

Grace News

I'M DREAMING OF A . . .

Bing croons softly on the stereo (remember those?). The gas fireplace hums quietly as the fan circulates the warmed air. The snow blows gently in a horizontal direction – roughly from Soap Lake to the Royal Slope (that would be north of here :)), closing again the just opened driveway. The children are all nestled in their beds, the soft glow of their iPods cast an eerie glow about their darkened rooms as they drift off to sleep. Even the dog and cats are curled up, together, as if to give a visual image to that oft heard saying, “Peace on Earth”. Such are the pictures of Currier and Ives that have and will continue to fill our vision of Christmas. Warm, soft, comfortable, not a threat in sight. Until . . .

“In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.”

One of the reasons that I so appreciate the birth story of Jesus, other than the fulfillment of promise, is the raw emotion that is often expressed by those who are encountered by God and God’s messengers. Terrified, that is how the shepherds are described. Mary is perplexed. Herod and the entire city with him were frightened. Zechariah was terrified. Why this reaction? Is God that scary? Do we have a built in sense that if God comes to me God is coming to get me? And I don’t mean in a good way! Do we fear God, or do we fear what God is about?

I suspect that it is the later – what God is about! If one thing can be said about God and the running narrative of Scripture, God surely colors outside of the lines! Water comes from rocks; donkeys talk; virgins have babies; water becomes wine; dead men rise; blind see; lame walk; salvation comes! And yet our reaction is one of fear and trembling. But the word of God to us is “do not fear”.

Such a word of comfort is always needed, especially in a time like ours. We worry as the economy continues its adjustment around the world. We struggle with stories of greed that have rippling effects that remove hope and support from those who have little of each. Wars continue with untold cost in both human life and suffering. Closer to home, though it is beautiful outside with all that snow, if you can’t shovel the stuff, how do you get out?

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I’m Dreaming...



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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Such are the pictures of Currier and Ives that have and will continue to fill our vision of Christmas. Warm, soft, comfortable, not a threat in sight. Until . . .
- The hope of Christmas was fulfilled on Good Friday.

REJOICE!



Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

I recall this image from my home congregation: A banner depicting Mary and Jesus in the manger and the backlit silhouette of the cross cast over this scene. It was jarring. The cross on Christmas? I didn't like it.

Christmas can carry so much emotional freight. We must be merry and filled with good cheer. We are driven to get everything perfect by the stroke of midnight on Christmas Eve. We are filled with wistful longing. But what are we longing for?

We long for peace, love and a place to belong. We want to know that someone cares. We want the assurance that all of this means something. And, we try to bring that all about in the weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The hope of Christmas was fulfilled on Good Friday. The cross is part of Christmas. "Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you" (What Child Is This?). The cross is the Christmas gift, where all of our Christmas glorias are realized in Jesus' glorification on the cross.

We don't have to get everything completely right. We can't. That's God's work and it has been done. So, good Christian friends, rejoice!



Dwelling in the Word
Lent 4 - February 23, 2017
Matthew 25:1-13

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise."

The wise preacher has been looking ahead. We have a series of 'end of time' parables from Matthew. Look at the whole scope and decide what you want to say, what you want to say when, and how you want to say it.

I do not judge the world to be living at the end of time. So, these parables might be seen as cautionary tales. This week the focus is on preparation, waiting and staying awake. But nobody can be awake all the time. We can be prepared, though. Take some oil for when it's time to wake up!

It's all about expectations, right? What do you think is happening, or might be happening? Are you prepared for contingencies? This is the text.

The Good News is that we're not caught with our lamps down yet. There is time to prepare and rethink our options. The gift is now. The opportunities are endless. Why would you ever have to ask for a 'second chance' when the first chance is still an open door. Walk through it!

Bp. Dave



Word Search Puzzle

from www.geocities.com/lectionarypuzzles/

free to distribute for free with this notice

words in a straight line left to right or top to bottom

W M Y P A S S
I H E A V E N
L Z R W M E B
L A N O A A U
A W O R R R T
N A T D K T E
D Y N S W H Y

(Mark 13:31) Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words
will not pass away.

Word List

HEAVEN WORDS EARTH WILL PASS MARK
AWAY NOT BUT AND MY

GRACE AND MERCY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Contact Us:

Give us a call for more information about our services and ministries.

