

MINISTRY@DHUMC



PASTOR'S MESSAGE



"How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given; so God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heaven.

No ear may hear his coming, but in this world of sin, where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O Little Town of Bethlehem, Phillips Brooks, 1868

The Presence of God

The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) publishes a booklet each year; *Whose Birthday is it Anyway?* As the title indicates, the booklet hopes to press home the Christian message of Christmas. That last phrase was almost too simple to write; 'the Christian message of Christmas', and yet, many of the people who celebrate the season around us will make little reference to baby Jesus, let alone the incarnation of the eternal Christ. A theological foundation is not apparently necessary to take a few days off work, go to a party, or have a few drinks and meals with friends.

There is plenty I enjoy about the season - much of the fun is secular (and a fair portion of that downright pagan!). Though, very truly I say to you, it doesn't come together for me until the story of God's redeeming work in Jesus Christ is at the center.

In the 1999 edition of *Whose Birthday is it Anyway?* Leo Tolstoy's 'Where Love Is, There God is Also' is included. Tolstoy captures the spirit of Advent preparation, its joy and its renewing power. The shoemaker Martin has a vision that Christ will visit him the next day. He prepares his modest home and sets the table. He watches though the hours but only encounters an old man in need of warmth and a cup of tea, a young mother with her child in need of food and warm clothing, and an old woman struggling with a young boy trying to steal an apple. Martin offers hospitality to each. And yet, he has not received the visit he is expecting.

In the evening, Martin opens the Bible to read and the book falls open to Matthew 25:

*For I was hungry, and you gave me food;
I was thirsty and you gave me drink;
I was a stranger and you took me in.*

DECEMBER

Saturday, Dec. 3

Railroad Historical Society gathering, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 4

Second Sunday of Advent "The Weakest Link: Advent" Matthew 3:1-12

"Be An Angel" project starts

Saturday, Dec. 10

Nursery School Breakfast with Santa, 8:30 to 10:30 a.m., Fellowship Hall and McBurney Chapel

Hanging of the Greens starting 9:30 a.m.

Sunday, Dec. 11

Third Sunday of Advent "Unmet Expectations" Matthew 11:2-11

Sunday, Dec. 18

Fourth Sunday of Advent "Seeking for Signs" Matthew 1:18-25

Cookies and cocoa in the Narthex

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(Continued) Martin realizes that he has not been deceived. The Savior has come to visit him. The story is too familiar to me and I expect it's familiar to many of you; we've heard it for many happy Christmases. I ask you to pause with me now, in our familiarity, and listen to it again in its simple, upsetting beauty.

*O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; cast out our sin,
and enter in, be born in us today.*

We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;

O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!

And may God bless your Advent and Christmas,
with love, joy, and peace!

Russell J. Atkinson

WORSHIP NOTES



To Bethlehem and To Kingdom Come

Almighty God, give us grace, that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armor of light, now in this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. Amen.

The First English Prayer Book, 1549

Though Christmas can be a troubling time to some, mostly, to use a familiar seasonal phrase, it reminds us of "comfort and joy." Using many familiar characters and episodes Christmas tells the story of Jesus' birth. All the well-known Christmas scenes point us in the same beautiful direction. We may surprise ourselves with how much of the scripture account we can recall word for word. It is not at all by chance that we all seem to have vivid memories of Christmas; singing the carols, worshiping in the candlelight, and hearing that

DECEMBER

Sunday, Dec. 19

**Nursery School
closed through Jan.
1, 2017**

Saturday, Dec. 24

**Christmas Eve
Family Service, 5
p.m.**

Saturday, Dec. 24

**Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service,
7:30 p.m.**

Sunday, Dec. 25

Christmas Day

**Christmas Cowboy
Breakfast, 9 a.m.**

**A more casual
service, 10 a.m.**

*"A Little Christmas Story"
Matthew 2:13-23*

ALERTS

Check out our web page at www.dhum.org.

We welcome your feedback and input on the newsletter. Have something that you would like to include in the next edition? Email the office at office@dhum.org.

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(Continued) mystical passage, the prologue to the Gospel of John.

Advent is much more of a challenge and (perhaps I can begin an argument) is more important for us disciples. Firstly, Advent covers a wider scope. Advent celebrates Christ coming again at the close of the age, and it celebrates those events when the Christ continually comes; post-resurrection experiences, where two or three are gathered, and in the Lord's Supper. Advent illuminates for us that the time between incarnation and final coming is one of continual imminence. Christ is coming now; not only in the past or in the future!

This set of ideas can be illustrated for us by considering the squabble generations of scripture translators have over the Aramaic word *maranatha* (the word shows up in **1 Corinthians 16:22**). To see the word's double meaning depends on the division of the syllables: *marana tha* means "come, our Lord," and *maran atha* means "our Lord has come." Examining the original texts does not conclusively show which way to split the word – much to the frustration of the literalists, the entertainment of the playful, and the benefit of the faith. The term was significant in early Christian spirituality and has meaning for many Christians today.

In *O Come Emmanuel: Scripture Verses for Advent Worship*, William Marshall states, "It is only because Christ is present with us now that we long and pray for his fuller manifestation." Here Marshall has made a *maranatha* statement. Both are crucial to understanding the expectation and celebration of the Advent-Christmas-Epiphany Seasons.

