

Dear Partners in Ministry,

December has not just brought us the season of Advent and the Sundays of waiting, but also some challenging and beautiful weather. And so, last Sunday, we had a change of plans due to snow. I've spoken in sermons of my feeble attempts to get things organized (my family included) and the futility of trying to control schedules. So, this Sunday all was in place for the Children's Christmas Play except those children whose families couldn't get out of their driveways. About eight a.m. Kit called me and we decided to postpone the play. Then, I had to come up with a sermon in place of the play. As he called, I was pulling books off the shelves to get ideas.



We light the "Angel Candle" as the third candle of Advent. Therefore, what better subject than angels for the sermon. I found some stuff, fifty-five hardy souls showed up, Eula made it, Rachel Ricks came to sing a solo during the play and sang it anyway and we had worship. Maybe because of the relaxed attitude and the feeling of gratefulness at just being there, I think we had a more meaningful morning. Maybe when we just let go of the plans and let God in, we are better off. Ya' think?

I have had two weeks of a bad cold when I couldn't do all the stuff I planned to do, when I couldn't visit folks in the hospital. My weekend plans changed hourly. Nothing went as I had planned. But – I went sledding with my grandsons, I got the wallpaper border down in the bathroom, I talked on the phone, I went to church and it was good.

Advent is about the breaking in of the Realm of God, about angels who come to us when and where and how we least expect it. Advent turns the plans of the world upside down. We wait for a mighty ruler, an earth shattering dynamic Christ and instead we find Him in humble and yet glorious beginnings.

If your plans aren't going as you expected (and whose are?), take time to pause, give thanks for what is and leave room for God.

Merry Christmas,

Pastor Sue

THANK YOU



Where do we begin to start thanking everyone who helped so much with the Christmas Candlelight Dinner? The committee worked so hard in organizing the event, the members of the congregation did a beautiful job on decorating the tables, the food was wonderful and the fellowship was great.

Many thanks to all who contributed to this special event. We are truly blessed with a caring church family.

The Worship and Music Committee

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KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS

Lucille Brand at Green Park Resident Home, John Schuette at Green Park Nursing Home, Ruth Lenz at Bethesda Meadows, Walt Miller at Orchid Terrace, Ann Goetz at Sunrise Assisted Living – Clayton, and Bob Leber who spent some time in the hospital but is now home and doing well.



COOKIE SALE RESULTS

The cookie sale this year netted \$309.00. Many thanks to all who donated cookies for the sale. We couldn't have done it without your help.

EPIPHANY SUNDAY, JANUARY 6TH

Epiphany is the climax of the Advent/Christmas Season and the Twelve Days of Christmas, which are usually counted from the evening of December 25th until the morning of January 6th. This is an occasion for feasting in some cultures, including the baking of special King's Cakes. The Worship and Music Committee will be providing the refreshments after worship that morning – King's Cakes. Come have a slice of cake and if you find an almond in your piece, you will have special blessing for the year.

More about Epiphany Sunday ---

EPIPHANY PARTY

The Congregational Vitality Initiative Committee invites you to the MPR after worship for Epiphany cake and a chance to help evaluate the health of our congregation and its ministry. Just find a seat and you will be served, all we ask is that you fill out the questionnaire. Maybe you will find the lucky almond in your slice of cake. Plan on taking time after worship for fellowship and a little work.

LADIES FELLOWSHIP



Ladies Fellowship will meet on Tuesday, January 15th to plan for the coming year. Bring your sandwich and your ideas. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

BIBLE STUDY CLASS

The Bible Study Class will take a break because of weather conditions, the holidays, etc. and resume lessons in February.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

1	Joel Knoll	18	Jeff Stevenson
2	Charles Zikes	19	Jane Eason
3	Walter Knoll	22	Dan Kammerer
3	John Mikusch	22	Jeremy Decker
4	Carl Schillinger	23	Marilyn Eason
4	Jamie Jackson	24	Nick Harvey
5	Chassidy Wodicker	28	Lois Decker
8	Gary York	29	Beth Hickman
12	Andrew Knoll	30	Harold Adams
14	Jordan Gross	30	Lester Krenning
17	Hannah Schillinger	31	Joyce Brand
17	Lynn Bippen	31	Andria Brym
17	Robin Knoll		



RECEPTION FOR REV. JEFF WHITMAN

A reception for Rev. Jeff Whitman, the new conference minister for the Missouri Mid-South Conference UCC will be held on Sunday, January 27th. Watch for details.

FAITHFUL READERS BOOK CLUB

Here are the books we are reading and the dates we will discuss them. Everyone is welcome to join us for lunch and discussion.

January 27 th	Eat, Pray, Love
March 30 th	Faith Club
June 1 st	Middlesex

ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES



For the final three Sundays in January and the first three in February, senior high youth and adults are invited to join in a study and conversation on national and international politics and how our faith might help to shape our commitments as we work together toward God's vision of global peace and justice.

As a guideline for our conversations, we will use a curriculum entitled "For the Peace of the World," which was published two years ago by the National Council of Churches. The curriculum should help us engage some of the major, global public issues of our time and to dialogue on those issues in light of Scripture and our faith tradition. We will meet after worship over the course of our six Sundays, and each meeting should be about one hour.

