



The Signpost

Harlem Road Church

December 2016

Volume 11, Number 9

Tradition!

Dear Friends,

Can you believe that it's December already? It's that time of the year when many families get together to celebrate the many traditions that the Christmas season brings. The traditions of decorating, baking, shopping, wrapping, celebrating, family get togethers, special meals, and family worship, all make the Christmas season deeply meaningful and fulfilling.

Sadly, the word "tradition" is a very scary word for some people today. To them, it can mean same old, same old, meaningless, shallow things we do just because we've always done them. And it's sad, because there are some traditions that bring a rich meaning to our experiences, especially around the holidays. I remember the opening monologue of the musical, *Fiddler on the Roof*: "How do we keep our balance? I can tell you in one word — Tradition! Because of our traditions, everyone here knows who he is, and what God expects him to do. Without our traditions, life would be as shaky as a fiddler on a roof."

I believe there is a lot of truth in those words, so I deeply encourage you to consider the traditions, the memories, you are creating for you and your family in this holiday season. Be sure to discover, create, or maintain some meaningful traditions that will reinforce your belief in, and love of, God this Christmas.

One of the traditions of the Church is this season called Advent. The celebration began today, four Sundays before Christmas. It's a season of preparation for the coming of Christ. It's a time for anticipation, action, and reflection. In fact, the word "Advent" literally means "coming." So actually, we are preparing ourselves spiritually for the coming again of Christ at Christmas. It's more of a matter of our faith and our hearts than anything else.

The question that really confronts all of us, though, is this: "How can you prepare yourself for the coming of Christ in the midst of such a busy season?" I deeply understand that dilemma. I really do. However, you can take time to teach and learn - in your home - so that everyone from young to old will be ready to celebrate the gift of Christ that is so personally given to each one. You can refocus some of your attention from the distracting, commercial elements of Christmas preparation, to the more personal, meaningful events. You can re-adjust some of your priorities of time, energy, and money. Dads and moms are really busy meeting the demands of daily life. Young people are involved in a myriad of activities from school to church to community. Sometimes, meals are eaten in shifts, or on the fly at the drive-through. Tensions and anxieties increase because of the pressures of buying presents, sending cards, decorating the home, cooking for guests, attending open houses, etc., etc., etc.; the list goes on and on, doesn't it? It's not surprising that in many families the preparation for Christmas involves frustration and disappointment and tension instead of being filled with enjoyment in the experience of sharing and celebrating the coming of Christ.



I've decided to opt for a more simple Christmas this year. At least I'm going to try! Oh, it takes some courage to put your foot down and turn your intentions into actions. But I know you can do it if you really want to. Maybe you should ask yourself the questions I've asked myself: "Do I have to say YES to everything I'm asked to do or get involved with?" "Do I have to allow the world to steer the course of everything I do this month?" "What are the important things I need to do with my family in December?" "Are some of the things we usually do year after year all that important?" "What do I really want to experience this Christmas season?" "How can I really celebrate the joy, hope, peace, and love that is central to this season of Advent?"

Preparing spiritually for Advent and Christmas requires some decisions. You really can decide to do what is most important for you. You really can make a decision this year, that Christmas will be a Holy event. Remember, it's a time of anticipating Christ, receiving Christ as the gift He is, and celebrating His presence in our lives. Anything less...and you've really missed the whole thing.

I want you to know that your church will be doing everything it can to make sure you have an opportunity to prepare spiritually, and enjoy to the fullest, this Christmas season. This Sunday we began the tradition of lighting the first candle of the Advent wreath; the candle of Hope. This Advent season, we will consider the life of Christ through Mary's eyes. We will see Jesus in a way we never have - from a mother's perspective.

On December 3 at 6 pm, and again on December 4 at 10:30 am, we'll enjoy the Children's Christmas Musical, "All About That Baby." The children have been working hard since early October, and the adult leaders since September, to share the meaning of this season with you. I've seen and heard pieces of this year's musical and I promise you a very rich and rewarding experience. Let's reward the children for all their hard work. Come, let them share their excited (and nervous) hearts with you.

We'll continue the Advent series, "Through Mary's Eyes" on Sunday mornings, and then we'll all share in a beautiful candle light Christmas Eve celebration at 7 pm, where we will at last complete our Advent journey as we observe the miracle of Christ's birth, through the eyes of Mary. Was it really a silent night? I think it was anything but a silent night.

On Sunday morning, December 25, we'll gather for one service at 10 am (children in their jammies is just fine!) to celebrate the birth of Jesus, complete with birthday cake for the children! Together, we'll share in the beauty of making a wonderful Christmas memory as a church family.

