

THE SPIRIT IS MOVING AND GOD IS STILL SPEAKING!

THE UNITED CHURCH OF NORTHFIELD

DECEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER

Jennifer's Journal
December 2011

As a mother of two young children, I struggle with a Christmas dilemma. I want my daughters to experience the magic of Christmas and part of that magic is the whole Santa Claus and presents under the tree scenario. On the other hand, I want to make sure the wonder of the incarnation, the earthly birth of God, is not lost in a pile of scotch tape, wrapping paper, and boxes. This Advent season, I acutely feel the tension between the here and coming kingdom of God and the world in which we live.

There is a rawness, a vulnerability to Advent that stands in sharp contrast to a generic holiday season. Our Scriptures speak of a thief coming in the night, a voice crying out in the wilderness, an unexpected pregnancy, a young girl's song of mercy and hope, and a light shining in the darkness. We hear the long ago echoes of exiled people crying out to God to take them home. Advent is the intertwining of shadow and light. We are constantly fed a message that the shadows are bad and the light is good and if we buy enough gifts, hang enough decorations, and attend enough parties, we can keep the shadows at bay and dance in the light. The problem is no matter how many strings of Christmas lights we hang, the shadows are still with us.

Advent is an invitation to do something revolutionary: Seek out the shadows. Sit in silence. Listen for the voices of hurting people. Give ourselves time and space to feel the tension of the season and acknowledge the ways our expectations of a perfect holiday do not quite match the reality of family dysfunction, financial burdens, and hard times we often experience. This practice of

shadow seeking is not nearly as depressing as it sounds. The shadows are already there. Instead of denying them or attempting to cover them up with busyness, food, and drink, we honestly acknowledge them. And then we wait because it is in the dark the light shines the brightest.

If we allow ourselves to be vulnerable to the pain and hurts of the world and its people, we are also more sensitive to the peace, love, hope, and joy that abounds. These are holy days in which the sacred is revealed in the most surprising of places and ways. Advent traditions help us to keep awake and aware so we do not miss the light amidst the shadows. Watching the fragile flickering of Advent candles and anticipating the lighting of the Christ candle reminds us of the necessity for patience and hope. Ancient Scriptures that speak of longing for God and the unexpected ways in which God responds helps us to identify our own desire to know God and brings us closer to Jesus. Practicing generosity brings to mind God's rich blessings. Advent devotionals and daily prayers remind us that this is holy time.

Of course, there is room for gifts and the joy of giving and receiving. Celebrations with family and friends give us a taste of God's great banquet to come. The world encourages us to use presents and parties to deny the shadows of human life. Advent invites us to give gifts and celebrate because in Jesus we have received the ultimate gift of life in a God who is always with us and an invitation to be filled at a table open to all who seek to know God in Jesus Christ.

Wait, watch, and love.

Have a holy Advent and blessed Christmas.

Pastor Jennifer

Worship Schedule for December

Date	Sunday	Scriptures	Theme
December 4	Second Sunday of Advent	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 Isaiah 40:1-11 2 Peter 3:8-15	Living as Advent People
December 11	Third Sunday of Advent	Psalm 126 Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 Luke 1:46-55	Turning the World Upside Down
December 18	Fourth Sunday of Advent	Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 Luke 1:26-38	Godly Possibilities
December 24	Christmas Eve	Lessons and Carols	
December 25	Christmas Day	Psalm 98 Hebrews 1:1-4, 5-12 John 1:1-14	Seeing the Glory



Bible Study - Bible Study meets Monday mornings from 9:00 to 11:00. During the month of December, meetings will take place at the home of Judy Plumley at 266 Central Street. Each week we will be discussing the Scriptures for the upcoming Sunday. See Worship Schedule above for Scriptures.

There will no Bible Study on December 26.



Advent November 27th through December 18th: We will celebrate the four Sundays of Advent with a Processional Drama, Lighting of the Advent Candle with scripture reading, and song. If your family would like to participate in this special time please contact Roy Butler at 485-8474.



SPECIAL CHRISTMAS TIME OFFERINGS TO BE TAKEN:

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18TH *Christmas Fund Offering*
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25TH *Christmas Fund Offering*
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24TH, Christmas Eve offering for OCWM
(*Our Churchs Wider Mission*)

Advent Presentation and Pot Luck Dinner

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16TH



Christ's Nativity -

The story of God's incredible love

told in images by Dr. Virginia M. Kimball, Theology Professor.

The program will offer a Power Point presentation of 30 images, all which touch the tenderness motif of mother and child as well as the burst of God's glory in the time-changing moment of Christmas. Explanation of the power of Christian liturgical art will form the background for the presentation.

