

Unity Presbyterian Church

Yoke Newsletter ~ December 2017

Church Calendar:

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

Prayer Concerns:

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

Anything But Silent

Sisters & Brothers in Christ,

One of my favorite moments during the Christmas season happens at the Christmas Eve Service when we are standing around the church with soft glowing candles and singing Silent Night, Holy Night. In the stillness of that moment I feel a deep connection to God surrounded by people I love. In that moment we proclaim with our voices that Christ has come, the Prince of Peace, and pray with our hearts that Christ will come again.

**Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright
'round yon virgin mother and child! Holy infant so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

I adore this image of the divine child snuggling gently in his mother's arms during the stillness of the night. While this moment is described as peaceful, the hours leading up to it were probably anything but silent. Christ was fully divine and miraculously conceived, but also fully human and he came to the world through the very real act of child birth. I believe Mary felt the harsh and real pain of labor along with the uncertainty and fear that accompanies it. I suspect Joseph felt the anxiousness and helplessness that any expecting father feels while waiting; worried for the ones he loves. I doubt the animals around the manger were peaceful and silent onlookers.

Here we see the miracle of Christmas. Christ comes in the midst of the chaos to bring peace. Our world is filled with chaos and it's easy to feel anxious and helpless as we watch politicians argue, see nations wage war, and witness the oppression of others. Our lives are filled with chaos and many of us feel (or know someone who feels) the harsh real pain of illness, grief, or desperate circumstances and all the uncertainty and fear that accompanies them.

In the midst of our chaos, Christ breaks in as a beacon of hope, peace, joy & love. A reminder that whatever is happening in the world and no matter what is affecting our livelihood, God claims us. In the still moments we find each other. Surrounded by the ones we love and surrounded by the light of Jesus we

know that God is working towards reconciliation and wholeness. We proclaim with our voices that Christ has come, the Prince of Peace, and pray with our hearts that Christ will come again.

Silent night, holy night! Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth, Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas!

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

Worship Schedule

December 3rd — 1st Sunday of Advent

Choral Cantata

Believe: The Truth of Christmas

Created by Marty Parks

Unity Presbyterian Choir

December 10th — 2nd Sunday of Advent

Sermon: "The Waiting is the Hardest Part" by Rev. Andrew Black

Inspired by Isaiah 40:1-11; 2 Peter 3:8-15a

& Mark 1:1-8

December 17th — 3rd Sunday of Advent

Sermon: "The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Us" By Rev. Andrew Black

Inspired by Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-14

& John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24th — 4th Sunday of Advent

Sunday 10:30 Worship Service

Sermon: "What's in a Nativity?" By Rev. Andrew Black

Inspired by Luke 2:1-20 & Titus 2:11-14

December 24th — Christmas Eve

7:00pm Worship Service

Lessons in Carols

December 31st — 1st Sunday after Christmas Day

Sermon: "The Dress Code" By Rev. Andrew Black

Inspired by Isaiah 61:10 - 62:3

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 are 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

UPCOMING EVENTS in the life of the congregation

- Dec. 6 Bible Study 10:30 am**
- 10 White Gift Dedication,
Advent Candle-lighting "Peace" Advent Candle-lighting
Rosetta Haynes and Steve Meade;
Soup Lunch 11:45 pm; Organ Recital and Carol Singing**
- 12 Morning Glories Luncheon Ruby Tuesdays 11 am**
- 13 Bible Study 10:30 am
Joint Session Meeting with Deacons and Trustees
Potluck carry-in 5:30 pm, 6:30-7:00 Joint meeting, Session 7:00 pm**
- 17 Worship 10:30; Advent Candle-lighting "Love" Vern and Dawn
Chapman; Sandwich Lunch 11:45 pm; Messiah Sing-Along**
- 18 Bring hams to Church or Church Office on or before.**
- 20 Bible Study Christmas Party 10:30 am
Pack-up Potts Pantry 10:30 am**
- 21 Pott's Pantry Distribution 4:15 p.m.**
- 24 Regular worship 10:30 am; Christmas Joy Offering Dedication
Advent Candle-lighting "Love" The Ellison family
Lessons and Carols Christmas Eve, 7 p.m.
Advent Candle-lighting "Christ" the Black family
with the young children singing a special song at the 7 pm service**
- 28 Mary's Birthday Party 1:00 pm**
- 25 Church Office Closed**

The Mitten Tree

It's time for the Mitten Tree!! Please 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. You can bring them anytime between now and the dedication Sunday which will be January 28, 2018. We will take the items collected to the Lighthouse Mission

Morning Glories

The Morning Glories will meet for a Christmas Party on Tuesday, December 12th at 11:00 am (note time change) at Ruby Tuesdays. Come join us for fellowship and lunch. We will continue our study of Hebrews in January.



