



The Steeple Bell

“Under the **Green Steeple**”

Shining God’s Light Since 1798

Making disciples...Building Christian community...Transforming lives!

From the Pastor – December 2018

The Season of Advent is Here!

I must confess that as a younger person, I always wondered why the church sticks Advent in front of Christmas.



Why didn’t we just move full tilt into Christmas? What was all the language about waiting and watching? I just wanted to focus on choosing Christmas gifts, around the clock Christmas music, decorating Christmas cookies, and fun parties.

I still enjoy all those things, but have come to realize that the pre-Christmas season of Advent is so important. Before we jump right from Thanksgiving to Christmas, the messages of Advent help us to focus on the sacred rather than the commercial side of Christmas. When we really tune in to the messages we hear during Advent, they help us to understand that it was God’s plan all along to come to earth in the form of a helpless baby. This baby grew into a man that demonstrated to us the nature of God, and brought salvation through his death on the cross. Let me share some of the history and traditions of Advent.



The name “Advent” is taken from the Latin *adventus*, which means “coming” and in the early Church was used mainly for Christmas itself, but eventually began to have a slightly different meaning, referring to the time of preparation for the coming of Jesus. In the Middle Ages, this meaning was extended and Christ’s coming was seen in three different ways: his birth in the past, his second and future coming at the end of time, and his present coming through grace into the hearts and souls of humanity.

One symbol of Advent is the wreath:

- Round to symbolize the eternity of God, who like a circle, has no beginning or end. Each candle on the wreath stands for a Sunday (and its following week).
- Each candle is representative of a Biblical theme, such as hope, love, peace, and joy.
- The candles also represent the spiritual light of God coming into the world.
- The wreath is made of evergreen, which never lose their living branches.
- The wreath is also an ancient symbol of victory and glory, and symbolizes “the fulfillment of time” in the coming of Christ and the glory of his birth.
- In the ancient world, purple dye was very expensive and could only be afforded by kings. The purple candles remind us that the one whose birth we’re preparing to celebrate is our true King.
- The rose colored candle tells us that Advent is a time of joyful preparation.

Blessing of the Nativities

On **December 9** during worship, we will have a “Blessing of the Nativities”. You are encouraged to bring one piece of your home nativity set to church to receive a blessing and invite the sacred meaning of Christmas into your home in a special way.



The season of Advent reminds us that there is more to Christmas than commercialism and parties. It is an invitation to enter into the fullness of the Christmas celebration by understanding the sacredness of the season above all else.

Pastor Laura

Church Life - "Under the **Green Steeple**"



Sunday Worship Schedule

9:30 am - Alleluia Gathering Christian Education for adults. The group, led by *Charlotte Summer*, is engaged in a series of discussions giving a practical application of Scripture to daily life. Each week will be a self-contained conversation about selected Bible passages. The class concludes in plenty of time to worship.

9:30 am - Faith Walkers Class (Grades K-6) will meet on the third floor from 9:30 – 10:15am.

10:30 am - A Contemporary Music Opportunity: Enjoy a 15 minute contemporary music as part of your Sunday morning worship!

10:45 am (Sept. - May) - Worship Service in the Sanctuary traditional in nature.

Fellowship Following Worship

Join us in the dining room for refreshments after the service.

Communion

The sacrament of Holy Communion is offered during worship on the first Sunday of each month. In the United Methodist Church, the Lord's Table is open to all.

Parking and Accessibility

We are a fully accessible building. Canes & a wheelchair are available as well as an elevator & an electric chairlift. There are reserved areas for loading & unloading passengers. We have limited street parking, but there are two banks across the street from us and you are welcome to park in either of their lots. **Please reserve the spaces in the front of the church for those who need to use the elevator.**



Rehearsal Schedules

Sunday Choir Rehearsals (Sept. – May)

One Voice Ensemble
Sundays after worship

Wednesday Choir Rehearsals (Sept. – May)

6:40 pm Chancel Choir
7:45 pm Bells Choir

As our church family grows, we are not always aware of the musical gifts in our congregation. If you enjoy singing or playing bells, please see the following ladies: Monica Rhude & Tami Chamberlain

Groups & Meetings

FUMC has a number of small study and fellowship groups. The church is also a meeting site for several community groups.

