



New Horizons News

A Newsletter from New Horizons United Methodist Church

December, 2013

Volume 16 Issue 12

Our Mission: To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Our Vision: New Horizons United Methodist Church is a caring faith community that invites everyone to experience the love of Jesus Christ and grow in relationship with God and one another.

Our Priorities: Invite
Grow
Serve

DECEMBER WORSHIP SERIES: “Letting God Come Close”

(Based on the book “Letting God Come Close” by William A. Berry, S.J.)

- Advent 1: Sunday, December 1—Service of Holy Communion with the Rev. Cleo Kottwitz, preaching “Company’s Coming!”
- Advent 2: Sunday, December 8—Sermon: “A Different Kind of Christmas!”
- Advent 3: Sunday, December 15—Nativity Pageant, “Journey to Bethlehem” by Children/Youth, orchestrated by Lucy Lee, Marie Powell and Christine Jarquio
- Advent 4: Sunday, December 22—Advent Service of Lessons and Carols!
- Christmas Eve: Tuesday, December 24—Service of Holy Communion with Candle-light and Special Music!
- First Sunday after Christmas: Sunday, December 29—The Rev. Jim Bryan, Preacher

KEEPING A HOLY ADVENT (AT HOME AND AT CHURCH!)

“The Advent wreath is a circular garland of evergreen branches representing [eternity](#). On that wreath, five candles are typically arranged. During the [season of Advent](#) one candle on the wreath is lit each Sunday as a part of the Advent services. Each candle represents an aspect of the spiritual preparation for the coming of the Lord, [Jesus Christ](#).

Advent Wreath Candles

Set on the branches of the wreath are four candles: three purple candles and one pink candle. In the center of the wreath sits a white candle. As a whole, these candles represent the coming of the [light of Christ](#) into the world.

On the first Sunday of Advent, the first purple candle is lit. This candle is typically called the ‘Prophecy Candle’ in remembrance of the prophets, primarily [Isaiah](#), who foretold the [birth of Christ](#). This candle represents hope or expectation in anticipation of the coming Messiah.

Each week on Sunday, an additional candle is lit. On the second Sunday of Advent, the second purple candle is lit. This candle typically represents [love](#). Some traditions call this the ‘[Bethlehem](#) Candle,’ symbolizing Christ’s [manger](#).

On the third Sunday of Advent the pink, or rose-colored candle is lit. This pink candle is customarily called the ‘Shepherds Candle’ and it represents joy.

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The fourth and last purple candle, oftentimes called the 'Angels Candle,' represents peace and is lit on the fourth Sunday of Advent.

On Christmas Eve, the white center candle is traditionally lit. This candle is called the 'Christ Candle' and represents the life of Christ that has come into the world. The color white represents purity. Christ is the sinless, spotless, pure Savior. Also, those who receive Christ as Savior are washed of their sins and [made whiter than snow](#).

Celebrating with an Advent wreath during the weeks prior to Christmas is a great way for [Christian families](#) to [keep Christ at the center of Christmas](#), and for parents to teach their children the true meaning of Christmas." (From <http://christianity.about.com/od/christmas/qt/adventwreath.htm>)

Many thanks to Michael Wise for setting up the Advent Wreath this year! Michael has promised to keep the candles filled with oil and make sure the wicks are trimmed throughout the season. We appreciate you, Michael!

HONOR SOMEONE YOU LOVE WITH A POINSETTIA!

We truly feel the sanctity of Jesus' birth when we enter the church on Christmas Eve and find a candle-lit sanctuary appointed with white paraments and decorated with red poinsettias and evergreens! The INVITE and GROW Ministry Teams are planning to help us recreate this beautiful atmosphere again this year. This Christmas we will be purchasing our poinsettias with money collected in previous years, that is being held in reserve in our designated giving account. Thus, the congregation will not make donations of \$8, \$10 or \$12 (as in years past) to cover the cost of the flowers. If you choose to put that amount into the Sunday offering plate in addition to your regular giving, your extra contribution will help fulfill our goal of meeting our budgeted income for 2013 congregational giving. These extra contributions will be greatly appreciated! However, you may still wish to honor someone you love by designating a poinsettia in his/her name. He/she may take the poinsettia home or send it to one of our home-bound parishioners at the end of the 12 days of Christmas. Large and small plants will both be available. Marie Powell has generously agreed to collect our list of names and compile it before our Christmas Eve service. To submit a name, please call Marie at 814-0425, text her at 489-8803 or email her at jamesandmarie@powell101.com. Thank you!

