



Spirit *connection*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER
DEWEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH | DECEMBER 2018

GOOD DEEDS

An Excerpt from "Your Light Gives Us Hope"

By Anselm Grun

Begin your day by asking yourself this: "What can I do today to 'prepare the way of the Lord'? What good deed, large or small, might I undertake to this end? When I was growing up, my siblings and I used to begin each day in Advent by asking ourselves what good deed we might do that day.

Perhaps this meant cleaning up the dishes after a meal or helping our little sister with her homework.

For every good deed we did, we were allowed to place one piece of hay in the manger of our nativity set. Of course, we wanted to make sure that by the time Christmas came, the Christ child would not have to be placed in a rough and empty manger, but rather in one filled

with the hay we'd brought because of the good deeds we'd done during the weeks of Advent.

Take a few moments to think of your own life. Surely you can imagine some act of kindness you could do today that exceeds what might normally be expected of you. Perhaps this would be to visit someone you know, to reach out to bring some small joy to a person in need, to call or send a note to a friend or acquaintance.

In ways like these you can imagine, in concrete ways, how you might live the message of Advent in your life.

A VERY BUSY DECEMBER

The month of December is very busy for a church. As you can tell by the list of activities to the right (and on page 3!), there's something special going on just about every week. We'd love to see you at each and every event, but remember to take time for yourself, also. We often get caught up in the busy-ness of Christmas and we can forget to take care of ourselves, to spend time in prayer, and simply to rest.

Take care of yourself this Holiday season. And if you need help - ask!

Church Events

Dec. 2

10 am Marvelous
Anticipation

Dec. 5

Christmas Outreach
Distribution

Dec. 8

1-3 pm Living Nativity
5:30 pm Christmas Parade

Dec. 9

10 am God Only Knows

Dec. 13

6 pm Crafting Christmas

Dec. 16

10 am I've Got a Secret

Dec. 19

5 pm Youth Christmas Party

Dec. 21

6 pm Blue Christmas
@ East Cross

Dec. 23

10 am Christmas Cantata
11:15 am Reception

Dec. 24

7 pm Candlelight Service

Hunger No More

A Message from Bishop Jimmy Nunn

The opening words of the Christmas carol “Away in a Manger” lament the fact that the bed for newborn Jesus was a manger. He didn’t get to sleep in a crib. The sentiment offers a subtle judgment on Jesus’s parents. It suggests that, had we been there, we would have provided a crib, not a manger, for the birth of the Son of God.

Have you ever thought about the message of the manger? Normally a manger is a place for animals to eat, not a spot for anyone to sleep. But throughout scripture, physical hunger is symbolic of spiritual hunger, and bread is often the food that satisfies hunger.

In Exodus, the people wandered in the wilderness. They were hungry. God met their need and gave them quail and manna. And the people responded to God’s provision with a question.

“What is it?” (Exodus 16:15) Those were the words the Hebrew people asked Moses when they saw manna from heaven for the first time. It could be gathered, but could not be possessed. It came in the right amount, never too little or too much. When the people gathered too

much, the manna spoiled. When they failed to gather enough, it stretched to meet the need.

What is it? Translated literally, manna means “a whatness” — and the question “What is it?” is phrasing that is better understood.

The Hebrew people tried to define “what is it.” They gave it the name manna. They thought manna was a means to satisfy their daily hunger. But what they named and ate could sustain them only one day at a time in the wilderness.

A physical solution for a spiritual hunger fails to satisfy the deeper need. Manna was not really “it.” While the bread made from the manna collected by the Hebrews satisfied physical hunger, it never fulfilled the deepest needs of the soul. “It” would not be defined; instead, “it” defined a people.

When the time came for the birth of Jesus, the whole world asked, “What is it?”

A baby was born in Bethlehem. That city name means “house of bread.” Jesus later called himself the Bread of Life.

The Bread of Life was born in the House of Bread. As an

infant, he was wrapped in bands of cloth and laid in a manger, the place where the animals came to eat. In the House of Bread, the Bread of Life was laid in the breadbasket.

When the angels appeared to the shepherds, proclaiming the birth of Jesus, those shepherds responded to the announcement by declaring, “Let us go to Bethlehem to see what *it* is” (Luke 2:15). I have added the italicized emphasis.

They were not going to ask the old “what is it” question. They went to find the answer to “what *it* is.”

We don’t have to wonder, “What is it?” Join me on the quest to discover “what *it* is.” It is the Bread of Life.

2 Corinthians 9:15

“Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!”

While this scripture is about cheerful giving, it also works beautifully during the Christmas season. God has truly blessed us with indescribable gifts!

The most precious gift we have received from God is the baby Jesus who grew up to become our Savior and our example by his great love.

As All
the Earth
WAITS...

Advent Series

December 2 - 24

Advent Sermon Series

Dec. 2 - Marvelous Anticipation

Dec. 9 - God Only Knows

Dec. 16 - I’ve Got a Secret

Dec. 23 - Sing & Shout Christmas Cantata

Dec. 24 - Unto Us This Day

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

7 pm

Help Needed

Cookson United Methodist Church is serving as the command center for helpers after a devastating tornado ripped through the Lake Tenkiller area on Dec. 1. If you’d like to help with cleanup, please contact the church office and they’ll connect you to the staff in charge of coordinating volunteers.

News Blotter

A bit of news about what's going on in the life of the church...

Sock Tree

During the month of December, please help us decorate our Sock Tree for kids at Dewey Elementary who need warm feet. All sizes welcome, but please bring new socks.