Sunday

NA Meeting
6:00 pm Dining Room

Franklin Aggies 4 H Group
Contact the church office for date and times

Monday

Prayer Group
9:00 am Third Floor Chapel

Women's Circle
6:30 pm 2nd Monday meets monthly Sept. – May
Contact the church office for location

Tuesday

1st, 4th, & 5th Tuesday – Hope UMC
4:30 – 5:30 pm Community Dinner

Wednesday

Franklin-Carlisle Rotary
12:10pm meets weekly in the Fellowship Hall

Friday

NA Meeting
7:00 pm meets weekly in the Dining Room

December Holiday Schedule

December will be a busy month here at Franklin First. Please make sure the following opportunities get noted on your calendar:

- **December 2:** Women's Circle Christmas Party at the Bowman home. Starts at 6:00 pm. Bring a dish to pass and an ornament to exchange.



- **December 9:** The children of Franklin First will be the feature of our morning worship service at 10:45 am. Come enjoy Christmas as seen through the eyes of children.



- **December 15:** Spend the morning at the church helping to assemble the Salvation Army gift boxes.



- **December 16:** Our music groups will present worship through Christmas themed music. Come at 10:45 am and prepare to be filled with the Christmas spirit.

- **December 16:** Our vocal music groups will join the Otterbein music groups to present a splendid Christmas concert for all to enjoy. The program starts at 6:30 pm but you will need to arrive early to get a good seat.



- **December 18:** The Franklin First tutoring staff (and any helpers who want to participate) will be providing desserts along with setup and cleanup help at the Anthony Wayne Elementary staff appreciation holiday luncheon. Setup will begin at 10:30 am, and cleanup is expected to be done by 1:30 pm. This will be a perfect time to thank the staff for their great work with the kids, and get in conversation with staff members so that we can get to know one another.



- **December 20:** The Salvation Army gifts will be distributed. Tami Chamberlain does an outstanding job organizing this Christmas blessing, and she will appreciate helpers on this busy day. The distribution will last from 9 am - 3 pm.



- **December 23:** Our "Celebrate Christmas" worship service is at 10:45 am. Traveling for the holidays, or having guests in? This will be a great opportunity to honor God in your festivities.



- **December 24:** Our "Candlelight Christmas Eve" service will begin at 7:00 pm. This service will include special music, drama, and a singing of "Silent Night" while we light candles to close the service. Bring your family and friends and keep the tradition of celebrating Jesus' birth together.



- **December 30:** Our 10:45 am worship service will include a carol sing and a message that will bring us full circle as we accompany the Wise Men as they worship the Christ child.



December has a tendency to get very busy, so reserve some room in your calendar to celebrate the sacred side of Christmas. You will be doubly blessed!

When Was the Last Time?

When was the last time you invited someone to come to worship to participate in some activity here at Franklin First?



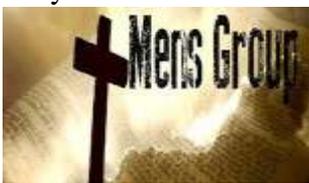
When was the last time you invited someone into a “faith conversation”? The greatest percentage

of persons who connect with a church and come to commit to Christ do so because of personal invitation. There are many other helpful factors, but none surpass the effectiveness of personal invitation. Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. God did not ask us to get into a “holy huddle,” reserving our fellowship for those who already believe in the saving power of Jesus Christ.

When was the last time you invited someone to take steps in beginning a discipleship journey? We have many opportunities to invite persons to engage in church with the goal of making disciples of Jesus: worship, Bible studies, special events, and service opportunities – just to name a few. We need not think of this as filling the pews at Franklin First, but as first steps in someone accepting Jesus as their Lord and Savior and becoming part of the fellowship of believers. The Christmas season is a great time to invite others to church worship and events.

Men’s Group

Anyone who would be able to build boxes for food distribution and also to sort/distribute the food would be welcome on Saturday, December 15th approximately 9:00 - 11:30 am. There will be no men's group for the month of December and our next meeting will be January 19, 2019 at 9:00 am



Women’s Circle Christmas Gathering

Women’s Circle will have a Christmas Gathering on Sunday, December 2nd at 6:00 p.m. at Judy Bowman’s home. Bring a dish to share and an ornament for exchange



Stewardship Report



Thank you to all who participated in our Stewardship Campaign during November. A special measure of gratitude goes to our weekly speakers: Peggy Darragh-Jeromos, John Lass, Connie Bolinger, and Ken Smith. Each of them spoke from the heart and challenged us with their own faith commitments. To date, we have received financial faith cards as well as offerings of time and talent. If you did not yet turn in your response to our campaign, please do so ASAP. Note that the financial card does not require a signature. Your response will help us please for our 2019 budget. The Bible tells us that God loves cheerful givers, and that God can take what we offer and do immeasurably more with it than we could ever imagine.

