The Code

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Have you seen the movie “Elf”? The main character, a human named Buddy, ends up being raised by elves at the North Pole. During his elf training, Buddy learns the “Code of the Elves”:

• Treat every day like Christmas.

• There is room for everyone on the nice list.

• The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear. (I especially like this last one!)

The “Code” is not a list of rules but rather a set of guidelines on how to live well as an elf. If you are going to live as a representative of “Christmas” and “Santa,” there is a certain way to do it well. And it involves a lot of singing.
I think the Code of the Elves raises questions for us as followers of Christ. What does it look like for us to follow Christ well? What is our “code” as Christians, especially during this Christmas season?

You could probably answer that question in a lot of ways, but I like these verses from 1 Thessalonians because they’re simple and include the very helpful clarifying statement, “This is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” It’s nice when God’s will is spelled out, isn’t it?

So what if 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 were our code throughout this advent season? What would it look like for us to live these values?

Rejoice always.
Pray continually.
Give thanks in all circumstances.

As we prepare for Christmas, getting ready to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, let us be like the elves. I invite you to take every opportunity to represent Christmas and Jesus well this season by following the “Code.”

-Melissa Nyoni
Director of Children’s and Family Ministries
melissa@sentforothers.org
908-735-7025

Sermon Series: The Code

Ever wonder about God’s will for you? Scripture offers some clear and simple starting points. Christmas is an excellent time to take God up on a beautiful and loving invitation:

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

~ 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

December 3 Treat Every Day Like Christmas
December 10 There’s Room for Everyone on the Nice List
December 17 The Best Way to Spread Christmas Cheer (Kids’ Christmas Pageant!)
November was a super fun month for Journey Youth Ministry! Our Sunday night youth program is growing, both in numbers and in faith, and our students are thoroughly enjoying their groups and worship experiences.

In addition to our time at The JYM, our students also got to participate in our Annual Thanksgiving Progressive Dinner! We shared yummy food, lots of laughs, and great memories.

~ Mecan Payne, Director of Youth Ministries
mecan@sentforothers.org 908-735-7025

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<th>December Events</th>
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In October, four members of Clinton UMC — Mary Jane Carlin, Kim Schundler, Chris Stone and Greg Crawford — traveled to Tegucigalpa, Honduras to spend a week at LAMB Institute, an organization we’ve supported for 20+ years.

The team, dubbed Manos y Pies (Hands and Feet), mixed mezcla (cement) and concrete, crafted rebar support posts, and hauled cinder blocks as part of the project to build a security wall around the children’s home property. Angel, Ariel, and Jose-Louis, the Honduran workers doing most of the work, had already labeled the wall the Trump Wall and got a laugh out of the fact that Americans were now building it.

We also met the young women in LAMB’s safe house program; we were overwhelmed with their joy and amazed by the transformation taking place in their lives. And then there were the children of LAMB. Playing, coloring, and reading together was an immense blessing. The children accepted us into their lives as if we had known each other forever.

That was the spirit we discovered in Honduras: joy, generosity, and the knowledge of God’s love. As a bumper sticker on a door in one of the shops we stopped in said: Without God, life has no meaning. That is the spirit of Honduras.

Curious to learn more? Mary Jane, Kim, Chris and Greg are eager to tell you their story of LAMB. Join us in the social hall December 3 at 7:30 p.m. If you can’t make it, ask us when you see us!

- Greg Crawford, Missions Chair
gcrawf216@gmail.com 908-236-0371
You’re Invited

Celebrate Christmas with Us!

**Saturday, December 23**

Contemporary Communion Service ….. 7:00 p.m.

**Sunday, December 24**

Traditional Service ....................... 9:30 a.m.

Contemporary Service ...................... 11:00 a.m.

Family Service .............................. 5:00 p.m.

Traditional Service ....................... 7:00 p.m.

Communion Service ....................... 11:00 p.m.

*Child care is available at all services except 11:00 p.m.*

*All services are candlelight.*
Christmas came early this year in Sunday School! Throughout the month of November, the kids learned about the work of Operation Christmas Child and took home boxes to pack for children around the world. With the church’s help, the children were able to collect 98 shoeboxes that will bring joy and God’s love to children this Christmas!

Throughout November, the children also learned about King Solomon, the Wise King. The children learned how Solomon chose to ask the Lord for wisdom to lead his people well. King Solomon’s wisdom led him to write many wise sayings and proverbs as well as build the temple for the Lord. Just like King Solomon, the children learned that they can ask God for help.

