

# ***First United Methodist Church***

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

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Yesterday I gave in to peer pressure. Yes, it's true. Now the back story is that I try to take Thursday's as my day off during the week. So, I had a couple of projects planned for the day, as well as just to do some reading and relaxing. I took Nancy out for lunch and then ran to the hardware store and purchased a replacement doorbell for our home. The current one ran out of "ding...dong."

I had already noticed the outside temperature was above freezing and really nice, considering what the temperatures had been and the fact we're at the end of November. Then as I turned onto our home street, I saw it. Our neighbor was out on his ladder putting Christmas lights up on his house. Oh...this hadn't been on my "to do" list of tasks for the day, but if I was going to hang the lights in decent weather this was probably the day.

Now part of the pressure I felt is that upon our return from Thanksgiving in Nebraska, our neighbors on one side and across the street already had their Christmas lights up. My house looked pretty dull and boring with the Christmas Cheer emanating from a couple houses close by.

So, yesterday I pulled the ladder out of the garage, got the lights out of the basement and started the process of hanging up the lights on the outside of the house. Two and a half hours later the project was done, and our house officially joined the blossoming list of Christmassy homes in our neighborhood.

As I was finishing up my project another neighbor arrived at home with a ladder in his pickup. He reported that he was told, "The neighbors are out putting up Christmas lights. You need to come home and get ours up too!" Yep, Christmas peer pressure.

Not only did I give in to Christmas peer pressure, I also became a part of the "pressure" side influencing others. But you know, that's an OK thing, I've decided. With the tension, anxiety, and fearfulness that is present in the world today, there is a greater need for Christmas hope, Christmas cheer, Christmas light, Christmas kindness, Christmas love, Christmas generosity, Christmas consideration etc. Of course, my real hope is that this Christmas influence would not just be seasonal, but that it would stretch into the new year and become a natural part of how we all live and how we treat one another.

So, I hope that all of you will join me in "giving in" to the Christmas Influence...and that we would also influence others around us to live out the positive and hope-filled qualities that are more prevalent in this season of the year. Yes, it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas. I hope these words are true not only for what we see on the outside of homes, but also on the inside of people's hearts and lives. Let's do what we can to make these words true and evident in our own lives. Let's give in to Christmas peer pressure!

Serving Together,

*Pastor Keith*

This Sunday, December 2, is our Service of Remembrance, in which we acknowledge the empty spot in our hearts because of the loss of family members and friends who are not here to share this holiday season with us. Join us at 2:00 pm in the chapel.