

# St. John's United Church of Christ

## The VOICE

DECEMBER 2013

### What is Advent?

shared by R.L. Getz



Advent is a season in the Christian year that lasts for about four weeks. In our secular American celebration of Christmas, the Christmas season (or *holiday* season, ugh) begins in the weeks prior to Christmas Day. Generally, this season starts in early December, though retailers have a bad habit of beginning Christmas in November (or even October). In my rule book, you shouldn't listen to Christmas music or turn on Christmas lights until after you've finished the Thanksgiving turkey . . . at the earliest. Of course outside of my immediate family, nobody follows my rules . . . especially retailers.

So Advent overlaps with what is usually thought of in American culture as the Christmas season. But its beginning and ending are well defined, and its themes are quite a bit different from what is commonly associated with secular Christmas celebrations.

The Christian season of Christmas actually begins on Christmas Eve and lasts for twelve days, ending on January 6<sup>th</sup>. The time before Christmas is Advent, *a season of preparation for Christmas*. Christians prepare for celebrating the birth of Jesus by remembering the longing of the Jews for a Messiah. In Advent, we're reminded of how much we ourselves also need a Savior, and we look forward to our Savior's second coming even as we prepare to celebrate his first coming at Christmas. The word "Advent" comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "coming" or "visit." It's meant to get us ready, not for a present-opening party, but for a child to be born to us, a savior-Emmanuel.

Advent doesn't get much attention compared to Christmas, though interest in Advent is growing steadily in many churches and in many Christian homes. That's not to say everybody is an "Adventophile," a lover of Advent, however. Some Protestants ignore Advent because it isn't taught in Scripture and because they associate it with Roman Catholicism. Secular culture ignores Advent because there isn't much money to be made here. I suppose you might be able to make a few bucks selling purple and pink candles, but this isn't going to thrill most retailers.

So as we prepare the sanctuary and look at the purple and pink associated as the advent colors of season, may we all prepare our hearts and souls for the coming of the Messiah. May we do it with prayer and gladness of heart for Advent applies to all who truly believe.



# DECEMBER WORSHIP NEWS

Sunday, December 1 –  
First Sunday of Advent  
Isaiah 2:1-5  
Psalm 122  
Romans 13:11-14  
Matthew 24:36-44

Sunday, December 8 –  
Second Sunday of Advent  
Isaiah 11:1-10  
Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19  
Romans 15:4-13  
Matthew 3:1-12

Sunday, December 15 –  
Third Sunday of Advent  
Isaiah 35:1-10  
Psalm 146:5-10  
James 5:7-10  
Matthew 11:2-11

Sunday, December 22 –  
Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Isaiah 7:10-16  
Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19  
Romans 1:1-7  
Matthew 1:18-25  
(Cantata)

Tuesday, December 24 –  
Christmas Eve  
Isaiah 9:2-7  
Psalm 96  
Titus 2:11-14  
Luke 2:1-20

Wednesday, December 25 –  
Christmas Day  
Isaiah 52:7-10  
Psalm 98  
Hebrews 1:1-12  
John 1:1-14

Sunday, December 29 – First Sunday after  
Christmas  
Isaiah 63:7-9  
Psalm 148  
Hebrews 2:10-18  
Matthew 2:13-23

Tuesday, December 31 – New Year's Eve  
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13  
Psalm 8  
Revelation 21:1-6a  
Matthew 25:31-49



## NOTE OF THANKS

*Dear Friends,*

*The children of the community roamed our halls gathering goodies & enriching the lives of our residents on Trick-or-Treat night. Both the residents & the children thoroughly enjoyed the evening. We had over one hundred children participate. This annual event was once again made possible by generous contributions from local service organizations, UCC churches, employees and friends of the home.*

*On behalf of the children and residents, we would like to thank you for your donations and another successful year!*

*Sincerely,*

*Amy Tillingier, Director of Lifestyle Services*

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS**  
Anna Marie "Reesie" Lauer  
4 Kindred Place  
Annville PA 17003  
Phone # 717-867-8504

## Consistory News by Robin Getz

Well, we are coming to the close of another year. By the time this article appears you will know the names of our newly selected members who you voted for at the annual congregational meeting.

