

December 2016

NEWSLETTER

FIRST
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

GOD IS STILL SPEAKING.

23 Church St
Shelby, Ohio 44875

Sunday Worship 10:00 AM

Reflections from the Rev

Dear Friends,

My favorite season in the church calendar is finally here! Advent is defined as the season in which we expectantly wait for the coming of the nativity of Jesus. Advent is my favorite season because the blessed busyness that there is around the church. It is a season when every week there is something special going on, (as you will be able to see in this month's newsletter). However, my two absolute favorite things about the season are very simple, and have very little to do with the busyness. First and foremost, it isn't Christmas until we have turned off all of the lights, illuminated the sanctuary with candles, and start singing, "Silent Night." The tears are gathering in my eyes as I think about it. Second, part of what makes Advent so special for me is the lighting of the four Advent Candles, and finally the lighting of the Christ candle on Christmas Eve. WHAT JOY!!!

Each week as we light the candles for Advent, we are reminded of what the savior will bring to us as we wait expectantly. The lit candles are a reminder to us of the light of God's love for us in sending Jesus. I often look at my sons and think of how much I love them, knowing that God's gift of Jesus just goes to show how selfless God's love for us truly is. May we help show that same kind of selfless agape love to the world during this Advent season. So it is my prayer that you will join in the fun here at 1st UCC and celebrate with us as we anticipate Jesus together!

Happy Advent, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you from the Robinson family! May the God of hope, peace, joy and love, fill your hearts this Advent Season.

With gratitude,

+Pastor James

The Reverend James R Robinson and Family



Advent Preaching Series for 2016

Week 1- 11/27: HOPE: Expect a Miracle

Week 2 12/4: PEACE: Giving Up on Perfect

Week 3 12/11: JOY: Jesus' Wish List

Week 4 12/18: LOVE: Scandalous Love

Christmas Eve 12/24: CHRIST - A Different Kind of Christmas

In Between Years

Written by Rev. Emily Heath

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."
- 2 Corinthians 5:17*

You may not know this, but it's New Year's Eve. Not on the calendar. That's about five weeks away. But in the world of the church, tomorrow starts a brand new year.

The Christian church year begins on the first Sunday of Advent, so generally right after Thanksgiving and near the start of December. That's no coincidence. The church year is modeled after Christ's life, death, and Resurrection, so it makes sense that we start with the story right before Christ is born.

By contrast, the church year ended last Sunday, on what is called "Christ the King Sunday" or, more inclusively, "Reign of Christ Sunday." The idea is that after we have journeyed through Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost, and the very long period we know as Ordinary Time, we have told the story of Christ as witnessed to in Scripture. On Christ the King we proclaim Christ's victory over every power of death and destruction, past, present, and yet to come.

Theologians like Paul Tillich have described this as the "already, not yet." Christ has already come into the world and triumphed over even the grave. And yet, just look around; there is so much left to be done until Christ's grace and peace reigns everywhere.

Part of the Christian life is learning to live in that tension. We proclaim that Christ is Lord, yet we also admit that the work is not done. We set our minds and hands to the tasks that are left, and we keep working, because God expects nothing less from us.

I think that's why we tell these same stories, year after year. We need the reminders of how it happened, and we need to look back before we can look forward. This week especially, in between years, we prepare once again to hear that the story of the Christ who grew up to be king began as a baby with a world of odds stacked against him.

Happy new year, church. May the great story inspire you once again this year, and always.

Prayer

Dear God, as we begin a new year with you, help me to hear this story once again with new ears, and to be transformed by it. Amen.



About the Author

Emily C. Heath is the Senior Pastor of the Congregational Church in Exeter, New Hampshire, and the author of [Glorify: Reclaiming the Heart of Progressive Christianity](#).

December 2016 Happenings

Sunday 12/4/16- Ugly Sweater and Potluck Sunday.

Wear your Ugly Christmas Sweater, or most festive Christmas attire to worship this week and bring a dish to share for potluck following the morning worship service! (Don't have an ugly sweater or festive attire? Come anyways and bring a dish to share!)

Saturday 12/10/16- Shelby Ministerial Association Progressive Dinner from 4:30pm- 8:00pm.

This is an opportunity for Shelby Churches to get together for fellowship (Let's participate and be Ecumenical!). Tickets are \$1.00, proceeds will go to the Shelby Ministerial Association. If you would like to purchase a ticket, please see Pastor James. (This is something that you should attend if you can. We will car pool to make it easier. -Pastor James)

4:30pm Shelby Alliance Church- Appetizers

5:00pm First United Methodist Church- Visit

5:30pm First United Church of Christ- Salad

6:00pm Shelby Church of the Nazarene- Visit

6:30pm Trinity United Methodist Church- Soup

7:00pm Taylortown Community Church- Visit

7:30pm Church Location to be announced- Dessert

8:00pm Close out event.

Sunday 12/11/16- Christmas "Dinner" Sunday.

