

MILACA UNITED METHODIST

December 2016 Newsletter

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors



Unto this day a savior is born



**Reverend
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- Sunday Service 10:00 am
- Coffee & Fellowship Following Service
- Bible Studies
- Youth Group
- Sunday School



December 2016

From the Pastor

This Advent season and through Christmas Day we are experiencing a new worship series based on Charles Dicken's classic *A Christmas Carol*. The resources I am using are from a book called [The Redemption of Scrooge](#) by Matt Rawle and worship suggestions from The Worship Design Studio. Our first Sunday went well, with a new Advent song to learn, dramatic readings, an extended Children's message time and other fun changes to our regular worship routine. I pray you will join us and bring others with you throughout this season.



In the story of *A Christmas Carol* as Scrooge is sleeping, the servant's bells over the door chaotically chime, and his dead partner Jacob Marley's ghost appears through the door, weighed down by heavy chains that have been forged with his miserly wealth. Marley says, that he is restless, always traveling with an "incessant torture of remorse."

Part of Marley's punishment is the inability to find peace, and his restlessness is one we know too well during the holidays. There are seemingly countless parties, decorations, concerts, gifts to wrap, stockings to hang (or threaten to take down depending on one's behavior), and meals to prepare.

On the other hand there is loneliness as well – memories of loved ones no longer with us, the numbing silence of an empty house, the sadness of seeing giggling children you could never have yourself.

Advent is to be a time of waiting, a spiritual discipline of slowing down to notice God's presence in the still small voice within a violent and hurried world. **"Be still, and know that I am God!"** the Psalmist reminds us in Psalm 46:10.

We can get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of Christmas that we forget the reason we are celebrating. Waiting for something that has already happened is a curious practice. The Advent season plays with our notion of time. **The church gathers in the present, to ponder the past, for a future hope.** *A Christmas Carol* is a beautiful story for Advent because it is a tale in which the past, present, and future all come together on one transformative night.

Blessings and See You in Church!

Pastor Joyce <><

December Worship Schedule

4th – Communion; Stewardship begins; Sermon - “The Remembrance of Christmas Past: Hope from Heartbreak”



11th – Sermon – “The Life of Christmas Present: Look Upon Me”
6:00 pm Java and Jesus

18th – Sunday School Children Program:
“The Christmas Guest”
Potluck following worship
Watch movie “A Christmas Carol”
Turn in your pledge cards
Return Change for Change bottles

21st – Wednesday 7:00 pm Blue Christmas Service here at Milaca UMC – this is a joint service with Zion Lutheran Church and Trinity Lutheran Church and is open to the community (see description of this service elsewhere in newsletter).

Christmas Eve Worship

Saturday December 24th at 4 pm

Luke 2:1-20, Isaiah 9:2-7

Sermon – “The Redemption of Scrooge:
Keeping Christmas Well”

Invite your friends and neighbors to attend this service with you.

Don't forget to bring your chain slips to make the hay for Jesus' manger bed!



Christmas Day Worship

Sunday December 25th at 10 am

Communion; Sermon – “God Bless Us – Every One!”

Invite your friends and neighbors to attend this service with you.



MAKE PLANS FOR THE COOKIE WALK

SATURDAY DECEMBER 3rd

We need helpers on Friday to decorate, make cookie rounds, and prepare soup.

Then on Saturday lots of hands make the work easier – many jobs you can do, talk to Stacy Coughlin or Pastor Joyce about how and where you can help.

Start baking those yummy recipes of cookies, candies, breads and other goodies. Set aside some jars of jelly, jam, preserves, salsa, and pickles to share. Check your closets, attics & basements for new or gently used items for our treasures room. Also, if you are a crafter we will gladly accept any of your projects. Reminder there is an absolutely beautiful quilt that will be raffled – it is on display in the Gathering Space. Be sure to invite your friends to meet you at the Milaca United Methodist Church for a day of Christmas cheer and shopping. Coffee & cinnamon rolls are available in the morning and a soup luncheon will also be served.