A Tithing Challenge

On Sunday, November 11th, I spoke at the Worship Service about my experience in learning to tithe. I spoke about Why we should tithe. Because everything in heaven and earth came from God. I spoke about Why do we tithe. Because we are told to throughout the Bible. When we refuse to tithe, we communicate to God that we don’t trust Him with that part of our lives. We end up spending it on ourselves, just like we already do with the rest of “our money.”



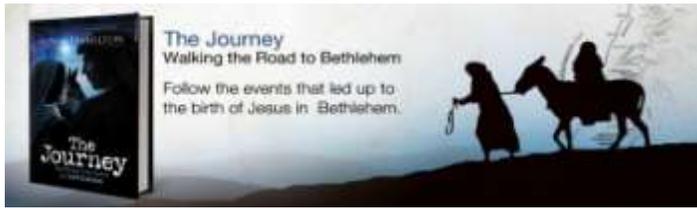
These biblical truths which are promised in Malachi 3:10 “bring the whole tithe into my storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”

After sharing my experience with tithing, I challenged the congregation to begin tithing. I ask that you look over your finances and plan over the next few weeks. Then in January take a step of faith and challenge yourselves for the following three months. You will be awed by what God has in store. Remember this: GIVING IS WHAT GOD DOES, BECAUSE GIVING IS WHO GOD IS. Our response should be to give our lives, our resources, and our service back to Him. Sincerely,
John Lass

Combined Adult Sunday School

During December, Charlotte Summer will be leading the adult Sunday School class with Adam Hamilton's Advent series entitled, "The Journey." This curriculum takes class members along with Mary and Joseph through the happenings of the Christmas story. All are invited. Hope to see all the adults there every Sunday. Sunday School isn't just for kids, anymore!

The class will be using new material beginning in January, topic to be determined.



Children's Sunday School

The kids will continue to meet for Sunday School and then for worship during church each Sunday.



Please continue to provide your child an opportunity to grow in their relationship with Jesus by making sure they have a way to church every Sunday. Thanks to the teachers and helpers who give of their time and talents for our children!

Prayer Group

Every Monday morning at 9:00 am in the third floor Prayer Chapel, we are meeting to pray for individual prayer concerns, our church, community and nation, our denomination, and current events. Our time together lasts about 1 ½ hours, and participants are not required to pray out loud.

Everyone is welcome. Bring your favorite Bible. Those who would like to submit prayer requests can do so by recording them on the prayer logs at the back of the sanctuary or in the choir room.



Connection Blueprint

The Franklin First training team consists of Mike and Linda Smith, Charlotte Summer, Cindy Kuntzman, and Pastor Laura. We continue in this school year long training, which consists of once a month Saturday commitments. In November, we learned that

every time we reach out with a material gift or a meal or a service project, we are connecting folks with the prevenient grace of God. We are connecting them with God's love as expressed through the outreach and mission efforts of the family of God. As we tutor a child, offer a warm space and a cup of coffee, provide nutritious snacks for a child's weekend, provide Salvation Army Christmas gift boxes – or any other outreach activity that God calls us to on behalf of others – we are the face, hands, and feet of our Lord and Savior. This perspective helps us to answer the "why" of what we do as a church. Are we reaching those who do not now know Jesus?

What will God lead our church to in 2019? Will we have the courage to follow, believing that God will equip us for whatever he is calling us to do? Our learnings in Connection Blueprint encourage us as a church to take risks and consider them steps of faith.

Thank You Church!

Thanks

The furnace in the parsonage was replaced last week, and the 46 year old furnace persevered

until the task was accomplished. Pastor Laura and Lee so appreciate the congregation's diligence in moving quickly on this! The weather is only going to get colder...

We have a lot of great events coming up at Franklin First for the Christmas Season. Who have you invited to worship with you this year? Is there someone you care enough about to want to share Christ with this Season? Take the time to show someone you care about that they can be closer to Christ this year by worshipping with us!

Breakthrough Prayer

What happens when a congregation unites to pray



collectively and consistently for God to break through in new and miraculous ways in the

ministry of the church? We find ourselves transitioning to an atmosphere of possibility, as we open ourselves to the work of the Holy Spirit. Any church that does not engage the power of God will grow stale in its ministry. As finite humans, we do not have the perspective to see what God sees for the available resources of time, talent, and treasure to meet the missions that God gives us. "If God calls us to it, God will equip us to do it."

