

St. Andrew United Methodist Church



December 2023 Newsletter

The birth of Jesus has its very beginning when young Mary said yes to God and with her “yes”, Mary’s entire earthly life changed. But it was Mary’s yes to God that gave each of us an opportunity to say yes to God. However, there is another that also said yes to God and his name was Joseph.

The best I can tell Joseph was a young man. Religiously, he obeyed the Jewish law. A hard-working man and a man able to make a home for his future wife. He was primarily a carpenter but as all independent businessmen he would work with other things such as a mason, working with rocks and other things, to make money. As a matter of what was happening at the time. I would say he was building a place for them to make a home during this period of engagement. Engagement that lasted about 6 months to a year. Many believe Joseph worked hard on making a home for Mary and himself at night. Dreaming of Mary all the time and the children they would have that would carry on the family name and to provide for Mary when he had passed away.

I can imagine seeing Joseph light up when he would see Mary as she traveled around their small village working and sometimes playing with the other girls. He would be so excited to see her later when they could talk and dream together about their future.

Mary goes to visit a relative after the visit from God’s Angel; they were to be the parents of John the Baptist, and after a short stay she returns home. It’s not long before everyone

can see Mary is with child. In the small village the news travels fast. She becomes someone to them that should be stoned and should be an outcast. It is the view of the communities that Mary has sinned.

When Mary returns and home from her visit with Elizabeth, it is obvious she is with child, Joseph only knows one thing for sure. He is not the father.

What words describe a man at a time like this? Anger, Confusion, Frustration, Embarrassment, Shame, Rage, and Disappointment. What did he say to her? What did she say to him? Did she tell him about the angel Gabriel? If she did, can you blame him for not believing her?

I wonder what Joseph said to her, "Mary, how could you? You were pledged to me. We were going to get married. I was going to build a little house for us in Nazareth. Mary, Mary, how could you do this? Why, Mary, why? I kept myself for you. Why couldn't you keep yourself for me?"

I think Joseph cried harder that day than he had ever cried in his life. His soul was being ripped out of his body. He was exhausted, he was lost and he didn't know what to do. Finally, he decided to put her away privately. Yes, that's what he would do. Joseph would try to ease the blunt force of what had happened. He cared for her even now and didn't want any harm to come to Mary. But one thing Joseph knew was for sure; it wasn't his baby.

Matthew 1:20-23

20 But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, "which means, "God is with us."

From this story of Mary and Joseph we see that all of our lives can be changed forever by saying yes to God. It's not always easy saying yes to our calling from God. God doesn't promise saying yes is easy. However, when we say yes to God, lives other than our own can be changed. Even new life and a new hope can be given for others when we say yes. Our yes to God can and will change our lives, our families lives, our Church, our community, and we can change the world by saying yes!

For Joseph and Mary, the decision to say yes is over. The decision to move through life with that decision is next on their journey in their earthly lives. For each of us, saying yes to God maybe just the beginning.

When God calls, yes is the right answer.

The story continues.

Celebrate the Real Reason for the Season,
Merry Christmas to each of you.

Pastor Brian

1 John 4:9-11

9 God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.

10 In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

11 Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.



I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus..
God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of
my life is Jesus. In him there is no darkness at all.
The night and the day are both alike. The Lamb is the light of the city of
God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

---Verse 1 of "I want to Walk as a Child of the Light"



The Legend of The Candy Cane

According to the legend of the candy cane, this candy was first created back in the 18th century. At that time, in certain areas of Europe, there was said to be a ban on public displays of Christianity. Christians were oppressed and no Bibles or crosses could be owned at the time. One man found this oppression distressing and wished he could share the love of Jesus and the joy of Christmas with the rest of the world. When Christmas came around, children didn't get to see nativity scenes or enjoy learning about the truth of Christmas. As a candy maker, this man prayed to find a way that he could offer local children a Christmas gift that would allow him to communicate the real story of Christmas.

His prayer led to an idea--The Candy Cane.

- **The Shepherd's Staff:** *He chose to make the candy cane in the shape of a shepherd's staff. After all, Jesus is the shepherd to his followers and the Bible notes that the "sheep" would hear His voice and follow him (Psalm 23:1, John 10:11, John 10:27-30, Isaiah 40:11).*
- **The Letter J for Jesus:** *Not only was the candy cane in the shape of a staff, but when held upside down, it formed a "J," which stood for Jesus (Luke 1:31, Matthew 1:21).*

- **He is A Rock:** *The candy maker chose hard candy for the candy cane, which was done to remind children that Jesus was our “rock,” dependable and strong (Psalm 31:3).*
- **By His Stripes:** *Wide red stripes were added to the candy cane, representative of the crucifixion and the blood Jesus shed for our sins.*
- **Red-His Shed Blood:** *Through his blood, we are given salvation and life (Revelation 1:5, John 3:16, Luke 22:20).*
- **White-Purification from Sin:** *There are also white stripes on the candy cane, which represents the holiness, and purity of Jesus, who was sinless (I John 1:7).*
- **Sweet Fragrance of Christ:** *Peppermint was the flavor that the candy maker chose for the candy cane. Peppermint was very similar to hyssop, which was used for sacrifice and purification in the Old Testament, reminding us of the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. It also reminds us of the spices brought by the Wise Men when they came to visit Jesus (Psalm 51:7, John 10:29, Matthew 2:11).*
- **Broken For Us:** *Of course, when the candy cane is eaten, it is often broken, which the candy maker meant as a reminder that when Jesus was crucified, his body was broken (I Cor. 11:24).*
- **Love of Christ:** *The candy cane was also made to be given as a gift, representing the love of Jesus when he gave us the gift of salvation.*

*Although no one is quite sure if the legend of the candy cane is really true, **the beauty of the legend is such a reminder of God’s love for us around Christmas**. In this legend, it was a way that the candy maker could tell the children the story of Christmas and still today, we have candy canes as a reminder of the real reason we celebrate Christmas.*

The above story is one of my favorite “legends” regarding Christmas. I have used this many times over the years, Children’s moments, Sunday School classes, Children’s Worship, Christmas crafts and stories. But what I loved the most about using that with Children, is that it is a simple way to tell the story of Jesus in a way that children could understand and enjoy (maybe because I always gave them a candy cane afterwards).

