



**T H E
M E S S E N G E R**

December 2016

RiversEdge United Methodist Church

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A Note from your Pastors:

Advent has begun. So what. Why, again, do we bother? Santa's been in the store for months now. Every time we turn around, there are commercials imploring us to buy something for that special someone in our life. Christmas carols fill the airwaves and the stores. Even the local Christian station has gotten in on the cultural bandwagon, playing Christmas songs non-stop until December 25th. Why swim against the flow? Is it worth it?

Quite frankly, if we view Advent solely as a preparation to celebrate Christmas, we miss the point. Like the movie *Titanic*, we know the ending already. Jesus, Immanuel, becomes a baby in a manger. Big whoop. We've rehearsed this for two thousand years. Can we get back to buying presents now?

No. The season of Advent can be so much more profound than lighting purple or blue candles in a wreath. Instead of it being a season of waiting, it could be a season of honing our skills: our skills to see what new things God is doing here and now.

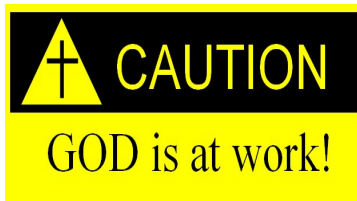
The Sadducees are our example of what not to do. They clung to their interpretation of scripture so tightly, they had no wiggle room to let the resurrection enter their minds. Christmas is more than just a yearly celebration of Christ coming as an infant. It is a clarion call to remind us that we too will miss the boat if we aren't paying attention.

As children, we might have been aghast when people didn't have room for Mary and Joseph, but how often do we make room in our hearts for God's action? There are people hurting now, who need help, but they don't have a halo on their heads. Are we to reject them because they aren't the Christ child? Certainly not!

We Christians can become sleepy in our lives of faith. The light of Christ can get just as dim in our souls as the daylight becomes dim around us as we approach winter.

What can rekindle our flame, our light, our hope? Remembering God becoming human is the start, but only the start. As impossible as it still sounds to us - God becoming human - God is still a God who can do surprising things. We have to have eyes to see and ears to hear, however. Two thousand years ago, the people didn't see God in the manger - at least, not without angelic help. May we spend this Advent asking the Holy Spirit to show us hopeful signs of God's work in our world. May we be ready to open our minds and hearts beyond the usual and expected, to find halos where we'd expect horns. Let's be ready to hope again. Let us practice hope during Advent.

Blessings,
Pastors Andy and Kristi Hopp



- ◆ Dave Saam is doing great after his heart procedure and has been given the O.K. to go to New York for Thanksgiving.
- ◆ Brian & Karen Doty announce the birth of their grandson Owen Michael on Oct 31. He was welcomed home by his big sister Chloe. All is well!
- ◆ Karen Hermacinski's daughter, Heather Reiter & husband Chad, welcomed their baby boy on Friday. All is well.



The children and youth Christmas program will be performed at the 10:30 worship on Sunday, **December 11th**.

A Tree Lot Christmas Joining Jesus' Family Tree is filled with wonderful songs that tell the truth of God's word and a script that follows a group of kids selling trees outside of Mr. Carmichael's toy store to raise money for kids in need. The kids have been practicing very hard and are looking forward to sharing this fun and meaningful story. Please make plans to join us; we are sure you will be glad you did.



John Schaer is still collecting **ALUMINUM CANS** to recycle. Aluminum CANS only, no aluminum disposable pans or other items. If you have any, you may leave them in the entry area of the river side of the church. You may call John at 822-8770 if you would like him to pick them up. Once he gets a truck load, he will take them to the recycle center. Not only will this help the earth, but the money will go to the Youth Group Program.



OUR PRECIOUS LIFE is a monthly group for widows, held at the church on the 3rd Monday. Participants will need to bring their bibles. If you have questions please contact Pastor Kristi via e-mail (krishopp@outlook.com) or cell (309-573-3061). This month's meeting has been cancelled.

Adult group **DIGGING DEEPER** will be on **Sunday mornings** at 9:15a.m. We will be digging deeper into the Bible passage we hear that morning, deeper into what it means to follow Jesus, deeper into how God is at work in our own lives and the world. Please come with questions and a learning spirit. Bring your favorite Bible, or use the ones we have. Let's learn together!

KEEPING THE FLAME ALIVE will meet on the third Monday of the month (**December 19**) at 8:30 a.m. at a **Bob Evans**. Participants will need to bring a copy of Open and their bibles. If you have questions please contact Pastor Andy via e-mail (try2hopp@msn.com) or cell (309-883-1422).



If the Christmas season brings more sadness than thoughts of joy, please join Pastors Andy and Kristi for a time of fellowship, prayers and a meal. It will be held on Monday, **December 19** at 7:00 pm. We will eat first in the upstairs fellowship area, then continue with worship in the same room. We will gently encourage each other to receive the message of the Christ child while respecting the hurt we feel in our lives.



The Mitten tree for the kids at Chaddock is up. It has been a custom to collect mittens to hang on the tree.



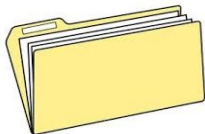
Pastor Kristi is expanding the 'Divorce Support Group' to help others with varied challenges.

CURVE BALLS: Learn to hit curve balls, life rarely pitches straight. God can teach you how to swing. This group is open for anyone who would like to join.

