

Word Of Hope
The Amazing
Grace
Place

DECEMBER, 2011

ADVENT WEDNESDAY EVENINGS

At 7 pm on the Advent Wednesdays of November 30 and December 7, we will gather for midweek worship and small group conversation as we prepare our hearts and souls for the coming of the Promised One. All are invited to come and worship; no experience necessary.



CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE



A BLUE CHRISTMAS: "Service of Light"
 Wednesday, Dec 14th 7 pm



THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Sunday, Dec 18th
 8:15am & 10:45am
 Celebration Worship & Children's Christmas Presentation
 9:30am Coffee & Conversation
 11:45am "The Hanging of Greens" ~ Church decorating

CHRISTMAS EVE

Saturday, Dec. 24th
 7 pm Christmas Eve ~ worship with a family feel
 10 pm The Christ Mass ~ the reflective celebration

CHRISTMAS DAY

Sunday, Dec 25th
 9:30 am
 Communion & Christmas Carols

EPIPHANY SUNDAY,

January 1st
 9:30 AM Worship

"BLUE CHRISTMAS" SERVICE

Blue? Yes, blue as in "the blues." As in "I am feeling blue." Not everyone is up and cheery for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with cancer or some other dis-ease that puts a question mark over the future, and a number of other human situations make parties and joviality painful for many people in our congregations and communities. There is a growing attentiveness to the needs of people who are blue at Christmas. Increasing numbers of churches are creating sacred space for people living through dark times. Such services are reflective, accepting where we really are, and holding out healing and hope. On Wednesday evening, December 14th, at 7pm, we will have a "SERVICE OF LIGHT" for those who sit in darkness at this time of year. In the process we will discover that we are not alone nor left hopeless.



FROM OUR PASTOR

For many of us Jesus people, the celebration of Christmas is preceded by a 4 week period called "Advent." Roughly translated that means "coming." And although the initial impulse is to think of the Christmas celebration which is coming, the encouragement is to contemplate more deeply our own personal need for the coming of the Christ child. Along those lines, I offer the following as a reading for Advent, an aid to your meditation.

As Wingfold (the church pastor) walked back to his lodgings he found a new element mingling in his thoughts. Human suffering laid hold upon him in a way that was new to him. He realized there were hearts in the world from whose agony broke terrible cries, hearts which produced sad faces like Miss Lingard's. Such hearts might be groaning and writhing in any of the houses he passed, and even if he knew the hearts, he could do nothing for their relief. What multitudes there must be in the world—how many even in Glaston—whose hearts were overwhelmed, who knew their own bitterness, and yet had no friend radiant enough to bring sunshine into their shady places! He fell into a mournful mood over the troubles of his race. Though always a kindhearted fellow, he had not been used to thinking about such things; he had experienced troubles enough of his own. But now that he had begun to hope, he saw a glimmer of light somewhere at the end of the dark cave in which he had all at once discovered that he was buried alive. He began also to feel how wretched those must be who were groping on without any hope in their dark eyes.



If he had never committed any crime, he had yet done enough wrong to understand the misery of shame and dishonor. How much more miserable must those be who had committed some terrible deed? What relief, what hope was there for them? What a breeding nest of cares and pain was the human heart! Oh, surely it needed some refuge! If no Savior had yet come, the tortured world of human hearts cried aloud for one. The world certainly needed a Savior to whom anyone might go, at any moment, without a journey, without letters or commendations or credentials. And yet what was the good of the pardon such a one might give if still the consciousness of the deeds of sin or the misery of loneliness kept on stinging? And who would wish one he loved to grown callous to a sin he had committed?

But if there was a God—such a God as, according to the Christian story, had sent his own son into the world, had given him to appear among us, clothed in the garb of humanity, to take all the consequences of being the son of obedience among the children of disobedience, engulfing their wrongs in his infinite forgiveness, and winning them back, by slow and unpromising and tedious renewal, to the heart of his father, surely such a God would not have created them knowing that some of them would commit such horrible sins from which he could not redeem them. And as he thought, the words rose in his mind, "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

His heart filled! He pondered the words. When he got home, he sought and found them in the book. Did a man ever really say them? he wondered to himself. Such words they were! If a man did utter them, either he was the most presumptuous of mortals, or he could do what he said. He had to have been either sent from God himself, or a fool. There could be no middle ground. (George Macdonald, *The Curate's Awakening*)

May your time of Advent reflection and preparation and your full-bore celebration of the coming of the Christ child, lead you to a more profound depth of trust in and faithfulness to the Savior of the world.

