

Wabash Church of the Brethren

645 Bond St., Wabash, IN 46992

260-563-5291 • wabashcob@yahoo.com • www.wabashcob.org



Here is what I'm thinking...

Our worship theme for this season of Advent thru Epiphany is *Freedom Bound*. How does this theme relate to our personal lives? Our worship resources remind us that the scriptures that inform this season "speak to us of people struggling to live in difficult political, social, and personal situations." Certainly we see these struggles all around us and even among and within us. Psalm 25:4 says, "Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths." "God's freedom takes us down pathways of justice, mercy, trust, love service and inclusion. Jesus inspires in his hearers a sense of God's inbreaking freedom when he urges his listeners to an alert activism for 'your redemption is drawing near' (Luke 21:28)

The truth is we are not free. Recently I picked up a book titled, *Practicing the Way of Jesus: Life Together in the Kingdom of Love*. The author, Mark Scandrette, writes about his efforts to follow the pathways of Jesus with integrity, intention and accountability to a community that strives to embody their faith. He calls this type of community a "Jesus dojo." "A dojo is a Japanese word meaning 'place of the way' and is used to describe a practice place for a skill or discipline. The important thing is that it is an active learning environment, where participation is invited and expected. So a 'Jesus dojo' is a space where a group of people wrestles with how to apply the teachings of Jesus to everyday life through shared practices and actions." A community of practice. Sounds great, like church—right? It did to me until I faced my own "devil in the details."

Mark (the author) started right at the heart of it. "Jesus once told his disciples, 'Sell your possessions and give to the poor' (Luke 12:33). And when people asked John the Baptist how to respond to the reality of God's kingdom he said, 'Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same' (Luke 3:11). So Mark started an experiment called *Have2Give1*, and put out a broad invitation to join him and thirty people signed up to participate. They spent eight weeks meeting, discussing, and holding each other accountable to their goals. They systematically divested themselves of their stuff—cars, bicycles, antiques, figurine collections, clothes, books, music and all proceeds went toward tsunami relief in Indonesia. This ultimately led to a discussion about how much money they made and where that money was spent. The benefits from this experiment lead to significant life changes for some including "getting out of debt, reconciling with families, overcoming addictions, and discovering inner healing. Many also shared that they experienced a greater sense of identity, purpose, security and peace.

Here's what I'm thinking... I want all those things for my life as well. But, I confess, I resist that level of transparency and vulnerability. Part of me would like to be part of a Jesus dojo, but within limits and parameters I could control. There are many ways that I work at having integrity in my faith commitments. Still, I struggle with the chains that bind me and keep me from taking the risks that truly following Jesus in this way would require.

That is the first step we are being called to take this Advent and Christmas. Taking an honest look at our life and our faith and how they are—or are not—integrated to inform and form each other. "Jesus invited his followers to 'seek the kingdom' and pray that the kingdom would become 'one earth as it is in heaven.' He invites us into a way of life in the kingdom in which we are empowered to live without worry, fear or lust; to love our enemies and reconcile with one another; to live in generosity and trust and to instinctively care for those who are hungry, thirsty, sick, naked and lonely."

Maybe the church is not a Jesus dojo yet. But if we can see the chains that bind us and take first steps to be such a place for each other then maybe we can help remove the obstacles in God's path to freedom so that we may abound in love.

December 2015

Blessings,

Kay

Worship Schedule

December 6

Freedom Bound: The Path of Joy

Scripture

Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; Luke 3:1-6; Philippians 1:3-11

Message

Pastor Kay Gaier

In this, the second week of Advent, images of God's mercy wash over us. The most striking image is of light that enters the darkness—dawning on us, illuminating our darkness, and giving us the strength to make the changes we need to be on this freedom way.

December 13

Freedom Bound: The Path of Peace

Scripture

Isaiah 12:1-6; Zephaniah 3:14-20; Luke 3:7-18; Philippians 4:4-7

Message

Pastor Kay Gaier

Fear of the unknown, fear of the past, and fear for our security entangles and paralyzes us. On this third Sunday of Advent we bring our fears to God. We long to be released from their power over our lives. Instead of life-denying servitude or a joyless acceptance of fate, our passages counsel God's people to an impassioned, resolute, joyful, and trusting response to life.

December 20

Freedom Bound: The Path of Love

Scripture

Psalm 80:1-7; Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:39-56; Hebrews 10:5-10

Message

Pastor Kay Gaier

From the smallest tribe of Israel, from a poor teenager, from the margins God is bringing real and unexpected freedom. The fourth Sunday of Advent explains what God's labor of love will mean for the world. The upheaval that Mary sings about is nothing short of revolutionary.

