

*The*

# COMMUNICATOR

Greenville United Methodist Church ~ 5892 Clarksville Highway ~ Joelton, TN 37080

**Reverend Dr. Diana DeWitt, Pastor**

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**December 2011**

As we enter this Advent season may our hearts be filled with the love of Christ as we reflect upon the treasure that God gave to mankind by becoming one of us. Born in a manger, the gift of Christmas is the gift of eternal life. Jesus came to redeem the world from the hopeless bondage of sin and death. May you find new freedom and hope this Advent season to live fully into God's plan for your life for the salvation of others as you share faith and hope to a world walking in darkness. The following poem was written by Tina, an amazing young woman that I minister to, who is incarcerated in the Tennessee Prison for Woman. She expresses well that true freedom comes only through a deep and abiding relationship with Jesus Christ.

*The confines of the prison are piercing through my skin.  
I feel the eyes fixed upon me, waiting for my fall;  
Expecting me to fail, disregarding all.  
I'm so tired...this concrete, steel cage is wearing me thin.  
What's left? My world is evaporating... what more can I defend?  
Cut deep by words, flagrant falsities, sharp like a sword.  
I've been silenced, no longer do I have a voice to be heard.  
Under a microscope of congruous, crude "assumptions,"  
I can't be right and they are never wrong.  
They've shackled my body, but not my spirit.  
My soul they can never gain.  
Through their weak attempts at complete and utter control,  
I'll stand strong on the pieces that are left of me.  
Physically bound by chains, but the mental chaos I resist.  
I live in dreams and memories of the loved ones that I miss,  
Only to reach out and touch nothing but emptiness.  
Tomorrow seems so far away, yet yesterday never ends.  
My freedom isn't beyond these barb wired gates.  
True freedom comes from within, the love and peace is found with Him.  
Sorrow at this senseless loss of time and life cannot keep me down.  
I have more freedom than most, everyday, as I share this joy and love I found.*

Wishing you all a Christ-filled Advent and Christmas season. I love you dearly and praise God for weaving our lives together for His glory and greater purposes!

Pastor Diana

## **ADVENT – What is it?**

Sometimes we have been in church our whole lives, or have worshiped in other denominations, and have no idea what the season of Advent is.

Advent is one of the seasons of the Church, like Lent, Easter, Pentecost, etc. Advent is the beginning of the Church Year for most churches. It begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, which is the Sunday nearest November 30, and ends on Christmas Eve. If Christmas Eve is a Sunday, it is counted as the fourth Sunday of Advent, with Christmas Eve proper beginning at sundown. The meaning of the word Advent means “coming” or “arrival.” The focus of the entire season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ in the First Advent, and the anticipation of the return of Christ the King in his Second Advent. It is celebrating the truth about God, the revelation of God in Christ whereby all creation might be reconciled to God.

Advent also symbolizes the spiritual journey of individuals and a congregation, as they affirm that Christ has come, that He is present in the world today, and that He will come again in power. Advent is also marked by the spirit of expectation, of anticipation, of preparation, of longing. Advent is celebrated as a time of joy and happiness as we await the coming of the King. Advent is a time of preparation that is marked by prayer. Advent’s prayers are prayers of humble devotion and commitment, prayers of submission, prayers of deliverance, prayers from those walking in darkness who are awaiting and anticipating a great light.

You will notice in the Sanctuary some of the coloring and different pieces used during the Advent Season. Most noticeable is the color of purple. This is the color of penitence and fasting, as well as the color of royalty to welcome the Advent of the King. This color is also used during the Lenten season. The Advent wreath is a circular wreath with evergreen (real or artificial) with five candles, four in the wreath and one in the center. The circle of the wreath reminds us of God Himself, His eternity and endless mercy, which has no beginning or end. The greenery of the wreath marks that of hope of newness, of renewal, of eternal life. The candles symbolize the light of God coming into the world through the birth of His son. The four outer candles represent the period of waiting. The colors of the candles are traditionally 3 purple and 1 pink with a white candle representing Christ in the center. The candles are lit, purple, purple, pink, and purple. The first candle represents Hope, The second represents Love, the third represents Joy, and the fourth represents Peace. The central Christ Candle, lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, reminds us that the incarnation is the heart of the season, giving light to the world.

