



The Witness

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DECEMBER 2022

Business Name

A Christmas Challenge

“Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.”

Matthew 1:18b-19

In the Christmas story, Mary became pregnant by the Holy Spirit before she and Joseph were married, but as far as Joseph knew, Mary had cheated on him with another man. Talk about a scandal! Talk about heartbreak, especially from Joseph’s point of view! What would you do if you were in Joseph’s place? How would you be feeling?

The law of Moses made provisions for such cases. Joseph would have been within his rights to call for Mary’s death. But he didn’t do this. Matthew tells us that the reason is that Joseph was a “righteous man.” What does this tell us about the New Testament’s definition of righteousness?

Righteousness is about showing mercy and compassion, as lived by Joseph and then Jesus. When asked what the most important commandment is in the law, Jesus said to love the Lord your God with all your heart, strength, mind, and soul, and love your neighbor as yourself. (Matthew 22:37-39). This is what it means to live by the law of love. Also, in Matthew, Jesus says, “*I desire mercy, not sacrifice*” (Matthew 9:13).

What would the world look like if we all were to take these instructions to heart and if we all lived like Joseph and according to the words of Jesus? What would people on the outside think of the Church if the Church were to follow Jesus’s teachings better? We won’t know until we embody it. We won’t know until we become that church—that group of people defined by love, mercy, and compassion we show others no matter what people say we should or could do. Can we make this our goal this Christmas season? I know we can.

Have a very Merry Christmas—Pastor Ken

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Invite your family and friends!

We will have a Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service on Saturday, December 24th at 5 pm. Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without it.



RBUMC CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Sunday School: 9:30am
Worship: 10:30am

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SUNDAY SCHOOL

This month we will be studying the Christmas story! We will look at some of the Old Testament prophets and their foretelling of Jesus' coming, how Mary learned of Jesus' coming, and how the news was shared with the Shepherds and Magi!

EVENTS

Hanging of the Greens- Dec. 4th
Christmas Party - Dec 17th
10am -1230pm @ Ms Stella's house.

SPECIAL NOTE:

As of Dec. 18th, I will be stepping down as Children's Ministry Director. I have enjoyed my time getting to know your children and teaching them more about Jesus. I will not be too much of a stranger, as I plan to stay on staff at our Preschool. I wish you all the best and hope to see you all around the church campus during various events and services!

PRESCHOOL CHAPEL

As part of my preschool position, I will be continuing preschool chapel! This month we will be learning about Advent, the Advent wreath and candles.



Trust the Plan

by Tom Mayberry

I was in a discussion group a couple of weeks ago and we got on the topic of what sayings did your parents tell you that stuck with you your whole life. One person said, “Trust the plan.” was what stuck with her. I thought that this was intriguing and after a couple of minutes, I realized that this is what we need to do regarding God’s plan, His will, in our lives.

We say the Lord’s prayer on a regular basis. It starts out with “Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” How often do you think about what you are saying?” “Thy will be done”. Do you really want God’s will, or do you want God to accept your will as what needs to happen? God’s will is the plan. There are a lot of things that we do not understand, and we need to **trust** what He has in store for us.

Now this is where this blog gets real! I do not feel it was by chance that I had been planning on writing on this topic. I had been thinking about it for over a week and decided to put down my thoughts while in my hotel room Monday night. As I finished the first two paragraphs above, I got a call telling me a dear friend’s son was unconscious and being taken to the hospital. I stopped writing and just sat there and prayed for his health. About 30 minutes later, I found out that he had passed away. He was only 45 years old and had no history to warn him about the possibility of a shortened life.

Now, I must put this belief into practice. I must trust His plan. This does not mean that I need to understand His plan, just to trust in it. There is no way that we can know what the future holds for his wife and young daughter. The shock and grief for the family is incomprehensible. The question is asked, “WHY?” You wonder how God can let something life this happen and let us suffer life this. Trust the plan. Trust the plan. That is what we must do.

Trusting God is more than a feeling; it’s a choice to have faith in what He says even when your feelings or circumstances would have you believe something different. Trusting God is not about ignoring your feelings or reality. It is not pretending that everything is OK when it isn’t. Trusting God is living a life of belief in and obedience to God even when it’s difficult. You are not facing these difficult times alone. The Lord is walking with you every step of the way. He also gives you other believers to walk with.