Will you include in your private prayer time these petitions?

- God, what would you have our church do to reach out into the community?
- God, is there something that you would ask our church to discontinue, that is no longer a priority?
- God, help us at Franklin First to recognize the opportunities you place before us.
- God, help us to recognize and appropriate the resources that you will provide for the fulfillment of specific missions.
- God, give us courage and wisdom as we proceed to move forward.

Ushering Opportunities Available

We can use some additional ushers! Rachel Chamberlain schedules our ushers for Sunday mornings, and we are grateful for her efforts. Usher duties include greeting folks with a friendly face as they come into the sanctuary, handing them bulletins and newsletters (when available), answering questions, and providing information about the nursery and children's church, the elevator, etc. as needed. See Rachel if you're interested.

We also need ushers for the 7:00 pm Christmas Eve service. Check with Theresa in the office if you would be available to help.

Christmas Humor

Santa Claus goes down so many chimneys that I hear he's thinking of getting a yearly flu shot.

A man was reading the latest version of "The Night before Christmas" to his young son. "Not a creature was tweeting or clicking a mouse."

Walking down the street at Christmas time, I wonder if we are celebrating the birth of Jesus or of General Electric.

As a little girl climbed onto Santa's lap, and Santa asked the usual, "And what would you like for Christmas, little one?" The child stared at him open mouthed and horrified for a minute, then gasped, "Didn't you get my Email?"

December Birthdays

- 4 – Ken Smith
- 5 – Jerry Johnson
- 10 – Peggy Darragh-Jeromos
- 10 – Wayne David Stevens
- 11 – Michelle Dicken
- 12 – Lisa Dillon
- 20 – Judy Bowman
- 21 – Mike Smith
- 23 – Joseph Chamberlain
- 25 – Janet Kirby
- 26 – Amber Ramsey
- 27 – Gracelynn Lucas
- 31 – Cody Chilcutt

December Anniversaries

- 4 – Jake & Alex Chamberlain
- 22 – Jerry & Barbara Ragland
- 27 – Jan & Julie Abell
- 28 – Robert & Judy Bowman

January Anniversary

- 2 – Brian & Jackie Graves

Looking Ahead

Healing Service

On **January 20** during our normal worship time, we will be having a special service of healing. Our focus will be recognizing and claiming Christ's presence, peace, and empowerment in our difficult time. Whatever issues we're facing, whether they be related to health, family challenges, marriage difficulties, emotional or mental struggles, job stress, your past, domestic violence, your faith journey, or some other concern – we can connect with spiritual resources that can alleviate some of our angst.

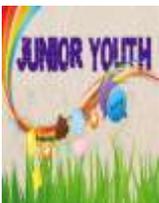
The healing service will be quite a different format; with meaningful music, time for prayer and private confession, laying on of hands and/or anointing for those who would wish it, and a guided meditation. It will not be necessary to share publicly about our issues we're bringing to God. We all have aspects of our lives with which we struggle, and God is loving, forgiving, and cares about our circumstances. Pastor Laura will also offer pastoral follow-up if requested. This service is open to the community, and you are encouraged to invite those you know who might benefit from a healing service. It is not God's intent that anyone live in a life of pain, and God will bring comfort and healing according to His divine wisdom.

Fast Track Disciple Study

After the first of the year, Mike and Linda Smith will be leading a "Fast Track Disciple Study." More details will follow, but please prayerfully consider if this study may be just what you have been looking for. The study will consist of 2 – 12 week sessions. The first session will discuss the Old Testament and will begin in January. The second session will begin in September and will discuss the New Testament. The study will meet in Mike and Linda's home. Look for more information soon.

Junior Youth Group

In January, we will be starting a Junior Youth Group for grades 3 – 8. Look for more details soon. If you know of someone who might be interested but currently does not attend our church, please contact Pastor Laura.



All Saints Day Sunday November 4, 2018



Paul Simonton

February 13, 1930 – November 15, 2017

Helen Robison

February 27, 1932 – November 27, 2017

Gerald "Dick" Fouts

October 5, 1952 – January 19, 2018

Sandy Smith

November 17 1950 - January 20, 2018

Ralph Mrusek

August 25, 1938 – January 29, 2018

Roberta Mathis

June 17, 1922 – February 2, 2018

Ann Rose-Deibel

January 21, 1950 – February 5, 2018

Charles Harbach

December 28, 1929 – February 20, 2019

Everett Chasteen

January 30, 1917 – March 14, 2018

Richard "Dick" Lee

March 5, 1942 – June 10, 2018



In Loving Memory
of those who departed this past month
Thought & Prayers for their families.

