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The Clarion



Between the Times

November 2009

Thanksgiving prepares Christians for Advent

Two significant events occur in November. First is Thanksgiving Day. I hope you will join us for the Community Thanksgiving Worship Service on Tuesday, November 24th, at 7:00 p.m., at the Church of God. The second is the beginning of the Advent Season on November 29th. That's the beginning of our preparation for the celebration of Christmas. What ties them together?

Officially, they're not related at all. Thanksgiving is a civil holiday, and Advent is a religious holiday. It's perfectly possible to celebrate Thanksgiving without being Christian, or even "religious."

But, if you happen to be Christian, Thanksgiving can be very much related to Advent – not because it marks the beginning of the Christmas shopping season, but because it puts us in the right frame of mind for the proper observance of Advent. In order to get the real picture of Advent, one first has to have a thankful heart.

The problem is that many folks say it's hard to feel thankful in times as troubling as these. When that kind of talk gets started, it snowballs into a "Woe is me!" lament that can paralyze the whole community. It needs to be checked right away with another idea, and developing a thankful heart will do that.

Consider some thoughts from my good friend, Mike. Mike was a kid in my first congregation in Western Kansas 36 years ago. Now, he's in his early 50's, but he'll not get too much older. He is "supposed" to be dead now. He "should have" died 12 years ago. He's got a severe heart condition, and everything that can possibly be done for him has been done. Now he is in hospice care.

We keep in touch every week, and he keeps a blog. It's part of his self-prescribed therapy. From his post

this week, I found some thoughts useful to all as we get ready to celebrate Thanksgiving as Christians and move on to celebrate Advent. Here's what Mike offers – and remember, he could be dead at any moment and he's very much aware of that:

I have put together some tips for living within the day that God has given us. Some may work for you while some may not. Just consider all of them and use what you may to put more comfort and joy within each day..... no matter what you are facing.

Embrace your blessings each day. In today's world it is easy to overlook what we have.....by seeing on TV or our computers things that someone thinks we just can't live without. There are many folks having difficult times..... but something we can remember and always depend on is friends and family. No matter how much income you may or may not have.....no amount can purchase the love of friends and family.

We live in a world where "instant gratification" is the norm. Don't live this way. If you want something bad enough it is worth the wait. Be realistic with your expectations. When we live by the mantra: "I want, what I want.....right now".....then we are setting ourselves up for disappointment. Remember this saying: "The trees that are slow to grow, bear the best fruit".

Your input determines your output. Feed your mind with positive and uplifting thoughts and you will find yourself sharing the same with others.

I really couldn't come up with any better thoughts to share with you at this particular point in our journey together ...*Between the Times.*

--FHS

Learning and Giving

Sunday School Classes Choose Mission Projects

Christian education has a mission component this year. Each Sunday School class is responsible for researching and selecting a recipient for their Sunday School offerings.

The goal is to encourage a reflection on mission and outreach.

In the past, all Sunday School offerings have been donated to a single mission project.

The elementary class has selected Play Pumps International to receive their offerings. Play Pumps provides communities in Africa with access to a clean, safe water supply. Its innovative mechanism uses playground equipment to create the energy that draws water from a well to a water tower that connects to a faucet. Along with clean water, Play Pumps provides safe play area for the children in the community and saves hours of work that the women and children used to devote to finding and carrying water to their homes.

Learn more at www.playpumps.org.

Stewardship — Time, Talents, Treasure

Pledge cards for both the operating and capital campaigns may be turned in at any time. Follow the progress toward our budget goals on the chart in the Gathering Room.

Members should have recently received a letter from Session about the stewardship campaign, as well as a budget showing mandatory funding for our congregation and a priority list for discretionary spending. If you haven't received these materials, please contact any member of the Session.

Remember that you can also help with CSPC's financial needs by:

- Volunteering to help clean the church or secretarial work;
- Bringing newspapers, catalogues, and other paper to the recycling bin;
- Using Goodsearch and Goodshop when you're searching or shopping online;
- Using the Kroger gift card and Remke card when you buy groceries.

Don't Rake Those Leaves—Rent-A-Youth!

Remember the CSPC Rent-A-Youth to help with fall lawn care or other household chores. Proceeds help the youth pay the costs of attending Montreat and other youth programs. Contact Brad or Jen Neal with questions: bradneal@insightbb.com or 727-1424.

Our Historic Mary Esther Circle

In 1994 two historic CSPC day groups, the Ruth Esther Circle and the Mary Margaret Circle, merged to form one group called the Mary Esther Circle. This group meets at church 12:30 on the second Monday of each month to discuss the PCUSA Bible Study for Women called Horizons. This year they are studying Joshua. They also continue a long-time Ruth Esther Circle mission by baking cookies for CSPC shut-ins at Christmas. On December 14th they will pack cookies and have a brief lesson.

New members are welcome to join them for an interesting and challenging study. 2010 dates are as January 11th, February 8th, March 8th, April 12th and May 10th. For more information, contact Ruth Schweitzer.

Learning and Fellowship: Make a Family Advent Wreath

On Sunday, November 22, the C.E. committee is sponsoring an Advent wreath making class in preparation for the Advent season. We will begin with a pitch-in dinner at 5:30 p.m. Then, each family will receive supplies and directions to make a personal, family Advent wreath.

Feel free to bring your own special holiday decorations to incorporate into your family wreath.

Please R.S.V.P. to Terry David so we have enough supplies. (tdavid@insightbb.com or 859-380-9466)

If your last name starts with A – H please bring a main dish; I – M vegetable/salad dish; N – R pasta, bread or potato; S – Z dessert.

Presbyterian Loan and Investment Program

On November 8, the congregation heard a presentation by Jay Hudson of the Presbyterian Loan and Investment Program. This group is the source of CSPC's re-financed mortgage. The program works by having Presbyterians invest so that funds are available for building and expanding churches across the nation.

For CSPC to receive the best rate on the loan we're receiving through this program, our members need to invest in it. Information is available online at www.pcusa.org. Information packets are also available in the church office. If you have questions, contact Ernie Elliot at eelliot@fuse.net or 331-2941.

Advent Program—December 20

Mark your calendars to join the fun of a CSPC tradition! The children's Advent program will be Sunday, December 20. We'll start with a potluck dinner at 5:30 p.m. with the program following. Watch for more information as we enter the Advent season.

Calendar

Nov. 17	Session Meeting
Nov. 20	Chicks with Sticks
Nov. 22	Dedication of gifts and offerings
Nov. 23	Session Workshop
Nov. 24	Community Thanksgiving Worship
Dec. 5	Holiday Party
Dec. 14	Mary Esther Circle
Dec. 20	Advent Program

Holiday Party

Check the posters around the church building for information about the CSPC Holiday Party. Reservations and money (\$20 per person) may be sent to Elizabeth Mozea, 261-5489

Fall Harvest Festival Was Fun for All!

Thanks to everyone who helped make the Harvest Festival a success for our congregation and our community. The event on Oct. 31 featured great fall décor, food, crafts, games and fun. Special thanks to Brad and Jen Neal and the youth groups for their help and to the church development committee for planning the event.