Fellow believers can remind you of God’s character through encouragement and accountability. They can pray for and support you. They can remind you of the truth when you’re struggling. Community reminds you that you are never alone, even in hard times. Remember that difficult times are just temporary. God is there with you forever.

Be thankful. This is difficult when things pile up on you, but you can look at any situation and find blessings in it. Recognize the blessings and thank Him for them. We have been given the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is within us and will guide us through the plan. That awareness of the Holy Spirit will help us recognize the steps we need to take to fulfill God’s will.

Keep in constant communication with God. Do not get discouraged. Prayer without ceasing. He is always listening. We can lean on his Scripture from Isaiah.

But those who trust in the Lord will find new strength. They will soar high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31

You are my community, as stated above. I ask for your prayers and support for this family to help them trust God’s plan and give them comfort and strength through the process.

Winter Survival Kit

The Outreach Committee of United Methodist Church will be preparing Winter Survival Kits for those in our community experiencing Homelessness. We are asking that members of the Church donate any of the following items they feel they can give.

Hand Warmers
 Adult Sized Gloves
 Flashlights
 Fast Food Gift Cards (\$5.00 or \$10.00)
 Chapstick
 Batteries (AAA, AA, C and/or D)
 Small/Travel First Aid Kits

Tents are always the #1 asked for item. If you feel you can donate a tent(s), we will make sure they get to the correct people to be distributed to someone experiencing Homelessness.

Another much needed item is “dry bags”. These can be found on Amazon by searching, “dry bag”. They come in different sizes and in a range of prices.

The Committee will be putting the survival kits together at the beginning of January. There will be containers at the Leawood-door entrance in which the donated items may be placed.

Thank you so much for generosity. These items are useful to our friends experiencing homelessness, but even more, receiving the items help them know they are recognized, loved and cared for.

Youth Activities!



December

11 5:30 p.m. Youth Christmas Party—**A Very Flamingo Christmas**— dinner, games, pictures, “Pink Flamingo Gift Exchange

16 Life Skills Last Day Before Winter break—We will be going to an afternoon movie at the theatre.

18 4:30 p.m. Christmas Caroling—Youth-sponsored but everyone of all ages is invited to attend. We will be going to Carol to the “Home Bound” members of our church family.

21 Youth **Movie and Dinner Out** night. More information to follow. For all 6th—12th graders.

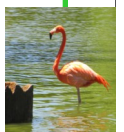
25 and January 1—No youth meeting.

January (partial)

8 5:30 p.m. Snack supper in fellowship hall

6:00 p.m. Jammin’ Thru James

7:00 p.m. “Baby New Year Celebration”



From the Office

The table is set up in front of the nursery for Christmas cards. You may leave cards for church-family members. Please check each week for cards which have been left for you.

After the first of the year, Statements of Giving for 2022 will be left on this table.

There is plenty of time to order poinsettias. Cost is 8.50 each. A list of those giving and receiving poinsettias will be in the bulletin on December 18. If there are new names after that date, they will be published in the December 25 bulletin. You may call the church office with your order or place it in the offering plate.

Call the church office if you personalized offering envelopes.

If you want your name published in the monthly birthday/anniversary list, please call the church office or place the info in the offering plate.



December

- | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|
| | 1 Sue Ferrell |
| | 3 Bret Lyness |
| | 7 Julie Smith & Shannon Stanfield |
| | 8 Steve Barker & Jamie Harvey |
| | 9 Caleb Pitkin |
| 16 | Ken Pritchard |
| 17 | Terra Stringfellow |
| 21 | Sabrina Trimmier |
| 22 | Clark Calabrese |
| 23 | Eli Hardin |
| 24 | Debbi Moorehead & Cameron Pritchard |
| 27 | Maggie Hart |
| 28 | Lisa Wilson |



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|----|-----------------------|
| 1 | Beetle & Linda Bailey |
| 14 | Bryan & Wendi Meagher |
| 31 | Jim & Susan Wulf |
| 31 | Steve & Wanda Markum |



We always have such a good time at the Food Pantry.



These fine folks cook breakfast at the Community Kitchen on the first Sunday of each month. Speak with Kathy Stanfield if you would like to join us!



The Food Drive for the Pantry was a big success!



The Youth were able to raise some funds through their annual soup lunch.



As usual, Hanging of the Greens was a highlight of the year.

Merry
Christmas