Jerry Myers

January 25, 1937 – November 14, 2018

Agnes Etter

December 24, 1918 – November 15, 2018

Fall Ministry Recaps

Trunk or Treat



Trunk or Treat was held at Anthony Wayne Elementary on Sunday, October 28 at 4:00 pm. The weather was blustery, with rain showers threatening (but the rain held off till we were heading home). We had a great turnout, with 18 Franklin First vehicles sharing candy to a crowd of around 100 children. A large percentage of the FF folks dressed in costume. We enjoyed making the connection with our neighbors in the Anthony Wayne area. Lots of fun!



Fall Bazaar

The Women's Circle Bazaar was a great success! The weather was beautiful, and our guests were greater in number than in previous years. Virtually every bite of the luncheon food that had been prepared was eaten, and as always – the noodles were in great demand. Our vendors reported increased sales this year as well.



Proceeds at last count came to \$2138. Thanks for all the hard work!



Franklin Fall Fest

Franklin's Fall Fest was rather dismal and rainy all weekend, but that did not curb the enthusiasm in the new Franklin First booth. Judy and Bob Bowman, along with a number of helpers, did a superb job in creating a welcoming and sheltering booth right in front of our church. Judy provided craft crosses for the kids, we



handed out some kitchen clips that had our church's contact information printed on them, and guests received free candy and a brochure about the ministry of Franklin First. Well done!



Organization for Ministry

Making disciples... Building Christian community... Transforming lives!

Church Council

Church Council Chair Mike Smith

Secretary Amber Ramsey
Lay Leader Charlotte Summer
Lay Member of Annual Conference
Charlotte Summer
Lay Member of Annual Conference Alternate
Kim Chewning

Membership Secretary
Peggy Darragh-Jeromos

Communications Coordinator
Peggy Darragh-Jeromos

Church Historian Robert Bowman
Treasurer Tami Chamberlain
Pastor Laura Saunders

Ministry Team Representatives:

Staff-Parish Relations Committee Julie Abell
Finance Committee Ken Smith
Trustees John Lass
Worship Ministry Team Monica Rhude
Committee on Lay Leadership Laura Saunders
Christian Education Jan Truesdell, Lee Saunders
Mission & Outreach Linda Smith, Amber Ramsey
Hospitality & Events Lisa Dillon, Judy Bowman
Welcoming Ministry
Rachel Chamberlain Dorothy Rayburg

Staff-Parish Relations Committee

Chairperson: Julie Abell
Terms expiring 2018:
Pam Bishop; Joe Chamberlain
Terms expiring 2019:
Jenny Chilcutt, Mishelle Dicken,
Cheryl Cyphers
Terms expiring 2020:
Tami Chamberlain, Jessica Lucas, Julie Abell

Trustees

Chairperson: John Lass
Vice Chairperson: Cody Chilcutt
Terms expiring 2018:
John Lass; Jim Martin; Trisha Dicken
Terms expiring 2019:
Cody Chilcutt; Jerry Myers; Connie Bolinger
Terms expiring 2020:
Jan Abell, Shirley Berold, Joe Chamberlain

Committee on Lay Leadership (Nominations)

Chair Pastor Laura Saunders
Terms expiring 2018:
Jerry Johnson, Teresa Lass, Megan Duff
Terms expiring 2019:
Nancy Osborne, Patti Noland,
Peggy Darragh-Jeromos
Terms expiring 2020:
Sally Fitzgerald, Brian Graves,
Charlotte Summer

Finance Committee

Chairperson Ken Smith
Treasurer Tami Chamberlain
Financial Secretary Julie Abell
Church Council Chairperson Mike Smith
Trustees Chairperson John Lass
Staff-Parish Chairperson Julie Abell
Lay Leader Charlotte Summer
Lay Member of Annual Conference
Charlotte Summer
Pastor Laura Saunders

Worship Ministry Team

Choir Director Monica Rhude
Bell Choir Tami Chamberlain
Altar Design Kay Marksberry, Pam Bishop
Technical Support Trisha Dicken
Lay Leader Charlotte Summer
Welcoming Ministry Rachel Chamberlain
Pastor Laura Saunders

