

The Parish Visitor

December, 2015



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HAPPY HALLOWTHANKSMAS!

by Rev. Mark

Did you pay close attention to the title of this article? Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas are all mashed together- Hallow-Thanks-Mas! Hunter, my younger son, introduced me to that term. His claim is that, from mid-October to the end of December, life in America is just one headlong rush through "holidays". And so, he deems it appropriate that, instead of "Happy Halloween", "Happy Thanksgiving" and "Merry Christmas", we should probably just all say, "Happy Hallowthanksmas!" (His tongue IS firmly planted in his cheek, however, when he suggests that!)

But all tongue-in-cheek references aside, there is a large dose of truth to what he says. We have ALL seen stores (I'm looking at YOU, Walmart!) who have Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas up...at the same time! I can get my jack-o-lantern flashlight, my cornucopia napkins and my tinsel- all in the same area of the store. (Now isn't THAT convenient!) And, of course, it is bottom-line profit that drives that mentality. Stores exist to make money- pure and simple. And, to a large extent, they don't care WHAT they sell. They only care what we are buying. They'd stock every shelf in the whole store with concrete blocks if they could sell them.

We blame the retailers and the advertisers. "How can they already have Christmas up?" "How can they show that stuff on TV?" "How can they make those kinds of movies?" And the truth is that it is because...we support it. We BUY the Christmas stuff early. We watch the show on TV. We pay to see "those movies". Now, at this point, you might well be saying, "I don't support those things, Pastor!" Well, maybe you do and maybe you don't. But the retailers and advertisers are "mass communicatin'" - they respond to what the majority of people do or are willing to do.

Why are Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas mashed together? Because we let it happen. Why are so many worthless shows on television? Because enough people are watching them to satisfy the advertisers. If more people watched the old-school "test pattern" that they used to run- back in the day- when the station went off the air for the night, than they do the latest "reality TV" show, it would run 24/7. To a large extent, we control what we see and hear.

With all of that in mind, I say...let's take Christmas back. Let's claim it for what it is- the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ- God with us. We don't have to throw out the great holiday music, the fun traditions or even "A Charlie Brown Christmas" (thank goodness!)- we should instead be comfortable to put them in perspective. This year, don't let rampant consumerism and blatant capitalism steal from you the true joy of the season. Instead, seek balance this Christmas season. Why? Because on December 25th, we celebrate the coming into the world of the One Who saves us, the One Who changes us and the One Who loves us more than we could possibly understand. We only have ONE message- just one! But it is THE BEST message ever. Christ came as a baby in a manger to change us. I, for one, am eternally grateful for that fact. Merry Christmas! God is good!

SPECIAL DATES:

- Dec 3 Caring Hearts Food Prep 9AM
- Dec 3 UMW Exec Meeting 4PM
- Dec 4 Electric Parade & Live Nativity 5:30PM
- Dec 5 UMM Work Day at MMDC 5:30AM
- Dec 6 Children's Christmas Program 10:15AM
- Dec 6 Communion & Food Pantry Collection Sunday
- Dec 7 Finance Meeting 6PM
- Dec 7 Trustees Meeting 7PM
- December 8 Miriam Circle 6PM
- Dec 11-12 Walk Through Bethlehem @ Buffalo Prairie Church 5:30PM
- Dec 13 Christmas Cantata @ all 3 Services
- Dec 15 Caring Hearts Food Prep 10:30AM
- Dec 16 Prepare Christmas Cheer Baskets 6PM
- Dec 17 Naomi Wesleyan Circle @ T&C 11:30AM
- Dec 18 Parish Visitor Deadline 8AM
- Dec 20 All-Church Caroling 2PM
- Dec 20 Administrative Council Meeting 7:15PM
- Dec 21 UM Men Meeting 6PM
- Dec 24-25 Office Closed for Christmas
- Dec 24 Christmas Eve Services 7 & 11 PM
- Dec 31 Office Closed for New Years

PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDIES



Revelation: In Christ You Are an Overcomer

WHAT: Rev. Mark's current Wednesday Evening Bible Study

WHEN: Wednesdays @ 6PM

WHERE: In the Fellowship Cafe'

WHY: The Book of Revelation is one of the most intriguing books of the Bible. It's also one of the most mysterious. Filled with vivid imagery, rich themes, and deep spiritual insights, it can be challenging to read and understand. Yet woven throughout Revelation's sweeping tapestry is a unifying message: The victory found in Jesus Christ. This Bible study takes an in-depth, yet practical, look at the book of Revelation, and shares how we can experience a victorious life.

