

THE KIRK KONNECTION

Editor: Carolyn Marnon

December 2021

It's 5 a.m. and I'm sitting in a dark, quiet living room. The only light is the glow emanating from the Christmas tree in the corner.

When I was younger I never thought I'd see 5 a.m. as regularly as I have this year. But this new trend is not an accident; it's by design. We've kept and are keeping Theo out of daycare/school until he's vaccinated, and Mieke has a constant stream of patients (virtual/by phone) during the week, so I am regularly the parent on duty. I've had to get creative in finding times and places to plan/prepare/write and have found two: in the car at the park a few miles down the road when I am off the clock for a couple hours or right here on the couch while Mieke and Theo are sleeping.

I'm not complaining. While I've made this adjustment out of necessity, I've come to thoroughly enjoy these quiet moments in which I can relax without any distraction. Only here do I encounter total silence. Only here can I bask in one single source of light.

While I can prepare weekly worship, talk to parishioners, attend Presbytery meetings and even moderate a session meeting with Theo nearby, I can't do what I'm doing right now when he's in the room. In order to write a sermon, I need to escape to a time and place that is free of any disruption that would compromise my meditation upon and communion with God. Right now, as I attempt to immerse myself in the precious season of Advent, it is no different.

While it is appropriate and valuable to move through the season of Advent in fellowship together at church as we worship, we are not experiencing the full measure of what this liturgical season has to offer if we do not cast aside all else as we anticipate the birth of the Savior. If we cannot block out all other distractions – visual and auditory – we might not uncover the hope, peace, joy and love that, as Christians, are our sacred treasure in these cold weeks.

That is a loaded word: sacred. When not just Christmas – but also Advent – has become so commercialized (there are “Advent” calendars for everything now, which have nothing to do with a culmination of Jesus’ birth) and when we have lived through this annual season so many times it gets harder and harder to treat it with the attention and care that it deserves. Do we look forward to it? Sure. Do we enjoy it and like the comfy, cozy feeling of it? Yeah, I think so. But are we treasuring this season as profoundly as we ought to be?

Given my own situation, I recognize how challenging it can be to find and set aside a time and place of total quiet and zero distraction. But it's worth it. In these moments I have room to hear my own thoughts while waiting and listening for what God will share with me. And when I maintain this practice of focusing upon this one solitary light in this dark room, I know it equips me to focus upon the one true source of light – our Messiah, Jesus the Christ – as I navigate the dark world we all inhabit today.

But that's the point, is it not? The world *is* flawed and it *is* dark, and we must not pretend otherwise. When this is the case, we must adapt to this darkness and focus upon the one *true* Light of the World. It does no good to live in a denial: our world is not a Christian one and it can be dark. By the same token, however, we must also not deny that Christ's light has the power to *overwhelm all else*. If we practice meditating upon this light in moments we set aside for Jesus, might we not be better equipped to recognize this illumination as we navigate this dark world? And, especially in this season, should we not find hope at what is to come, peace in the knowledge that the Messiah *will* come, joy at the beginning of our road to salvation and abundant love in the most loving gift anyone could ever receive?

Strange....I haven't turned any lights on, but it doesn't seem nearly as dark in here as it did before.

Pastor Mike



Sponsor a Snowflake!

Happy Advent, all! This Christmas we are partnering with Learn Through Play Preschool and Michigan Foster Care Closet in our sponsorship of a 12 year old girl who is in local foster care. Tara, the preschool's administrator, has received gift requests and ideas from the Foster Care Closet and simplified our process by putting those items on the paper snowflakes you'll find on our Christmas tree in the lounge. There is still time to participate! If you have taken a snowflake with an item on it, please bring the item(s) to the office as soon as possible or to worship this Sunday! You can still come into the office during office hours or take one of the remaining snowflakes, but time is running out! **All items must be collected and assembled at the Kirk by Wednesday, 12/15, at 2 PM** so that they can be delivered on time. All collected gifts can be left in the care of Carolyn, Pastor Mike or Nancy at church during office hours (Mon-Thurs, 10-2) or can be left in the back pew this Sunday (12/12) of the sanctuary for Pastor Mike. Thank you so much for your generosity and participation (and please note that we have been asked to not wrap the items)! :)



Toiletries Needed for Family Resource Center

It's not too late to support the John Glenn Family Resource Center by supplying much-needed toiletries! Please bring items either on **Sundays (place them in the back pew of the Sanctuary)**, and Pastor Mike will gather them up) or **Monday - Thursday during office hours (10-2). Carolyn or Pastor Mike can accept them** and store them until we drop them off at the FRC.

****Please bring your donations before Monday, December 13****

The list of requested toiletries, with most needed items in **BOLD**:

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Deodorant (**men and women**)
- Pads and tampons
- Toothpaste (**for adults and children**)
- Toothbrushes (**adult & kids size**)
- Bar soap
- Hand soap (pump)
- Lotion
- Hair Brushes/combs
- Chapstick
- **Body wash (for men and women)**
- Laundry Detergent pods

-Mission Elders Mieke Beckman and June Jennings

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The month of November brought many blessings to Learn Through Play Preschool. We were so happy to have a Thanksgiving feast with our classmates where we shared our favorite food items. We worked hard on many Thanksgiving crafts and activities. Our students were so excited to learn how to be grateful for things we have in life and how we can help those who are less fortunate than us. Such an important life lesson!



