



THE TIDINGS

December
2015

Ministerial Moments

I write this today on a blustery, dreary day, but we have had so many beautiful days in November that it is hard to complain. On Sunday, November 1, we had a beautiful day to dedicate the Janice Schmidt gardens around the church. Sunday, November 8, seven of us went to Columbia, IL where we had lunch at Merz on Main and then traveled on to the labyrinth newly installed by St. Paul UCC. The labyrinth is roughly one block north and one block east of the church. It was an absolutely beautiful day.

The labyrinth itself has been landscaped with a mulched walkway. The walkway is currently wide enough that two people can pass each other without one of them having to step out of the pathway. I don't know if this will still be true when the plants are grown. It was really surprising that as close as we were to Main St. that there was no noise. In fact, the feeling of the place is relatively secluded. I hope others of you will take a chance to visit it in the future. This study on prayer was probably the best thing I have ever encountered as it opened me up to new ways and understandings of prayer as well. I am thinking that I may use some of the same material in the future with both the Confirmation Class and Adult Sunday school class.

Thursday afternoon Bible study will be taking a break now until January when we will begin an actual Bible study which I think is called Bible 101. Anyone interested is welcome to join us.

The confirmation class will, in December, be viewing an Adam Hamilton series I used with the Adult Sunday School Class a couple of years ago. I believe it is called the Journey and visits sights in Israel which are attributed to places Mary and Joseph may have lived and traveled before the birth of Jesus. The Adult Sunday School class will be starting a study on Advent hymns. All are welcome to join us.



For the secular world, this is called the Christmas Season, but by the church calendar, it is called Advent, the beginning of the church year, a time of waiting the coming of Christ. Our scriptures which have already tended to be a little dark at the end of the church year, speaking more and more of the apocalypse will remain somewhat dark but then lighten as we get closer to Christmas and the birth of Christ. "Out of Darkness came a great light."

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2016 Annual Meeting Sunday, January 17th

We will enjoy a potluck dinner after church service and then begin our meeting. All organizations are asked to please have their yearly reports turned into the church secretary by **January 6th.** It is important we receive the reports early so our secretary has time to type them and compose an informational packet the week prior to the meeting. Thank you very much. You can email them to loriselman@gmail.com. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

DECEMBER Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

Mabel Schickedanz	1
David G Schneidewind	3
Jay Lehman	9
Leroy Karsten	10
Brian Duffie	19
Allen Waeltz	22
Ron Geisel	27
Justin Dressel	27

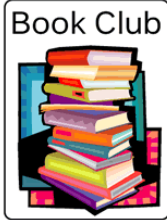
Anniversaries

David & Mindy Schneidewind	4
Andrew & Elizabeth Stuart	6

ADVENT DEVOTIONALS

There are new Advent Devotionals available. These are titled "Wonder" this year. I did not order many because I know many of you prefer to use the Portals of Prayer of which we still have several.





BOOK CLUB

Our book club, started in conjunction with the Marissa Library with the Deaconess Literacy Grant, seems to be a success. We could still use a few more adult tutors however. Our newest recruits, in addition to Carol Mercer and myself, related to Friedens are Kay and Warren Trotter. We thank them and all those who are making this new ministry possible.

CHRISTMAS FUND

Every Christmas Season we collect what is called the Christmas Fund. Some of you may remember when this was called "Veterans of the Cross". It is the same offering, different name and is one of our 5 for 5 Denominational offerings. Some of the funds are used as a supplement to the pension for 325 lower-income retired UCC clergy and lay employees. There are also quarterly health premium supplements for 209 lower-income retired UCC clergy and lay employees. Then Christmas "Thank You" Gift checks are sent to 510 retired UCC clergy and lay church employees. Finally emergency grants are available for 50 active/retired UCC clergy and lay employees.



Greeters and Ushers for December

- December 6 - Gene & Betty Bollmeier, Linda Jones
- December 13 - Jay & Leslie Lehman, Lorrie Lehman, Neal Galle
- December 20 - Dave & Pete Dressel
- December 24 - Christmas Eve - Church Council Members
- December 27 - Ruby Lehman, Larry & Kathy Matzenbacher

Greeters and Ushers for January

- January 3 - Leroy & Marlene Karsten, Sandy Smith
- January 10- Leroy & Marlene Karsten, Sandy Smith
- January 17- Eloise Fauth, John & Janet Fauth
- January 24- Eloise Fauth, John & Janet Fauth
- January 31- John Barrett, Tim Campbell

December 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 St. John's UCC Women's Luncheon 11:45 am	2 Choir 7:00 pm	3	4	5
6 Community Carol Sing at 1st Baptist 6:30 pm	7 Daughters Dinner at Antique Station :00 pm	8 Church Council Dinner at Antique Station 5:30 pm, Mtg @ 7 pm	9 Choir 7:00 pm	10	11	12
13 Items Due for January Tidings	14	15	16 Choir 7:00 pm	17	18	19
20 Scripture & Song	21	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service 7:30 pm	25 	26
27	28 Pastor Gail out of Office until Jan. 5	29	30	31 	January 3rd—Lay Pastor January 17th—Annual Meeting after church	



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By the church calendar, the Christmas season is that time from Dec. 25 through Jan. 6, or what the English used to call the 12 days of Christmas. I've known a few people who actually refer to Dec. 26 as Boxer day, but I've never really understood this Anglican tradition. (No it is not the day you box up all the unwanted gifts and return them to the store for exchanges.) The result of the Christmas Season being after Christmas, though, is that we will continue to sing some Christmas songs until Epiphany, Jan. 6, particularly "Go Tell it on the Mountain", "We Three Kings", and "Noel", all of which put emphasis on either after Christ's birth or the coming of the Wisemen.

This year, the primary Gospel will be Luke, with, of course, everyone's favorite Christmas stories.

The Old Testament Scriptures, however, will not be from Isaiah, but rather from Jeremiah, Malachi, Zephania, and Micah. Our candles symbolize Hope, Peace, Joy (the pink one) and Love.

For many of us, this has been a tough year. If ever there was a year when we needed a great light, perhaps it is now. Let us move toward the light with Hope, Peace, Joy and the great Love of God. "Come, O Come Emanuel." God be with us. Amen

Blessings,
Pastor Gail

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS CAROL

The annual Christmas Carol Service will be at 1st Baptist Church on Sunday Dec. 6 at 6:30PM. They have requested 7 dozen cookies from each church. Please let me or Susie Stewart know if you are baking and will have some to donate.



SADNESS

It is with sadness that since the publishing of the last newsletter, we lost Robert Lehman, husband of Ruby, father of Jay and Bobbi. Shortly thereafter, we heard of the loss of Janet Fauth's mother in Sesser. Evangelical Daughters made the decision to drive to her visitation. Since that time Mabel Schickedanz has had a fall and is currently staying at Terrace on the Park, 901 N. 10th St. in Mascoutah. Irving is with her. They will be there about 6 more weeks. Our prayers continue to be with these families.

Order Form for Christmas Poinsettias DUE BY DECEMBER 8th.

Name of person ordering

Reason for giving poinsettia: In Honor of In Memory of

Name of person for whom poinsettia is ordered for:



Number of poinsettias ordered _____ X \$6.00 each or 2 for \$10.00

= Total Amount Due: _____

Money or check may be attached to this form and dropped in the offering plate. Orders MUST be in by December 8th. The poinsettias will be placed in the chancel and should be picked up after the December 24th Candle Light Service.



*Friedens United Church of Christ
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Marissa, IL 62257*

***Merry Christmas!
and
Happy New Year !!***