WHAT ELSE: It's **NOT too late!** The books are \$9

His Name is Jesus

WHAT: Rev. Mark's NEW Tuesday morning Bible Study

WHEN: Tuesdays @ 9AM, beginning December 8th

WHERE: In the Fellowship Cafe'

WHY: Get to know Jesus---and discover what it means to follow him as Savior and Lord! This back-to-basics interactive study helps you understand the Gospels chronologically; see how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy; and explore how His ministry enacted the saving reign of God.

WHAT ELSE: The books are \$10

The Twelve: The Lives of the Apostles After Calvary

WHAT: Rev. Mark's current Wednesday morning MEN'S Bible Study

WHEN: Wednesdays @ 6:30AM

WHERE: In the Fellowship Cafe' next to the sanctuary

WHY: What did the twelve apostles do after Calvary? Where did they go? Author C. Bernard Ruffin has woven Scripture, tradition, and historical documents to re-create and outline the lives of each of Christ's closest followers.

WHAT ELSE: The books are \$12

The 10 Commandments

WHAT: Rev. Mark's current Sunday Morning Bible Study

WHEN: Sundays @ 9:15AM

WHERE: In the Dining Room

WHY: God's rules do more than restrict--they give freedom. They are words of prevention and protection. They define identity--ours and God's. Each of the weeks in this study by Rob Suggs looks at one of God's commandments and a Bible passage that will help you better understand how to apply God's law. As you study these laws, you will encounter God himself.

WHAT ELSE: We would **LOVE to have you join this class.** Books are \$8.

ADVENT WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Advent, the time of waiting that leads to Christmas Day, officially begins on Sunday, November 29th this year. There are two different Christmas sermon series that will be offered: **The Greatest Gift of All** at the morning services and **Finding Meaning** at the evening Point service. (see accompanying article) Here are all of the special Christmas opportunities that will be offered during December:

Friday, December 4: Holly Days and the Electric Light Parade

5PM- Live Nativity uptown.

5:30PM- Participating in the Parade

Sunday, December 6: The 2nd Sunday in Advent

We will light the second **Advent Candle** - the Candle of Peace- at all 3 services.

8AM Worship

10:15AM Worship- Children's Christmas Program (see accompanying article)

6PM Worship

Sunday, December 13: The 3rd Sunday in Advent

We will light the third **Advent Candle** - the Candle of Joy- at all 3 services.

8AM, 10:15 AM and 6PM- Choir Cantata

Sunday, December 20: The 4th Sunday in Advent

We will light the fourth **Advent Candle** - the Candle of Love- at all 3 services.

8AM Worship

10:15AM Worship

2PM- All-Church Christmas Caroling

6PM Worship

Thursday, December 24: Christmas Eve

We will celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with 2 very special Candlelight Services.

- At 7PM, we will light the Christ candle and sing LOTS of great Christmas carols!
- At 11PM, BOTH the Chancel and Bell Choirs will share their marvelous gifts with us. In addition, we will light the Christ candle and sing LOTS of great Christmas carols!

Both Christmas Eve services will be built around a message of faith and revelation- **The Endowment** (Luke 2:15-20) We will focus on the fact that a baby in a manger, Who split time in half, is the greatest gift of all. Both services will end with a candlelight singing of "Silent Night".

Christmas Eve is truly a night that changed the world. Please take an hour out of your holiday schedule to join your church family in celebrating the arrival of a baby in a manger who offers us grace, hope, peace, and love!

Come to worship throughout Advent expecting God to show up in powerful ways and touch your life!