GROW TEAM OFFERS ADVENT STUDY

Marie Powell will be leading an Advent study based on the book, "When God Comes Down" by James Harnish. We will be meeting each Monday, (December 2, 9, 16 and 23) at 6:00 p.m. at the church. If you would like to participate, please contact Marie at 814-0425 or at jamesandmarie@powell101.com.

A CONGREGATIONAL CHALLENGE!

Let's see how many of us can learn to sing (from memory!) a beloved, Wesleyan grace for use before meals. This will be a great, spiritual song to know when you get together with family and friends for holiday meals this season! We sang this at the start of our Thanksgiving feast, and we will sing it again on Sunday, December 15th when we gather to eat a Christmas feast in honor of Dorothy Kespohl. Our New Horizons' Choir members are available to teach us the tune, and the words to the grace are as follows:

Be present at our table Lord;
 Be here and everywhere adored;
 These mercies bless, and grant that we
 May feast in fellowship with thee. Amen

Annual Christmas Dinner

Dorothy's Dinner

Sunday, December 15—Following Morning Worship Service

Turkey, Stuffing, and Mashed Potatoes are Provided

Bring a side dish or dessert or two

AND

Your Christmas Cheer and Warmth to Share

Our Annual Christmas Church Dinner was begun by Dorothy Kespohl, the late matriarch of NHUMC. We will again follow the tradition of cooking the turkeys as she did and eating and rejoicing together. Come and tell stories of your special Christmas memories.

Be with your church family in the celebration of Jesus's Birthday

Advent – The Coming of Christ

The Seeking of Room at the Inn by Strangers

In Advent, we give thanks for the coming of Christ into our midst. This is this time to welcome those who come to join in worship and the time to invite family, friends, neighbors, and the stranger. This is a time to think about the one who is seeking and asking if there is room at the inn. Will you welcome the seeker the same as a friend knocking on your door? This is our opportunity to introduce a person to Christ this Christmas. A visitor may be a family member from out of town, a person thinking about making a change in the coming year after Christmas, seekers longing for the familiarity of Christmas traditions they grew up with, and curiosity driven consumers seeking the comforts of beautiful Christmas music.

Each of us needs to prepare in our hearts and our conversations to welcome visitors this season. The church is decorated with greenery and trim, the music is practiced, and everything is in place awaiting...**awaiting Christ's birth and the stranger who walks among us.**

Thoughts offered by the Invite Ministry Team

Based on thoughts from EvangelismCoach.com and ReThink Church

An Annual Children's Christmas Event

Brunch with Mary & Joseph

Saturday, December 7, 10am

Good pancake breakfast, fun nativity crafts, pictures with Mary and Joseph in the manger and a delightful interactive story of special things that happened when the Christ child was born...these are all the happenings for children Saturday morning, December 7, at 10:00am. **Invite and bring** your children, grandchildren, and neighbor children for this unique time **centering on the meaning** of the Christmas season.

And this is an opportunity for everyone to bring the message to a child by assisting in the activities. The event is planned by the Invite and Grow Ministry Teams and produced by a caring congregation.

“ON THE WAY TO BETHLEHEM”

On December 15th we will all be “On the Way to Bethlehem” as New Horizon’s children, youth and choir present our annual Christmas play during the worship service. This year’s production will lead us through the Advent Season as the prophets, shepherds, Magi and Holy Family prepare for the birth of the Christmas Child. The congregation will participate in this experience with traditional Christmas hymns, highlighted by solo and group performances of the cast and choir.