We will always be thankful to all who decide to share their time and talents not only in the name of your church but by doing the work that God has called all of us to do. We are thankful to Walter Bolles, Missy Daub and Terry Knapp for agreeing to serve as Elders. We are also thankful for Connie Martin, Bob Seltzer and Pat Ziegler for agreeing to join us. As for me, the end of the year also signifies the end of my term as your consistory president. Serving has been a joy even though some of the challenges have been many but with all of the help offered between the members of consistory along with the members of this church they have seemed very minor as a whole.

Following Christmas and the post-Christmas bustle, you will see the next project underway which will be the removal of the old water damaged tile in the social hall and the cleaning of the track and replacement of new tile. There will be more information coming for this work detail and we may be looking for a few good volunteers to help us in this area.

We will be working on pulling together the annual Congregational Celebration in January with a pot-luck luncheon following our Sunday Worship. Keep an eye on the bulletin for that information as soon as it is finalized.

We continue to work hard to keep our church as loved and necessary as it always has been. You are the people who make it what it is. You give it life and offer it breath to sustain our Christian lives. May we always continue to do this work together as one in the body of Christ.

## Pastor Herb's Message

Advent is the season of anticipation and preparation. The first Sunday in Advent is the fourth Sunday before December 25. The focus of the season includes not only preparation for the anniversary of Christ's birth but also the anticipation of Christ's return at the close of history. The seasonal color, purple, announces Christ's royalty. The color blue is used sometimes symbolizing jointly royalty and hope.

Christmas is the festival day that is celebrated as the birthday of Jesus Christ. White, the color of the season is appropriately used from Christmas Eve through at least the first Sunday in Epiphany. The season is one of joyful celebration.

The above information comes from the United Church of Christ Book of Worship.

That is all valuable information, but what about the season of Advent and Christmas here at St. John's UCC?

The Advent season starts on December 1. The Advent Candle of *HOPE*, the first of the Advent Candles will be lit. The focus scripture will be Isaiah 2:1-5 and the sermon title will be Trusting God's Vision. We will be looking at the prophet's vision of what the new age will look like.

December 8 will see the Advent Candle of *HOPE* relit and the Advent Candle of *PEACE* lit for the first time. We will continue with a focus scripture

from the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 11:1-10). Branching Out will be the sermon title and we will discover that, even when things seem dark and sad, God can bring new life and light.

The third Sunday of Advent is December 15. After the Advent Candles of *HOPE* and *PEACE* are relit, the Advent Candle of *LOVE* will shine forth. Isaiah will again be the focus scripture (Isaiah 35:1-10). The sermon title will be What Highway Are We On? as we hear the vision that God has in store for us past, present, and future.

As the fourth Advent Candle, *JOY*, is lit along with the Advent Candles of *HOPE*, *PEACE*, and *LOVE*, our focus will be on our choir as they share with us a Christmas Cantata. Music will fill the air.

Christmas Eve will see all the Advent Candles bringing their light to our celebration and the brightest candle of all, the Christ Candle, will show us the way. Luke 2:1-20 will once again tell us the story of the birth of God's Son, Jesus.

As always, the season of Advent and Christmas will be less of a time of *HOPE*, *PEACE*, *LOVE*, and *JOY* if you are not here at St. John's UCC.

Thank you for the privilege of sharing Advent and Christmas with you.

Pastor Herb



## December Celebrations

### Happy Birthday to:

1 Janell Carroll	15 Jonathan Oskam	27 Kadie Walmer
6 Mabel Rudy	16 Brad Griffiths	27 Jack Good
6 Amy Zechman	18 Darlene Boltz	30 Judy Fox
11 Jarrod Kapp	25 Shayne Tyrpin	31 Rev. Allen Helwig
11 Chris Rentschler	25 Larry Walmer	

### Happy Anniversary to:

7 Jean Ann & Neal Grimes

If your information is incorrect or not included, please contact the church office.

