

2022

December

THE
MESSENGER



Prepared for the members & friends of:

St. John's United Church of Christ (Huntersville)

300 N. Huntersville Road, Batesville, IN 47006

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One of my favorite parts of this season is the music. I love Christmas music. Most years, I try dutifully to keep my listening under check until Thanksgiving. But you can bet that come the afternoon of Thanksgiving Day, my playlist includes a whole bunch of *Sleigh ride*, *Jingle Bells*, and Christmas carols. The music brings me joy. The music is, mostly, of good quality. And, all though this is a personal choice, the music is only a part of my life for a short while each year. So yes, I play it enthusiastically. I imagine I am not alone.

But just what is it that makes Christmas music so special? Whole radio stations change their entire programming for the month of December, so it must a big deal. What is it about Christmas music that makes so many of us tune in so deeply? I have a few thoughts.

1. **They are just fun.** It has to be said, some songs are just fun to sing and hear. *Jingle Bells*, *Sleigh Ride*, *Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree*, and more are just fun. They are peppy; they are cheerful. They make our days brighter just by singing them. Sometimes there are deeper meanings in life. And sometimes fun things are just fun. Some Christmas songs are just fun.
2. **They connect to cherished memories.** I have great memories of carols sung in church, of music playing while we decorated the Christmas tree, of Silent Night in a darkened Sanctuary, and of caroling trips with church youth groups. Others of you probably have similar memories. (Anyone sing around the piano on Christmas Day with their family?) From the songs that came from those classic Christmas cartoons to carols older than our congregation, so many Christmas songs are steeped in history and memories and even nostalgia. They “take us back” and we enjoy the ride. These memories are special. (Just see the section in this very newsletter about them.) And the songs that make us remember them become equally special. That is a part of why we love them. Of course, also true is...
3. **They point to Jesus, Emmanuel.** This is obviously true only for those of us who profess Jesus as Lord. And not all Christmas songs do this. (I love *Jingle Bells*, but I'm not going to try and turn it into a Christian analogy.) But for most of this music, this is the main point. Why do we love to sing *Away in the Manger* or *O Holy Night*? Why do we belt out *Joy to the World* or hushedly sing *Silent Night*? Because we know the one behind them. The one coming in the manger. It has been said that singing is “praying twice.” Perhaps nowhere is that more true than our Christmas music. We enjoy the songs because of their beauty. But we love them because of whom they point to. Jesus, God with us.

Christmas music truly is one of the gifts of the holiday season. And it points toward THE gift of the season, Jesus. The reasons above and the gift that is Jesus is enough for me to keep playing them. Keep singing them. I encourage you to do the same, but you probably are already. So enjoy that music with feeling this December. For singing is praying twice. Let us pray twice in celebration of the One who comes in a manger. Merry Christmas!

Shalom,

Pastor Jay

“O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL”

#154



Based on Matthew 1:23, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

the text of this Advent hymn dates from the eighth or ninth century. The seven verses were originally in Latin, and were translated by John Mason Neale in his collection “*Hymni Ecclasiæ*” in 1851. Neale, born in London on January 24, 1818, graduated from Trinity College and was ordained in the Church of England in 1841. He was a hymn writer, scholar and priest, and author of Christian texts. Neale also researched and wrote on obscure medieval hymn texts. He was also author of the Christmas Carol, “Good King Wenceslas,” in 1853, and translator of the hymns, “*All Glory, Laud and Honor*” (#265), “*Of the Father’s Love Begotten*” (#181), and “*Good Christian Men, Rejoice*” (#198). Dr. Neale died on August 6, 1866 in Grinstead, England.

The text, VENI EMMANUEL, was harmonized and adapted by Thomas Helmore from a fifteenth century French melody. Helmore was born on May 7, 1811 at Kidderminster, England, and graduated from Magdalen College, Oxford. He was ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1840, and was an author and editor of carols and hymns, and was master of choristers at Chapel Royal. Helmore died in London on July 6, 1890.

“Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel”

David W. Hanson, Organist/Choir Director
St. John’s (Huntersville) UCC

LITURGIST & BENEVOLENCE
SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

- 4 Joan Westerfeld.....Southeast IN Health Clinic
- 11 Mike VonderheideGlobal Ministries
- 18 Linda KanningSt. John’s Music Fund
- 24 Joan Westerfeld..... Veterans of the Cross
- 25 RD KitchellChurch World Service

PRAYERS FOR:

- Nikki Sarringhaus.
- John & Connie Moody.
- Kent Meyers (son to Taaron & Roger).
- Chyntia Buczak (Cancer, friend to Dan Hall).
- Danny McDonough (Health Issues, father to Sarah Feldmann).
- Carolyn Carson (Breast Cancer, grandmother to Nikki Sarringhaus).
- Loretta Jones (Health Issues, cousin to Dale Koester).
- Robert Weiler Jr. (Colon Cancer).
- Lori Mauer (Thyroid Cancer).
- Vy (Thie) Hetzendorfer (Breast Cancer).
- The Family of Ruth Thie.
- Dave & Bonnie Johnston.
- The Family of Douglas Maple.
- Jerry Rose (Cardiac & Neurological Issues).



CHANCEL CHOIR
CHRISTMAS
CANTATA
Sunday, December 11
@ 9am

THE WINTER ROSE

by Joseph M. Martin

From the earliest Christian time, the rose has been a symbol of divine love. Today, the rose remains a vital expression of love and peace both inside the Church and the outside world. As a gift, the rose’s delicate beauty is usually reserved for the most meaningful expressions of the heart. Let the words and music of this cantata remind you that even in the deepest winter, we are people of joy and life...children of the garden.



Baptism!

Eleanor Rose Gerritsen, the daughter of John & Jena Gerritsen was baptized on November 20, 2022. What a special occasion and what a blessing they chose St. John’s for her baptism.



To honor the Veterans buried in our Cemetery, our church will be placing a wreath on each Veterans' grave site. This will occur in mid-December along with several other local cemeteries through the WREATHS Across AMERICA project. Donations to the cemetery board to help offset the cost of \$15 per wreath would be greatly appreciated. If interested, please give your donations to Danny Narwold, Mark Meyer, Gary Weber or Rob Wagner. Please see Rob with any questions.



As part of the 100th Anniversary of the Sunday School Picnic next July, we are seeing if there is interest in having a "Country Store" like in the past. Our thoughts are to have different "parts" of the store –

produce, baked goods (specialty baked goods like homemade breads, coffee cakes, not the usual cookie, pie, and cake sale), canned goods, fun crafts, nice handmade gift items, etc. Do you sew, knit, quilt, or crochet, are you a talented woodcrafter, is making jewelry an interest of yours, is gardening and canning your passion, do you love making greeting cards, are you an artist, do you enjoy floral design, maybe dabble in propagating plants, or do you just really like making crafts of all kinds?

We have a "sign-up" sheet by the card signing table to find out who is interested in donating to the store and what your specialty is to give us an idea if the Country Store idea is something to pursue for the Picnic.

Any questions: Give us a call!



- Cindy Feller 812-212-8308
- Sheryl Voss 812-212-8996 or 812-934-3803
- Bev McKinney 812-212-2307 or 812-623-2709



CHRISTMAS VISITS

During the month of December, Pastor Joey tries to schedule at least one visit with everyone on his visiting list. Which means this is the

perfect time to ask if you should be on that list. If you would like to receive a visit from Pastor Joey, simply let the office know and we will get that visit scheduled. Thanks!



December

- 2 Molly Abel, Mikayla Redmon
- 5 Kent Meyers
- 8 Holly Kuykendall, Kaylie Raver, Kathy Walsman
- 10 Willis Rouse, Bev Schwier
- 11 Paul Koeneman, Jeremy Welborn
- 12 Frank Bergman, Brian Haakinson
- 13 Landon Raver, Bev McKinney
- 15 Clint Sarringhaus
- 16 Nancy Meyer, Hudson Sitterding, Robert Weiler
- 18 Carolyn Dieckmann, Gale Griffith, Hannah Lehfeltd
- 20 Elsie Vohland
- 21 Jenny Abel, Ron Meyer,
- 22 Cole Dial, Carter Feldmann, Haley Hall, Jordyn Welborn
- 23 Linda Wagner
- 24 Don Haarman
- 26 Sherry Linville, John Thie
- 27 Elizabeth Hall
- 28 Wade Volk
- 29 Preston Voss
- 31 Cody Haakinson, Paul Voss

