

# ***First United Methodist Church***

***310 North Rowley, Mitchell, SD 57301***

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What helps you get in the Christmas spirit? There are a couple of different things for me, but last night I re-discovered an important one. I attended the Mitchell Christian School Christmas Concert. What a blast!!

Yes of course, all the music had a Christmas theme to it and some of the songs were even some of my holiday favorites. But what really put a smile on my face and a touch of Christmas joy in my heart was watching the kids...and seeing and hearing their enthusiasm.

Those who were in attendance couldn't help but experience the joy and excitement on the faces of the children. During one song, the children were to ring bells. Let me tell you, this wasn't some wimpy "I don't want to be seen doing this" type bell ringing. No, this was the "I don't care if I hit the kid next to me" type ringing!! "I'm ringing my bell!!!!!" It made me smile...and remember such enthusiasm in my own soul!!

Maybe all the singing or playing wasn't perfect. It didn't need to be, in my opinion, because Christmas isn't about perfection. Christmas is about God coming into the mess of our imperfect world and into the mess of our imperfect lives to show us what God's idea of love and living is really all about. Yes, it really was a great Christmas concert! And I experienced real Christmas Joy through that hour of watching, listening, and simply being present to soak in the excitement and enthusiasm of this season. Thank you MCS Children and Youth. You truly blessed my soul!

Serving Together,

*Pastor Keith*

If you too like the excitement, enthusiasm, and message that children bring, be sure to come join us at Mitchell First UMC this Sunday afternoon for our own Sunday School Christmas Program. The program itself starts at 4:00 pm, but there will also be musical performances by the children and youth of our church starting about 3:30. For family at a distance, or our shut-ins, we are going to live stream the Christmas Program, technology permitting.

Be sure to join us for worship Sunday morning too. Pastor Keith will continue with the Sermon Series the Characters of Christmas. This week we look at Elizabeth and baby John the Baptist. We'll also have a piece of special music featuring four of our church's talented pianists on two different pianos.

This year we will have three Christmas Eve services, including an "early" Christmas Eve service on Friday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 pm in the chapel in our facility. Our Saturday Christmas Eve services will be held at 4:30 & 6:30 in the sanctuary. Invite your family and friends. We will also have one service on Christmas Day at 9:30 am. We have cards available for you to take to give to other people with our Christmas Service times. Christmas is a wonderful time to invite those who don't have a church connection to join you for worship.

Also, recently I have visited with two dear ladies of our church family; Marcene Usher and Iva Fleming. Both send their greetings to all of you in our church family. They both said they think of all of you often!!