So, if you're ready to simplify your Christmas season; if you're wanting to find the deeper meaning; if you would like to incorporate the joy, hope, peace, and love that Christ brings into your daily life; if you want to teach your children the deeper focus of faith - a faith that will carry them through their lifetimes - I would encourage you now to make some serious decisions about what's really important. How do we keep our balance in such a busy season? As the Fiddler said, "Tradition – It's how we know who we are and what God expects us to do." Don't let the real meaning pass you by yet another year. Be courageous. Put your foot down early and decide to make the important things...well...important.

Blessings,
Pastor Bud

Children's Ministry News

By Pam Leskovac

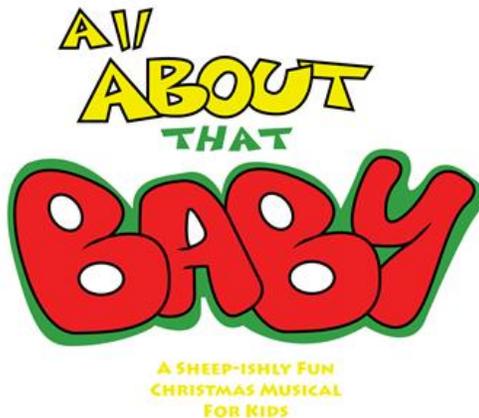
Friday Night Live!

FNL is for children ages 4 through 5th grade. We don't hold FNL in December or January. Our next event is February 17: "Putting Others First." Join us from 6:30-8:30 pm (dinner included.) We'll have a fun-filled evening of music, dinner, crafts, games, stories and more! Contact pam@harlemroadchurch.org for more info!

If you'd like to volunteer for this great outreach ministry, contact Pam today!

Christmas Musical

DON'T MISS THE CHILDREN PERFORMING THIS YEAR'S MUSICAL!



Missions News

Harlem Road UMC focuses its Mission Outreach efforts in two key areas: our local Big Walnut community, with an emphasis on Westerville Estates, and our global Haitian community in the Imagine Missions orphanage. Our local outreach is done in partnership with other churches and organizations. We call our combined group "SidebySide." The other organizations are Galena UMC, Church of the Saviour UMC, New Albany UMC, New Albany Church of the Resurrection, and Harlem Township Helping Hands.

Local Outreach

Free Produce Giveaway

We held our monthly produce giveaway each third Saturday. We have stopped the giveaway, at Mid-Ohio's direction, until next March. If you would like to help with this ministry, please contact Mishelle Soule at bristol2425@yahoo.com. Volunteers are needed from 10 am – 1 pm to sort and hand out the food. If you have a pick-up truck that can haul 2,000 lbs, WE NEED YOU to help occasionally to bring the food from Mid-Ohio Food Bank in Grove City to HRUMC on a Saturday morning. You'd be down in Grove City by 9 am and be done helping us by 10:30 am.

SidebySide – Winter Activities

SidebySide has two large ministries happening in December. First of all, we will be holding our second Christmas "store" at Westerville Estates, a store where Estates kids up to 5th grade can "shop" (no money involved) for gifts for their immediate family members. This was a great hit last year! The store will be held in the Estates community building on Wednesday, December 14. Setup will be 2 – 4 pm and the store will be open 4 – 6 pm. Volunteers will be needed to help setup and then to be a "personal shopper" to help each child do his/her shopping. If you'd like to volunteer, please let Judy S-K know (judysharpekos@insight.rr.com). We also really need folks to donate some gift items. Here are suggestions: Things for men and older boys: small tools, ear buds, fishing items and items sports related - maybe OSU stuff and trinkets or new baseball caps. Older girls and women: Glitzy, girly stuff like fancy nail polish or lipstick. Ear buds. We have jewelry but could use more. We have one small jewelry box; a couple more would be great. Perfume/body spray, Hair "ornaments" (scrunchies, barrettes, etc.), Kids: stuffed animals (possibly Christmas related?), kids' board games, family-friendly DVDs, fun stuff like Christmas pencils or stickers, dolls, toy cars/trucks, balls, sports items, anything superhero, princess stuff. Please bring in your donated items (new preferred but gently used is OK) to the Missions table in the back hallway by Sunday, December 11.

Our second large ministry is the sponsorship of Estates kids for Christmas gifts. Wish Lists are available at the church, and gifts need to be brought to Church of the Saviour on Monday, December 12 between the hours of 9:30 am – 6 pm.

Missions Support

Ideas for Christmas Gifts: Remember the awesome bed sheets we've sold at church a couple of times? Well, you can get them again by going to the website <http://expressfundraiser.com/>. Each sheet set is \$40, regardless of size. On the screen where you enter your billing details will be a place to select "your organization" to receive the fund-raising credits. Just click on Harlem Road UMC!