Dinner at 6:00 P.M in Howe's Hall

Presentation at 7:00 P.M. in Sanctuary

Child care provided during presentation in Nursery

Free Will Offering

JOIN IN A TIME OF CAROLING

**WITH NORTHFIELD CHURCHES ON
DECEMBER 18TH AT 2:00 p.m.**

**AT THE MAYO MANOR
MEET IN THE DINING HALL
ALL ARE WELCOME!!**





USHERS AND GREETERS - Please check the dates for Ushering and Greeting and call Judy Plumley (485-6117) if you find that you cannot be there the scheduled date and she will arrange a swap or a substitute. Thank you. (January dates were not available at the time of printing).

Dec 11th

Ushers: Ray and Ginny Kunkel

Greeters: Audrey Avery & Harriet Hirst

Dec 18th

Ushers: Judy Knapp and Leah Knapp

Greeters: Brenda Cruickshank and Marilyn Bruce

Dec 25th

Ushers: Barbara and Kayla Barrows

Greeters: Annalill and Anita Crain



COMMUNION STEWARDS – We offer a gluten free communion option. Communion is offered on the first Sunday of each month. In January 2012, Communion will take place on the *second* Sunday of the month.

January 2011: John and Beverly Knox, Barbara Barrows, and Beverly Dezotell.

February 2011: Roy and Liz Butler, Laura Ranker, Audrey Avery.

March 2011: Peter and Debbie Maloney-Evans and partners.

COFFEE HOURS: A time for fellowship.



Please consider signing up to host a coffee hour. Coffee hour hosts will be asked only to make coffee and tea water and a cold beverage. Anyone, on any given Sunday, wishing to bring a food item to share during the coffee hour is welcome to do so.



Equal Exchange Fairly traded Gourmet Coffee and Gourmet Tea are available for sale during Fellowship Hour. You can also place an order by calling Chris Southworth at (802)-793-5433 and leave a message.

COFFEE: \$8.00 a bag for ground

COFFEE: \$8.00 a bag for whole bean (Breakfast Blend or Mind, Body & Souls)

TEA: \$5.00 a box



Church Tree Trimming to take place December 18th during the morning worship service.

A Note from the Desk of the Pastor:

Pastor's study is in Howe's Hall

Reverend Jennifer Kimball

Email - matisationjm@yahoo.com

Home phone number (802) 778-0813

Cell (607) 434-5632.

OFFICE HOURS: (NOTE NEW CHANGES)

WEDNESDAY 9:00 A.M. - 11:30 A.M.

Other Hours available by appointment.

FRIDAY - PASTOR'S DAY OFF

Church Office Phone: 485-4431

Church e-mail:

uccnorthfield@trans-video.net

Visit us at our website:

www.unitedchurchofnorthfield.org.

SOS webpage-Visit us at:

www.unitedchurchofnorthfield.org/sos.



**Pastor Jennifer will be on vacation
from December 26th thru January 1st.**

**In case of a pastoral emergency please
contact Deacon Bev Knox at 485-4101**

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Council Meeting - December 13th, Tuesday
at 7PM, Howe's Hall. *(note change in date)*

Deacons Meeting - January 4th, Wednesday 4:45,
location TBA.

**Annual Meeting of the United Church of
Northfield** will be held **January 22nd**. A Special
Budget Informational meeting will be held on
January 15th.

**United Methodist
Church (UMC) Free
Friday Night**

Dinners - The United Church of Northfield will continue to host the **Second Friday** night Dinner each month at Methodist Church and we are looking for volunteers to assist with this effort. If interested, Call Chris Southworth at 485-8738 or 793-5433. This is a wonderful way to share in fellowship with the community. Anyone wishing to help out on that day can call Bonnie Gayle or Harriet Hirst at 485-3770.



**SUPPORT FOR
THE LOCAL CERV**

Please bring in non-perishable food items that will go to the Northfield Food Shelf (peanut butter, cereal, soup, crackers, rice, hamburger helper, canned fruit, meats, etc.). Donated items can be placed in the mission baskets now located inside the sanctuary at the rear corner of the church.

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Website: www.unitedchurchofnorthfield.org



FORWARDING
ADDRESS REQUESTED

SAVE OUR STEEPLE UPDATE

Have you looked up at the steeple lately? It is a beautiful site we all can be proud of. Southgate has completed installing the slate, weathervane, and clock faces. In an effort to close the gap and meet our fundraising goal, the SOS committee continues to hold fundraising events; the latest being the raffle held on December 4th. We thank all who participated in the raffle and congratulate the three winners. Keep your eye on the thermometer and if you are lucky you may catch Peter Evans with his can of red paint.

STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN PLEDGE AND TIME AND TALENT SHEETS

The Stewardship Committee and Finance Committee would like to remind individuals to turn in their annual pledge card and their completed time and talent sheet. Please mail them in the self addressed envelopes that came with your packet. Thank you. Anyone needing a pledge card or time and talent sheet should contact Lauren Howard (552-4552) or Barbara Barrows (485-7042) and they would be happy to help you.