It is my hope that as we are in this season of Advent, that each time you see a candy cane, you remember God's love for you, and that you share His love with everyone you meet~

And I leave you with my scripture for December ~

***For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour,
which is Christ the Lord. ~ Luke 2:11 kjv***

Wishing you Hope, Faith, Joy, Peace and Love,

Sheila Radochio

Minister of Congregational Care

NEWS FROM SNAP

Snap is getting ready for Christmas. We have a very busy schedule for December. We sang and signed at the Table on December 3. On December 11 we will be going to see the Nutcracker at the Clay Center and on December 13, we will be visiting the Hansford Center to sing Christmas carols. We will also visit Riverside Nursing Home to hand out blankets and candy canes to the residents. Our Christmas party will be on December 20 and that will end our Snap 2023 year. We will return on January 2, 2024.

CHILDREN

We offer child care for ages infant to 10. We will have a worship-related activity for children ages 3 to 10.

Please see Bob Lilly if you would like to be a volunteer.



BREAKFAST WITH SANTA ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9 FROM 9 am to 10:30 am. Breakfast with Santa, a story and a Christmas craft are planned. No charge... just please bring canned food for the Saint Albans Food Pantry.

OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

Five top needs at the St. Albans Food Pantry for December are: pancake mix, variety boxes of oatmeal, cereal, beef stew, and Ramen noodles.

Christ Kitchen needs hot dog chili, tuna and small styrofoam bowls.

Bring 12 count, NOT 18 count egg cartons for use at the Food Pantry.

Here are some of the ways that you, as part of our St. Andrew family, are invited to help be the hands and feet of Jesus in our community. All items may be placed in the basket located in the overflow area behind the Sanctuary. It is labeled for the food pantry and Christ Kitchen.



The Christmas eve service at St. Andrew will be on Sunday, December 24 at 6:00 PM. Communion will be served.

Diana and Tim's small group will meet at the Villager Apartments on December 14 at 4:30 PM for caroling and to enjoy cookies and hot chocolate. This will be the last time the group meets until after the New Year.



Small Group Meeting Schedule for December

Amy and Bob's small group meets on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 PM via Zoom.
Diane and Tim's small group meets at 11:00 AM on Zoom on December 7 and at 4:30 PM on December 14 in person at Villager Apartments.
Fishermen's small group meets at 11 AM on December 14 in person

PRAYER REQUESTS

Rev. Jarrold and Mrs. Debbie Lanham
Don Nichols
Alice Baldwin
Emma Gandee
Dick Baier
Kay Harvey
Susie Gilbert
Sue Ann Holstein
Tammy and Mike Sublette
Roy Bailes
Gary Asbury
Leigh Long
Bobbie Fisher

CHURCH CALENDER

December 5	9:30-2:30	SNAP Baking fruit cakes in the kitchen
December 6	9:30-2:30 6:30 PM	SNAP Amy and Bob's small groups on Zoom
December 7	11:00	Baking fruit cakes in the kitchen Diana and Tim's small group on Zoom
December 9	9:00-10:30	Breakfast with Santa in Friendship Hall
December 10	10:30 10:30	Nursery – ages infants through elementary school Morning worship in the Sanctuary
December 11	9:30-2:30 6:00 PM 6:00-7:30	SNAP Alpha Christa Fellowship in the Parlor ** Karate in Friendship Hall
December 11 (continued)	6:30-8:00	Boy Scouts
December 12	9:30-2:30	SNAP
December 13-19		Christmas Basket distribution
December 13	9:30-2:30 6:30 PM	SNAP Amy and Bob's small groups on Zoom

December 14	11:00	Fishermen's small group to pack Christmas baskets at the church
	4:30	Diana and Tim's small group at The Villager Apartments for caroling, cookies, and hot chocolate. All our welcome. This will be our last meeting until after the New Year.
	6:30-7:30	Cub Scouts in Cottrell Hall
December 17	10:30	Nursery ages infants through elementary school
	10:30	Morning Worship in the Sanctuary
December 18	9:30-2:30	SNAP
	6:00-7:30	Karate in Friendship
	6:30-8:00	Boy Scouts in Cottrell Hall
December 19	9:30-2:30	SNAP
		Information due in the office for January newsletter
December 20	9:30-2:30	SNAP Christmas party
December 24	10:30	Nursery for ages infants through elementary school
	10:30	Morning Worship in the Sanctuary
	6:00	CHRISTMAS EVE service in the Sanctuary
December 25		CHRISTMAS DAY (church office is closed)

****ALPHA CHRISTA FELLOWSHIP ASKS THAT THE LADIES ATTENDING BRING EITHER CANNED FOOD OR A TOY. We are doing this instead of our usual gift exchange. Items will be donated to the St. Albans Food Pantry or a toy drive. Thank you. Looking forward to seeing you on December 11!!**