HOUSE-OF-GOD-KEEPING

COME

Come unto me.... -Jesus
Matthew 11:28



It's striking how often the simple word "come" emerges at key moments in the Bible—and beyond. Many folks, pastors included, find the above passage to be powerfully reassuring: "Come to me all you who labor and are heavy-laden and I will give you rest."

Advent is a time of coming and not just the coming of the Christ child to us but also our coming to him. It's no coincidence that worship in this coming season begins with "O Come, All Ye Faithful." It's a call to worship but it's also a call to return. To come back. Even if we've come many times before and then not so much, this is a call to be restored. An invite and a "welcome home."

Even if you hesitate to number yourself among "ye faithful" we are all encouraged to hear Jesus' gracious invitation to "come unto ME." And then "O Come, Let Us Adore Him."

WOH CHRISTMAS ASSISTANCE

The KICK-OFF FOR OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS ASSISTANCE was Sunday, November 20th but "tags" are still available. Through this effort we provide help for a few local families in need during this Christmas season. The display includes a variety of gift ideas. Even if you are able to buy just one gift it will be a gift of love

for that recipient. We ask that all gifts be returned (WITH TAGS!) by Sunday, December 11th at which time we will have our GIFT WRAPPING LUNCH & FELLOWSHIP beginning at 9:30am and extending after the second service (lunch provided.) Plan to join in the fun and fellowship while helping those in need.

END-OF-THE-YEAR FINANCIALS

As we come up on the end of the year, we are running a financial shortfall of about \$10,000. Please keep the ministries of the church in your prayers and prayerfully consider your own giving at this time.

And while we're at it, we also ask that you consider your giving for the coming year with a financial pledge for 2012. It's a great spiritual discipline AND it is immensely helpful to the leaders of the congregation as they carry out their oversight responsibilities.

ADVENT PRAYERS

Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes,
The Savior promised long;
Let every heart prepare a throne
And every voice a song (LBW # 35)



IN THIS ADVENT SEASON devotional booklets are available in the entryway as well as LBW hymnals and a guide for the use of hymns as daily prayers.

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP ~ Saturday, Dec 24
7 pm Family Worship & 10 pm Christ Mass
CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP ~ Sunday, Dec 25
9:30am Spoken Communion & Carols

WOMEN'S LUNCHEON

Mark your calendars for the Annual Women's Christmas Luncheon Saturday, Dec 3rd at 11am at the Bronte Café (Joseph Beth). Bring your friends and join us as we



sit back for awhile during this hectic time of year to relax and celebrate together this season of joy. We'll have lunch and, if you wish, you can bring a \$5 gift to exchange (gift exchange is optional.) Call the church office (272-8515) to make reservations. Ladies of all ages are welcome!

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

See the sign up sheet for Christmas poinsettias to decorate the church "in honor of" or "in memory of" an important person or event. Each poinsettia is \$10.

FELLOWSHIP/HANGING GREENS

We're having a special fellowship at noon on Sunday, December 18th.

Come enjoy the fellowship as we decorate the sanctuary for the celebration of Christ's birth. It'll be a great time to catch your breath and participate in a deeply meaningful congregational tradition. Let us know if you'd like to help, as we delight together in the joy this season brings.

WOH LADIES NIGHT OUT...

Thursday, December 15th at 6pm you're invited to bring a plate of Christmas goodies to share. We'll gather at the church with treats in hand to go Christmas caroling at the home of some nearby friends. Afterward we'll have a little



dinner at a local restaurant so come enjoy an evening of good friends and conversation. Invite a friend to join in the fun and remember it's an evening for ladies of ALL ages so bring the girls and join us and the guys are invited too!

ANNUAL REPORTS

It's that time of year again—we will need annual reports from all teams and leaders by Sunday, January 8th. Those summaries will then be compiled into our Annual Report, which will be available on Sunday, January 15th in time for review before our Annual Meeting on January 22nd

PRAYER

O God, strip my holidays this year of all excessive fat. Keep them lean with the truth of what I'm celebrating. Keep me poised and relaxed—above all, help me to be honest, confession my own need to be born again and to make a fresh start with a new Bethlehem kind of faith. Amen. —Robert D. Hershey (1909-1993)



CHRISTMAS SHOPPING AT WOH...



We have opportunities for some easy gift giving, things that take the hassle and hustle out of holiday shopping and we even promise you can find a convenient parking spot!

ALTERNATIVE GIVING is an opportunity to give a unique gift while supporting someone in a third world country with a live-able income. On Sunday, December 11, we will have a fair trade sale in the entryway at church. In addition, you might consider a gift through Lutheran World Relief, the Heifer Project, or the ELCA's Disaster Relief Fund.