## Sunday Worship Volunteers, Thank You!

#### December Readers

Dec. 1-	Robin Getz
Dec. 8-	Keith Gingrich
Dec. 15-	Sharon Hibshman
Dec. 22-	Neal Grimes
Dec. 29-	Tracey Hevel

#### December Flowers

Dec. 1-	Pam Emery & Nancy Frantz
Dec. 8-	Neal & Jean Ann Grimes
Dec. 15-	OPEN
Dec. 22-	Louise & Larry Walmer
Dec. 29-	Barb & Joe Miller

#### November Attendance

Nov. 3-	94
Nov 10-	50
Nov 17-	65

#### December Bulletins

Dec. 1-	OPEN
Dec. 8-	Neal & Jean Ann Grimes
Dec. 15-	OPEN
Dec. 22-	Louise & Larry Walmer
Dec. 29-	Barb & Joe Miller

#### December Coffee Hosts

Dec. 1-	Joe Miller
Dec. 8-	Joe Miller
Dec. 15-	Connie Martin & Marlene Zechman
Dec. 22-	Joe Miller
Dec. 29-	Joe Miller

#### December Deacon

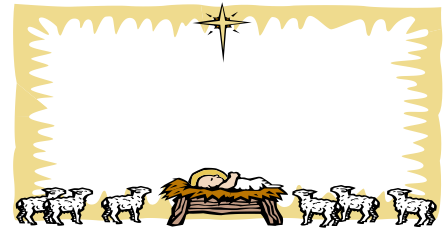
Robin Gingrich

**Merry  
Christmas!**  
*and a  
Blessed New Year*



## From Robin's Nest to Yours

By: Robin L. Getz



Happy New Year!!! I guess I am really pushing the seasons now. But does it not constantly amaze you how fast it seems that we return to another holiday season? I can see why some retailers are pushing a cover bag for the Christmas tree, because it seems like you no sooner put it away and you need it again.

There has been so much going on in our small little church that I can barely keep up with it. Still looking toward a new Shepherd to lead us, which I know will come in good time. Remain thankful for Pastor Herb and all that he and Sharon continue to share with us as well as those supply pastors who have given us a fresh breath every now and again.

So what is it we would like to talk about this month? You know....if you haven't guessed as of yet, I can have a strange outlook on things compared to most. Some complain when they cannot get a signal on their cell phone, and I look at photos from the 1930's or so and wonder how it would have been to live in that era. What would it be like to get from point A to point B on dirt roads by horse and buggy? To wear the dress that was part of that time. Can you imagine going through the day with bows, skirts and hats. To wash my hair in the rain water barrel as I am told was common practice. To make hot piping bread in a wood stove and have a hint of that smoke within. You have seen all of those historical black and whites. Some have even lived in that era, but I would not name names..... What would it be like to have access to a time capsule and go back to that time? Who today in the current generation knows what a "flapper" was? Or a zoot suit, or the Charleston or heaven forbid the unthinkable speak easy? That time was almost as bad as the Beatles or Woodstock. How difficult it was during those days and yet how lucky are we today to have all that we have as far as modern conveniences.

Ok, then how about imagining our families going back even further when entire communities began with a covered wagon. I just recently heard a story where I work in which a gentleman rode his horse to the mill to get grain. The distance was slight, only a few miles as the crow flies, but by the time he returned the Indians had killed his wife. We have all seen Little House on the Prairie or similar shows where they put their throw rugs on the wash line and banged them with a rug beater until all of the dust was gone. Everyone pretty much made their own clothes by hand. You were considered pretty wealthy if you could order a fancy premade dress from the general store. Even though the shows depicted that time as hard, with everyone working their knuckles to the bone, I think, what would it be like to go in a time capsule to spend even one week in that era. I know I would need to learn all there is to know about a flint lock if I am to protect myself when Paul would go to the mill. But I also think, how lucky are we today to see what we have seen and yet be at a place that we are? Do we think twice when we pull something off of the shelf at

Redner's for a meal? And how have we reacted when the lines go forever and there are only a few registers open?