Wednesday, Dec. 5

Volunteers will distribute Christmas Outreach gifts and food boxes to this year's families. This afternoon event is the culmination of all the hard work of many volunteers, givers, and even pie enthusiasts.

Saturday, Dec. 8

Dewey UMC will host a living nativity (weather permitting) 1-3 pm here at the church. The annual Christmas parade will begin at 5:30 pm. Work is underway on the parade float.

Thursday, Dec. 13

Come create a sheet-music Christmas wreath and share your favorite finger food. Kids' crafts will also be available. The fun begins at 6 pm.

Wednesday, Dec. 19

The One:10 Youth will hold their annual Christmas Party! This event is complete with a "Dirty Santa"-type gift exchange, a Christmas costume contest, and lots of snacks. This event is open to all youth in grades 6 and up. Please bring three wrapped gifts totaling \$10 or less.

Friday, Dec. 21

If you're feeling a loss, recent or distant, the Blue Christmas service may be a perfect fit for you. Our church has joined with several area churches to present this service at 6 pm at East Cross United Methodist.

Sunday, Dec. 23

The Choir will perform the Christmas Cantata during the 10 am morning worship, and the children will share an adorable performance. Following worship, the children's department will host a reception. All are invited. Cake and punch will be provided.

Dec. 24

Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service will include a very special candle lighting ceremony, an important message, and Christmas music. The service begins at 7 pm.

Dec. 30

December has a FIFTH SUNDAY! Everyone knows what that means - food! Before your New Year's resolution kicks in, bring a dish to share for the potluck lunch following worship.



Worth the Wait

A Message from Pastor Jinx

Christmas means different things to different people. Our response to Christmas individually changes during our lifetimes. When I was little, I hated Christmas. I always got socks and underwear for Christmas, while my cousin got all the best toys. As I grew into a teenager, we would experience one or more deaths in our family every year.

As a young adult, Christmas was a time for me to buy all the stuff I wanted for myself, and occasionally for someone else. When I was in the Army, it was a time of loneliness. When I first got married and had children, my view of Christmas changed from buying for myself to buying for my children, and I loved to see the magic of Santa through their eyes.

Later, when I worked in logistics for Amazon, Christmas was absolute madness, and if it wasn't for having two children, I would boycott the whole holiday. It wasn't until I began working in a church that I could really enjoy this holiday. Last year, Christmas truly became a season of joy for me (and my family). It will be hard to ever top that.

It seems like the whole world is tense and anxious, broken and suffering. This year, it feels like the whole earth is waiting for something. Maybe it is waiting for the other shoe to drop, for chaos to fully take over. Maybe it is waiting, even hoping, for something else. For me, this year feels like the earth is waiting for a savior more than ever before. Advent is a season of waiting for the Christ child to be born, yet we know he has already been born.

We await for the baby in our rituals, but we are really awaiting the return of the King, in our hearts. I challenge each one of you to prepare your hearts for Jesus, as child or king. Take the time this season to consider how you will grow in Christ during 2019, and commit to growing in God in new ways.

We are a people of **Hope**, **Love**, **Joy**, and **Peace**. Those are the traditional themes of Advent. It is our job to be the hands and feet of Christ in the world. Therefore, it is our duty to plant seeds of **Hope**. To **Love** instead of hate. To bring **Joy**, where there is sorrow, and above all to wage a campaign of **Peace** that will end strife and conflict.

If we live into our calling, the impact will be undeniable, the fruits of our labors will be evident, and we will truly be building the kingdom, fit for the King.... On earth as it is in Heaven.

Rev. Jinx M. Barber, M.Div, GDBL

Pastor

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our Stewardship effort this year focused on more than just finances. This year's Stewardship plan includes your Prayers, your Presence, your Service, your Gifts, and your Witness. If you haven't received and/or turned in your stewardship commitment packet, please call or stop by the church office.

End-of-year giving should be turned in by Sunday, Dec. 30, in order to receive credit for the 2018 year.

If you signed up to be part of our Lost Arts learning program, please be on the lookout for info in January.

The Food Pantry committee will meet at 5 pm January 8. If you would like to be part of this ministry, please make plans to attend the meeting.

The church office will be closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day. The office will close at Noon on Christmas Eve.

Trained nursery volunteers are needed to fill out December dates! If you'd like to work in the nursery, please sign up online or in the back of the sanctuary. Christmas Eve has been added to the schedule.

If you haven't met her already, please welcome our new Admin assistant, Crystal Holland. Crystal has joined us during the very busy time of Advent, and has hit the ground running.

Contact Us

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CARDS & LETTERS

Do you know someone who is stuck at home or at a nursing home, hospital, college, or even jail?

Would that person benefit from personal notes from caring church members? If so, please let the church office know and we'll add them to this list:

Carol Shriver

2300 SE 28th St., Rm. 211
Bentonville, AR 72712

Jeanette Stone

Pleasant Valley Nursing
1120 Illinois St., Rm. 45B
Muskogee, OK 74403

Kali Adams

Box 712
340 W. 1st St., Rm. 712
Norman, OK 73072
479-236-0994

Send a card or note to let them know you're thinking of them. If you need a card and/or stamp, we have extras in the church office.

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

Advent Bible Study

9 am Sundays • Dec. 2-23
Fellowship Hall

Inspiring stories of hope and second chances in the Advent season. This study matches real-life stories of struggle and triumph to the Advent themes of hope, love, joy, and peace to show how the light of Christmas shines brightly even in hard times.

This video-enhanced study is open to all youth and adults and is led by Rev. Jinx Barber. No need to sign up in advance!

