

Words from Our Spiritual Director

NO ROOM

"And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." Luke 2:7 (NKJV)

The events in Biblical history tell us that there was a time for people to go to their respective locations for taxing. So Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem. She was ready to deliver her Son, Jesus, but there was no place for them at "Motel Six", because there were so many people in town for the taxing. There was just no place for them.

Today it is still the same. People are bustling about, getting last-minute shopping done, so children and adults, alike, will have their gifts on Christmas Day. However, they have overlooked the main reason for the season – remember the main thing is to make room for the main thing – celebrating Jesus, the One Who saves the lost. Too often, there is just not enough time for Jesus, not enough space in our hearts for the Savior.

We, who are firm believers, want everyone to know that the purpose of this season is the birth of the One Who ultimately will die for our sins - that without His birth, there would be no hope of forgiveness, cleansing, and eternal life (salvation). There would be no hope for "peace on earth" without God sending His only Son to us to make the exchange – His life for our death, His righteousness for our sin (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Let us give thanks for our new life in Christ, Who has given us the victory, even though He came to us as a little baby boy, wrapped in swaddling cloths, and lying in a trough filled with hay. In that place, created by Him, we see God in His infinite grace.

I love to open my gifts, but I get more enjoyment watching children, in their innocence, excitedly opening their presents, never realizing that without the Presence there might not be any presents.



Let's keep the joy of Christmas in the Gift that never stops giving. Let's find room for Him.

"...and you will be my witnesses..."

Acts 1:8



Merry Christmas to everyone,

Pastor Ray Harper

Community Co-Spiritual Director

It was just a few days before Christmas. Two men who were next-door neighbors decided to go sailing while their wives went Christmas shopping. While the men were out in their sailboat, a storm arose. The water became very angry and the men had great difficulty keeping the boat under control. As they maneuvered their way toward land, they hit a sandbar and the boat grounded. Both men jumped overboard and began to push and shove with all their strength, trying to get the boat into deeper water. With his feet almost knee-deep in mud, and the waves bouncing him against the side of the boat, and his hair blowing wildly in the wind, one of the men said with a knowing grin, "This sure beats Christmas shopping, doesn't it?" *Illustrations Unlimited, James Hewett, 1988, p 86*

From Our Lay Director



As we enter into December, my thoughts naturally turn to Christmas. Unlike most people, I listen to Christmas music all year round. I figure there is never a bad time to reflect on the birth of our Savior. I also listen to "Easter" and "Good Friday" music all year round. I figure there is never a bad time to remember what Jesus did for us on the cross, and how we are made clean by His resurrection. Every year in December, I spend extra time in prayer asking God to show me how and what he wants me to give to honor Him. In the world the focus of many people seems to be on getting great deals at the store, and giving or receiving the coolest gifts. I really struggle with the challenge of giving in a way that honors God.

One of the best gifts any of us can give to another is the Gift of Time. We all can think of lonely people who could use a cheer-up call, a "Thinking Of You" note, or a visit in person. There are also many good causes to give money to – Philippines Relief Fund, Coats for Kids, food pantries, and many, many more. I believe that God calls us to not only be generous with our financial giving, but to also be generous with giving our time. Visiting someone in prison (Matt 25:34-40), visiting a widow (1 Tim 5:3, James 1:27), and visiting someone who is isolated by their circumstances are ways any of us can reach out to another, and share with them the love of Jesus Christ, simply through our fellowship. It is likely that there are people in our lives that could use a helping hand with something or other – and God could be nudging us to give our time to help them. I pray that God opens my eyes to see whom He wants me to give my time to in His Name. And through that action, I pray that God is honored and Jesus' birthday is celebrated.

Peace,

Sue Neves

Dear Father, take my eyes so totally off myself, that I see nothing before me but the needs of other. In the name of Jesus, Amen



BELATED THANKSGIVING OR EARLY CHRISTMAS??

Many thanks to all those who sought out a replacement cast iron skillet! One has been found and purchased. We will have it in the back of the sanctuary at the next gathering -- if you would like to contribute to help defray the cost, please place money in the skillet. If we gather more money than it cost, the rest will go toward Emmaus weekend costs.



Thank you and God Bless! - *Sue Neves*

CHRYSALIS NEWS



Do you know of a young person 15-21 who would benefit from the Chrysalis experience? Remember your Emmaus/Chrysalis weekend? One we will never forget—the sharing of God's love and an opportunity to grow in Christ. Helping us to be able to better share the love of Christ and lead others to Him. Is that young person ready for such an experience?

Give them a Christmas gift of agape love and sponsor them on an upcoming Chrysalis flight. **Girl's flight is January 18-20 and**

Boy's flight is February 15-17. Both flights are at Piqua Greene Street United Methodist Church. Need an application form—go to West Ohio Chrysalis site, get one at an Emmaus Gathering or contact me at tdever51@gmail.com.

There's a Chrysalis Hoot on December 14th at 7:00 PM at Piqua Greene Street United Methodist Church. Plan to attend and bring a friend. This will be our Christmas celebration.



Tom Dever

Chrysalis Representative



*Love for Christ will be expressed through music,
verse, and holy actions*

*at the **December Gathering at High St UMC**
on **December 8th – 7:00 P.M.***

Please join us as

*God gives us yet another opportunity to prepare
our hearts for celebration of*

“The Reason for the Season”

Jesus Christ, Our Savior and Lord

What can I give? What can I give? Many families in Emmaus have given their loved ones a pre-paid registration check attached to an Emmaus application. Wow!— That's a gift that keeps on giving!!