HOLLY DAYS/ FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS PARADE

Surely you have attended Aledo's Holly Days and the Festival of Lights Parade that kick off the holiday season in town? Well...now you have a chance to be IN it! On Friday, December 4th, we will be participating in two separate yet connected ministries associated with the event.

- From 5PM-7PM, we will feature a live Nativity uptown. Complete with costumed actors representing the characters from the first Christmas, a group of carolers singing Christmas songs and...hopefully...some live animals, this is a GREAT way for us to reach out to the community.
- At 5:30PM, we will also be hosting an entry in the parade. Our NEW church bus will be decorated with lights. Up to 14 people are invited to ride on the bus and wave at those in attendance!

If you would like to be a part of either of these fun activities, contact the church office or watch for sign-up sheets in worship to get your name on the list! Let them know if you want to be in the Nativity...or the bus!



PLEDGE FORM INFORMATION

Between Christmas and New Years, each member family will be receiving a letter from the Finance and Stewardship Committee outlining the process of making a pledge commitment for 2016. The letter will inform you of how to fill out your pledge form and how to return it to the church if you are unable to bring it to the Commitment Sunday services on January 17, 2016. Please pray about your part in connecting others with Jesus Christ through your tithe and offering for next year.

Ron Engstrom

Chairman of Finance and Stewardship Committee

WEDNESDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

Wednesday Night Fellowship has had a WONDERFUL "semester". Over the Wednesday evenings this fall, we have averaged around 90-100 people a week at dinner! That is amazing! And the food has been great! Our Children's Ministry- FUEL- has gone well. Both the Youth and Adult Bible Studies have been well received and well attended. The Bell Choir and Chancel Choir both continue to fill the building with beautiful music on Wednesday evenings as they practice.

There will be a special "Holiday Schedule" for Wednesday Night Fellowship during December. It will be offered on Wednesday the 2nd, Wednesday the 9th and Wednesday the 16th. We will then take a few weeks off for Christmas. Regular Wednesday Night programming will start back up on Wednesday, January 6th. Don't forget- the evening begins with dinner at 5:15PM, with FUEL- for kids Pre-School through 6th Grade, Youth Bible study for grades 7th through 12th and Adult Bible Study all beginning at 6PM. The nursery is also available.

NEW SERMON SERIES(S)!

by Rev. Mark

On November 29th, we began Advent- the season leading up to Christmas. And we began two new sermon series. First, at both the 8AM and 10:15AM services, we are focusing on the events of that first Christmas Eve as we consider **The Greatest Gift of All**. The remaining weeks of that series look like this:

- Sunday, December 6 (8AM only)- **The Baby** (Luke 2:6-7)

There is nothing “normal” or “expected” about the way Jesus came.

- Sunday, December 20- **The Announcement** (Luke 2:8-14)

This News is so Good that it HAD to be shared!

- Thursday, December 24- Christmas Eve- **The Endowment** (Luke 2:15-20)

A baby in a manger, Who split time in half, is the greatest gift of all.

At the 6PM service, we are spending the 4 Sundays of the Christmas season Finding Meaning. The meaning of Christmas is SO obvious...and yet SO overlooked. The remaining weeks of this series look like this:

- Sunday, December 6, 2nd Sunday in Advent- **Peace** (Psalm 34)

Peace is not the absence of conflict- it's the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means.

- Sunday, December 13, 3rd Sunday in Advent- **Joy** (Psalm 16)

Joy is the simplest form of gratitude.

- Sunday, December 20, 4th Sunday in Advent- **Love** (Psalm 136)

Love isn't something you find. Love is something that finds you.

Come each week expecting God to speak to you in powerful ways!



FUEL- OUR WEDNESDAY NIGHT CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

by Rev. Mark

Our Wednesday Night Children's ministry- **FUEL**- is off and running. And the leadership couldn't be more excited! The emphasis is built around "Hands-On Bible". The kids have fun while they learn more about the great stories of the Bible...AND how those stories impact their lives! We are SO excited about the positive impact this ministry has on our children! If you have children or grandchildren, please consider helping them be a part of this exciting new program. If you have friends or neighbors who have kids, please invite them. Let them know that they are welcome to come for dinner at 5:15PM, stay for an adult Bible study while their kids are ministered to from 6PM to 7PM and be home, working on homework and getting everybody ready for bed, by 7:15PM!

