



Heart Beat Newsletter

Zion United Methodist Church
In the heart of Whitehouse



December, 2019

Pastor Carol's Comments

Ah, Christmas...when peace and love are often interlaced with controversy. Do you get irritated at the cashier who says "Happy Holidays"? Do you pass up Starbucks' Christmas Blend because of the design of their cups? Allow me to put your mind at ease about at least one Christmas sticking point: "Xmas."

This is not, in fact, an insidious plot to take Christ out of Christmas. It actually goes back to the eve of a battle fought in the year 312 by Emperor Constantine. Constantine had a vision that moved him to have all of his soldiers paint the first two letters of the word "Christ" on their shields. In Greek, those letters are *chi* (χ) and *rho* (ρ). In English, the use of "X" to represent Christ goes back to 1021. Eventually, the "rho" got dropped, and the word "Xmas" became a common way of describing the "Christ-mass" (or Eucharist). So, "Xmas" is actually a time-honored expression of the Christian faith.



Instead of barking up the wrong (Christmas) tree this year, let's focus instead on true, meaningful ways of keeping Christ in Christmas—generous giving that helps others, worship and study, time spent in thoughtful reflection and prayer, responsible purchasing, and extending good will and grace to all in the name of Jesus.

News Around Zion

Mission News

We had the privilege to deliver 24 Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes this year. Thank you to everyone who participated in this project. We are currently collecting blankets, hats, scarves and gloves to be distributed in Toledo during the next month or so.

Advent Bible Study

Our Advent Bible Study begins December 5 at 6:30 p.m. We will study the video series, Light of the World, by Amy-Jill Levine. She traces the Christmas narrative through the stories of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary, the journey to Bethlehem, and the visit from the Magi. These stories open conversations around connections of the Gospel stories to the Old Testament, the role of women in first-century Jewish culture, the importance of Mary's visitation, and the revolutionary implications of Mary's Magnificat, the census and the stable, the star of Bethlehem, and the flight to Egypt. Purchase of the book is optional. Sign up on the sheet in the narthex. The study is for 3 weeks: December 5, 12 and 19.

Poinsettia Sale

If you would like to order a Poinsettia in honor or in memory of a loved one, use the order form that is found in the Sunday bulletin. They will cost \$9 and the order is due Dec. 8. This benefits United Methodist Men scholarships.

Christmas Eve

*All are invited to celebrate the birth
of the Christ Child with us...
Candlelight and Carol Service
Tuesday, 12/24, at 7:00 p.m.
Family-friendly!*





News Around Zion (continued)

Good Gift-Giving

As United Methodists, we follow three “General Rules”: 1. Do no harm. 2. Do good. 3. Stay in love with God (through worship, prayer, scripture, and Communion). Giving Fair Trade Christmas gifts helps us live into those rules. By purchasing Fair Trade products, you help create opportunities for economically disadvantaged producers, ensure that prices paid allow producers to make a living wage, strengthen communities, support safe working conditions, develop positive trading relationships, foster democratic economic participation, and protect the environment through sustainable business practices.

Fair Trade products are easy to find. Check your grocery store for chocolates and coffee. Look for items with the Fair Trade mark. Go to cokebury.com, scroll down to “Services,” click on “Catalogs and Brochures,” then scroll to the Fair Trade catalog, or go to www.westohioumc.org/conference/fair-trade for wonderful gift choices and more info about how Fair Trade makes a difference. Or, just do a quick search for “Fair Trade Gifts” online. When you give Fair Trade gifts, you’ll be giving twice—to your loved one, and to the person whose life is made better by your purchase.



Got E-Waste?

We will hold our 3rd Annual Electronics Recycling Day on Saturday, January 18, from 10 – 2. Start collecting your old electronic devices, and plan to be at the church to help our neighbors unload their cars and vans. (Sorry—TVs of any kind are no longer accepted.)

Studies show that as many as 100 million consumer electronics items become obsolete every year, and the amount of e-waste is growing almost three times faster than overall municipal waste. Keeping electronics out of landfills and reusing their components is one way we can honor our role as stewards of God’s creation.

Thank You from the Food Pantry Patrons

The Whitehouse Cub Scouts and Sunbeam Christian Preschool delivered plenty of supplies for the Food Pantry! What a blessing! The shelves were getting pretty empty, but they will be much better stocked now! Thank you to all who helped with the delivery and then to sort the items in the pantry.

First Federal is also collecting food for the Food Pantry. And, Hope UMC will be collecting food for us at their “Rock and Roll Christmas Concert” on Sat., 12/7, at 7 p.m. We are blessed to have such good neighbors!

Church Information

Pastor Carol Williams-Young
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Worship at 10:25 a.m.

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<http://www.zionumcwhitehouse.org>

Upcoming Events

- Dec. 3 & 17 - Food Pantry, coffee and conversation at 9:30; food pick-up 10 a.m. to noon
- Dec. 7, 7:00 p.m. - Hope UMC’s “Rock and Roll Christmas Concert” with food collection for our Food Pantry.
- Dec. 8, 12, & 19 - Advent Bible Study at 6:30 p.m.
- Dec. 18 - Preschool Christmas Program at 6 p.m.
- Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve Service at 7 p.m.