December 27

Freedom Bound: The Path of Praise

Scripture

Psalm 148; 1 Samuel 1:18-20,26; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52

Message

Andrew Duffy

The gift of Jesus is a gift that shapes the church's life. After Christmas celebrations in which we spend time with our families and friends, it is good to remember on the Sunday after Christmas that our primary family is the church. Freedom in Christ is evidenced by a spirit of cooperation, not competition—through service and praise and bearing with one another despite conflicts and differences.

January 3

Freedom Bound: The Path of The True Light

Scripture

Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7; Matthew 2:1-12; Ephesians 3:1-12

Message

Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Struble

The light Jesus brings into the world challenges and illuminates all the distinctions between us that we elevate as ultimate goods. For if the light has the power to draw wise men from afar and overcome barriers of former religious outcasts, what power does it still have to bring new freedom into our church and the world?

Prayers for:

Stan Miller continues to receive therapy for his constant headaches.

Solomi Titus is our girl from the group that was abducted from school in Nigeria. Please keep her and her family in your hearts and prayers.

Kenny Larrowe will be visiting a surgeon to discuss options regarding his neck pain.

Roy Shepler is home from the hospital and is being treated for prostate cancer but is currently feeling well.



Please come share a meal at the Main View Inn in historic downtown North Manchester, IN from 11am-1pm on Sunday, December 6 to support local business One World Handcraft. The shop will be open from 11am-4pm for an open house.

Come listen to the North Manchester Symphony Orchestra at 3pm at Cordier Auditorium. The concert will be a *Holiday Celebration* featuring the *Messiah* by George Frederic Handel.



Christmas Spirit

On December 7 Join us at the church for a light meal at 5:30, and then we will head over to the Phi Delta building at 242 S. Huntington at 6:30pm to help wrap presents for Operation Christmas Spirit.

Snow and ice . . .

If we ever have to cancel Sunday morning worship this winter because of snow and/or cold, please check WANE-TV, Ft. Wayne, for such an announcement. An attempt will also be made to post this info on the local radio station(s).

News from

Church Bake Sale

- Thursday 12/5 come join us at 5:00pm to share meal and then work on our creations.

Doors will be open earlier.



- Saturday December 5 from 9—3. Please sign up to help man the booth. We would like to have 2 people per time slot—Sign up sheet is in the kitchen.

- If you have goodies you have made at home, you can drop them off at the church Friday, or bring them to Big R on Saturday.

Movie Time

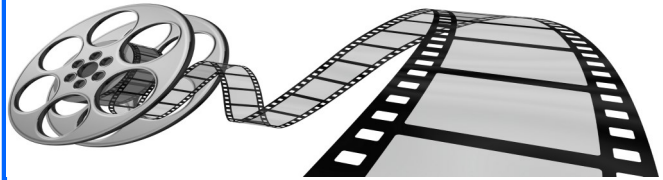
When: December 13 after service

Movie: Spare Parts

Summary: Four Hispanic high school students form a robotics club. With no experience, 800 bucks, used car parts and a dream, this rag tag team goes up against the country's reigning robotics champion, MIT.

Who: All are welcome to stay.

A light meal will be served and breakout discussion groups to follow.



Wabash Church of the Brethren Caroling and Visitation

JOIN IN AND INVITE OTHERS Sunday December 20, 2015

All will meet at Timbercrest Lobby at 2:30pm. After that visit, we will all travel to Wabash to visit folks there.

MEET BACK AT THE CHURCH FOR REFRESHMENTS AT approximately 5:30pm. Soup will be furnished but other refreshments needed. Please see Carol Horn if you are able to furnish some. You can call this cell phone number to check on our timing if you can only join us at church. 260-437-2227 .



Hanging of the Greens

We will meet at the church starting at 9 am on Saturday December 7 to prepare the church for Advent worship.



CAMP MACK

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P.O. Box 158, Milford, IN 46542
Phone: 574-658-4831 Fax 574-658-4765
Email: info@campmack.org

Many sincere thanks to those who attended, donated items for the auction, provided a booth, did a demonstration, brought entertainment or helped in any way to make the 16th Camp Mack Festival last month a great success. Plan to be a part of the 18th Annual Camp Mack Festival on October 1, 2016!

Volunteer Work Days are November 2-4. Come for a day or the entire time. Meals and lodging are available. Contact the office for reservations.

Get-A-Way Days: Treat yourself to a “mini retreat”!

☐ November 14: Sand Hill Cranes trip to Jasper Pulaski FWA

Visit Camp’s website or call Camp for details.

