



Heart Beat Newsletter

Zion United Methodist Church
In the heart of Whitehouse



December, 2020

Pastor Carol's Comments

A couple weeks ago, we observed Christ the King Sunday, the last Sunday of the church year. I've been thinking back over the year that has passed, and as I have, some words from Ephesians have kept repeating themselves in my mind: "God...has made Christ the head over all things for the church, which is his body...."

Throughout the pandemic, there has been much discussion about whether churches should be "closed," and it's again a hot topic as virus numbers climb. Each time I hear people rail against churches being "closed," I grit my teeth, because anyone who thinks a closed church *building* equals a closed *church* doesn't really understand what the Church is.

Quite simply, the Church is Christ's body in the world. We are his hands, reaching out to help. We are his feet, going where we need to go to share the love of Jesus. We are his voice, raised in prayer, praise, and the healing message of the gospel, whether we're in our sanctuary, in our homes watching on a computer, or in the parking lot. Ours are the hearts that break for the pain of others and yearn to feel as completely as possible "the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."

No matter what the past year has brought, the Church has been open at Zion, as we have made adjustments and continued to learn, worship, and serve—feeding the hungry, clothing those who need warm clothing, and ensuring that children are cared for. No matter what the new year that began on the first Sunday of Advent brings, whether our building is open or closed, Zion will continue to be the Church, which is Christ's body.

Yes, Virginia, There Will Be a Christmas Eve Service!

We will celebrate Christmas Eve together on 12/24 at 7:00 p.m. As of this writing, details are still being worked out. It's likely that, like the shepherds, we will be gathered under the stars. But, as we have done throughout the changing circumstances of this year, we will adjust as needed so that we can mark this special time together with Scripture, candlelight, and song.

News Around Zion

Christmas Assistance Update

Laurie Dotson has been busy fielding requests for assistance and offers to give it. As of this writing, 29 families have asked for a hand. There may be more, since families can still make requests by contacting their child's school.

Laurie's publicity and letters to previous donors resulted in 33 groups and individuals offering to sponsor a family. Two businesses and two individuals have made or asked about making a donation to the program. Some of these sponsors have asked for multiple families to adopt.

In order to minimize COVID exposure, Laurie, Ben, and Caleb will be receiving items from sponsors on Dec. 10. The items will sit over the weekend to rid them of any COVID contamination. Pick-up will be by appointment the following week. Recipients will stay in their vehicles and wear a mask while the items are loaded into their vehicles, so that all will have both a merry *and* safe Christmas.

Operation Christmas Child Boxes

22 OCC boxes were sent on their way this year! Thanks to all who filled boxes, purchased items to add, and donated money for postage.

Warm Heads, Hands, and Bodies...

This year we will again be collecting blankets, hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, and other winter items for men, women, and children. These items will be donated to a charity in Toledo. In past years we have donated them to St. Paul's or to the Family House. We will be collecting the items through the month of December and deliver them in early January. Place them in the basket by the door on Sundays or on the kitchen counter during the week.

...And Full Tummies, Too

We continue to help ensure that AW schoolchildren have enough to eat when schools are closed. Each Friday, 52 children pick up food for the weekend. On the Monday before Thanksgiving, 63 households came to Zion to pick up 103 bags with enough food for the week of vacation. The next vacation bag pick-up is on 12/21 here in our parking lot.

**News Around Zion (continued)**Electronics Recycling Day Returns!

For the 4th year, we will host our Annual Electronics Recycling Day on Saturday, 1/23, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the church parking lot. All are invited to come and dispose of their unwanted electronic devices in an environmentally responsible way, so start spreading the word!

According to Recycle IT, studies suggest that as many as 100 million consumer electronics items become obsolete every year. This electronic waste is the fastest growing portion of our waste stream—growing almost three times faster than our overall municipal waste. Electronic devices contain mercury, lead, and other harmful materials that can poison the soil, water, and air if burned or buried in a landfill. Recycle IT strives to be a zero-landfill company and avoid incineration.

Our Recycling Day is in keeping with United Methodist beliefs about care of the earth. We believe that all of creation is God's, and as a denomination we support and encourage policies and activities that facilitate the safe processing of toxic waste, provide appropriate recycling opportunities, and reduce municipal waste.

Advent Trivia: Why Is the 3rd Advent Candle Pink?
Advent is a time of repentant waiting, symbolized by purple or blue candles. On the third Sunday, joyous anticipation breaks into our penitence. In fact, this Sunday is called "Gaudete Sunday," from the Latin word for joy! The pink candle symbolizes the lighter mood of Gaudete Sunday.

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>

Christmas Shopping

Your Christmas shopping can make the world a better place and support the ministries of Zion.

Shop online at nearly 3000 stores through UMCMarket.org and iGive. On your first visit to the site, choose Zion as your organization and join iGive. Click on the link to the store where you want to shop, and we will earn a portion of your purchase. Each store lists the donation it will make.

Sign your Kroger Plus card up for Kroger Community Rewards, and your purchases will count towards a "pot" of money from which Zion will receive a share. Go to kroger.com, log in to your account, click on "Community Rewards," search for and choose "Whitehouse Zion" (or PP098). Once you're set up, just use your card each time you shop. We earned \$31.95 last quarter!

Amazon Smile sends us .5% of every eligible purchase each month when you choose Zion as your Smile charity. Go to smile.amazon.com (no www. at the beginning.), log in to your account, click on Choose/Change My Charity, and choose Whitehouse Zion. Always begin your Amazon shopping session at smile.amazon.com, so that your purchases will automatically be credited to Zion. We earned \$12.44 in our first few months on AmazonSmile. Tell everyone you know to add us as their Smile charity; that Christmas shopping can really add up!

Find Fair Trade gifts at Cokesbury.com. Just enter "Fair Trade" into the search box to see dozens of beautifully crafted gifts that will support others around the world.

Upcoming Events

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

Thursday, 12/10, 6 p.m. - Advent Bible Study on Zoom.

Tuesday, 12/15, 4-6:30 p.m. - Food Pantry

Thursday, 12/17, 6 p.m. Advent Bible Study on Zoom.

Monday, 12/21, 9-10 a.m. - Drive-by food bag pick-up for AW students

Thursday, 12/24, 7 p.m. - Christmas Eve Service

Sat., 1/23, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Electronics Recycling