Dear Church Members,

We just wanted to say thank you to those of you who pitched in to get us moved. We feel truly blessed to have each and every one of you in our lives. You are all special in our hearts.

Blessings,
Adam Douglas &
Tammy Friedel



A Little Christmas Every Day

Let's have a little Christmas every day.
Show your love in some small way.
On Christmas, gifts go to Father and Mother, Sister and Brother.
That's when you show love for one another.
But when the tree is down and Christmas is past,
why don't we make the spirit last?
We don't need all the gifts galore.
The loving spirit is what we need more.
Let's keep our hearts glowing
and know that we are showing
kindness and love for more than a day.
The world will get better as we go on our way.
Peace and good-will will be here to stay.
The whole world will grow better when we act this way.
Let's have a little Christmas every day.



Seasons greetings to all , and many thanks to all who have helped me.

Erma Dobbins

Operation Christmas Child Thank You

You have, once again, shown your overwhelming kindness and love for children around the world. In 2015, we will contribute 216 boxes for Operation Christmas Child. While we fell a little short of our stated goal in the numerical sense, we absolutely achieved the goal of making this year's campaign a success. In the end, what matters is not necessarily the number of boxes packed, but more importantly, the real and heartfelt effort to connect as many people as possible to Jesus Christ.

These boxes are like stones thrown into a pond. As the stone hits the water, ripples are sent out that cover a much wider area. We can only imagine the impact that these boxes will have on the lives of the children who receive them, their families, and their communities. This one simple act of kindness can affect so many lives.

Now that the boxes have been collected and delivered to the next point, please take a moment to pray that these gifts find their way into the hands of the children who need them most. Thanks to all of you who filled boxes, donated items, and gave monetarily to this mission. As you navigate your way through the hustle and bustle of this Christmas season, may your hearts be warmed by the fact that you have brightened the life of some child on the other side of the world.....a child who, hopefully and prayerfully, will come to know Jesus in a special way. Have a blessed Christmas!

With heartfelt thanks,
Joan Reynolds and Scott Spencer



UNITED METHODIST MEN'S SOUP LUNCHEON

On Sunday, December 13th at 11:30AM, the United Methodist Men are hosting their annual Soup Luncheon. A WIDE variety of soups will be offered- you are welcome to try more than one! Please come for the Christmas Cantata and then stay for great soups and great fellowship! What a GREAT way to get into the holiday spirit!

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

12/01/1973– Bill & Kris Taylor
 12/02/1972– Neil & Pam Truman
 12/07/?- Tim & Jennifer Thompson
 12/23/1954– Earl & Barbara Etheridge
 12/31/1949– Charles & Ella Luallen



UM Women Golden Age Birthdays

12/7– Renee Forber
 12/7– Marge Lloyd
 12/8– Verla Thompson

Happy Birthday



C.I.A. (CARING INDIVIDUAL ADULTS) LUNCHEON UPDATE

by Joanne Harris

CIA- a monthly luncheon aimed at folks who often find themselves eating alone- will take December off. We will be back full-force in January!

THOSE WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Roger/Jodie Andress | Cathy Hay |
| Scott Balmer | Katie Hermanson |
| Linda Bierbaum | Linda Hoy |
| Emily Blaser/Merrick | Kelsey Huston |
| Dola Boals | Judy Inman |
| Rhonda Brown | Craig Kelly |
| Patty Bruner | Kimberly |
| John & Bev Carlin | Vickie Korn |
| Shirley Chrisman | Alison Kuk |
| Ellie Davis | Nadine Liby |
| Jim Earl | Becky Long |
| Ron/Diane Engstrom | Sydney Magedanz |
| Lyn Franks | Jean McAffey |
| Deb Giles | Jerry McAlister |
| Larry Griffith | Edna McCreight |
| Florine Hampton | Connie Midkiff |
| Jim Hanson | Margarite Nelson family |
| Rev Harris & family | Linda Patsche |