JOSEPH-BETH and KROGER GIFT CARDS...these will make great gifts AND will support WOH programs!

GOT TREE?

If you are considering the possibility of purchasing an upgrade for your artificial Christmas tree in the after-season specials, we would like to suggest that you give your former, still beautiful, preferably large, tree to WOH. The one we currently use is probably ready for retirement.

CAR CARE BASICS



Ever wonder what the framistan on the doohickey of your car's finklenit does? LOTS of people wonder that which is why we have engaged a professional to offer a one hour "car care basics" class on Saturday afternoon, January 14. Watch the January newsletter for details.

SUNDAY MORNING ADVENT WORSHIP

8:15 Classic Grace Worship
9:30 TRUE NORTH & LifeShare
10:45 Celebration Service



WOH FOLKS

WE THANK ALL THOSE who were part of our "Seedtime & Harvest" Sunday, especially the members of the VISION & STEWARDSHIP TEAM. In the middle of trying times for many, we all still do also experience God's abundance and we look forward with much hope to the opportunities that lie ahead. It is with glad and generous hearts that we continue to share in God's vision for ministry in this place.

MANY THANKS TO OUR 'UNsung HEROES' There are those who serve diligently and with little recognition and yet, without them countless lives would be lost. We are talking about our BLOOD DONORS who faithfully give the 'gift of life' several times throughout the year. Please honor these folks with a sincere 'Thank You': SHARON ASBURY, JANICE ADAMS, DON BLACK, JOANNE BROWN, SUE COOK, PASTOR DUVAL, JEREMY KISLING, JASON LAMBIRTH, ROBERT LIPINSKI, JOHN McMULLEN, ERIC & CHRISTINA MUNSON, DIANE WARD, JILL WATSON, VICTOR WONG, RANDALL WRIGHT, NANCY KIRKWOOD and BOB VERHOEVEN. You are greatly appreciated!

THANKS to DON BLACK for his continued repair on the sanctuary chairs. As always, your helpfulness is greatly appreciated.

CONGRATULATIONS to JULIE McEWEN for receiving the Humanitarian Award from the Woodford County Humane Society. She was recognized for the countless ways in which she supports the shelter and the care they give.

THANKS to JOHN POLNISCH & DON BLACK for providing transportation to Cincinnati for the WISI FAMILY as they further pursue the immigration process.

WE THANK DIANE WARD for taking care of cleaning the spots on the sanctuary carpet. Looks great once again!

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE

Our next RMH outing will be Tuesday, December 6th. We'll be preparing a Christmas type meal for the families there. You're invited to share in this great opportunity to spend some quality time together while also lending a helping hand. Invite a friend or make it a family affair! Contact DARLENE TAYLOR for details or if you'd like to join in!

PIANIST

We continue the search - If you have a lead on a pianist who might like to be considered for this position, please encourage them to contact Pastor and submit a resume.



Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love!
-Hamilton Wright Mabie

OUR FAITHFUL SERVANTS



There are many who serve our congregation faithfully and without thanks:

- Church Council – CHARLOTTE WONG, BILL STEWART, MARJORIE FLORO, TENA ADAMS, JANICE ADAMS, DIANE WARD, GLENDA EARNEST & JASON LAMBIRTH and COLLEEN BLACK for her help with the finances.
- Care Team – JULIE McEWEN & COLLEEN BLACK and the many others who provide care and support for this congregation.
- Preaching Team – TOM FEDORKA, JEREMY KISLING & JOHN McMULLEN.
- Assisting Ministers – TOM BROWNING, JOANNE BROWN, JANICE ADAMS & DARLENE TAYLOR.
- Communion Care Team - JILL & MOLLY WATSON, SHANNON WRIGHT & ROBERT LIPINSKI and KAREN POLNISCH for caring for the Communion linens.
- LAURIE JOHNSON, DAWN WEBB & THE PRAISE BAND/SINGERS for their faithfulness in worship & music preparation.
- Mowing Team - TODD COTTRELL, BOB COOK, , DIANE WARD, JASON LAMBIRTH & PASTOR DUVAL and SUE & TESS COOK, CAITLIN & JOANNE BROWN, DAWN & MARY WEBB for the care and tending of the flower beds.
- JOHN POLNISCH, DON BLACK & DAVE EARNEST for their many fix-it around the place.
- TRUE NORTH TEACHERS – DENISE POLNISCH, KRISTIN SLAVIK, CAITLIN BROWN, TIFFANY NEDLAND, SUE COOK, and DARLENE TAYLOR.