STEWARDSHIP DRIVE BEGINS DECEMBER 4TH - REMEMBER TO PLEDGE

The Finance Committee reminds you to turn in your pledge cards that were in your church mailbox on Dec 4th or put in the mail if you did not pick it up.

It is an estimate of your giving which can be changed (up or down) as one's circumstances change. This enables the church to make a responsible ministry budget for the coming year.



JAVA AND JESUS – Casual worship experience & free meal

Sunday December 11th

6:00 meal – Ham Dinner with cheesy potatoes.

6:30 worship time – lots of Christmas music

This service is open to all people: members and those in our neighborhood.

This service is designed for those who don't have a church home and have a need for spiritual and physical nourishment, but is open to any and all who want to attend. The service is led by Dayna, Jere, Vicki, RC, and Pastor Joyce. Meals are provided by the Outreach Committee and members of the congregation.





Poinsettias to Decorate our Worship Space

We are asking for red or white in color and you have two options this year, order at church or bring your own.



Order at church: Poinsettia's will come from the Floral Depot and cost \$16.99 ea. **These must be ordered by Sunday Dec. 4th.** Mark your check Christmas Flowers and place it in the offering plate or give it to Pastor Joyce. These will be labeled with your name to make for easy pick up after the Christmas Day service.

Bring your own: Purchase your own Poinsettia's in red or white and bring them to church by Thursday Dec. 8th so they can be placed in the worship space before the service on Dec. 11th.

Special Family Worship Celebration Day Dec 18th, 10:00am

SS program "The Christmas Guest."

Turn in your **pledge cards**.

Bring in your **Change for Change bottles**.

Potluck follows worship – bring a main dish, side dish or dessert.

Stay and watch Disney's version of *A Christmas Carol*.



Wednesday Dec. 21, 7:00 pm at

Milaca United Methodist Church

Pastor Joyce will again be working with Pastor Tim Bauer from Trinity & Pastor Stephen Blenkush from Zion Lutheran churches. This is a worship service open to all the people in the community of Milaca and our surrounding towns. It is intended to be a service that offers comfort and hope for

those who are struggling with, or who are assisting those who are in the struggle with, grief, illness, or any other sort of loss or sadness at this time of year.

"Blue Christmas" services are an acknowledgment that not everyone's Christmas is a "merry" one. Yet, gathering together as a community of faith around God's Word for prayer, and the laying on of hands and anointing for healing, God's comfort is tangibly present and received. Please extend an invitation to this service to anyone you know who might benefit from it.

**A SUGGESTION FOR CHRISTMAS EVE
OR CHRISTMAS MORNING**



Gather around the tree before you open gifts and have someone read the Christmas story from Luke 2:1-7: In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Have someone read this message about sharing: This is a season of sharing: we share our time, our most beloved traditions, our favorite recipes. We share stories and memories, music and moments of worship. And we share Christmas presents, which we will open in a few minutes. These gifts are not love in themselves, but they are simple reflections of the love we have for one another and they are given in honor of a greater love – God's love for us in giving us Jesus. So we open these presents with thankfulness for Jesus and to celebrate his birthday.

*The Magic of
Christmas
is not in the presents
but in His
presence*

Have someone pray this prayer: God of Heaven, it is You, we know, who has gathered us around this tree to share with one another the treasures that are hidden in these brightly colored wrappings...to share with one another your good gift of time together. We know

you are with us too, dear Lord, sharing this time even as you shared your own dear Son that we might all be your children. For all of these gifts, we thank you and praise you. Amen.

Missions to Benefit Milaca Food Pantry in this Christmas Season

Change for Change



Bottles were distributed at the Nov. 27th service (more can be found on the table in the Gathering Space). Save your change through Dec. 18th (use a bag if you need more room) and bring it that day to the service where we will dedicate to the Food Pantry. This will help pay for the meat voucher families receive to go and get a fresh meat item from Teals Supermarket.