The church has been collecting canned good items and non-perishable foods to provide Christmas Dinner to 20 families in the Shelby community. Sunday 12/11 we will dedicate 20 food bags, (decorated and filled by church youth) containing all of the ingredients to make the perfect Christmas Dinner. If you have signed up to donate items for this ministry, please have food items and \$ that you have signed up to donate at the church by Sunday 12/11/16. Food items can be taken to the first floor children's Sunday school room, to the table marked, "Christmas Dinner Sunday." Donations can be dropped in the can located on the Welcome Table in the back of the Sanctuary that is marked, "Christmas Dinner Sunday Donations."

Sunday 12/18/16- Christmas Caroling to Shut-Ins

After our worship service of 12/18, we will take our annual Christmas caroling trip to shut in's in our area, and the Crestwood Care Center. The Elders will be preparing Cookie tins for us to distribute to our shut-ins. After caroling, anyone who is interested is invited to join us for lunch at McDonalds. Lets spread some Christmas cheer!

Saturday 12/24/16- Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service 7:00pm.

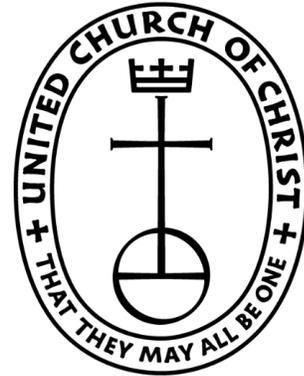
Please join us on Christmas Eve for the most well attended service of the year. Bring your family and friends as we celebrate the birth of our savior. The choir and bell choir are getting all practiced up for this service. The church youth are preparing luminaries that will line the sidewalks on this beautiful and sacred night. The Elders are preparing treat bags for all visitors who attend. Let's pack the church house as we turn the lights down low, light candles and sing together as God's family. (Pastor James would like to see us have more in attendance this year that last year. Last year we had 108 on Christmas Eve.)

Sunday 12/25/16- Christmas Day Worship Service 10:00am

Since Christmas falls on a Sunday this year, we will be having worship on Christmas day. Being Christmas day, it is important to us that you get to be with your families as much as possible so the service will be about 30 to 40 minutes long. This only happens once every 7 years so come with your family to church on Christmas!

15 Ways to Make Sure We are a Visitor Friendly Church

1. Every church member is a host! Every church member is responsible for making guests feel welcome!
2. The most important person for a visitor to talk to is you! It's not the pastor, or greeter, but the regular attender.
3. Treat first time visitors as "guests of God," and not strangers.
4. Smile at everyone, look them in the eyes and offer your hand!
5. Don't wait for them to come to you, you go to them!
6. Learn people's names and remember them (the best that you can).
7. Get to know them! Take interest in what they have to say. Listening is a very effective way to show love.
8. LET CHILDREN BE CHILDREN!!!!
9. Invite visitors to join you at something, anything! Something going on, or just lunch after worship.
10. Never let anyone sit alone.
11. Please never tell a first time visitor they are sitting in your seat. (haha!)
12. Invite them to sign the guest book in the back of the sanctuary, and leave their address, so we can send them a card.
13. Tell visitors you are glad they are here.
14. Help visitors with anything they may need.
15. Be yourself.



Advent Sunday School Class

There is still time to be involved in the Adult Sunday School group for Advent! There are two more sessions left. 9:00am on Sunday mornings.

Sunday School Schedule

December 4th- Jesus' Wish List

December 11th- By a Different Road

Notes of Thanks

- The Election Night Supper was a success! Thank you for helping us raise \$632.70!
- A special thanks to all who helped make this years church Bazaar a success!
- Thank you to all who showed up and helped decorate the church for Advent. A special thanks to Pastor James, Ellie, and the Metzger's for the yummy breakfast they provided for all who helped decorate.
- A big thank you to Marty and Cindy Metzger for donating the new Christmas tree and star to the church for this Christmas!

Coming in 2016

- Epiphany Sunday- 1/8
- Submittals for Church Lent Devotional's Due - 2/1
- Rev. Pam Easterday Preaching "Evolution Sunday." - 2/12
- Ash Wednesday Service - 03/1
- New Member Sessions- March/April 2017
- Maundy Thursday Fellowship Dinner - 4/13
- Good Friday Service - 4/14
- Easter/ New Member Sunday - 04/16
- Pentecost/Confirmation Sunday - 06/4

Fundraiser for Kitchen Fund

"The Giving Tree."

Located on the welcome center is a basket of plastic envelopes numbered \$1 to \$100. If you would like to participate pick up the envelope with the amount you would like to contribute, place that amount in the envelope, and drop it in the offering plate as it goes by. There are plastic leaves in each envelope. We invite you to take your leaf and write something you are thankful for on our leaf and pin it to the trees on the bulletin board in the back of the sanctuary. Once all envelopes are filled, we will have raised \$5,050 dollars for the kitchen/ hall renovations!

Prayer Concerns

Peggy Knapp, Darlene King, Alice King, Sandy Laser, Dori Mckinney, Denise Richardson, Lee Robinson, Gloria Ebinger, Jon Connelly, Confirmands.

Pastor James December Office Hours

Sunday: 9:00am- Noon

Monday: On Call

Tuesday - Thursday: 8:00am- Noon

Friday: 8:00am-2:00pm (Office/Visitation)

Saturday: Family Day (Emergency Calls Only)

(PLEASE NOTE!!!!- Pastor James' Office Hours will be changing in January)