



Heart Beat Newsletter

Zion United Methodist Church

In the heart of Whitehouse



November, 2020

Pastor Carol's Comments

We are all facing the fact that the holidays are going to be different this year. But then, many of us remember other holiday seasons that were “different”—during the Depression, during times of war, maybe even during the polio epidemic. Or, maybe you’ve had a holiday season that was different because of changes in your personal life—the loss of a loved one, illness, financial issues, a move to a new city. The truth is, we experience “different” holidays at many times in our lives.

This year, things will be different at church, too. We won’t be having our Community Thanksgiving Eve Service this year, although I’ll post a Thanksgiving Eve meditation online. We’ll forego our traditional “Hanging of the Greens,” but if we find ourselves back inside during Advent, we’ll put out our most cherished decorations. We won’t be lighting each other’s candles on Christmas Eve, but I’m thinking of how we can celebrate that special night under the stars (as the shepherds did!).

It’s worth keeping in mind that many of our Christmas traditions were unknown to early Christians. “Christianity Today” says that trees and greenery weren’t associated with Christmas until the 1500s; in fact, the 2nd-century theologian Tertullian condemned Christians who hung laurel branches in their houses for winter festivals like their pagan neighbors did. According to Bob Vila (of PBS’s “This Old House”), poinsettias weren’t introduced in the U.S. until 1828!

The good news is that, while the virus has led to the cancellation of many things, hope is not cancelled. Joy is not cancelled. Peace and love are not cancelled. The fact of the birth of Christ and our anticipation of his return are not cancelled!

Paring away some of the trappings of Advent and Christmas, beloved as these traditions are, gives us a chance to focus on what is essential: the inbreaking love God has for the world. This year’s holidays may be different, but different can be good. Resolve now to see the goodness that these “different” holidays may hold for all of us.

News Around Zion

New Fall Dinner Format a Success!

Our change to a “take-out” format for the Fall Dinner was a success! Customers entered through the parking lot door, picked up their dinners, and exited through the south door. The menu was streamlined a bit to make it easier to serve in take-out fashion. For example, we substituted Pudge’s delicious home-made cole slaw for tossed salad and dressing. Customers still had ham and turkey options. They also could choose their desserts, packaged in see-through containers, which made it easier (or maybe harder!) to choose.

We served 100 dinners—more than in recent years. In fact, we ran out of turkey at the end of the night. We also saw some new faces among our customers. Another bonus—less clean-up.

Thanks to all who prepared, set up, served, and cleaned up. It was a good night!



Christmas Assistance Program Open for Business

Requests for Christmas assistance and offers to sponsor families are pouring in. Laurie sent letters to previous donors and publicized the program. The schools sent letters home with each child. Families can request assistance by calling or emailing the church through Dec. 1. After that, they can contact their child’s school. Want to be a sponsor? Contact Laurie or Pastor Carol.



News Around Zion (continued)

Trick AND Treat

Linda will be playing a little trick on us by taking a (much-needed and well-deserved) weekend off on 11/8. When our friend from Hope UMC, Russ Schifferly, learned that our regular substitute wouldn't be available, Russ offered to play his guitar for our service! Thanks to Russ for giving us a treat by sharing his gifts with us.

Operation Christmas Child

You still have time to support Operation Christmas Child. You can get a box from the church or use your own box. Also, don't forget to pick up a leaflet. Fill it nice and full with toys such as a ball, doll, stuffed animal, or coloring book and crayons. It is important to add school supplies because some parents can't afford to buy them, and their children can't go to school without them. You can also add personal grooming items like a comb, hair brush, or hair ribbons. There's a box of previously donated items that you can use to fill your box. When you are finished, fill out the envelope and include your donation of \$9.00 for shipping. Tape your label to one end of the box. We will be collecting and blessing the boxes on Sunday, 11/15.

Charge Conference

This year, our Charge Conference will be held here at Zion, on Wed., 11/11, at 6:30 p.m. We will elect our lay leadership and vote on pastoral compensation, among other matters. Pastor Warren of Hope will preside. (Since pastors are not allowed to preside over their own charge conference, Pastor Carol will preside over Hope's conference.) All are encouraged to attend.

Church Information

Pastor Carol Williams-Young
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Worship at 10:25 a.m.
Sunday School at 9:00 a.m.

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Find us on Facebook: whitehousezionumc

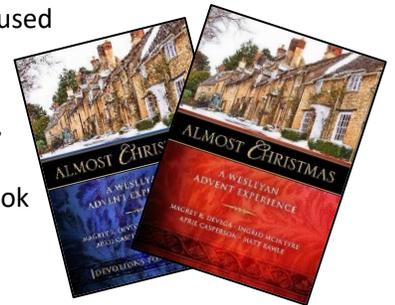
Website:
<http://www.zionumcwhitehouse.org>

Advent Study

This year, our study will be *Almost Christmas: A Wesleyan Advent Experience*. In it, the authors share how we can move from having "Almost Peace," "Almost Joy," "Almost Love," and "Almost Hope" to the whole-hearted experience that God wants us to have.

We'll begin at 6:00 (*note the new time!*) on 11/12 with an introduction to the study. Then we'll begin with the videos and book discussion on 11/19. (Advent officially begins on Sunday, 11/29, but since Christmas Eve falls on a Thursday this year, we only have three Thursdays before Christmas during Advent.) We'll continue to meet on Zoom. Email Pastor Carol to receive the link to join the group.

Even if you can't attend the online meetings, consider buying the book and studying along on your own. There is also an optional book of daily Advent devotions available. You may purchase the book (available in large print) at Cokesbury or from Amazon. (If you purchase from Amazon, don't forget to go to smile.amazon.com so that Zion will receive some of the proceeds.) *Note from Pastor Carol:* "If you want a good price on a used book, check abebooks.com. Books labeled "Very Good" or "Fine" are often like new, and much less expensive. I use this site often for my book purchases."



Upcoming Events

Sundays, 10:25 a.m. - Parking Lot Service, 106.1 FM

Thursday, 11/5, 7:00 - Bible Study on Zoom.

Tuesday, 11/3, 4-6:30 p.m. - Food Pantry

Wednesday, 11/11, 6:30 p.m. - Charge Conference

Thurs., 11/12, 6:00 p.m. - Advent Study on Zoom
 Contact Pastor Carol if you need the link.
 6:30 p.m. - Girl Scouts

Sunday, 11/15 - Deadline for OCC boxes

Tuesday, 11/17, 4-6:30 p.m. - Food Pantry