Ok...since I am on a roll; let's go back to a time where you walked to get anywhere. Horses were for royalty. Your daily diet consisted of unleavened bread, olive oil, perhaps wine. Areas were hot, dry and desolate and families lived in close quarters with dirt floors and, if you were truly lucky, a roof overhead might be an option. You lived in fear if you believed in God especially when the Romans and Egyptians were in charge. You herded sheep and goats, cattle and oxen and you were thankful for all that you had. You prayed continually for someone to help you. On a daily basis you hoped for someone to calm the unrest and especially someone to return your world to balance. What despair did the Christians of that time experience? We read of King Herod and his beautiful palace of mosaic tiles and large pools and lush gardens. You read of women wearing decorative robes and gold and the poor servants beaten at any time for reasons we cannot fathom. We read of his order to have all boys under the age of two killed as that is how great his fear was at the word of the coming of a Messiah. Can we even begin to imagine what it must have been like to live during this time? In this era that is our Christian history?

Would our faith be strong enough to risk the wrath of the Romans, be it imprisonment, torture, becoming a servant or in many cases death. If we were asked to help Joseph and Mary get to Bethlehem and prepare a place for this small baby that everyone was seeking and in Herod's case to kill, would we be willing to say, here I am, let me give you a place to rest? Let me offer some food or drink or even a well-rested donkey to keep your trip safe. Close your eyes and imagine living at that time in history. What would you do? Is your faith and willingness that strong that you would sacrifice yourself and your family members to help? Would you be able to spend that one week in this time capsule?

So I guess my question for the month would be, what era would you like to time capsule yourself to see and experience firsthand and do you have the strength and the truth to make one of those Bethlehem at the time of Christ.

As Christmas time approaches, let us all take the time to imagine all that was true at that time. Visualize the time and all that was wished and prayed for. What was imaginable and what was out of touch. How desperate God's people must have been as they waited and longed for a Messiah.

The merriest Christmas to all and may we all remember how truly blessed we are as we decorate our trees and shop for that perfect gift and bake our annual cookies. May we never forget what our greatest gift of all was, no matter what era we lived in or visited.....



## MUSIC AND WORSHIP NEWS by Louise Walmer

### Musical Offerings – December 2013

**Dec. 1** - 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent: Hope

*"We Wait"*

Sr. Choir

**Dec. 8** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Advent: Peace

Baritone Solo – Pam Frantz

**Dec. 15** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent: Love

*"The Child Who Is Born to be a King"*

St. John's Quartet

**Dec. 22** – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent: Joy

*"Bethlehem's Child"*

Congregational Choir

**Dec. 24** – Christmas Eve 7pm

*"Amen, Tell It on the Mountain"*

Sr. Choir

*"What Can I Give the Holy Child"*

Christmas Eve 11pm

*"Cradle Song"* from the cantata, Bethlehem's Child

**Dec. 29** – First Sunday after Christmas

Hand Bells

The Choral Benediction throughout the Advent, Christmas and Epiphany season will be, "A Christmas Blessing".

### **The Cantata – "Bethlehem's Child"**

The Sr. Choir and a number of "extras" from the congregation are diligently rehearsing every Wednesday evening to prepare the cantata, "Bethlehem's Child".

*From the composers Victor Johnson and Lloyd Larson:* "The music and narration of Bethlehem's Child blends familiar carols and scripture texts' from Isaiah, Micah, Matthew, and Luke with new, original compositions thus creating a worship experience for the timeless message of Christmas."

### **Search Committee Update: by Wendy Dorsey** **A Call, not a Job; a Vocation, not an Occupation**

St. John's Search Committee has thus far received and reviewed 13 Ministerial Profiles of candidates interested in becoming our new Pastor. From this pool of screened applicants, 3 preliminary interviews (via conference call) have now been conducted. The Committee has attended a worship service to hear one of these candidates at a neutral pulpit and will be traveling to another site in the next few weeks to hear a 2<sup>nd</sup> candidate.

