDRFLVIWSPNGZPFIOYLDZJGMANGER
 LTZUCIECGLFPJKSIAIMRFKSSIHIEK
 QRYKETOSUPDXTIJEIQMVKMYRLBMNST
 YOTBZSSZAALTGUSHQSYVQDRYRNBKOH
 FLIYBKEJGTMLIVMEJJKCURWAQLDKES
 OXVXTACWRCULJCTWIPDGPRTNTUNDEN
 NHIJQC COIJLBEXULCIHZTZYSMCEVPW
 IATQZQIGTWJHGND DPF IYIXPAMMAAPM
 KRAQPUTYISQQOQLRGHRXBNECVSJMHH
 IQNNLKDUJESUSMYRZTXXLITVMEKKEK
 OAQPLKTVLMXBXZCFVRBJSNLSFJZGLL
 SLSURTIMEMNALJCVPHMMRKIRXLKCMZ
 PWZUFUCWRMCAFYLWBDIKFWXOIVJLFB
 JPGJMHQFRDXFPZVAFFIKTEATPCDGDZ
 GNNAHCDHPSECNUBUYAHLWCEFIKMDG
 TFRQBZTXPEUHLTYVBTLFUDQWKPSNU
 XYXFYRYOEPKZWAYEAYEK NODMAVNAVO
 FKHOILJPIJASYTNLDBDLCQGGPDHDSXA
 HLNBBQHKCQFYUVBPQIPEWBMNTRYIDI
 BEEZATJTYRVVBETHLEHEMLDVC GAKTC

Christ, the Saviour,
 is born!

- ANGEL
- BABY
- BETHLEHEM
- BIRTH
- CAMEL
- DONKEY
- INNKEEPER
- JESUS
- JOSEPH
- MANGER
- MARY
- MIRACLE
- NATIVITY
- SHEEP
- SHEPHERD
- STAR
- WISEMEN



Merry Christmas

Advent Readers & Candle Lighters

December 3 -Roberta Fisher
December 10 - Pittman's
December 17 - Open
December 24 - Open
December 31 - Open
7pm Christmas Eve Service - Bob & Teri Wagner
11pm Christmas Eve Service - Bev & Gordie Kuhlman

Alter Care

December - Beverly Kuhlman

Communion

Preparer: Teri Wagner
Communion Servers: Teri Wagner & Devon Klomp

Ushers & Greeters

December 3 -Doris Doss & Larry Bandlow
December 10 - Open
December 17 - Open
December 24 - Open
December 31 - Open

Liturgists

December 3 - Open
December 10 - Open
December 17 - Open
December 24 - Open
December 31 - Open

Scripture Readings for December

Sunday, December 3
First Sunday of Advent
Isa 64: 1-9
Ps 80:1-7, 17 -19
1 Cor 1: 3-9
Mark 13: 24-37
Where Are You, God?

Sunday, December 17
Third Sunday of Advent
Isa 61: 1-4, 8-11
Ps 126 or Luke 1: 46b-55
26
1 Thess 5: 16-24
John 1: 6-8, 19-28
Shouts of Joy

Sunday, December 10
Second Sunday of Advent
Isa 40: 1-11
Ps 85: 1-2, 8-13
2 Pet 3: 8-15:3: 24-37
Mark 1: 1-8
Messengers of Hope

Sunday, December 24
Fourth Sunday of Advent
2 Sam 7: 1-11, 16
Luke 1: 46b-55 or Ps 89: 1-4, 19-
26
Rom 16: 25-27
Luke 1: 26-38Eph 1: 15-23
Birthing a Promise

Sunday, December 31
First Sunday after Christmas
Isa 61:10-62:3
Ps 148
Gal 4: 4-7
Luke 2: 22-40
Long-Awaited Gift



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