ANNIVERSARIES

December



- 3 Kimberly & Nick Rahe

COMMUNITY events *December*

- 1 - I Heard the Bells @ Gibson Theatre @ 6pm
- 2 - Batesville Community Tree Lighting festivities begin @ 4pm. The Chamber Holiday Parade begins @ 6pm. See Chamber website for events.
- 3 - Holy Family Church Boar's Head Festival: Oldenburg, IN 7:30pm-8:30pm.
- 6 - I Heard the Bells @ Gibson Theatre @ 6pm
- 8 - Christmas Almost New Book Sale: Batesville Public Library December 10th from 10am-4pm.
- 9 - Batesville High School Disney's Lion King Jr. Production @ 7pm in the Auditorium.
- 17- RomWeber Marketplace: Meet the Grinch anytime between 11am-1pm.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY UPDATE:

We are starting the process of updating our member photo directory. It has been some time since we last published the directory, and some member information is bound to be outdated. Members please double check your information that is currently in the directory and update any information as needed. We are also asking for new/current photos, you may do it in several ways:

1. Email the church with the updated information (*preferred method due to photo submission*)
2. Drop a note off to the church office before or after worship
3. Put any new information in your pledge card during the stewardship drive
4. Mail the information to the church
5. Call the church during office hours and give your information to Shannon Hankins

Deadline for submission is December 31, 2022. We hope to publish copies of the new directory in early 2023, so please help us ensure that we have the most accurate information.



SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



★ Children's Christmas Program ★
the Heavenly Chimes AND our Children's Choir.
And, of course, more cuteness than you can shake a stick at. Join us!

Don't forget to attend our Annual Sunday School Christmas Program on December 11 @ 6pm. There will be poems and a live nativity. There will be both

IN MEMORY/HONOR OF:



Anyone wishing to memorialize or honor a loved one at Christmas may do so again this year by placing a poinsettia in church or making a donation to the Heavenly Bouquet fund. Both add beauty to our sanctuary during the Advent season. We ask that poinsettias be brought or delivered to the church on Thursday, December 22 so they may be arranged on Friday morning, December 23. You can take the poinsettia home after service on Christmas Day. Decorating the sanctuary with the poinsettias has been a long-standing tradition of St. John's and the creation of the Heavenly Bouquet fund enables us to decorate not only at Christmas, but throughout the year. This year the trees on the side of the altar and the tree in the Commons were purchased with Heavenly Bouquet donations. Watch for forms in upcoming bulletins.



ADVENT SERMON SERIES

We are doing an Advent sermon series this year: "At the Manger." Join us in worship as we look at the story of three different members of the nativity scene. (And then on

Christmas Eve as we talk about the Baby Jesus.) We will count down the days to Christmas by remembering those who were there. Worship starts at 9am. Join us.



CHRISTMAS SERVICE SCHEDULE

† Christmas Eve: Worship at 9pm, Carols and Communion. Join us for our Lessons and Carols inspired worship, ending with the Hallelujah Chorus.

† Christmas Morning: Worship at 9am, and One-room Sunday school at 10:15am. Celebrate the day of Jesus's birth with worship. Then stay for Sunday school for all ages (including a one-room school house for our children).

GROWING SERVANTS

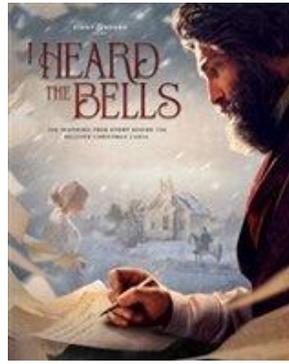
The Growing Servants Youth Group, our group for the youngest of our youth, will be meeting to put together Christmas baskets after Sunday School on December 11. We would love your young child to join us. A lunch will be provided. For more details, please talk to Pastor Joey or Amber Wirth. Hope to see your children there!