December brings Christmas and the birth of our Lord Jesus! The kids will spend the month learning about the people who experienced the first Christmas. We will also be practicing for our pageant on December 17. Don’t miss this wonderful sing-a-long pageant, where the children will bring the birth of Jesus to life in a special way.

If you have any questions about Sunday School or would like to volunteer for this important ministry, please Contact Melissa Nyoni at melissa@sentforothers.org.

Our Moms’ Group meets one Saturday a month from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the church social hall. The next meeting date is:

Saturday, December 9, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.
Smith Household

Babysitting is available but must be reserved in advance. All moms are welcome!

Want to learn more? Contact Jill Puleo at 908-455-0706 or jillpuleo@merck.com.
Simplify: Give Online

Whether you’re wrapping up year-end giving or planning for 2018, online giving is a great way to simplify your life. From your laptop, go to sentforothers.org and open the “Give” tab at the top right corner of your screen. From your app, click on the “Give” icon in the middle of the screen, left-hand side. Select “Make a recurring gift” if you’d like to schedule your gifts weekly or monthly.

Greeting Card and Calendar Collection

Do you end up with extra greeting cards and calendars? Share them with the Open Cupboard Food Pantry. Please bring your extra cards and calendars to the “Missions” table in the social hall.

Blood Drive

Give the gift of life this Christmas season:

Saturday, December 9
8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Clinton UMC

For information or to schedule, call 800-933-2566 or log on to www.nybloodcenter.org. Walk-ins are welcome.
Discipleship Fund

At Clinton UMC, we believe that everyone should have access to initiatives that help them grow as disciples. Unfortunately, cost can be a deterrent, and the lack of a formal fund makes it hard for some to seek and receive assistance.

To consistently support Walk to Emmaus scholarships and other discipleship and ministry opportunities, CUMC is creating a new “Discipleship Fund.” This fund would support not only Emmaus but also expenses related to community groups and other ministries that further our walk with Jesus.

You’re invited to support this endeavor by giving through our website, app, mail, or during our regular offering time. Please mark your offering “Discipleship Fund.”

Show You Care: Share Coffee!

Every Sunday morning, coffee, tea, and hot chocolate are ready by 8:00 in the social hall for all the early birds; then, during the “fellowship time” between the services, goodies and juices are also available.

The Care Committee always welcomes help with all events; find out how you can help, even one time a year, by contacting Mary Fitzpatrick at mefitz62@hotmail.com or Rosie Ranauro at roseranauro@embarqmail.com. You can also talk to any Care Committee member.

The host scheduling calendar and calendars for remaining months of 2017 are on the bulletin board in the social hall; choose your Sunday to host by putting your name on that Sunday. If you want someone to host with you, please contact Rosie.

A big “thank-you” to our November hosts: Wisty Hall and Rheta Spinks; Blanche Milheim and Priscilla Cartwright; Don & Jane Treece; Eleanor Irons and Mary Fitzpatrick.

In addition to hosting fellowship time every Sunday, and shopping and maintaining the kitchen and supplies, the Care Committee assists with receptions (including funerals), church picnics, etc. throughout the year.
**Nursing Home Ministry**

On the third Sunday of each month, a group from CUMC visits the Rolling Hills Nursing Home at 2:30 p.m. for a time of song and fellowship. If you speak with Ed Davis or any one of the people from our church family who have been to Rolling Hills for this special ministry, you will hear about the power of love and encouragement between people. We encourage you to consider joining the group any month!

**Prayer Chain**

We would love to add you to our prayer chain to receive the prayers of our people each week. We appreciate every prayer that is lifted for healing and comfort for those who are in a time of trial. You may also join us in the sanctuary each Thursday at noon to pray for our friends and loved ones. Prayers may be sent to the church office through our app or email.

Prayer is a treasure that is never exhausted.

### Flower Dedications

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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>12/17/17</td>
<td>Emily Colo</td>
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<td><em>In loving memory of her mom, Betty Lawrence, who would have been 95</em></td>
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<td>12/24/17</td>
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<tr>
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The church does not receive mail at 12 Halstead Street (the church) or 10 Halstead Street (the church office).

Ensure your mail is not lost: Send mail to the church’s Post Office Box in Clinton:
P.O. Box 5331, Clinton, NJ 08809

Send packages to 10 Halstead Street, Clinton, NJ 08809.

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