Another idea: if you like to shop for gifts on Amazon.com, why not use smile.amazon.com instead? It's the exact same Amazon and the exact same shopping experience but with SMILE.amazon.com, you get to select a non-profit organization to which Amazon will donate a percentage of your purchase price. Go to smile.amazon.com and choose your non-profit. If you'd like to donate to the Imagine Missions orphanage in Haiti, here's a short-cut link: smile.amazon.com/ch/27-3309011.

Global Outreach

Our Orphans in Haiti

Our kids are all doing well in school!! Please pray for their health....a nasty cold/virus has been going around and it seems that almost every one of our 100 kids has had it and passed it on to someone else.

Jenny Hecker and Judy Sharpe-Kosmatka will be going down to Haiti in January again. If any of you sponsors have a small gift or letter you'd like us to carry to your sponsored child, please give it to one of them before Jan. 12.

Ongoing Missions at HRUMC

Income for Our Neighbors: Each month, necklaces made by two Westerville Estates women are taken to the Ohio Art Market for sale. Please patronize the Ohio Art Market, located in Uptown Westerville on the corner of Main and State streets.

Aluminum Pop Tabs: Please bring in the tabs off your aluminum cans and we will take them to the Columbus Ronald McDonald House which recycles them to raise funds to purchase wheelchairs. Receptacles are on the table at the back of the main hallway.

BoxTops for Education: Please bring in the BoxTops for Education labels from your food packages and we will take them to Souders Elementary School. Receptacles are on the table at the back of the main hallway.

Health and Wellness

By Sue Wilcox

“Tis the Season to be thankful...”

As we move from Thanksgiving to the season of Advent, we reflect on the things in our lives for which we are grateful.

For the Health & Wellness committee, one of the first things that comes to mind is the help and support of so many people in our congregation this past year. Not only have you given so much of your time to attend our many events, but you have also played a critical role in making them possible.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 we are told to “Give thanks in all things.”

To put a “health & wellness” spin on this, what we know from science is that the very act of being thankful raises our happiness quotient and consequently improves our chances of overall good health. When we are “thankful in all things” we are stacking the deck in our healthy favor. God in His wisdom has been telling us this from the beginning.

And so from the Health and Wellness Committee, we send you heartfelt thanks from our grateful hearts.

We look forward to what lies ahead and with your continued help we will enjoy another year of growing and learning to live in good health.

Walk to Bethlehem

We have reached Morocco in our journey to Bethlehem. We need many more miles to make it to Bethlehem by Christmas! Thank you to those of you who are participating and logging your miles. If you are interested, it is not too late to help us with the last portion of our trip

Remember to record your activities/miles on the clipboard or email them to “awalktobethlehem@gmail.com.” If you need help with converting your activities into steps, there is a sheet on the table in the church lobby.

Reynoldsburg Emmaus Walks

By Judi Ayers

Emmaus is an awesome part of a Christian’s walk. It is a weekend all about you and the love of Jesus Christ. You will become closer in your personal relationship with God and your Christian family.



If you are interested in attending an Emmaus Walk or would like to know more about this Christian weekend, please contact Judi Ayers by email at jayers@ocsea.org or by cell phone at 614-915-6825 and leave a voice mail. I will get back to you as soon as I can.

2017 dates:

- Men's Walk #83- Mar 9-12
- Women's Walk #104- Apr 27-30
- Women's Walk #105- Jul 27-30
- Men's Walk #84- Oct 12-15
- Women's Walk #106- Nov 9-12



Community Connection Groups

Thinking about joining a small group, but not sure which one might be right for you? Contact the leaders to find out more about the people in the group and what they do!

LAKE OF THE WOODS: A women's nondenominational community connection weekly bible study group meets at Nancy Babbitt's home in Lake of the Woods, at 9119 White Oak Lane, Westerville. Contact Nancy at 614-891-5638 or johnlbabbitt@gmail.com

IRONWORKS MEN'S MINISTRY BREAKFAST GROUP. Ironworks is an opportunity for men to come together and network with other men of the church and community for the purpose of helping each other to become better warriors for Jesus Christ. We meet at the church the first Saturday of the month. A hot breakfast starts at 8:45 am, followed by a relevant study topic/discussion. Please see or email Mark Peterson for further information. Leader: Mark Peterson (6906whodey@gmail.com or 614-270-0600)

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY Meeting Time/Place: Tuesdays at 7 pm in the pastor's office. All men are welcome!
Leader: Jim Bernhardt (bernharj@gmail.com or 614-895-1807)

WOMEN'S TUESDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY Meeting Time/Place: Our small group will have our last session of Battlefield of the Mind on December 3. On December 13 we will have a night of fellowship at Ellen Jacob's house and then take a break until January 10. At that time, we will begin a short study of God's endless supply. We meet every Tuesday at 7 pm, at the home of Ellen Jacobs, 148 Nicole Dr., Westerville. Anyone is welcome to join us.