Bryce Rathje
 Pastor Toni Ross
 Pam Russell
 Mr & Mrs Rusty Smet
 Janet Smith
 Carmen Techau
 Cory Thomas
 Earl Thompson
 Pam Truman
 Marilyn Wagler
 Ethel Welch
 Tom Wright
 Shut Ins/ Nursing Homes
 Military & families
 All ill/in hospitals
 Families & marriages
 Our nation & world
 France

Mercer County Schools
 Administration, Teachers, Students
 and Staff
 National and Local Governmental
 Leaders



SAVE THE DATE!!

**“THE JOURNEY”
WOMEN’S EVENT
WILL BE HELD
APRIL 9TH AT
ALEDO UMC.**

**INVITE
SOMEONE!**

CHRISTMAS CHEER BASKETS



The Caring Hearts Food Prep and Visitation Teams will sponsor a fellowship time of making Christmas Cheer Baskets on December 16th after our last Wednesday Fellowship for the season. We invite everyone to come share in this fun activity from 6 – 8 PM in the church basement Activity Room.

Please bring canned goods, fresh fruit, Christmas cookies and candies. We will have frozen soup to add to the baskets. What a joy it is to share Christ’s love with others, especially at this time of year!

SPECIAL OBSERVANCES IN DECEMBER

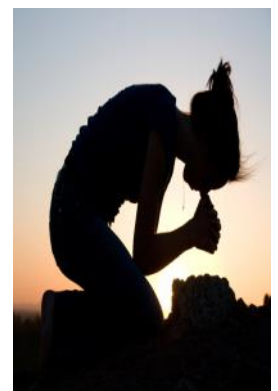
Bet you didn’t know that December is Hi Neighbor Month! What about Read a New Book Month? Safe Toy Month? Write to a Friend Month? Bingo Month? In addition, here are some special days in December: The 1st- Eat a Red Apple Day, the 2nd- National Fritters Day, the 3rd- Roof over Your Head Day, the 4th- Wear Brown Shoes Day, the 5th- Bathtub Party Day, the 6th- Put on your own Shoes Day, the 7th- Pearl Harbor Day, the 8th- Brownie Day, the 9th- Pastry Day, the 10th- Human Rights Day, the 11th- Noodle Ring Day, the 12th- Ding-a-Ling Day, the 13th- Violin Day, the 14th- Bouillabaisse Day, the 15th- Lemon Cupcake Day, the 16th- Go Caroling Day (see accompanying article), the 17th- Maple Syrup Day, the 18th - Bake Cookies Day, the 19th- Look for an Evergreen Day, the 20th- Chocolate Covered Anything Day, the 21st- Look on the Bright Side Day, the 22nd- Date Nut Bread Day, the 23rd- Festivus (for the rest of us!) Day, the 24th- Egg Nog Day, the 25th- The Birthday of Christ, the 26th- Boxing Day, the 27th- Make Cut-Out Snowflakes Day, the 28th- Card Playing Day, the 29th- Pepper Pot Day, the 30st- National Bicarbonate of Soda Day, the 31st- New Year's Eve

JANUARY- A SEASON OF PRAYER AND FASTING

A great thing will happen in January! On Sunday, January 3rd, we will begin a 2-week period of prayer and fasting. Everybody in the church will be encouraged to participate as God leads you.

That time of prayer and fasting will be brought to a close in a powerful way. From 5PM, Friday January 15th through 5PM Saturday, January 16th, we will host our 4th annual 24-Hour Prayer Vigil. You will be given the opportunity to sign up to lead and/or attend one or more hours of prayer. The hours will rotate back and forth between the sanctuary and the chapel. Communion will be available each hour.

Then, on Sunday, January 17th, we will celebrate Commitment Sunday. Late this month, each household will receive a packet about committing our time, talent and tithes to God. And on Commitment Sunday, at all three services, we will all have the opportunity to bring our Commitment Card and place it on the altar. Please keep this powerful and important time in the life of our congregation in your prayers!