We meet on **December 12 at 7:00 p.m.** If you are interested in joining us or want more information, please contact Pastor Kristi Hopp via cell (309-573-3061) or e-mail (krishopp@outlook.com).

CHURCH EQUIPMENT POLICY

Due to potential damage to our church equipment, our kitchen equipment needs to stay in our kitchen. The white tables can't leave the church property, and the white chairs can't leave the church building. We have metal chairs available. If you want to borrow them, please contact the church office.



UPDATING RECORDS

If you would like your name added to the birthday list, have had an email address change or would like your email address added to the any of the church email groups (1-receive announcements & newsletter, 2-receive prayer requests). See Judy, email at Jude187@msn.com or call at 822-8770. Also, check with other family members.

Submitted by: Judy Schaer, Worship Committee Chair



Be sure to check out website at riversedgeumc.org where you will find the newsletters, calendars and announcements regularly. If you see pictures that you are in and would like them removed, please let Pastor Andy or Judy Schaer know. The committee wanted pictures to depict the life of our church.

Submitted by: Publicity Committee



10:30 a.m. **WORSHIP SERVICE HELPERS** are still needed. If you are interested in ushering, reading scripture, greeting or being an acolyte, please sign up on the Schedule Sheet in the back of the sanctuary.

We still need one **SUNDAY SCHOOL** teacher. We are working towards having two teachers per class. Please talk with Pastor Andy, Gale Allen or April Nauman if you'd like to help. Please help us raise the next generation of Christians.

The **PRAISE AND WORSHIP TEAM** is looking for singers and musicians. If you have any interest learning more, please contact Jarrod Doty at church, by email at jdoty69@gmail.com or by phone at 309.657.8904.

If you, or anyone you know, want to fill in on the **ORGAN** or **PIANO** occasionally, please text or call Carla Doty at 657-8903 or email at dougdoty@aol.com.

There is still room for more **CHOIR** participants. We meet on Wednesday evenings (to be announced) at 7pm. Anyone from 7th grade up to 100 years is invited to join us. If you think that you don't sing well enough and would like to try it anyway, please come. Other members will guide you along.

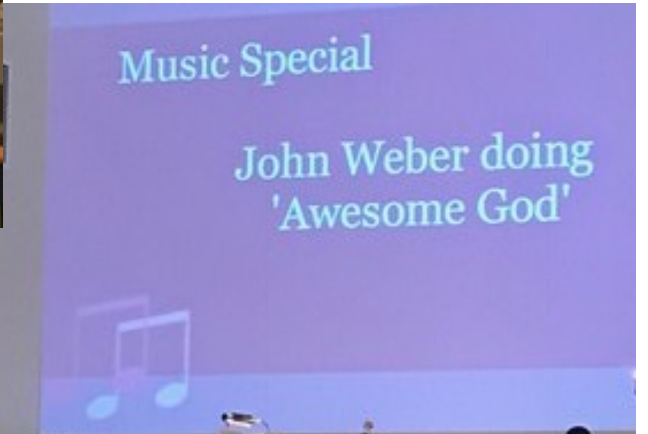
Also, we welcome special numbers: solos, duets (or any number of individuals), instrumentals and other forms of worship. Music plays a very important role in our worship experience.

This is an opportunity to serve. You will feel blessed. Remember that there is **JOY IN SERVING JESUS**.

Submitted by: Judy Schaer, Worship Committee Chair



Every time we have Food Pantry Day, we will have our **King's Closet** upstairs at the Annex. We have clothes, other small items, or produce for local people to take and use, if they need it. Bring items all month. It comes in free and goes out free, no charge. Anything left over will be taken to Good Will or South Side Missions.



December

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5 7 p.m. Trustees	6	7	8	9 10 a.m. Decorate Church 9-11 a.m. Food Pantry/King's Closet	10 10 a.m. Decorate Church
11 10:30 a.m. Children's Christmas Program	12 7 p.m. Curve Balls	13 NO Ad Council	14	15	16	17
18	19 8:30 a.m. Keeping the Flame Alive (Bob Evans) 7 p.m. Blue Christmas Service	20	21	22	23	24 7 p.m. & 11 p.m. Christmas Eve Services
25 8 a.m. NO Service 10:30 a.m. Christmas Service	26	27	28	29	30	31 O.U.R. New Year's Eve Party (TBA)

OUR MOTTO: "The Church That Cares"

OUR MISSION (our purpose): "Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ through our welcome, worship, and witness."

OUR VISION (what we hope to be): "We are a community of caring people striving to meet the spiritual and physical needs of our neighbors."

WORSHIP SERVICES:

Sunday 8 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

O.U.R.: Outwardly Upwardly Righteously
(first Sunday of month)

NURSERY:

Sunday 8-11:45 a.m. (infant-kindergarten)

OUR PRECIOUS LIFE:

7 p.m. 3rd Monday

SUNDAY SCHOOL GROUPS : 9:15-10:15 a.m.

D.O.C.K. (Preschool – 5th grade)

Youth (grades 6 – 12)

Digging Deeper (Adults)

CURVE BALLS SUPPORT GROUP:

7 p.m. 2nd & 4th Mondays

CHOIR PRACTICE: (7th grade-Adult)

September through May

7 p.m. Wednesday evenings, as announced

KEEPING THE FLAME ALIVE:

8:30 a.m. 3rd Monday