There are so many who do the work of the servant in this place and to all we say 'THANK YOU' for your faithfulness and commitment in service to this place

WOH AVAILABILITY

If you work for a company that prefers off site locations for meetings or training, please let those in charge know about the availability of our fellowship hall. It's a pleasant setting, conveniently located, and comes with kitchen facilities. For a modest building use reimbursement, our facility can be very attractive for a variety of events. Just give our Pastor's name as a contact (272-8515)

TWELVE YEARS OF MISSION

It will soon be 2012 and Word of Hope will be embarking on a 12th year of Youth Mission Trips. It is a ministry that has influenced numerous lives over the years. It has taken us to places where we've seen and been part of the aftermath of many tragedies and we have been profoundly impacted by it all. We have also had the joy of meeting scores of different people whom God has most definitely placed in our path, people who have taught us as much about ourselves as they have about their own lives and struggles. We are thankful for all that this ministry has brought to our youth, but moreover for the impact it has had on this congregation. The seed of faith that is planted through this ministry continues to grow even years later – an endless blessing. I believe that our youth, chaperones and all those in this congregation have shared in some of the most life-changing and faith-stretching experiences we will ever encounter – a part of this pilgrimage upon which we all journey. We continue this ministry pressing on to whatever God may have in store for us and looking to Him alone for direction and purpose. I am grateful to our youth who share their willingness and their heart for this outreach ministry and to this congregation who supports this with such constancy and enthusiasm. We look to a God who shows us the way and makes the path clear. May He continue to bless this ministry and this congregation so that we may be His hands and feet wherever He may send us.

-Darlene Taylor

REGULAR GATHERINGS

Worship -- Sundays, 8:15 & 10:45am

True North Children's Ministry – Sundays, 9:30am

Adult Time, 9:30am, The Rob Bell DVD series

Walk-ins welcome

Confirmation "Bible Basics", Sundays, Noon – 1:30 pm

Wed Nite Care & Conversation ~ 7 pm at WOH

Ronald McDonald House: 1st Tuesday of the Month ~ 5pm

Church Council: Tuesday, Dec 4th ~ 5pm at Wong's

Pastor Thom Duval: 272-8515

Office times: Monday- Friday 7:30am-10:30am

SIMPLY GIVING

Word of Hope relies on the financial support of the congregation and Simply Giving is a simple and convenient way to manage your church giving.

You can also go visit the Word of Hope website, www.wordofhopechurch.com, and locate the link to the electronic giving page there. We thank you for the many ways in which you give of your time and talents that truly makes this the Amazing Grace Place!

SH YOUTH - COMING UP IN DECEMBER

YOUTH GROUP SUNDAY MORNINGS! ~ 9:30am!! Casual conversation over donuts and caffeine! See you there!

- TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6th ~ 5pm Ronald McDonald House
- SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10th ~ Help with Toys for Tots! Watch for time & details!
- SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10th ~ Lunch & Christmas Party (Following Toys for Tots)
- SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18th ~ COOKING BAKING AT RMH We're baking & decorating cookies with the families at Ronald McDonald House! Come join the fun if you're still in town!

For The Frig—What's Happening @ WOH!

It seems like a lot of very good events come up so quickly that we don't see them coming. Here's a list of some of the most notable of UPCOMING EVENTS in the next few months:

DECEMBER

- 6 - Ronald McDonald House
- 10 - Sr High—Toys for Tots
- 11 - Fair Trade Fair //
Christmas Assist-Wrapping
- 14 - Blue Christmas: Service of Light
- 15 - Ladies' Night Out/Caroling
- 18 - Hanging of the Greens //
Ronald McD Cookie Bake
- 24 - 7 & 10 Christmas Eve
- 25 - 9:30 Christmas Worship

JANUARY

- 3 - Ronald McDonald House
- 8 - Annual Reports deadline
- 14 - Car Care Basics Class
- 15 - Mission Trip Youth & Parents
- 22 - 9 am Worship & Annual
- 24 - Ladies' Night Out
- 29 - Spaghetti Dinner/Takeout
(Youth Group Mission Trip)

FEBRUARY

- 7 - Ronald McDonald House
- 18 - MARDI GRAS GALA @ WOH
- 19 - SH Youth lunch & activity
- 21 - Ladies' Night Out
- 22 - 7 pm Ash Wednesday
- 24-26 - Confirmation Retreat
- THE WEDNESDAYS OF LENT—
6 pm Soup Supper, 7 pm Worship
LENT: The Power of ONES!