Did You Miss Sunday's Sermon?

If you miss church on Sunday, you can STILL experience the sermon. Simply go to www.stickwithjesus.com. Scroll down the main page until you find the date you missed- that day's blog will be a transcript of the sermon! If you would like to subscribe and receive a daily email link, email Rev. Mark at revmark@stickwithjesus.com. Please share these links with your friends and family.



Connection Coins For December

The Connection Coins (or as Rev. Mark calls them, the "thinly-veiled Pringles cans"!) are doing great things in the life of the Aledo UMC! On the 2nd Sunday of each month, during the Children's Moment, the ushers pass around those cans. You are encouraged to drop your change in- although we WILL accept "folding money"! And that change goes toward helping fund a ministry within the church.

This month (December 13th), the Connection Coin offering will go toward another important ministry. Christmas baskets will be assembled to provide to families in need this season. 100% of the money that is collected in the cans on the 13th of December will be used to help cover the costs of this powerful ministry. What a GREAT way to help connect people to Jesus Christ. So bring your change on December 13th!



CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Have you felt God tugging at you, urging you to take a leap of faith and become a larger part of something bigger than yourself? Have you been considering joining the church, but just haven't taken the plunge! There is no time like the present! Contact Rev. Mark (469-2515, revmark@sjumchurch.org) and set up a time to visit with him. This 30-minute meeting will allow you to get to know each other better. At the end of the meeting, you'll decide which Sunday you would like to join the church...and the rest, as they say, is history! Pray about it- are YOU ready to step out in faith?

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

On Sunday, December 6th at the 10:15AM **Worship Service**, the children of our congregation will present their annual Christmas Program. Featuring costumed shepherds, wise men, animals and the Holy Family, this program will be interactive- the congregation will "sing through" the presentation as we lift up the classic carols of the season. Plan on having YOUR child or grandchild at the church at 9AM that day to participate. Also, plan on coming AND bringing someone with you to experience this wonderful event!

THE NURSERY

Perhaps one of the best-kept secrets at AUMC is our Nursery Program. Professionally staffed and lovingly tended, our Nursery is a great place to take your children! The main focus of our nursery is simple...care. Our goal is to provide a loving environment where the youngest among us can feel comfortable and safe. At the Aledo United Methodist Church, we truly believe that the children of our congregation are NOT simply the future of the church- they are very much an active, important part of the PRESENT of the church! We strive to take good care of them while offering them a glimpse of ...THE KINGDOM!



Christmas Gifts for Nursing Homes

Every year the churches of Mercer County unite to donate small Christmas gifts to the residents of Aledo's two nursing homes. They try to give each resident at least one gift. This year is no exception. Last year, both places were VERY appreciative of our gifts.

- Small fleece lap blankets
- Dressy scarves and costume jewelry
- Diabetic socks
- Purse-pack or cubed tissues
- Lotion
- Stamps and stationery
- Candy, regular or sugar-free
- Slipper socks with grips on bottom
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Shower gel
- Deodorant
- After shave
- Christmas wrapping paper, tape, and tags



All gifts should be UNWRAPPED. Please NO powder or open-backed slippers. Bring your donations to the church office or get them to me by Wed., Dec. 9th. Thank you in advance for making Christmas just a little bit brighter for our nursing home residents.

Mary Flint



THE CHRISTMAS CANTATA

Not once, not twice but THREE times on Sunday, December 13th, our Chancel Choir will present their Christmas Cantata- "Lead Me Back to Bethlehem". At 8AM, 10:15AM and 6PM, they will lift their voices as they use their gifts to sing praise to God. Here's a marvelous idea- attend one of the morning services to enjoy his beautiful cantata. Then, come back at 6PM and bring someone with you who wouldn't otherwise come. It is a safe, low-risk opportunity to invite someone to come to church with you!

AUMC STAFF APPRECIATION

The Pastor-Pastor Relations Committee would like to express our sincere appreciation to all of our church staff for have faithfully and with the upmost dedication served us this year. We know that the whole congregation joins us in these sentiments. On the first two Sundays in December, we will be passing envelopes in which you may place monetary donations. These Appreciation Christmas Gifts will be given to each staff member on December 16th.

