



**T H E
M E S S E N G E R**
RiversEdge United Methodist Church

January 2017

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A Note from your Pastors:

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me, a house free of decorations...

To be clear, the Hopp household leaves up the Christmas decorations at least until January 6. Why? Well, for starters, we believe in celebrating the Christmas **season**, not just the **day**.

It saddens us greatly how we Christians have too often let the culture modify our traditions. This modification became evident when we got into a heated discussion regarding **when** the twelve days of Christmas occur. We in our society have pumped up particular **days**, we no longer know how to celebrate **seasons**.

Quite frankly, I don't know if any one of us could stand having twelve days off without any shopping stores open. Would any of us know how to prepare to be idle for so long?

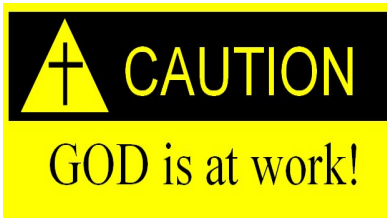
This points to a clear fact. We, in this culture, lack the ability to savor anything. In a world of instant everything, spending more than an hour savoring something seems to be a frivolous waste of time. We've got to keep moving. We don't want moss growing under our feet.

Yet, celebrating seasons and taking time to savor the good things in life is one of the antidotes this culture sorely needs. With more and more people saying "No" to Christianity, showing people how to slow down and savor might be the witness this world needs. We're worried we Christians have become too much like the culture. Our actual witness is the same as those who don't believe - take everything down the day after Christmas - nothing to see here - it wasn't that big of a deal anyway, just the birth of the Savior of the World - get back to us when He does something important.

For those of us who were fortunate enough to be parents of little children, we have a question. Do you miss cuddling with your child? Rocking your child to sleep? Seeing them learn new things with wonder. Do you wish you could have some of those moments back, so that you could savor them this time around?

God became human. God became a baby. This is profound and it demands that we savor this news. Christmas isn't a day. Christmas is a season, and it wonderfully spans the ending of the current year and the beginning of the new year. As Scrooge says, he will keep Christmas every day of the year, so, the invitation goes to us as well. As we see 2017 on the horizon, will we strive to keep the spirit of Christmas alive every day in the coming year? Will you join us?

Blessings,
Pastors Andy and Kristi Hopp



- ◆ Jeanne Brennan's son has been sober for 3 months. A great joy!
- ◆ Kristina Atherton Bencher is thankful that after 8 years the family will be able to have closure with the revealing of the tombstone of her cousin, Dallas Atherton, honoring his memory and love (located in Spring Bay cemetery).
- ◆ Karen Hermacinski is thankful for all those who came to decorate the church for the Christmas season.
- ◆ Brenda Story-Philips announced the engagement of her granddaughter Tiffany Story and Frederick.
- ◆ Mary Poignant announced that the food pantry served 84 families of which 13 were new (262 people) on Friday.
- ◆ Judy Loeffler Gordon hand made several hats for the mitten tree.
- ◆ The Miller's daughter, Kelly (Joel) Burt, had a baby boy, Jude Alan David Burt.



THE WORK OF CHRISTMAS

When the song of the angels is stilled,
 When the star in the sky is gone,
 When the Kings and Princes are home,
 When the shepherds are back with their flocks,
 The work of Christmas begins.
 To find the lost,
 To heal the broken,
 To feed the hungry
 To release the prisoner,
 To teach the nations,
 To bring peace among brothers,
 To make music in the heart.

By: Howard Thurman



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 is **January 16**.

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 (**January 16**) at 8:30 a.m. at a **Bob Evans**. Participants will need to bring a copy of Book One and their bibles. If you have questions please contact Pastor Andy via e-mail (try2hopp@msn.com) or cell (309-883-1422).



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 **January 9 and 23 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).



January 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3 7 p.m. Trustees	4 7 p.m. Choir	5	6 9-11 a.m. Food Pantry & King's Closet	7
8	9 7 p.m. Curve Balls	10 7 p.m. Ad Council	11	12	13	14
15	16 8:30 a.m. Keeping the Flame Alive (@ Bob Evans) 7 p.m. Our Precious Life	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 7 p.m. Curve Balls	24	25	26	27	28
29 2-5:30 p.m. District Leadership Training at Crossroads	30	31				

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.

NURSERY:

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

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

D.O.C.K. (Preschool – 5th grade)

Youth (grades 6 – 12)

Digging Deeper (Adults)

CHOIR PRACTICE: (7th grade-Adult)

September through May

7 p.m. Wednesday evenings, as announced

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

OUR PRECIOUS LIFE:

7 p.m. 3rd Monday

CURVE BALLS SUPPORT GROUP:

7 p.m. 2nd & 4th Mondays

KEEPING THE FLAME ALIVE:

8:30 a.m. 3rd Monday

