

I trust you each had a good Thanksgiving and the "Blizzard of Oz" or Bruce as it was officially named did not disrupt your plans, or life, too much. I appreciate the wisdom the Trustees displayed as they decided to cancel worship about 8:15 Sunday morning. I was in route, but as I turned around the rain started and as we all know by 11:00 the snow and wind were here. I hope you were able to enjoy time at home and had enough warning to have all you might need for a few days. The sermon will be available as a document on our website. Unfortunately, it was not preached and therefore was not recorded. So, the best option is for you to read it. Heck, you could read the scripture and the sermon and do so as a time of devotion.

Fortunately, our Church Conference had been the previous Sunday. At that gathering, held at Berryton UMC this year, our members approved the pastor's compensation package and the 2019 Leadership. Those who are on ministry teams are listed in this issue of *Echoes*. As a congregation we continue to grow and adapt as we work to serve the needs of those outside of our doors. One way we do that is by paying our Mission Shares. At this time we are on track to again pay 100%, which is \$19,432. This will be the third year in a row we have meet this denominational obligation. I am grateful for your faithful giving and the faithful work so many of you do to care for our facility, plan worship, care for our children and youth, and even manage our finances.

As we mark the end of another calendar year, we celebrate the beginning of a new "church year." Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> marks the beginning of Advent. In worship we will have the opportunity to hang our "Memory Tree" ornaments on our sanctuary tree. There will be cards in the sanctuary for you to fill out and a time during the service when we will be invited to hang the ornaments.

As you likely read, on the front page of this *Echoes*, our Advent Series is "The Christmas Story Revealed in Christmas Stories." I hope you take time to read or re-read these classic stories that uniquely point us to the love God continues to reveal to us in the birth and life and death and resurrection of Jesus. I know December is a busy month. I also know December has much more meaning when we take time to worship the God who continues to gift us with life and the promise of life eternal.

I look forward to seeing you in worship each Sunday and on Christmas Eve. This year that falls on a Monday and worship will begin at 5:30pm. Again this year, all of the **Christmas Eve offering will be given away** to agencies that Church Council designates. If you plan to make other donations to SHUMC on Christmas Eve (operating fund or capital improvements) be sure to designate the funds as such. Otherwise, all donations on Christmas Eve will be given away.

**Embrace the hope, peace, joy and love. Barb.**