NEW MEMBER CLASSES

We have several people interested in becoming members of our congregation. Potential members are asked to attend a two week class (basically an orientation on the United Church of Christ and our Congregation). Upon completion of the class, they will then be affirmed during worship as new members. Our next session will be on January 8th and January 15th immediately following worship. New members will be received on January 22nd. If you are interested in the opportunity to join the church, please talk to Pastor Joey. If the days of the classes do not work for you, other arrangements can be made. We look forward to affirming our membership covenant together this January.



I HEARD THE BELLS:

Special showing at The Gibson Theatre Thursday, December 1 at 6pm and Monday, December 5 at 6pm. I HEARD THE BELLS tells the inspiring true story behind the beloved Christmas carol and its author, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. Known as America's Poet, Henry leads an idyllic life – until the day his world is shattered by tragedy. With a nation divided by Civil War and his family torn apart, Henry puts down his pen, silenced by grief. But it's the sound of Christmas morning that reignites the poet's lost voice as he discovers the resounding hope of rekindled faith.



Your Favorite Christmas Traditions?

Thank you to those who submitted your Christmas traditions or memories.
What wonderful stories you have shared.

~Merry Christmas!

~ submitted by Barb Foster:

When I was five, before the time of kindergarten, my mom attended the Ladies Aid group monthly. For their December meeting, they would have a gift exchange afterwards. People were to spend only \$1.00 on each. Since there were no babysitters, they brought their kids too. If you brought 2, you needed two gift-wrapped items for kids. It was called a grab bag and everyone could take out a gift.

I don't remember much about the day, except getting that small gift. I found in it, little nativity figures hand painted, made in occupied Japan. That didn't mean anything then, but now, I believe they are fairly valuable.



When I took them home, my dad decided to make a little wooden stable for the figures. We worked together in his workshop and set up the finished project under the Christmas tree. It became a focus for Christmas decorations every year. I carefully wrapped and stored it for the next Christmas season.

When I left home after college, it was mine to take with me. It has been the center of our decorations as we moved and made each new place our home. Our kids began to look forward to setting up the nativity set and treated it with great care. As time has passed, it has become more valuable, no matter what it might actually be worth as an antique. Every year it just doesn't feel like Christmas until it is set up under our tree.

Your Favorite Christmas Traditions *continued*

~ submitted by Cindy Feller:

One of my fondest memories from my childhood was that every Christmas Eve we went to my Grandma and Grandpa Skidmore's house in Aurora. All of my Mom's siblings and their families lived in Aurora and Lawrenceburg so our family had to travel the farthest and you wanted to be there regardless of the weather. One year it was snowing pretty hard and Dad didn't think we would make it in the car so we piled in Dad's coal truck and away we went. Back in those days it seemed like it snowed all winter and life still went on. School was hardly ever called off. Now you think about how dangerous that was for our family to make the trip that Christmas Eve but the deep love we had for Grandma and Grandpa and Mom's family was the reason we did it.

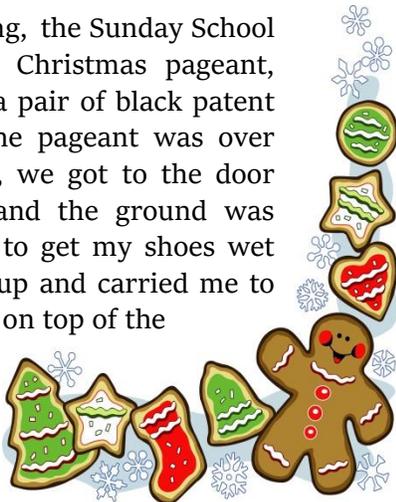


~ submitted by Jenell Schroeder

Two traditions that I do each year is make sugar cookies with the grandchildren about a week before Christmas. I make the dough and they are old enough now to roll it out and use the cookie cutters. They each have their favorites and when they're cool enough to frost, their imagination goes into gear. We have every kind of sprinkles, decorations and icing colors you could want.

Another tradition I do is to have a family Christmas breakfast it makes me so thankful and gives me a warm feeling to have them all around the table sharing each other's stories.