Again this year, the people of Drexel Hill United Methodist Church will celebrate the season with parties, presents, and meals. We will join with friends, believers and otherwise, in warmth and hospitality. We will also behold *Maranatha*: Come, our Lord. Our Lord has come.

The Oxen

By Thomas Hardy

Christmas Eve, and twelve of the clock. "Now they are all on their knees," An elder said as we sat in a flock By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where They dwelt in their strawy pen, Nor did it occur to one of us there To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave In these years! Yet, I feel, If someone said on Christmas Eve, "Come; see the oxen kneel,

"In the lonely barton by yonder comb Our childhood used to know, "I should go with him in the gloom, Hoping it might be so.



Christmas Eve Services

Christmas Eve at Drexel Hill United Methodist Church will comprise two worship services. The first, at 5 p.m., will be a Christmas Eve Family Service, designed with children and young families in mind.

The second service, a Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, will contain carols and lessons, a Christmas sermon, and the lighting of candles to the singing of "Silent night".

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**Merry
Christmas**

Christmas Morning Breakfast and service

You and anyone staying with you for Christmas are most cordially invited to our Fellowship Hall for a Christmas Breakfast beginning at 9 a.m. and finishing moments before the service begins at 10 a.m. Pajamas are acceptable attire on this casual morning at church.

During the service, our choir director, Dan Matarazzo, will be leading us through a carol-sing where you call out the choices! The service will be rounded out with a little Christmas story.

O, we wish you the comforts and tidings of joy!

HOLIDAY MUSICAL



If you would like a chance to see a matinee performance of the Media Theater's "A Christmas Story" on Dec. 8 at 2 p.m., contact Becky Harbison at rrharbison@verizon.net.

The musical, based on the well-known Christmas movie, features Jennie Eisenhower, daughter of David and Julie (Nixon) Eisenhower, in the role of Ralphie's mother.

Tickets are \$40 for non-premium seats, \$35 for senior citizens. Deadline to order tickets from Becky is Friday, Dec. 2, and payment must be made to her by Sunday, Dec. 4. Refunds are not available once tickets are purchased. Also, due to the popularity of this musical, there is a chance the performance will be sold out.

For more information about the Media Theater's production of "A Christmas Story", click [here](#), or visit <http://mediatheatrenews.blogspot.com/2016/10/media-theatre-announces-cast-for.html>.

We hope you'll be joining us in ushering in the holiday season by watching Flick get his tongue stuck on the flagpole and Ralphie shooting his eye out.

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IN THE COMMUNITY



The breakfast will feature:

For the children—

- ✦ Teddy Bear pancakes
- ✦ A Santa lollipop made from bananas, strawberries and marshmallows
- ✦ Apple juice or water

For the adults—

- ✦ 3 pancakes
- ✦ 2 sausage
- ✦ Juice
- ✦ Coffee

Breakfast with Santa

Drexel Hill United Methodist Church invites you to have Breakfast with Santa, Saturday, Dec. 10, 8:30 to 11 a.m., in Fellowship Hall and McBurney Chapel at the church, 600 Burmont Road.

- First seating, 8:30-9:30 a.m. for breakfast
9:30 to 10:30 a.m., Visit with Santa
- Second seating, 8:30-9:30 a.m., Visit with Santa
9:30-10:30 a.m. for breakfast

Cost is \$8 per child, \$5 per adult with children 1 and under admitted free. For an additional \$3 you can fill a container with homemade cookies. We will also be collecting donated hats and mittens for those in need.

Bring your camera and take your picture with Santa, Mrs. Claus and their Elf. Your children will receive:

- ✦ A book
- ✦ Make a Craft
- ✦ Make Reindeer Food

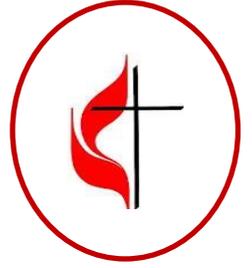


Be an Angel

On Dec. 4, we will begin our Christmas Angel Project. We ask everyone to take an angel from the tree with the ages and gender of each child on them, and sign and return the attached index card to the designated tin.

Use the instructions as a guide to what to buy. Gift cards are always good. Return the unwrapped gift with the angel on Sunday, Dec. 18. All items will be packaged and gift wrapped on Dec. 18 following the service.

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Thanksgiving basket thank you

Thank you everyone who contributed to the Thanksgiving Food Baskets. We were able to provide 24 families, 152 people in all, with fresh fruits and vegetables, canned goods, cookies and more, plus a \$20 gift card to Giant.



Dining for Dollars

Our Dining for Dollars fund-raiser takes place the fourth Monday of each month. Enjoy a dinner at a selected restaurant on that day and money earned will be donated to the Outreach Committee to help ally expenses that come up during the many community projects the committee members work on all year. Check the church bulletin or visit the church website for the next scheduled Dining for Dollars event.

Food collection

The Outreach Ministry collects non-perishable food items each Sunday for the Upper Darby Food Cupboard. Although any non-perishable items are accepted, please be mindful of items that children can pack in their lunches.