The children and youth will prepare for the program during the Sunday School hour each Sunday beginning December 1st, with a rehearsal on the afternoon of December 8th. Costume fitting will be done toward the end of that practice.

If your child, grandchild or neighbor would like to participate, please notify Lucy Lee at 474-2462 or let me know at church this Sunday. There is always plenty of room for more shepherds, angels, kings and barnyard animals!

We will look forward to another moving performance that prepares our hearts for this special season.

SERVE TEAM WORK IN DECEMBER

In December, we will take a break from the Birthday and Blessing Box except for one Sunday when we will gather funds for the Relief from the Midwest Tornadoes that recently ravaged many towns in our neighboring states. Be watching for this important Sunday to donate to our neighbors.

Luella Adams is working with the Voluntary Action Center to provide gifts to 4 children and their adult parents. Sign-up sheets are available in the narthex, or talk with Luella if you wish to participate. All gifts will need to in the church by Sunday, December 8.

Cedar Ridge Elementary School has asked New Horizons if we can help with a few Christmas gifts for some students. An anonymous person has agreed to purchase a book for 6 foster children in one particular family at the school. If you are willing to assist with donations towards these 6 books, please let Lenora know. Education is so important to the future of our children and providing them with a book of their own is one small way to promote education and reading.

New Horizons and Cedar Ridge have started a character building project for the 2nd/3rd graders at the school. In November, Carol O. and Lenora read a book to the classes on “Have You Filled Your Bucket Today?” and lead a discussion and activity. We will be doing this about every 5 of 6 weeks for Cedar Ridge. We need volunteers who would be willing to give a half hour to this project. The next session will be in January. Please let Lenora know if you are willing to participate. We need you, and the children love it! Children at the school sometimes arrive without hats, gloves or scarves during the winter. We are collecting these things to give to Cedar Ridge in January after the Christmas break. The items will be placed in the “Teacher’s Closet” for availability when a child comes to school without these things. There will be a tree on display for these gifts in the narthex during December. Please donate to this worthwhile project by bringing one or more of these items in December and placing them on the tree.

The nurturing part of the Serve team will be providing Christmas cookies for the shut-ins. Would you be willing to donate homemade cookies and/or help visit them? Please look for a future announcement. Thanks Connie and Joyce for your work with this important part of our ministry!

ONGOING WORK WITH OUR SMALL CHURCH INITIATIVE PROGRAM

Our Small Church Initiative consultation is scheduled for Friday, February 28th. One month prior to that date, we are scheduled to submit an extensive “self study.” That means we will need to start work soon to complete the document on time. A team of 2—3 people will be leading this effort but it will require the help of many of us so that we can put together a detailed, accurate and comprehensive report. Thank you in advance for your willingness to help with this important work!

WHY Invite Someone to Church?

- Why? – To Share this Amazing Message
- Who? - You and Me of New Horizons UMC – *A Place to Find the Hope of Christmas*
- Invite? Well, Everyone! Especially those on your prayer list
- When? Sunday, December 14 for a Celebration of Christmas Music and the Story of the Nativity by the Children's Program and sharing good food and fellowship at Dorothy's Dinner— turkeys and all the potluck trimmings.

AND THE MOST AWESOME EVENT

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – to experience the anticipation, hope, renewal, and wonder in the birth of Christ—Tuesday, December 24, 5:30pm

This is the time to Invite and Share the Hope of Christmas!

GIVE A GIFT THAT WILL CHANGE THE LIVES OF OTHERS

It is often difficult to find a gift for a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle, special friend that you want to remember. Consider giving a gift that changes lives of others in that person's name. There are many worthy agencies and causes. "Imagine No Malaria" and "Heifer International" are examples of two that our church supports.

"Imagine No Malaria" is an extraordinary effort of the people of the United Methodist Church putting faith into action to end preventable deaths by malaria in Africa. Your donations support the efforts to prevent this disease. A donation of \$10 provides a mosquito net; \$30 provides testing kits for 15 people; \$75 provides medication to treat 15 malaria patients. For more information and other ways donations of all amounts can help, check out imaginenomalaria.org.