**LEARN
THROUGH
PLAY
PRESCHOOL**





DECEMBER

BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Pat Gallaher
- 7 Bob Gates
- 28 Pat Higgins
- 29 Georange Kirk

NO MORE BOTTLES AND CANS

We are no longer accepting bottles and cans at the church for recycling.

Please do not leave cans and/or bottles in the hallway. We are grateful for your past donations; however, the ants have become a problem for us. We need to do everything we can to prevent them from entering the building.



Financial Report as of 11/30/2021

| | November | Year to Date | Budget |
|---------------------------|----------|--------------|---------|
| Income | 4,848 | 95,859 | 99,122 |
| Expenses | 10,367 | 109,323 | 111,545 |
| Net Income or Loss | -5,519 | -13,464 | -12,423 |
| Liquid Assets* | 128,166 | 128,166 | |

* equals the total for Kirk checking, savings, and mutual funds.
Does not include Thank God 4 Christian Parents Fund.

November showed a considerable loss that was exaggerated by a noncash loss in Mutual Funds holdings of \$1,750. However, the Kirk also received regular offerings that were \$2,000 below monthly budget. Expenses were normal. The latest monthly trends in giving are concerning due to membership loss by death or voluntary departures. Our current volume of liquid assets remains an advantage in these financial times.

The mission of the Kirk of Our Savior is to glorify God, nurture new and existing relationships, and bear witness to our faith and divine calling through worship, service, stewardship and prayer.

It is the vision of this church to become a living example of God's love, called to show Christ to those within the church community by offering ourselves in service to those in need and inviting all to share in this vision.



FAMILY FUN NIGHT RETURNS!

Friday, December 10

Doors open at 6pm

Bingo starts at 6:30pm

Come join the Ottes as they host Fun Night this Friday. Be ready to shout BINGO!

B-I-N-G-O!

WORSHIP COMMITTEE

Madeline Carpenter (2022), Chairman and Elder

Bonnie Hilberer (2022) Elder

Colleen Williamson (2022) Deacon

FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

(2022) Deacon

Bill Partaka (2024) Deacon

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Peggy Flacks (2022) Deacon

MISSION/OUTREACH

Mieke Beckman (2023) Chairman and Elder

June Jennings (2023) Elder

Andrea Alicea (2022) Deacon

FOUNDATION

Rob Otte (2022) Chairman and Elder

Patrick Frobe (2023) Elder

CALLS AND CARDS TEAM

Lois Hanley (2023) Deacon

TREASURER: Fred Kirk

CLERK: June Jennings

A publication for the family and friends of
Kirk of Our Savior

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December 2021

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|-------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|-----------|
| | | | | | | |
| 5 10:30am Worship | 6 7:30-9pm BiPolar Depression Support Group Meeting-Lounge | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 7:30-9pm Almond-Lounge | 11 |
| | | | | | 6pm-Fun Night hosted by The Otes | |
| 12 10:30am Worship | 13 7:30-9pm BiPolar Depression Support Group Meeting-Lounge | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 6-8pm LTP Milk and Cookies with Santa | 18 |
| | | | | | 7:30-9pm Almond-Lounge | |
| 19 10:30am Worship | 20 No School LTP | 21 No School LTP | 22 No School LTP | 23 No School LTP | 24 No School LTP | 25 |
| | | | | | 7pm-Christmas Eve Service | |
| 26 10:30am Worship | 27 No School LTP | 28 No School LTP | 29 No School LTP | 30 No School LTP | 31 No School LTP | |
| | | | | | 7:30-9pm Almond-Lounge | |

December 2021 Daily Lectionary

These Scripture readings are from the two-year daily lectionary of the Presbyterian Book of Common Worship (Westminster John Knox Press, 2018). The readings from the three-year Revised Common Lectionary for Sundays and Festivals are not included in this document.

Wednesday, December 1

Morning: Pss. 50; 147:1–11
Evening: Pss. 53; 17
Amos 3:12–4:5
2 Peter 3:1–10
Matt. 21:23–32

Tuesday, December 7

Morning: Pss. 33; 146
Evening: Pss. 85; 94
Amos 7:10–17
Rev. 1:9–16
Matt. 22:34–46

Monday, December 13

Morning: Pss. 122; 145
Evening: Pss. 40; 67
Zech. 1:7–17
Rev. 3:7–13
Matt. 24:15–31

Thursday, December 2

Morning: Pss. 18:1–20;
147:12–20
Evening: Pss. 126; 62
Amos 4:6–13
2 Peter 3:11–18
Matt. 21:33–46

Wednesday, December 8

Morning: Pss. 50; 147:1–11
Evening: Pss. 53; 17
Amos 8:1–14
Rev. 1:17–2:7
Matt. 23:1–12