Pastors: Plan to be camp’s guests at the fall Pastors’ Sabbath on Tuesday, November 3 to Wednesday, November 4. The guest leader, Jeff Carter. This event is no charge; it is our gift to you.

Camp Mack Alternative Gift Options: Consider a gift that could change a life! Give a child a gift of summer camp or give a Good as Gold certificate so that the recipient may choose the program of their choice. Or help to fulfill one of the wishes on the **Camp Mack Wish List**:

- A donation to the Growing from the Ashes Capital Campaign for Becker Retreat Center
- Funds for operation – as Camp serves without income from Becker Lodge.

NEW YEAR’S PARTY: for those in 6th grade through high school. Theme: Fearless Faith Live DJs, dancing, pizza, popcorn, movies, awesome worship and camp’s own “Times Square countdown” with a ball drop and sparkling grape juice! Time: Dec. 31, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. to Jan. 1, 2016: at 12:30 p.m.

PRAYER REQUEST: Please pray the Staff and volunteers.

A Quiet Place Quote: “May our surrendered hearts reach out with an eager delight to discover and embrace the lovely will of our loving God.” Hannah Whitall Smith



Medicare changes for 2016

Are you or someone you know on Medicare? If so, remember that the plans do change yearly. There are many resources online to help you navigate the process. <http://www.in.gov/idoi/2495.htm> is a good place to start. But what if you don't have online access or just need some help navigating all the terms, choices and forms? The Winchester Senior Center has volunteers that have been trained to help you! Just call 260-563-4475 and they will get you the details of when someone will be there. Don't just assume that the plan you have today will be the best plan for you tomorrow.

If you are new to the Medicare process, they can help you with that too!



Timbercrest's Third Annual Festival of Trees

Saturday December 5, 2015, 10am—2pm

Free hot chocolate and cookies

Lots of beautifully decorated trees (including one from our district)

Christmas bazaar with 25 vendors

Trees will be on display through December

Special Offering— Advent December 13



Advent
offering

The Church of the Brethren Advent Offering supports ongoing international partnerships with brothers and sisters in Nigeria, Haiti, South Sudan, and many other places around the world. It also helps fund the Office of Public Witness, the Youth Peace Travel Team, Youth and Young Adult Ministry events like Christian Citizenship Seminar, and many other ministries that provide opportunities for people of all ages to give voice to the fulfilled promises of God through action.

Please give generously to support these and many other life-changing ministries of the Church of the Brethren.

Movie Time

When: December 6 5:30pm for the meal, 6:30 pm for the movie.

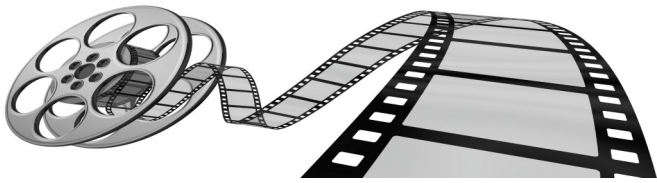
Where: Manchester Church of the Brethren

Movie: *The Stones Cry Out*

Summary: The movie is based on the story of the Nakba of 1948 until today. Call Judi Brown to sign up for the supper (260-306-2065).

Who: All are welcome.

A breakout discussion will follow.



Camp Mack Alternative Gift Options

Consider a life-changing gift - a gift of summer camp or a Good as Gold certificate for the program of the recipient's choice. Call camp to order a certificate. Also give a monetary give in

honor or
memory of a
loved one.



Brethren are called to prayer in the face of extremist violence

In the aftermath of the violence in Paris, General Secretary Stan Noffsinger issues this statement: Brethren are encouraged to bring into the sphere of prayer all people affected by violence—those hurt and killed in the terrorist attacks in Paris and the bombings that occurred in Beirut, Lebanon, on Thursday evening; communities in northeast Nigeria that are still suffering from violence; the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and those affected by continuing fighting in South Sudan and Darfur; the people of Syria and Iraq and Afghanistan who have suffered years of war; those caught up in an escalating situation in Israel and Palestine; the people hurt and killed by gun violence in the US; the children fleeing gang and drug-related violence in Central America; and other places around the world where violence seems to prevail.

“The grief grips at our hearts, but I am reminded by the Nigerian church's witness—in the midst of violence they also took the time to pray for those who perpetrated the violence, for the light of Christ to remove the veil of darkness from the minds of Boko Haram,” said Noffsinger. “So today, while my prayers remember Parisians and the French people I also pray that the light of Christ remove the veil of darkness which clouds the minds of terrorists, and those of us who are citizens in countries that may have acted in unjust ways. God, may the light of Christ illuminate the path to justice and peace.”