



News From Holland

Newsletter of Holland First United Methodist Church
December 2005 **Rev. Chris Hughes, Pastor** **Volume XII**
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Chris' Corner

¹⁰ Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ "Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; ask it either in the depth or in the height above." ¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!" ¹³ Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, O house of David! Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? ¹⁴ "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. **Isaiah 7:10-14**

Beginning the Advent-ure! Changing Direction!

Have you ever found yourself heading the wrong direction? Becky and I were still engaged when we went with some friends from Germany to visit the Grand Canyon. I was driving, and we were supposed to be heading south to Phoenix. About 2 pm, Becky had asked me if we were heading the right direction, and I assured her we were. About an hour later, Elke, our German friend asked, "Shouldn't the sun be on our right if we are heading south? I thought about, looked out the window and saw the sun out the left window and realized that indeed, I was heading the wrong direction!

King Ahaz was one of a long line of kings of the northern Jewish nation of Judah, who were heading the wrong direction – away from God. God sent his prophets to give the kings direction, but the kings sought other advice: they did not want to bother with God. And so God devised a plan – God would come into the world as a baby, and would live among us. Why? To show us the way! Rather than simply telling us that we were heading the wrong direction, God would become Immanuel (*which means God with us*), and lead us on the Adventure of a lifetime.

This week begins Advent, the four week advent-ure leading up to Christmas. It is intended as a time of preparation for the appearance of God in our midst. This Advent, I hope you will join me in Advent-ure. Take a look out the window of your life, and see if you are heading the right direction, and then join me in the daily readings of the devotional guide, and come worship each Sunday as we head toward Christmas!

Chris.

Blessed to be your pastor!

DECEMBER WORSHIP SERVICES**Bible Readings & Message Titles**

Date	Scripture	Sermon
December 4 Communion Day	Isaiah 40: 1-5; Mark 1: 1-18	“Prepare for Advent-ure”
December 11	John 1: 6-8; John 1: 19-28	“A Leader for Advent-ure”
December 18	Luke 1: 26-38	“Called to Advent-ure”
December 25 Christmas Day	Luke 2: 1-20	“The Story Begins”

Administrative Council

Whenever one takes into account the seasons and holidays, it seems most appropriate that Thanksgiving comes before Christmas in the year. Thanksgiving is the time to ponder the many blessings of life and to express gratitude for those blessings. Christmas is the time to receive the baby blessing. That time of quiet thankfulness is sometimes disrupted by the chaotic clamor that the worldly Christmas has become. I challenge each member of this church to travel into this Christmas season carrying and displaying an attitude of gratitude for one of the biggest blessings for a Christian, the baby Jesus. Focus your eyes on the Christ child and imagine that precious little ones' journey. It was a long ride to Bethlehem, no room at the inn, and only a lowly stable for a King. Not much fanfare in that first Christmas, no twirling Christmas tree or singing Elvis or 57 brightly wrapped presents or the hustling crowds at the mall. How could that have been a *real* Christmas? It seems as if the Lord was trying to tell His people about the true meaning of Christmas in that first Christmas night. I think the lessons that can be learned from that first Christmas are as follows: 1. Surround yourself with love. It doesn't have to be in a fancy setting and it might be with only a few members (the animals and shepherds), as long as love (baby Jesus) is in the center, it is all okay. 2. It is not about the gift only the manner in which it is given. Yes baby Jesus did receive extravagant gifts, but the gifts were given out of awe and love by important people who had sacrificed much to those gifts personally to the Christ child. 3. Spend Christmas with Jesus and the Angels will follow. If our Christmas is in pursuit of Jesus, surely the outpouring of Christ's love will feel just like the brush of an angel's wings. Enjoy the season, may it be blessed!

Mike and Melany

Prayer Circle

PRAYER CIRCLE will be conducted by telephone over the Holidays. Judy will type up a prayer list for all. If you have any prayer concerns, please let her know.

Judy's News

LUNCHEON: There will be no luncheon in December due to the Holidays. The next one will be in January.

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS: Our class is growing and the participation is wonderful. Consider coming and try it on for size. You may be surprised what the Lord has in store for you! New books will be out for December classes. Let Judy know if you want one.

CANDLELIGHT SERVICE: Candlelight Service will be held at our church on December 18th at 6:00 P.M. The community will be invited with participation from other churches. Fellowship will follow so plan on bringing some goody for all to enjoy.

COWBOY CHURCH: The next Cowboy Church will be held on **Tuesday**, December 20th at 6:00 pm. We will be serving soup and Frank Parmer's famous chili. The November service was well attended and if you were unable to attend you missed the super music and the message. Remember to bring cookies and join us at the Hegar's!

UMW News

Nine women attended the UMW meeting held on Wednesday, Nov. 16th at Mary Cude's home. Mary brought the program, "Preparing for Advent". The December meeting is scheduled for December 7th at 1:00 P.M. with a luncheon at the home of Judy Gotcher. Everyone will bring a side dish. Kathy Hegar will have the program. Everyone is invited but please let Judy know if you plan to come.

WELCOME

*Give a big welcome to Bill and Hilda Eubank who transferred their membership to ours on Sunday, November 13th. Both have been attending our Adult Sunday School Class. Hilda came to our UMW meeting and Bill is very interested in setting up a UM Men's group. What do you say, gentlemen? It is so great to have a couple join and immediately become active in everything within the church.

*If you have not had the opportunity to visit with Larry, Cynthia, Cole, Austin and Cody Norville, please do so. They are all delightful and I believe they will become very active once they get unpacked. They are living in the "Dobbs House" (for the Hollandites) and at 705 West Travis for the rest of you.

We are truly blessed!

Upcoming Events

December

7th

UMW Luncheon @ Judy's @ 1:00 pm

18th

Christmas Community Service @ 6:00 pm

20th

Cowboy Church @ 6:00 pm