In the meantime the Search Committee is meeting frequently, all working hard and well together through the challenging process to find the person best suited for St. John's UCC. We are grateful during this time for the excellent interim leadership of Pastor Herb. We profoundly trust that God will guide both our candidates and the members of our Search Committee and we ask you to pray for us regularly. We are blessed with a wonderful church family and an ***Awesome God*** who we ask in prayer to sustain and support us through each step of our work.

## **St. John's Fellowship News,** By Ginny Knapp

It was party time for members of St. John's Fellowship as we hosted the annual Holiday Party for residents of Cedar Haven recently. The auditorium was filled with residents who were treated to cookies, finger jello, and punch. Each resident received a box of tissues.

Howard Lee and the Gospel Singers were the entertainment for the evening and the residents enjoyed singing along with them. Everyone always comes away from this affair with a good feeling!

Many thanks to all who participated in our Avon Christmas project. Kathryn Myers was our top saleslady and Connie Martin came in a close second. The sale netted the treasury \$575.00.

The Christmas Party is scheduled for Tuesday, December 17th at 6:00 PM at the Farmer's Wife Restaurant. Everyone pays their own & will order off the menu. Everyone is welcome to come—we'd love to have you join us for good fellowship, good food and lots of fun.

After the Christmas party we'll be taking a break from regular meetings until March 2014 but we'll come back with some new ideas and projects so please keep us in your thoughts and prayers. Also consider joining us— we' love to see you there!



*Dear Friends,*

*Thank you to those who sent cards, gave hugs, and expressed condolences after the loss of my Grandmother, Jane L. Wetzel. I'd like also to thank Louise Walmer and her crew for organizing and hosting the funeral luncheon at the church.*

*Sincerely,*

*Angie Michael*

*In appreciation for the many birthday cards, flowers, phone calls and out to lunches I received on my birthday.*

*Thank you!*

*God Bless*

*Kathryn Myers*

## FROM THE CHRISTIAN ED. CORNER<sup>by Angela Michael</sup>

I want to start off by thanking Melissa Daub, Scott Benfer, Amber Daub and Kayla Benfer who were all involved in spearheading the planning and organizing of St. John's first time hosting the annual Thanksgiving Youth Break-fast. I'd also like to thank those who volunteered their time and donated items in an effort to make this event a success. Thanks also to Scott Benfer for organizing and chaperoning the Thanksgiving Lock In again this year.

By now the shoe boxes have been wrapped up, packed and transported to the designated drop off point. Thanks to Julie Ditzler, who led this special mission and to those who donated items and helped wrap and pack up the boxes. A fun time was had by all as we wrapped and packed shoe boxes on November 17.

Coming up in December, Robin Getz is planning a carol outing for the youth and anyone

else interested in spreading good cheer this year during the holiday. This is an outing planned in conjunction with the NLRPC's annual carol outing. We hope that by teaming up with this group, we can continue a years long tradition here at St. John's that has been suffering in recent years by waning attendance. We hope you will come out to carol with us, and bring along a friend.

On Sunday, December 8, I will be leading a special intergenerational workshop during Christian Connection time that I hope everyone will come out to attend. At this workshop we will be decorating felt Christmas ornaments in the shape of hearts. These ornaments will then be donated to JOY Pantry in Jonestown to be handed out to the people the pantry serves during the month of December.

## BUDGET & STEWARDSHIP<sup>By Neal Grimes</sup>

The proposed 2014 budget was presented to the consistory at their October 29th meeting and was approved. The next step is to be presented to the congregation at the annual meeting which will be held on Sunday, November 24.

This report shows the October and year-to-date totals.


October	Income	Y.T.D.
Weekly Offerings (4 weeks)	\$ 7,436.00	\$ 90,489.53
Defray Cost of Envelopes	-0-	197.00
Bulletins	20.00	300.00
Joint Men's & Women's Fellowship	-0-	2,500.00
Christian Education	-0-	388.60
Fundraising	64.00	1,536.54
Special Services	-0-	315.00
Social Hall Rentals/Misc	45.00	302.65
Interest	1.76	14.73
Total Income for October	\$ 7,566.76	\$ 90,071.05
Expenses	\$ 9,635.69	\$ 75,041.45
Net Income/(Loss)	\$ 2,068.93	\$ 15,029.60

Our budget for weekly offerings \$2,300.00 to-date we are averaging \$2,104.40.