While the presidential primary season hits full stride, I hope that these sessions might serve as another way in which we can consider some important issues facing our country and our world. So bring yourselves and bring your ideas and bring a prayerfully-considered openness to how God might be calling us to be part of the body of Christ in the world.

Brad Urban

CONFIRMATION CLASS SCHEDULE

- January 5 Visit the UCC Neighborhood Houses. Meet at church at 8:30 am. Be back by noon.
- January 6 Sunday – stay in worship and then class with Pastor Sue until 12:30 pm.
- January 13 Sunday School class and Youth Fellowship service project at St. John's UCC on North Grand.
- January 20 Sunday School Class and extended time with Pastor Sue until 12:30 pm.
- January 27 Sunday School Class



- 24 Willing Workers 10 am
Yoga Class 6:30 pm
- 27 Faithful Readers Book Club
Adult Education after worship
- 28 Crier articles due
- 29 Bell Choir 7 pm
- 30 Choir 7 pm
- 31 Yoga Class 6:30 pm

COMING EVENTS

- 1 Office closed – Happy New Year
- 2 Yoga Class 6:30 pm
- 6 Communion Sunday - Epiphany
Growing Thru Grief Meeting 4 pm
- 7 Church Council 7 pm
- 8 Bell Choir 7 pm
- 9 Free Lunch – 12 noon
Choir 7 pm
- 10 Willing Workers 10 am
Yoga Class 6:30 pm
- 13 Birthday Sunday
Engaging Youth meeting 8:30 am
Worship/Music meeting after worship
Adult Education after worship
- 14 Christian Education Meeting 6:30 pm
- 15 Women's Fellowship Planning Luncheon
Bell Choir 7 pm
- 16 Choir 7 pm
- 17 Yoga Class 6:30 pm
- 19 50+ Group Planning Breakfast
- 20 Growing Thru Grief Meeting 4 pm
Adult Education after worship
- 21 Church office closed – Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday
- 23 Choir 7 pm



**LITURGISTS, USHERS, ACOLYTES AND CHILDREN'S TIME
FOR JANUARY**

Liturgists

January 6 Brad Urban
January 13 Dana Faerber
January 20
January 27 Harry Jennings



Children's Time



January 6 Terri Karcher
January 13 Kit Norton
January 20 Bob Leber
January 27 Brad Urban

Ushers

January 6 Youth
January 13 50+ Group
January 20 Evangelism
January 27 Women's Fellowship



ACOLYTES



Acolytes

January 6 Brent Rohlfig
January 13 Sarah Witte
January 20 Haylee Thibodeaux
January 27 Carley Nickel

FOOD FOR THOUGHT FOR THE NEW YEAR

Thanks to Janet Remmers for this article –

What a difference a sad event in someone's life makes.

George Carlin (His wife recently died....)

A message by George Carlin:

The paradox of our time in history is that we have taller buildings but shorter tempers, wider freeways, but narrower viewpoints. We spend more, but have less, we buy more, but enjoy less. We have bigger houses and smaller families, more conveniences, but less time. We have more degrees but less sense, more knowledge, but less judgment, more experts, yet more problems, more medicine, but less wellness.

We drink too much, smoke too much, spend too recklessly, laugh too little, drive too fast, get too angry, stay up too late, get up too tired, read too little, watch TV too much, and pray too seldom.

We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We talk too much, love too seldom, and hate too often.

We've learned how to make a living, but not a life. We've added years to life not life to years. We've been all the way to the moon and back, but have trouble crossing the street to meet a new neighbor. We conquered outer space but not inner space. We've done larger things, but not better things.

We've cleaned up the air, but polluted the soul. We've conquered the atom, but not our prejudice. We write more, but learn less. We plan more, but accomplish less. We've learned to rush, but not to wait. We build more computers to hold more information, to produce more copies than ever, but we communicate less and less.

These are the times of fast foods and slow digestion, big men and small character, steep profits and shallow relationships. These are the days of two incomes but more divorce, fancier houses, but broken homes. These are days of quick trips, disposable diapers, throwaway morality, one night stands, overweight bodies, and pills that do everything from cheer, to quiet, to kill. It is time when

there is much in the showroom window and nothing in the stockroom. A time when technology can bring this letter to you, and a time when you can choose either to share this insight, or to just hit delete...

Remember; spend some time with your loved ones, because they are not going to be around forever.

Remember, say a kind word to someone who looks up to you in awe, because that little person soon will grow up and leave your side.

Remember, to give a warm hug to the one next to you, because that is the only treasure you can give with your heart and it doesn't cost a cent.

Remember, to say, 'I love you' to your partner and your loved ones, but most of all mean it. A kiss and an embrace will mend hurt when it comes from deep inside of you.

Remember to hold hands and cherish the moment for someday that person will not be there again.

Give time to love, give time to speak! And give time to share the precious thought in your mind.

AND ALWAYS REMEMBER:

Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.

If you don't send this to at least 8 people...Who cares?

George Carlin