

Unity Presbyterian Church

Yoke Newsletter ~ December 2016

Church Calendar:

<http://unitypresbyterian.net/page/calendar>

Prayer Concerns:

<http://unitypresbyterian.net/prayer.php>

From Pastor Andrew :

We Are Not that Far

Friends in Christ,

Christmas is not far away and all the stores are stocked, with trees, garland, lights, ornaments, and wrapping paper. Everyone is getting ready to stuff stockings and stack presents under the tree. We are eagerly anticipating the holiday parties and gift giving, the cookies and candy canes, and of course the Christmas Carols. Pop holiday tunes and traditional Christmas songs are once again getting played on our local radio stations. One of my favorite Christmas songs is by the Christian group Point of Grace called Not That Far From Bethlehem which says:

Let us celebrate
As the Christmases go by
Learn to live our days
With our hearts near to the child
Ever drawn, ever close
To the only love that lasts
And though 2000 years have passed

We're not that far from Bethlehem
Where all our hope and joy began
For when our hearts still cherish him
We're not that far
We're not that far from Bethlehem

In Hebrew Bethlehem means "House of Bread," a fitting name for the humble birthplace of our savior who said, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." (John 6:32-33) Christmas is so much more than the celebration of the Holidays, so much more than evergreens, elves, poinsettias, and bows.

It is about Bethlehem and the blessed birth of Jesus; where far away and long ago God's hope for the world's healing, God's peacemaker to reconcile us, God's joyful mystery that draws us close, and God's everlasting Love entered into the world. Through advent we wait, longing to see the Christ child born once again, we feel the excitement and the anticipation of what that means.

Christmas comes again, bringing us once again face to face with our savior's humbleness. Even today Bethlehem symbolizes where Christ comes close to us, all we need to do is cherish him, and proclaim, "Give us this bread always." (John 6:34)

May the Peace of Christ be with you,
Rev. Andrew Black

Worship Schedule

December 4th— 2nd Sunday of Advent
Service of Word and Table
Sermon: "Waiting" by Rev. Andrew Black
Inspired by Matthew 3:1-12

December 11th —3rd Sunday of Advent
Choral Cantata
Joy! Unspeakable Joy!

December 18th — 4th Sunday of Advent
Sermon: "Praying" by Rev. Andrew Black
Inspired by Matthew 1:18-25

December 24th 7:00 pm — Christmas Eve
Lessons and Carols

December 25th — Christmas Day
Sermon: "Living" by Rev. Andrew Black
Inspired by John 1:1-14

Where is Pastor Andrew

Pastor Andrew will be on Vacation from December 26th — Jan 1st, 2017
Have a blessed and Happy New Year

Growth Giving Challenge for the Potts Food Pantry

We are doing an amazing job collecting items for the food pantry throughout the year, but the Christmas holidays are always difficult for families in need. Can we rise to the challenge? What would it mean for our food pantry if each week during Advent we all brought something extra to stock the shelves. Just one extra item per person per week added to the one item we already bring can make an amazing difference. By just adding a few more items to your weekly shopping list and dropping them off on Sunday morning we can greatly increase the efforts to feed those of our community in need. Keep watching the weekly bulletin insert for suggestions on the items the Food Pantry needs most.

The Food Pantry currently serves 12 families and there is an ever increasing need in our community. The pantry not only needs donations, it needs YOU. There is a great deal of time and effort that goes into operating the food pantry each month. There is food to purchase, stock, pack, and distribute. Our current dedicated group of volunteers is amazing, but they need YOUR help. I hope each of us can spend some time discerning how they might be called to help support the Food Pantry with our time and talents. Please let Pastor Andrew, Dawn Chapman or Jan Buffington know if you are interested in doing more to help us continue to answer Christ's call to care for and love our neighbors. ~Pastor Andrew

CHURCH GARDEN

We invited the Community to have plots this past year. There are some concerns of how to get more community involvement and what to do next. A few were aggravated about lack of interest (As am I) Dirt people will be motivated by the cold weather to dream about playing in the garden! Remember to tell everyone of our opportunity at Unity to learn and share the fun & knowledge involved with our 'Community' Garden and ALL our 'Master Gardeners'. Remember to emphasize our 'Green Congregation' Status. We have a great bunch here at Unity Presbyterian Church.
Sincerely -Dawn Chapman

The Mitten Tree

It's time for the mitten tree!! Don't forget to bring your gifts of gloves, mittens, scarves and hats to decorate the tree. These items will go to the 14th and Chestnut Center after the Christmas season. Please bring your gifts to decorate the tree and help the children of our community.

Blanket Sunday

We will collect blankets, sheets, pillows and mattress pads. Please bring slightly used or new items. Bring them anytime and we will dedicate them on January 29, 2017. We will take the items collected to the Lighthouse Mission.

Thank you!

Morning Glories

The Morning Glories will meet for a *Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 13, at 11:00 am (note time change) at Bob Evans.* Come join us for fellowship and lunch!



Save the front of your greeting cards as a mission/recycling project. There is a box in the back of the church where you can leave your cards.

View from the Inside by Camille Church Mouse



Lo, winter has come! Get out your long johns, blankets, hot cocoa, and anything to keep warm. This too, will pass!! The Chicken Noodle dinner was delicious, as usual!

The "Ding Dong" is up and running!! It is beautiful and is a wonderful addition to our church property.

The Christmas decorations are up along with the mitten tree. The white gift tags are disappearing and soon we will be bringing back gifts for those in need. This is a season of giving and sharing.

Enjoy the Christmas season but remember we are celebrating the birth of Jesus. Join us as we celebrate this joyous season.

God's blessings and joy to all of you. Peace and love.

POTTS PANTRY FOR THANKSGIVING:

ALL of Food Pantry Individuals were very pleased with the Turkeys and Thanksgiving Fixings. The younger family members were pleased with the pie ingredients as well as occasional sweets. Many appreciate the fact that we offer additional groceries when students are home from school during Fall Break. We received Thanks and Happy Thanksgiving wishes to all involved with Unity Presbyterian Potts Food Pantry. May everyone have a happy celebration and a very Merry Christmas.

THANK YOU FROM THE Shirley Huber family

Unity Presbyterian Church Family: We would like to thank each and every one of you for opening your hearts and church for Shirley during her time of need. We know many prayers, calls, and thoughts have been made and we ask that you continue to pray for her. Thank you for caring, with God's love.

Green Corner

The reality of wildfires has hit home to the Modesitt household as we hear the news out of Tennessee. Reading news reports that mention places we have been and roads we have driven make it all too real. Seeing the pictures of the beautiful Smoky Mountains in flames breaks our hearts.

Some of this was from unfortunate natural conditions of drought which is in God's hands. When you hear that some of these wildfires were set or caused by man it shows how much responsibility we all have for the world around us.

At Unity we have acknowledged our part in taking care of the world around us and we work to take care of God's gift. Unfortunately, not everyone outside of our congregation has heard the message or taken it to heart. Still, we can all do our part.

This Christmas season, take time to thank God for the gift of this beautiful planet he has given us. Also, please pray for those affected by these devastating fires. At the same time, look around your part of this world and take the time to do the things that we can do to help.

Recycle paper, glass and plastic that comes into your homes.

Save water by turning off the faucet when it isn't needed.

Donate usable items to area charities instead of throwing them away. Or see if someone you know might be able to use the items.

Turn down your heat a degree or two and dress warmer. Make sure your furnace filters are clean and your furnace is running efficiently.

These are all small things that we can all do to help the environment. If we all do something it can add up to a big impact in helping take care of God's gift to us!