But this I say: He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.



# December 2013

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> Devotions at 9 AM Followed by Christian Connection 10:30am Worship (Communion) Helen Walmer Memorial Fund	<b>2</b> 7:00 PM Music/Worship Committee Meeting	<b>3</b> Office Hours 9:00 AM-3:00 PM	<b>4</b> Office Hours 9:00 AM-3:00 PM Bible Study-Noon 6:45 PM Cantata Practice 7:30 Choir Practice	<b>5</b> Office Hours 9:00 AM-3:00 PM	<b>6</b> NLPRC Little Learners 9:00 AM-11:00 AM	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> Devotions at 9 AM Followed by Christian Connection 10:30am Worship JOY Pantry Sunday	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> Office Hours 9:00 AM-3:00 PM	<b>11</b> Office Hours 9:00 AM-3:00 PM Bible Study-Noon 6:45 PM Cantata Practice 7:30 PM Choir Practice	<b>12</b> Office Hours 9:00 AM-3:00 PM	<b>13</b> NLPRC Little Learners 9:00 AM-11:00 AM 5:15 PM Christmas Caroling	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b> Devotions at 9 AM Followed by Christian Connection 10:30am Worship Christian Education Meeting following Worship	<b>16</b> Deadline for the VOICE Articles	<b>17</b> Office Hours 9:00 AM-3:00 PM	<b>18</b> Office Hours 9:00 AM-3:00 PM Bible Study-Noon 6:45 PM Cantata Practice 7:30 PM Choir Practice	<b>19</b> Office Hours 9:00 AM-3:00 PM	<b>20</b> NLPRC Little Learners 9:00 AM-11:00 AM	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> Devotions at 9 AM Followed by Christian Connection 10:30am Worship Cantata Deacon Fund Sunday Dine & Donate Sunday	<b>23</b> Office Hours 8:00 AM—4:00 PM	<b>24</b> Christmas Eve Services 7:00 PM & 11:00 PM	<b>25</b> 	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Office Hours 8:00 AM-12:00 P M	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> Devotions at 9 AM Followed by Christian Connection 10:30am Worship	<b>30</b> Office Hours 9:00 AM—3:00 PM 7:00 PM Consistory Meeting	<b>31</b>				

## St. John's United Church of Christ

141 W. Main Street P.O. Box 87  
Fredericksburg, PA 17026



## St. John's United Church of Christ

141 W. Main Street P.O. Box 87  
Fredericksburg, PA 17026

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Pastor's Numbers 717-866-5390  
E-mail [stjohnsucc@comcast.net](mailto:stjohnsucc@comcast.net)  
Website: [www.stjohnsuccfburg.org](http://www.stjohnsuccfburg.org)

### Church Staff

Pastor Herb Hibshman, Jr. Interim Pastor  
Mrs. Beth Ann Griffiths, Organist  
Mrs. Louise Walmer, Choir Director  
Mrs. Donna Eberly-Lehman Church Secretary

### Consistory

Robin Getz, President  
Wendy Dorsey, Vice President  
Melissa Seltzer, Secretary  
Walter Bolles, Treasurer

### Elders

Joe Ditzler  
Wendy Dorsey  
Robin Getz  
Jean Ann Grimes  
Jerry Mohn  
Melissa Seltzer

### Deacons

Walter Bolles  
Missy Daub  
Robin Gingrich  
Terry Knapp  
Angela Michael  
Mark Tyrpin

**Every Sunday  
Devotions at 9:00am Followed by  
Christian Connection  
10:30am Morning Worship**

*St. John's United Church of Christ is: A church of faith, heeding to God's call, through worship, evangelism, discipleship and fellowship. We are building on our church's history, while looking to our future. Our church is filled with messengers, who share the gift of God's love, with the community and beyond. We strive to be a church that reaches out to all with compassion, a vision of God's everlasting peace, and a witness of spiritual hope to our present and future generations. For all this and so much more, we pray in God's name.*