Leader: Ellen Jacobs (jacobsellen53@gmail.com or 614-406-4s337)

WOMEN'S WEDNESDAY NIGHT GROUP Meeting Time/Place: We are planning a Christmas dinner on December 14 at 6 pm. Contact Diana for details.

Leader: Diana Robertson (office@harlemroadchurch.org or 614-882-9487)

WOMEN'S LUNCH BUNCH Meeting Time/Place: Lunch Bunch is not meeting in December.

Leader: Bobbi Pollock (blp1946@embarqmail.com or 740-965-4503)

SATURDAY COUPLES GROUP Meeting Time/Place: The Couples' Group will meet at the home of Ron and Lisa Danne on Saturday, December 17, at 6 pm for our annual Christmas fellowship party. Please bring a dessert or hors d'oeuvre to share. In the spirit of giving we will have a gift exchange for the adults with a \$10 limit - remember it is always fun to see how creative our gifts can get. The children will also have a \$5 gift exchange. Children's gifts should be appropriate for both a boy or girl. Please RSVP to Ron and Lisa at lisad@columbus.rr.com by December 14.

Leaders: Ron and Lisa Danne (lisad@columbus.rr.com or 740-244-7223)

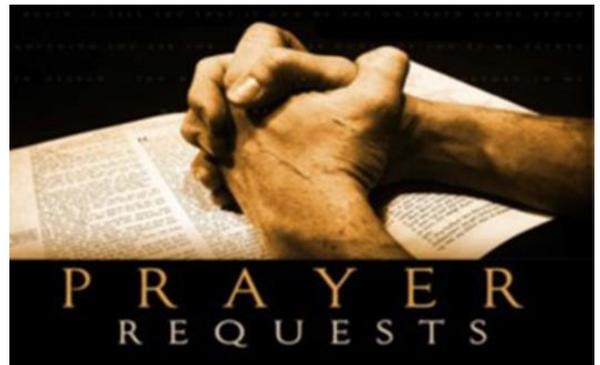
THE AYERS GROUP Meeting Time/Place: We will meet on December 6 at 6:30 pm at Lucky House in Westerville for our Christmas dinner. On January 3 and 17 we'll meet at Karen and Diane's house. On January 3 we will have our goofy gift exchange with the right-left game; then on January 17 we'll try out a new study. Larry will pass out sample copies at our dinner.

Leader: Karen Dodson 614-579-5135, kadee115@aol.com.

Prayer Requests

Expectant Moms: Jenni Stupski, Kristyn Dennis Brady

Requests: Donna Evans, Mary Lou Piper, Joel Hecker, Katie Paul, Herb & Bonnie Wilson, Alan Heligmann, Allie Pollock, Jim Stone, Liz Fravel, Kelly Hanlin, Yvonne Lake, Martha Ann Branin, Arthur Saunders, Kyle Cooger, Jarrett Wampler, Gary Evans, Sara Roberts, Betty Baughman, Sophia Hill, George Pollock, Joel Wilcox, Denny Krebs, Herb Baker, Clyde Fravel, Linda Emerson, Penny Meyers, Winnie Bateson, Kim Houf, Dottie Sund, Suellen Peterson, Doug Edwards, Ken & Kathy Cook, Joe Carl



Cancer Treatment: Judy Miller, Patti Hayes, Jim Houf, Robin Cumberledge, Ray White, Don Basile, Kathy Rank, Denise Sproul, Shari King, Mike Stati, Nancy Neutzing, Zoey Harper, Allen Dyer, Charles & Sheryl Boldosar, Shawn Correll, Chuck Netting, Howie Goodman, Loraine Bell, Sidney Hatfield, Debbie Goslin, Debbie Dorsch, Gary Fravel, Rosemary Finn, Bunny Pearson, Craig Valentine, John Feller, John Bell, Leah Dean, Mike Doel, Jessie Wampler, Vicki Troendly, Robin Smith, David Heisman, Diane Jewell

Military Service: Joe Pasqua, Jeremy Ragan, Christina Hahn, Chad Cunningham, Scott Crowell, Sean Hatch, John Smock, Stuart David, Nathan Brumbaugh, James Martin, Michael David-Gish, Nathan Bertram