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Worship: Sunday Morning @ 8:45 @
First United Methodist Church, 191
E. Gladys

(Continued from page 1) *I'm Dreaming...*

How is "incarnation" a good thing in such overwhelming situations? Is this act the beginning of God's assertion, "do not fear"? Is this word that God is present with us, even in or maybe especially in, our suffering, the beginning of our not fearing? Or is the word that as the called people of God we are called to walk with those who suffer? Are these the fulfillment of "God with us"? Is this the hope and picture of Christmas that is peace on earth – God is with us and that what God is about is the salvation, redemption of the whole creation?! And that God chooses to be present through you and I? Such would indeed be good news for all the world. Merry Christmas

Upcoming Events

Dec 2
Hanging of
the Greens,
2pm @ FUMC

Dec 2-3 Fes-
tival of Trees

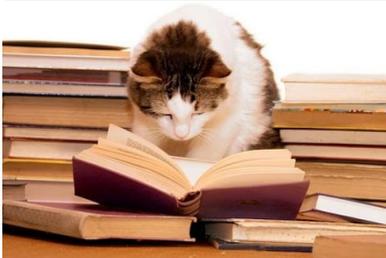
Dec 8 Movie
Night: The
Christmas
Story

Dec 10 Worship @ Prison @5p

Dec 17 Combined Service @ 10am & Children's
Program

Dec 24 Christmas Eve Service @ 7pm

Dec 25 Christmas Day Service @ 10am



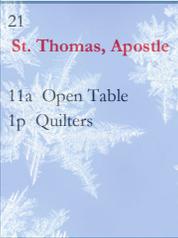
Serving God's People

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Reader</i> | <i>Refreshments</i> | <i>Acolyte</i> |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Dec 3 | Phil Schmidt | Lee, Boyd, Wendling | |
| Dec 10 | Dawn Largé | Hertenstein, Largé | |
| Dec 17 | Regina Marks | Marks | |
| Dec 24 | Jerry McMichael | McMichael | |
| Dec 31 | ? | ? | |

Celebrations

| <i>Date</i> | <i>Celebration</i> | <i>Celebrant</i> |
|-------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Dec 4 | Birthday | Caitlin Cozad |
| Dec 12 | Anniversary | Candace and Dwight Osborne |
| Dec 24 | Birthday | Rick Cooper |
| Dec 27 | Anniversary | Dot and Dick Hensley |
| Dec 29 | Birthday | Rochelle Meyers |
| Dec 31 | Anniversary | Cindy and Tom Inch |

December 2017

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|---|
| | | | | | 1 | 2  2p Hanging of the Greens Festival of Trees |
| 3 1 Advent 8:45a Worship & Communion 10a Education Hour 11a Festival of Trees | 4 6:32a Next Text 9:30a Next Text 2.0 | 5 8a Coffee | 6 9a Starbucks 10:30a Bible Study with Pastor Jim | 7 11a Open Table 1p Quilters | 8  6:30p Movie Night—The Christmas Story | 9  6-8p Living Nativity |
| Pastor Inch—Hermiston | | | | | | |
| 10 2 Advent 8:45a Worship & Communion 10a Education Hour 4p Living Nativity 5p Worship @ Prison | 11 6:32a Next Text 9:30a Next Text 2.0 | 12 8a Coffee 6:30p Leadership Team @ Pastor's Home | 13 9a Starbucks 10a Gather Study 10:30a Bible Study with Pastor Jim | 14 11a Open Table 1p Quilters | 15 | 16 |
| Pastor Inch—Hermiston | | | | | | |
| 17 3 Advent 10a Children's Christmas Program | 18 6:32a Next Text 9:30a Next Text 2.0 | 19 8a Coffee | 20 9a Starbucks 9:30a Foot Clinic 10:30a Bible Study with Pastor Jim | 21  St. Thomas, Apostle 11a Open Table 1p Quilters | 22 | 23 |
| Pastor Inch—Hermiston | | | | | | |
| 24 4 Advent 8:45a Worship & Communion 7p Worship Christmas Eve | 25 Christmas Day 10a Worship & Communion | 26 St. Stephen, Martyr 8a Coffee 5:30p Novel Ideas | 27 St. John, Apostle 10a Gather Study 10:30a Bible Study with Pastor Jim | 28 The Holy Innocents 11a Open Table 1p Quilters | 29 7p Tapping Into Faith | 30 |
| Pastor Inch—Hermiston | | | | | | |
| 31 1 Christmas 8:45a Worship & Communion New Year's Eve | | | | | | |
| Pastor Inch—Hermiston | | | | | | |