VIEW FROM THE INSIDE BY CAMILLE CHURCH MOUSE



We are going to pay later for this great weather. It should be colder and possibly snowy. Just wait!!

The chicken noodle dinner was great! I filled up and oh, my, the deserts!!

Congratulations to our bell. It's one year old. I enjoy hearing it ring!

We are decorated for Christmas and the cantata is coming up soon. The White Gifts are due December 10th and The Mitten Tree is up. Come and join us as we celebrate the birth of Jesus. Many activities have been planned like crafts and sing-a-longs. Check the bulletin and newsletter for all of the events.

God's blessings and joy to everyone. Merry Christmas!!

Greeting Cards: 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.

Green Corner

With the warm weather there are still lots of leaves that are on the ground. Here are some ideas from the website "The Spruce" for ways to use your leaves instead of bagging them. Enjoy!!

It's a fall weekend ritual in most neighborhoods—the raking and bagging of autumn leaves—and it is repeated, week after week until, at last, the last leaf has fallen.

Why make so much work for yourself when there are simple ways to make your fall leaf clean-up work for your garden? Don't spend all of that time bagging leaves to be picked up by your municipality when you can put them to work in your garden beds instead.

Here are five ways to use leaves in your garden.

Compost Leaves

Autumn leaves, especially those that have been shredded by a lawnmower, are dream additions to the compost pile. Leaves are a great source of "brown," high-carbon material for the compost. Simply alternate layers of shredded leaves with the regular green materials you'd add to your compost pile, such as vegetable and fruit scraps, weeds, grass clippings and plants that you pull out in your fall garden clean-up, and let it sit over the winter. Aerate or turn the pile when you think of it, and by planting time you'll have finished compost.

If you are a fan of lasagna gardening, also known as sheet composting, autumn leaves are a true gift to the gardener. You can build a lasagna garden in the fall with your leaves and other compostables, let it sit over the winter, and plant in the new bed in the spring.

Make Leaf Mold

Leaf mold is a wonderful soil amendment that is made from nothing more than fall leaves with the occasional layer of garden soil or finished compost added. The pile sits for about a year, and when it's finished you have the perfect amendment for vegetable and flower gardens, as well as a fantastic addition to potting soils.

Create Mulch

After you shred the leaves, they can be used as an organic mulch in flower beds, vegetable gardens, under trees and shrubs, or in container gardens. Simply apply a 2- to 3-inch layer of shredded leaves to the beds, keeping the mulch from directly touching the stems and trunks of the plants. The mulch retains moisture in the soil, stays cool, and limits weed seed germination. As a bonus, the leaves add nutrients to the soil as they break down, and the worms and soil microorganisms work on them as well, resulting in lighter, fluffier soil over time.

Hoard Leaves

You may think that once all the leaf clean-up is finished, you'll never want to see another leaf again. But just wait. What about when spring rolls around, and you're out there weeding and deadheading and pruning again, adding all of those "greens" to the compost pile? Brown materials can be hard to come by in spring and summer. But, if you've thought ahead and hoarded a garbage bag or

two in your garage over the winter, you won't have any problem making perfect compost in spring. It's much easier to dump a bag of leaves on the compost pile than to stand there shredding newspaper in an attempt to dry out a soggy compost pile.

Mowing

This one may be the easiest solution, as it involves no raking whatsoever. There really is no scientific reason to rake all the leaves off the lawn.

If you run over them with a mower, they'll break down over the winter, providing your soil with nutrients and shading the soil, which results in fewer lawn weeds to worry about next year. If you do this once a week until the leaves are finished falling, you won't have to rake a single leaf, and your lawn will look better for it next spring and summer.

So, there you have them—five ways to deal with autumn leaves. Use one or a combination, and don't be surprised to find yourself eyeing your neighbor's leaves after you see the benefits autumn leaves bring to your garden