We have been asked to collect just 3 items: Boxed stuffing, Gelatin (any flavor), and Canned Mixed Fruit. The youth will be taking bags labeled with this information to houses in the community and later will go back and pick up those folks donations. Bring your donations to church by Wednesday Dec. 14th.



All My World By Jere Day

In memory of his sister Susie Quinn (shared in worship on All Saints Sunday)

All my world has changed today-
Our sister will be buried away
In the ashes of the fight she made
To help her sons up from the water wade.
She gave up a lot on the journey
To happiness for herself, yearning
For peace and a life fulfilled.
Crops are planted along in the till
Waiting for warm rains and
Sprouting the seeds of flowers grand.
Onward we live to meet our Lord
She's gone on before so adored,
A saint she's not, but she did good,
On her faith she proudly stood,
Convictions strong as a tight set jaw-
We loved her anyway all in all!



From the Bishop's Office

In a letter to all United Methodists on behalf of the Council of Bishops, Council President Bishop Bruce R. Ough called for a renewed commitment to the vision of the Beloved Community of Christ. The full text of his letter is below.

November 22, 2016

To the people called United Methodist: Grace and peace in the name of Jesus Christ!

On the eve of Advent and in the post-election climate in the United States, I write as President of the Council of Bishops to call for a renewed commitment to the vision of the Beloved Community of Christ.

Isaiah prophesied that a child would be born to re-establish the beloved community—a time of endless peace, a time of justice and righteousness, a time of reconciliation and unity.

For a child has been born to us, a son given to us;

authority rests upon his shoulders;

And he is named

Wonderful Counselor,

Mighty God,

Everlasting Father,

Prince of Peace.

His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace

for the throne of David and his kingdom.

He shall establish and uphold it with justice and righteousness

from this time onward and forevermore.

Isaiah 9:6-7 (NRSV)

In a post-election article, Bishop Gregory Palmer eloquently stated the reality of a divided United States. "Everywhere we turn we are reminded of the profound fissures along the lines of gender, race, and class, just to name a few. The truth is these fissures and divisions are not new and not directly attributable to the long campaign season just ended. For many years there has been a growing trust deficit in public leadership and institutions. These are trying times, and the fabric of who we are and who we aspire to be has been stretched beyond anything we desire to look upon. But look upon it squarely we must."

This state of division and discord is global, fueled by the racist, sexist, and xenophobic rhetoric of the recent U.S. election cycle. Recently, Pope Francis warned against the "virus of polarization" and hostility in the world targeting people of different nationalities, races, and beliefs.

He was blunt and warned against animosity creeping into the church, as well, noting “we are not immune from this.” Pope Francis reminded us of “our pitiful hearts that tend to judge, divide, oppose, and condemn” and cautioned somberly against those who “raise walls, build barriers, and label people.”

As followers of the Christ, we are harbingers, models and guardians of the Beloved Community. As those baptized into the Body of Christ, we “accept the freedom and power God gives us to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves” and to renounce the spiritual forces of evil in the world, our respective nations, and the church. As disciples of Jesus, we stand against all expressions of hatred, discrimination, oppression, and exclusion. As those who serve Christ, we love whom Christ loves. As stewards of Jesus' good news, we are peacemakers, pray for our enemies, and seek reconciliation with those from whom we have become estranged.

At the November 2010 meeting of the Council of Bishops in Panama, the Council issued a pastoral letter calling for United Methodists to be bearers of the beloved community across the globe. The letter is eerily contemporary and relevant to our current context. It points to the opportunity that is uniquely ours to bind up the wounds and to proclaim the Advent prophecy of a time of justice and righteousness. I include the full text as a reminder of the kingdom reality we are called to incarnate:

We, the bishops of The United Methodist Church, feel compelled to renew our commitment to work to become the beloved community of Christ. We, as a Council, desire to deal with the crucial issues of racism and the sacredness of every human being. Therefore, as the spiritual and administrative leaders of the church, we issue an urgent call to the whole people of God, lay and clergy: to speak the truth in love in public and private discourse, to act with compassion, and to work for peace with justice in the world.

