

To the folks and friends of Mt. Zion,

Every year around Christmas, I am drawn to that passage of scripture found in Philippians, Chapter 2, verses 1 through 11. It is often referred to as the '*Christ Hymn*'.

It is here that the apostle Paul reminds us not "*to be jealous or proud, but be humble and consider others more important than ourselves.*" And of course, we know that this is not an easy thing to do.

Paul, however, points us to the Christ who reigns in humility. He calls us to put on the mind of Christ, citing the words of this poignant hymn: "*Christ was truly God. But he did not try to remain equal with God. He gave up everything and became a servant, when he became like one of us. Christ humbled himself. He obeyed God and even died on a cross. Then God gave Christ the highest place and honored his name about all others.*"

This phrase, ". . . *He (Jesus) became like one of us*" reminds us of the meaning of the incarnation; in that God took on human form and entered into our world. This is what Christmas is all about.

Grace & Peace,

Gary

### **Sunday Morning Worship**

December 10, 2017 **Second Sunday of Advent**

**Lesson:** Mark 1:1-8

**Sermon** "Blazing a Trail or Trailing a Blaze?"

### **Advent & Christmas Theme**

*"The Road to Christmas"*

December 10, 2017 Second Sunday of Advent - The Preparer of the Road

**Sermon Title:** "*Blazing a Trail or Trailing a Blaze?*" Mark 1:1-8

December 17, 2017 Third Sunday of Advent - The Purpose of the Road

**Sermon Title:** "*John's Opening Act*" John 1:6-8, 19-28

December 24, 2017 Fourth Sunday of Advent - The Travelers on the Road

**Sermon Title:** "*Room For Those on the Outside*" Matthew 1:18-25

*Only one service on Sunday morning at 10 a.m.*

December 24, 2017 Christmas Eve - The Road that Leads Home

**Sermon Title** "*God News for You!*" 4 pm Luke 2:1-7

**Sermon Title** "*God's Unlikely Entrance*" 7 pm & 9 pm Luke 2:1-7

Here are some **events and opportunities** for you to get connected in the church:

**Shepherding Team #4 Is On Call This Week**, December 10th to December 16th. Contact Margaret and Jerry Rose.

**The youth ministry would like to say thank you** to all who donated gifts for the 2017 Secret Santa Shop and all who volunteered to make this year's Breakfast with Santa a success.

**The Open Doors Food Pantry needs your help! When:** Friday December 15, 2017 from 1:00 to 4:00 to help organize **lots** of food and set up for our Christmas Pantry **and/or** Saturday December 16, 2017 from 7:30 to 12:30 to serve those in need and help clean up. Any time you have to come on out and help is a blessing. Don't forget to drop your loose change in the offering basket! Questions, email Carol Hill or Laurie Norwood: [opendoorsfoodpantry@gmail.com](mailto:opendoorsfoodpantry@gmail.com).

**Open Doors Food Pantry Christmas Donations Needed.** Please help provide the families of the ODFP a supplemental grocery store gift card to help with their holiday food expenses. **Through 12/13**, every gift card purchased through Mt Zion's Scrips program, will be matched 1 for 1 by an anonymous donor. Please help us meet our goal of 130 gift cards! 100% of the donations go directly to ODFP clients. Any additional funds received will go towards fresh produce in 2018. Make checks payable to Mt Zion UMC/Open Doors Food Pantry Christmas as the memo. Contact Allison Dennis or Carol Hill.

**Updated results from Consecration Sunday.** The Finance & Stewardship Teams are excited to share that to-date we have received Estimate of Giving Cards from 111 giving units with an Estimate of Giving for 2018 of \$514,970 and increase of 11%, or \$51,606 over 2017 estimated giving. We are so thankful for your generous support of the missions and ministries of Mt. Zion. If you have not yet turned in an Estimate of Giving Card for 2018 it is not too late to do so. Additional Estimate of Giving Cards may be found in the Treasurers mailbox along the main hallway and in the narthexes.

**This years Advent Study is Christmas: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly.** We currently have 3 options - Wednesdays at 7:00pm with Pastor Gary & Monday Mornings at 10:00am starting 12/4; Sundays at 10:10 with the Drop in Class starting 12/3. or if you would like to host a group - we are still looking for facilitators. Books will be available in Fellowship Hall

**Calling all cooks and those who like to eat!** Join our Cooking Group once a month and cook a meal to eat as well as enough to freeze for use by the Shepherding teams. If you are interested, please contact Debra Leiss.

**SAGE Brigade:** Friday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at Noon. We will enjoy our Christmas celebration together. Please join the group for lunch and fellowship and bring a side dish or dessert to share. Contact Debbie Burgio for more information.

**Operation Christmas Child a Big Success!** Sincere thanks to everyone who donated filled boxes – a total of 90!! They are on their way to children around the world and Missions has given \$540 from the Missions Legacy Fund to pay for The Greatest Journey lesson materials for 90 children to hear about our loving Savior, Jesus Christ. Well done, good and faithful servants!

**The Care Giver's Group meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every month between services,** in the church library. Contact Judy H. Johnson.

**Seated Chair Class in the Chapel** on Wednesday mornings 9:30-10:00. Join us as we build strength, increase flexibility and balance in 30 minutes. **No class on the following dates:** Dec. 13, Dec. 20, Dec. 27\*, Jan. 17, Feb. 21, Mar. 21, Apr. 18, May 16, June 20. \*Class vote. Contact: Bettye Ames or Front Office.

**Pajamas Needed!!** Nights are getting colder and the need for new pajamas is getting greater for children without the security of a stable home who are living in shelters, long-term foster care and group homes. Winter is the coldest January thru March but, unfortunately, this is when the PJ Program receives the lowest number of donations. Please donate New Pajamas (sizes Infants through Teens) and/or new storybooks. Collection at Mt Zion January 1 thru January 15, 2018. Distribution in Maryland is by the Pajama Program ([www.pajamaprogram.org](http://www.pajamaprogram.org)). Let's not let the season of giving end when the nights are the coldest! Contact: Karen Williams.