Tuesday, December 14

Morning: Pss. 33; 146
Evening: Pss. 85; 94
Zech. 2:1–13
Rev. 3:14–22
Matt. 24:32–44

Friday, December 3

Morning: Pss. 102; 148
Evening: Pss. 130; 16
Amos 5:1–17
Jude 1–16
Matt. 22:1–14

Thursday, December 9

Morning: Pss. 18:1–20;
147:12–20
Evening: Pss. 126; 62
Amos 9:1–10
Rev. 2:8–17
Matt. 23:13–26

Wednesday, December 15

Morning: Pss. 50; 147:1–11
Evening: Pss. 53; 17
Zech. 3:1–10
Rev. 4:1–8
Matt. 24:45–51

Saturday, December 4

Morning: Pss. 90; 149
Evening: Pss. 80; 72
Amos 5:18–27
Jude 17–25
Matt. 22:15–22

Friday, December 10

Morning: Pss. 102; 148
Evening: Pss. 130; 16
Hag. 1:1–15
Rev. 2:18–29
Matt. 23:27–39

Thursday, December 16

Morning: Pss. 18:1–20;
147:12–20
Evening: Pss. 126; 62
Zech. 4:1–14
Rev. 4:9–5:5
Matt. 25:1–13

Sunday, December 5

Second Sunday of Advent
Morning: Pss. 24; 150
Evening: Pss. 25; 110
Amos 6:1–14
2 Thess. 1:5–12
Luke 1:57–68

Saturday, December 11

Morning: Pss. 90; 149
Evening: Pss. 80; 72
Hag. 2:1–9
Rev. 3:1–6
Matt. 24:1–14

Friday, December 17

Morning: Pss. 102; 148
Evening: Pss. 130; 16
Zech. 7:8–8:8
Rev. 5:6–14
Matt. 25:14–30

Monday, December 6

Morning: Pss. 122; 145
Evening: Pss. 40; 67
Amos 7:1–9
Rev. 1:1–8
Matt. 22:23–33

Sunday, December 12

Third Sunday of Advent
Morning: Pss. 24; 150
Evening: Pss. 25; 110
Amos 9:11–15
2 Thess. 2:1–3, 13–17
John 5:30–47

Saturday, December 18

Morning: Pss. 90; 149
Evening: Pss. 80; 72
Gen. 3:8–15
Rev. 12:1–10
John 3:16–21

| | | |
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| Sunday, December 19 | Saturday, December 25 | Friday, December 31 |
| Fourth Sunday of Advent | Nativity of the Lord / Christmas Day | Morning: Pss. 98; 148 |
| Morning: Pss. 24; 150 Evening: Pss. 25; 110 Zeph. 3:14–20 Titus 1:1–16 Luke 1:1–25 | Morning: Pss. 2; 149 Evening: Pss. 98; 96 Micah 4:1–5; 5:2–4 1 John 4:7–16 John 3:31–36 | Evening: Pss. 45; 96 1 Kings 3:5–14 James 4:13–17; 5:7–11 John 5:1–15 |
| Monday, December 20 | Sunday, December 26 | |
| Morning: Pss. 122; 145 Evening: Pss. 40; 67 1 Sam. 2:1b–10 Titus 2:1–10 Luke 1:26–36 | First Sunday of Christmas Morning: Pss. 116; 150 Evening: Pss. 119:1–24; 27 1 Sam. 1:1–2, 7b–28 Col. 1:9–20 Luke 2:22–40 | |
| Tuesday, December 21 | Monday, December 27 | |
| Morning: Pss. 33; 146 Evening: Pss. 85; 94 2 Sam. 7:1–17 Titus 2:11–3:8a Luke 1:39–48a (48b–56) | Morning: Pss. 34; 145 Evening: Pss. 19; 121 Prov. 8:22–30 1 John 5:1–12 John 13:20–35 | |
| Wednesday, December 22 | Tuesday, December 28 | |
| Morning: Pss. 50; 147:1–11 Evening: Pss. 53; 17 2 Sam. 7:18–29 Gal. 3:1–14 Luke 1:57–66 | Morning: Pss. 2; 146 Evening: Pss. 110; 111 Isa. 49:13–23 Isa. 54:1–13 Matt. 18:1–14 | |
| Thursday, December 23 | Wednesday, December 29 | |
| Morning: Pss. 18:1–20; 147:12–20 Evening: Pss. 126; 62 Jer. 31:10–14 Gal. 3:15–22 Luke 1:67–80 or Matt. 1:1–17 | Morning: Pss. 96; 147:1–11 Evening: Pss. 132; 97 2 Sam. 23:13–17b 2 John 1–13 John 2:1–11 | |
| Friday, December 24 | Thursday, December 30 | |
| Nativity of the Lord / Christmas Eve | Morning: Pss. 93; 147:12–20 Evening: Ps. 89:1–18; 89:19–52 1 Kings 17:17–24 3 John 1–15 John 4:46–54 | |
| Morning: Pss. 102; 148 Evening: Pss. 132; 114 Isa. 60:1–6 Gal. 3:23–4:7 Matt. 1:18–25 | | |