In order to transform the world, in faithfulness to Christ's command, we must model respect and kindness and extinguish the fires of animosity. And thus, we call on all churches to engage in genuinely honest dialogue and respectful conversation, such that others who observe the action in our lives might declare, ‘See how they love each other!’

As people of faith, we are charged to build the beloved community because Christ has broken down the dividing walls and ended the hostilities between us. Yet, we continue to build walls in the church and the world which separate us and cause our hearts to grieve.

On the continent of Africa and in many parts of Asia, including the Middle East, the Philippines, and India, the historical and contemporary impact of colonialism, racism, tribalism, hostility, and religious persecution continue to affect human relationships.

The challenge in the Philippines is to break down the barriers between mainline society and tribal peoples. Meeting this challenge will accord equal rights such as land possession and free education for all.

By nature, colonialism in Africa thrives on hostile, violent and demeaning human relationships. Racism and tribalism cut deep wounds, not in one's flesh and blood, but also on the soul and the spirit. These gaping wounds leave permanent scars.

In Europe, racism is a growing issue, with political parties openly working against minority, ethnic, and religious communities. Prejudice is overly articulated in the media, in politics, and even in churches.

Throughout the United States, there has been a rapid escalation of violence related to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and religious preference. This escalation includes personal attacks,

bullying, and vicious and criminal acts of violence to the mind, body, and spirit of persons. These actions diminish life for victims and their families, as well as for the perpetrators and the whole community. They are the ultimate, insidious, and irreverent attacks on the sacredness of God-given life.

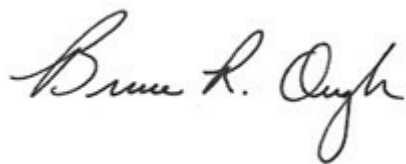
Across the world, terrorism—as demonstrated by wanton acts of violence against innocent persons—leaves a trail of loss of life, limb, home, and community. Discriminatory treatment is widely practiced against immigrants and refugees everywhere around the world. All of this creates a universal atmosphere of suspicion, mistrust, and fear. Often this is the result of religious persecution of various faith communities, including Christians, which threatens the capacity or hope for reconciliation and peace. The church is called to decisively and directly counter these acts and engender and empower a 'perfect love that casts out all fear' (I John 4:18, NRSV). Through intentional action we can 'overcome evil with good' (Romans 12:21, NRSV).

It is incumbent upon the bearers of this vision of a beloved community to do whatever we can today to hasten the day of a just world with peace. This is our hope, our prayer, and our commitment."

Friends in Christ, this is not an invitation to naiveté. People's lives, livelihoods, security, and well-being are at stake. Immigrants are scrambling for the shadows. Indigenous peoples are disrespected and forgotten. Children of color are being bullied and threatened. Muslims are being labeled and listed. Women are ridiculed and objectified. The LGBTQ community is filled with fear. Racism is being legitimized. Hundreds of millions remain impoverished without access to educational opportunities, economic resources, or equal justice.

We must stand against the meanness and hatred that is upon us. We must stand for what is best in us as people of God. We must not address the anger, fear, confusion, and insecurity of the prevailing culture with more blame, attack, and criticism. As Richard Rohr recently noted, "The best criticism of the bad is the practice of the better." We must stand against bigotry, hate, and discrimination in all forms and settings. We must proclaim from our pulpits the good news that overcomes hatred and fear. We must be quick to confess our own sin and places of complicity and vigilant against all that diminishes the worth of any individual.

So, I urge all who follow the Christ to remember who we are in this time. We are the people of God called to proclaim the mighty acts of Christ who calls us out of darkness into his marvelous light. We are the people of God called to create the Beloved Community of Christ. We are people of God commanded to love as Jesus loved. We are people of God created to be the kingdom of God envisioned in the Advent prophecy and fulfilled by Jesus. This is our vision, our hope, our prayer, our opportunity, our commitment. May it be so!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Bruce R. Ough". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bruce" and last name "Ough" clearly legible.