Heifer International donations will provide a meaningful gift for a loved one and help children and families around the world receive training and animals that help them become self-reliant. \$20 is enough money for a flock of chicks, ducks or geese. \$30 is enough for a hive honey bees. \$120 will purchase a pig, sheep or goat. It is also possible to buy a share of animals with shares beginning at \$10. For more information and the different options available, go to www.heifer.org. Heifer International will provide a free card for each donation.

....AND ON "GIVING TUESDAY" YOU CAN DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT!

On Tuesday, December 3, (between 12:00 a.m. and 11:59 p.m. EST) each on-line donation sent through the General Board of Global Ministries for any one of their hundreds of mission projects and missionaries will be matched, dollar for dollar by Global Ministries! Both "Imagine No Malaria" and "Heifer International" are Global Ministry projects. As always, 100% of each donation and the matched dollars will be used to support the project you designate. If your shopping plans include providing gifts that change lives, go to the Global Ministries website, <http://www.umcmmission.org/Give-to-Mission/Search-for-Projects/Advance-Project-Search>.

SHHH! QUIET! SLOW DOWN! - IT'S ADVENT!

Dear Friends,

In Advent, God calls upon Christians to do things that are highly counter-culture! In the midst of the carols and jingles, we are called to times of stillness and quiet—to listen for the "still, small voice of God" (1 Kings 19:12). In the midst of rampant consumerism, God calls us to look closely at our patterns of giving and receiving. In the midst of uncontrolled materialism, God calls us to deeply examine our needs and our desires. There are many opportunities to help others!

God calls us to a high standard, which we understand by studying the life of our savior, Jesus, who came to earth as a babe born in Bethlehem into a poor family; the One who became a carpenter in Nazareth and

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then an itinerant preacher who had “nowhere to lay his head” (Luke 9:58). During this season of expectation and waiting, our prayerful self-examination helps us clear debris out of our hearts, minds and spirits, so we may make room for Christ to be born anew in us. Adopting an attitude of prayer grounds and centers us during this holy season.

In Advent, as the days of December grow shorter, darkness surrounds us more and more. For some of us, the darkness is internal as well, because this season brings reminders of loved ones who have made their transition. In our spiritual lives, times of darkness are to be appreciated (even savored), for they are containers into which the light of Christ breaks through. We appreciate God’s saving grace much more after we have known dark times of struggle or pain.

Author Sue Monk Kidd found a cocoon one day, on a tree branch, while she was out on a walk; she found it to be highly symbolic of where she currently found herself in her spiritual journey at midlife. She said, “I asked myself what would happen if I could learn the spiritual art of cocooning. Might I discover a stilling of the soul that invites God and a new recreation of life? Would I see that waiting, with all its quiet passion and hidden fire, is the real crucible of spiritual transformation? Would the posture of the cocoon allow me a way to shed old, embedded patterns of living and move into a more genuine humanity where the authentic self breaks through?” (Kidd, *When the Heart Waits*, p. 14).

As a congregation, we are entering a time of prayerful self-examination this Advent. We will begin a detailed Self-Study, which is part of the Small Church Initiative (SCI) process we voted to undertake. I will be choosing 2—3 leaders to assist us with delegating all the tasks required in the Self-Study. Once the tasks are allocated, people will have several weeks to accomplish their portion of the work. Our leaders will gather all the information and compile it. We hope to have our extensive document ready to submit to Kay Kotan by the end of January.

Might this Self-Study process be for our church a way of clearing out debris, to prepare a manger in which to lay the baby Jesus when He is born anew to us? Through the process of our consultation on February 28 and the subsequent prescriptions we will receive on March 1, we will have the opportunity for new life to enter our congregation. We are inviting Christ to be born anew in our midst! Let us enter this process wholeheartedly, not afraid of the darkness, but confident that Jesus is with us every step of our way, as he promised—
ALWAYS!