## BITS AND PIECES

**Pairs & Spares** Sunday School Christmas party will be December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 pm at the church.

The **Pleasant View Christmas Parade is December 3<sup>rd</sup>**. We all had a great time and it was a wonderful way for us to reach out to the community. Come and join us.

**Caroling, December 4<sup>th</sup>** Join us as we spread Christmas Cheer through the joy of caroling. If you would like to come along, we will meet at Billie Zimmerle's at 6149 Eatons Creek Road at **4:00 p.m.** After caroling we meet back at Miss Billie's for some good food and fellowship.

**Breakfast With Santa!** This year Breakfast with Santa will be **Saturday morning, December 10<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 to 10:00 am.** Santa will arrive at Greenville that Saturday morning to enjoy breakfast. There will be a time for pictures or for him to hear from all the "good boys and girls" what they want for Christmas. Cost for this event is \$7 for children, which includes breakfast and their picture with Santa (additional pictures \$3 each) and \$6 for breakfast only. The proceeds from this year's event will go to the Joelton Hope Center. Everyone (young and old) is invited to come and have a great breakfast and see Santa!

**December 10<sup>th</sup>** is the Christmas Party for the children sponsored by the **Emmanuel Outreach Community** from **12:00-2:00 pm**, at the St. Lawrence Community Center. The Center will be buzzing with activity. Your contributions have helped make this possible. We are excited by the cooperative effort of the churches and think this will be a great way to show God's love for the community this Christmas season!

**Children's Christmas Program, December 11<sup>th</sup>**

**5:30 p.m.** Pre-Program Music

**6:00 p.m.** Children's Program –*Back to the Manger*

Invite your family and friends to attend our Christmas Program that Sunday night. Our children and youth will be taking us back to the manger and help us all learn the true meaning of Christmas. After the program join us for snacks and fellowship.

**UMW Christmas Party, December 16<sup>th</sup>** – Join us at Alesia Balthrop's home (1182 Greystone Place, Ashland City, 915-8652) at **6:30 pm**. Secret pals will be revealed and gifts exchanged. If you are attending and do not have a secret pal, please bring a \$10.00 gift to be exchanged. All ladies are invited.

Be sure to invite your friends to join us **Sunday, December 18<sup>th</sup>**, as our choir presents ***The Night Before Christmas*** during our worship service. This worship music presentation will help us all to see everything that is glorious about Christmas.

Make plans as part of your Christmas activities to worship with us on **Christmas Eve** beginning at 6:00 pm.

There will be **NO Sunday School on Christmas Day, December 25<sup>th</sup>**.

## BITS AND PIECES

**Youth Outing - December 30** The youth of Greenville (12+) will be attending a very special late night/early morning lock in at the Jimmy Floyd Family Center in Lebanon, TN on **Friday, December 30**. This is a special event for several of the United Methodist Churches. The JFFC is being taken over for the evening for several United Methodist Churches ONLY. There will be great music, food, fun, talks, and the entire complex is ours! There will be swimming with lifeguard supervision, games, gym, etc. What a blast this will be! Here's the kicker, it is only **\$10**. What? That's right, **\$10** per person. You are encouraged to invite a friend to this yearend event. Special info and permission forms will be available the first Sunday in December. The **\$10** must be paid in advance. See Mark "O" Bowers for details. Plan now to attend, you will be glad you did. This is going to be sahweeet!

**SCRIP Cards - Making a list and checking it twice.** Christmas is coming faster than we may want to believe. Have you considered **giving** SCRIP gift cards this year to those who can use them? Have you considered **purchasing** your gifts with SCRIP gift cards? These cards are an easy way to do, and give, what you would normally. Buy purchasing gift cards through our SCRIP program, you are helping give to the mission trip fund. Each of the gift cards have a specific percentage of the face value given back to us. It is a **WIN, WIN for everyone!**

SCRIP basically just means "Money". You use it like money, you give it like money, you keep it in a safe place like money. You can purchase your medicine, groceries, auto parts, appliances, plane tickets, cruise tickets, gas, food, I-tunes, and anything else you can think of. Attached is an order form sheet. It includes all of the cards and denominations that we sell. We do have *some* individual cards as well. We are taking orders **weekly** till the 2nd or 3rd week of December. Don't wait, place your order today and help make a difference. Please see Karen Baird for information and ordering. Order form is attached to *Communicator*.