Bishop Bruce R. Ough

President, Council of Bishops

The United Methodist Church



Winter has arrived with a blast of cold and snow. I guess we knew it was coming, but still not ready for it.

I am getting back to my helping with events for church. We served 58 ladies for Christian Women on Tuesday, November 15th. They enjoyed a brunch of biscuits and gravy, tater tots and an orange. Marilyn Anderson was their special music. They meet next month on December 13th and we serve them our annual Christmas lunch at 11:00. They have their meeting first in December.

UMW met on Thursday, November 17th by several going to the Dining Site for lunch. Our meeting started at 12:30pm as we had Kim Harris, Big Waters Deaconess as our guest speaker. There were four ladies from Ogilvie that came also. Kim gave an inspirational talk on her journey becoming a Methodist and her call to become a Deaconess. It was very interesting.

We had election of officers and the same slate of offices was voted in again for 2017. They are President Audrey Bowe, Vice President Betty Anderson, Secretary Joyce Stobb and Treasurer Jeanette Hanenburg. All the committees stayed the same. All are listed in the glass case on the kitchen wall. We will be getting small poinsettias for the shut ins and elderly again this year. Betty Anderson will be getting them and Sue Olson will help her deliver them.

At last month's meeting they voted to raise the non-member funeral lunch up to \$5.00 a plate. Members rate stays the same at \$3.00.

Several of us helped serve Ralph's Birthday Party. Lots of delicious food. Hope he had a good day.

We started planning next years dates. The High Tea is Wednesday, May 3rd, Salad Luncheon is Wednesday, October 4th. The date we discussed in September was a community conflict, so we will be having it the first Wednesday in October. It was originally Pease Soup Luncheon date and they stopped, so we took their date. The rest of the dates we will decide in December.

Our Christmas lunch will be on December 15th at Jeanette's house at noon.

Thanks again for all your prayers and thoughts of me. They are greatly appreciated. I am feeling a lot better, just moving slower!

Have a Happy and Blessed Christmas Season. See you in church.

Audrey Bowe

President UMW







CHRISTMAS SEASON

December Calendar Items:

2nd – Cookie Walk Prep

Dec 3rd – Cookie Walk 8:30am-1:00pm

4th – Stewardship Sunday

Chamber Band

5th – Finance Meeting 6:30pm

7th – Ministerial Meeting 8:30am

Youth 5:30pm Youth Supper 6:00pm

8th – High Rise Meal 11:30am

Church Council 6:30pm

10th – Salvation Army Bell Ringing @ Unclaimed Freight

11th – Barb & Dayna Duets Prelude & Service

SPRC Meeting 11:15am

Java & Jesus 6:00pm

13th – Christian Women

15th – Jeanette's Christmas Lunch 12:00pm

UMW Christmas Gathering

Council Meeting 6:30pm

18th – Sunday School Program

Pledges Due

Potluck & Movie: A Christmas Carol

21st – Blue Christmas Service

No Youth

24th – Christmas Eve Service 4:00pm

25th – Christmas Day Service w/Communion

Change Shaker Sunday

Newsletter Items Due

28th – No Youth

Birthdays:

3- Frank Crooms

4- Levi Anderson

4- Ryan Gilbert

9- John Hillcrest

16- Tilly Bergstrom

17- Christie Barnes

20- Dave Johnson

21- Lance Gubrud

28- Cyndee Green

28- Judy Schwieger

Anniversary:

27- Larry & Dorothy Moe



High Rise Meal

High Rise Meal for Thursday, Dec 8th
Seating at 11:15am, Dinner served
at 11:30am. Cost \$4.00.

Menu:

Baked pork chop,
baked potato w/sour cream,
mixed vegetables,
dinner roll,
frosted white cake.