Ruth Dulaney, PPRC Chairperson

Celebrating “Jesus Style”

We Christians know the Christmas story really well. Jesus is God’s gift to us. And so at Christmas, we celebrate with gifts to the ones we love. However, I think we have forgotten something - the story is a bit deeper than that!

The Christmas story is that God humbled (literally lowered, humiliated) Himself for those in need. Here's how the Bible puts it:

- [Jesus] who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking on the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross. - Philippians 2:6-8
- God stripped Himself of eternal riches and became a poor human in a poor family in our broken world.
- Jesus lowered Himself massively and came into our world because we *needed* Him to. We needed Him to die for our sin, and He humbled Himself to do that.
- We were spiritually poor, but God lowered Himself to make us spiritually rich (Eph. 1:3).

HOW TO REALLY CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

So, how should Christians celebrate Christmas?

Like Jesus did, we too should humble ourselves for the benefit of those in need.

Instead of spending heaps of money on presents your family or friends don't really need, why not give to those in need as Jesus gave His life for you when you were in need?

Why not give so that the hungry can eat?

Why not give so that the thirsty can drink?

Why not give so that the needy can receive?

This Christmas, celebrate "Jesus style". Celebrate Christmas by lowering yourself for those in need, and giving to those in need as He has given to us.

What's Coming Up, TAG:

**2/3rds of God—
Dec 19th,
10-12pm**

**ATTN, 6-8th
graders, Join us on
every Tuesday,
5-6:15pm**

**Senior High
(9-12th), come learn and fel-
lowship with us every
Sunday, 6:00-7:15pm**

**Youth Bible Study—
Wednesdays, 6-7pm**

BOOK DRIVE

The Children’s Library is receiving a much needed upgrade! Our goal is to make the library more accessible and up-to-date.

For the month of December, we will be collecting new or gently used of the following books: early readers, picture/board, fiction, nonfictional, Christian education and Bible story for grades Preschool to 5th. Books should be left on the counter in the room marked 5th-8th grade (A2J) in the Education Wing. Donations for the purchase of new books can be given; please mark as Children’s Library.

Any books donated that don’t match our needed criteria will be lovingly given among three shelters in Iowa.

Would you help us pass knowledge and the joy of reading on to our little ones here at AUMC?



**PRAYER WALK
THROUGH THE
CHURCH EVERY
SUNDAY MORNING
AT 7AM.**



WORSHIP TIMES:
Sundays 8AM &
10:15AM
Sunday School 9:15AM
"The Point" 6PM

THANK YOU!

A HUGE thank you to all who prepared food, donated money, made craft items, provided Nativities, set up or cleaned up areas, and served in any way at the Follow the Star Holiday Bazaar. We connected many people to Jesus Christ through our love and fellowship; and, as a bonus, our profits will be distributed to local missions! A complete summary of the Holiday Bazaar activities will be reported in the January Parish Visitor.

Ruth Dulaney

The deadline for the next Parish Visitor is

**Friday,
December 18
at 8am.**

Please have all articles submitted by this date!

ALL-CHURCH CHRISTMAS CAROLING

On Sunday, Dec. 20th at 2PM, we will have our annual All-Church Christmas Caroling event. Every year, we gather at the church and head out to spread a bit of Christmas cheer to folks in our church who are no longer able to make it on Sundays. We will carpool to Brookstone and Genesis Senior Living. Mark your calendar and plan on being a part of this great event! This is a wonderfully simple, inexpensive way to let other people see the love of Christ through you at Christmas. Join us as we carol for Christ!



Joy to the World!

FINANCIAL MATTERS

(WEEKLY NEED \$5,833)

| Date | 11/01 | 11/08 | 11/15 | 11/22 |
|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Attendance | 302 | 244 | 307 | 295 |
| Receipts | \$15,723.50 | \$4,818.15 | \$4,971.46 | \$5,304.00 |

SHARING
GOD'S
GIFTS