Love and peace to you in Christ Jesus,

Heather

The Rev. Heather M. Morgan

Pastor

BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD. (Psalm 46:10)

“Is there any note in all the music of the world as mighty as the grand pause? Is there any word in the Psalms more eloquent than the word “Selah” meaning pause? Is there anything more thrilling and awe-inspiring than the calm before the crashing of the storm, or the strange quiet that seems to fall upon nature before some supernatural phenomenon or disastrous upheaval? And is there anything that can touch our hearts like the *power of stillness*?

“For the hearts that will cease focusing on themselves, there is “the peace of God which transcends all understanding (Phil. 4:7); ‘quietness and trust’ (Isa. 30:15), which is the source of all strength; a ‘great peace’ that will never ‘make them stumble’ (Ps. 119:165); and a deep rest, which the world can never give nor take away. Deep within the center of the soul is a chamber of peace where God lives and where, if we will enter it and

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quiet all the other sounds, we can hear His 'gentle whisper' (1 Kings 19:12).

Even in the fastest wheel that is turning, if you look at the center, where the axle is found, there is no movement at all. And even in the busiest life, there is a place where we may dwell alone with God in eternal stillness.

"There is only one way to know God. 'Be still, and know.' 'The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent before him' (Hab. 2:20)."

This meditation was taken from, "Streams in the Desert—366 Daily Devotional Reading" by L.B. Cowman; edited by James Reimann, p. 438.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, December 1

- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School & Kids Club
- 10:45 a.m. Worship
- 11:45 a.m. Hanging of the Greens
- 6:00 p.m. Troop 7 Committee Meeting

Monday, December 2

- 6:00 p.m. Advent Study
- 7:00 p.m. Scout Meeting

Tuesday, December 3— General Board of Global Ministries "Giving Tuesday"

Wednesday, December 4

- 6:00 p.m. Pack Committee Meeting
- 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Saturday, December 7

- 10:00 a.m. Brunch with Mary & Joseph
- 2:00 p.m. Boy Scouts serve at Loaves & Fishes

Sunday, December 8

- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School & Kids Club
- 10:45 a.m. Worship
- 11:45 a.m. Fellowship
- TBA Rehearsal for "On the Way to Bethlehem"

Monday, December 9

- 6:00 p.m. Advent Study
- 7:00 p.m. Scout Meeting

Wednesday, December 11

- 6:00 p.m. Webelos 2
- 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Thursday, December 12

- 7:00 p.m. Leadership Board

Saturday, December 14

- 8:00 a.m. United Methodist Men's Meeting

Sunday, December 15

- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School & Kids Club
- 10:45 a.m. Worship (Christmas Program) followed by "Dorothy's Dinner"

Monday, December 16

- 6:00 p.m. Advent Study
- 7:00 p.m. Scout Meeting

Wednesday, December 18

- 6:30 p.m. Cub Scout Pack 7
- 7:00 p.m. Choir Practice

Sunday, December 22

- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School & Kids Club
- 10:45 a.m. Worship
- 11:45 a.m. Fellowship

Monday, December 23

- 6:00 p.m. Advent Study

Tuesday, December 24

- 5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion

Wednesday, December 25—Christmas Church Office Closed

Thursday—Friday, December 26 & 27—Church Office Closed

Sunday, December 29

- 9:30 a.m. Sunday School & Kids Club
- 10:45 a.m. Worship
- 11:45 a.m. Fellowship

Monday—Thursday, December 30—January 2 Church Office Closed



New Horizons
United Methodist Church
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CHURCH INFORMATION

Our Staff

Pastor—The Rev. Heather Morgan

Administrative Assistant—Caroline Sechler

Director of Music—Christine Jarquio

Custodian—Christopher Morgan

Pastor's Office Hours

Tuesday & Wednesday

4:00 p.m.—7:00 p.m.

Sunday Services

9:30 a.m.—Sunday School & Kids Club for all ages

10:45 a.m.—Worship

11:45 a.m.—Fellowship

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