**Snow/Ice Bad Weather Closings/Cancellations** During this upcoming season of unpredictable weather and conditions, we have decided as a church, to use the official closing of Metro Nashville Public Schools as our guide to cancel meetings, gatherings, classes, etc. Our first and foremost priority is the safety of everyone. This area of Middle Tennessee can also be the complete opposite of other parts of the Metro area. If need, and safety pre-caution arises at the last minute and metro schools are still open or undecided, we will try to place the information **ASAP** on the church answering machine message-**not** the Phone Tree. It will be up to you, if you think that there might be a chance of a cancellation, to call **876-8174**.

## **STORY BEHIND THE HYMN - O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

This is one of our Advent hymns as we "prepare the way". This hymn is an amazing collection of expressions regarding spiritual truths. It is probably the oldest Christmas carol still sung today. This popular hymn dates back to the ninth century. It presents the different biblical roles that the church believed Jesus fulfilled. The universal nature of faith presented in this song can now be seen by the fact that it has crossed over from a hymn sung in Latin, to a carol translated into scores of languages and embraced by every Christian denomination in the world.

The writer of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" is unknown. He was no doubt a monk or priest who penned the words before 800 A.D. He would have been a scholar who was rich with knowledge in both the Old and New Testaments. It was originally saved for a single week of Advent vespers leading up to the celebration of Christ's birth.

In its original form the song was known as a song of the "Great Antiphons" or "Great O's" The original, framed in seven different verses, represented the different biblical views of the Messiah. One verse was sung/chanted each day during the last seven days before Christmas.

The song owes its worldwide acceptance to John Mason Neale who was born in 1818. John was an Anglican priest who was educated at Trinity College in Cambridge. He could write and speak over twenty languages. At times many feared his intelligence and insight. Some thought he was too evangelical, too progressive, and too much of a free-thinker. He was sent to the Madeira Islands off the NW coast of Africa and pushed out of the spotlight. Neale refused to give up on God or his calling. He began a school for girls, an orphanage, and a house of refuge for prostitutes.

After working on a tune to go with the ninth century words, "Oh come, Oh come, Emmanuel" was published in the 1850's. It was later cut to five verses. In this simple but brilliant song are the echoed voices of those from the past who gently urge the world to accept and worship the King who fulfills God's greatest promise to his children.

## CALENDAR

<b>DECEMBER 1</b>	Trustee Meeting	7:00 pm
<b>3</b>	Pleasant View Christmas Parade Pairs & Spares Christmas Party	10:00 am 6:00 pm
<b>4</b>	Holy Communion ERF Offering Caroling (meet at Billie Zimmerle's)	10:30 am 4:00 pm
<b>10</b>	Breakfast with Santa Emanuel Outreach Party (St. Lawrence)	8:00 to 10:00 am 12:00 am
<b>11</b>	Children's Christmas Program	5:30 pm
<b>16</b>	UMW Christmas Party (Alesia Balthrop's)	6:30 pm
<b>18</b>	Choir presents The Night Before Christmas	10:30 am
<b>24</b>	Christmas Eve service	6:00 pm
<b>25</b>	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b> (church only)	10:30 am

<b>ACOLYTHE:</b>	Emma Mason
<b>LITURGIST:</b>	Reverend Dr. Diana DeWitt
<b>USHERS:</b>	Michael Baird and Billy Black

<b>G.R.O.W.</b>	Wednesday (only 12/7 & 12/14)	5:30 pm
<b>CHOIR PRACTICE</b>	Every Wednesday	7:00 pm
<b>SUNDAY SCHOOL</b>	Every Sunday (Except 12/25)	9:30 am
<b>WORSHIP SERVICE</b>	Every Sunday	10:30 am