When I was very young, the Sunday School classes would have a Christmas pageant, one year I had gotten a pair of black patent leather shoes. When the pageant was over and we went to leave, we got to the door and it was snowing and the ground was covered. I didn't want to get my shoes wet so my Dad picked me up and carried me to the car. I felt like I was on top of the world with my Dad carrying me so that I wouldn't get my new shoes wet.



~ submitted by Joan Westerfeld:

Christmas just wouldn't be Christmas without going to church on Christmas Eve. The entire church sanctuary is Christmas beautification! Everywhere you look there are Christmas colors that reflect the joys and spirit of the holiday.



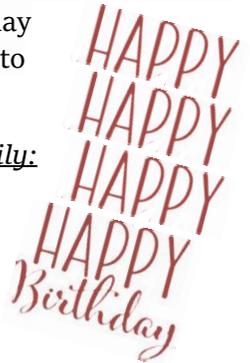
The voices of our chancel choir, David Hanson's superb skills on the organ and piano and now our very own Pastor Joey provides a musical experience that rivals none! Everyone in attendance leaves the church with a peace that passes all understanding.

~ submitted by Carey Weiler:

Every year my Mother in law, Carleen Weiler, makes small round mini cakes for all of the grandkids to decorate their own cake, puts one candle in the cake, and we all sing Happy Birthday to Jesus. My kids look forward to this every year.

~ submitted by Bev Schwier & family:

Every year on Christmas Day before we eat dinner and after our meal blessing, we sing Happy Birthday to Jesus!

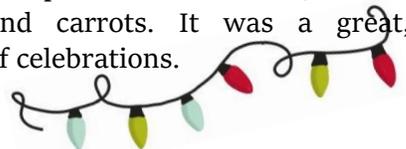


~ submitted by Pastor Joey

So many of my favorites Christmas memories revolve around decorations: I remember putting up the tree each year, both as a kid and now as a parent. All the while, we would look at the special ornaments and remember their stories. (This one is from when Daddy was a baby; this one was made by Aunt Jamie when she was five.) I also remember driving around looking at Christmas lights, especially the home that went "all-out." And, of course, the professional displays that took your breath away. I remember the pride of outting my OWN outside Christmas lights up for the first time when we came here to Batesville (because previous houses had been too remote to make it worth it).

But my favorite set of Christmas memories has to be Christmas 2014. That was the year Carter came. As he will proudly tell you, he came home on Christmas Eve wrapped in a stocking. (Well, at least until we changed him to ride in the car seat.) His sisters and grandparents met him two days later; the girls were at their grandparent's for Christmas Day. To my children's delight, Santa knew to come late and brought Christmas presents on Dec 27th. He got pretzel sticks and carrots. It was a great, if exhausting, day of celebrations.

Merry Christmas!



December

January 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Worship Service: 9am / Children's Sunday School: 10:15am

Office Hours: Tuesday thru Thursday, 8am-4pm

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 City of Batesville Tree Lighting Festivities 4-8pm, Parade starts @ 6pm 	3 Oldenburg Holidays Under the Spires Festivities start at 8am 
4 Men's Choir Singing COMMUNION Pledge Dedication  SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT	5 Sunday School Board Meeting @ 6pm	6 	7 Chancel Choir Practice @ 7pm in the Choir Room Confirmation Classes: Year 1 @ 6pm Year 2 @ 7pm	8 BAMA @ 1:30	9	10 
11 Christmas Cantata @ 9am Chancel Choir Singing Boy Scouts: Court of Honors 1-4pm Christmas Program @ 6pm  THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	12	13 Council Meeting @ 6:30pm	14 Confirmation Classes: Year 1 @ 6pm Year 2 @ 7pm	15	16	17 
18  FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	19 	20	21 Chancel Choir Practice @ 7pm in the Choir Room NO Confirmation Classes	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Service @ 9pm  CHRISTMAS EVE
25 Chancel Choir Singing HAPPY BIRTHDAY Jesus! CHRISTMAS DAY 	26	27	28 NO Confirmation Classes	29 	30	31 

 I love my church family!



Glory to God
in the highest,
and on earth peace,
good will toward men.



Luke 2:14, KJV

