

GOD'S DREAM SEEKERS NEWS

December 2017
Volume 4 Issue 12



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December! Tis the season for Holiday cheer! We will start to see decorations dawning our homes and streets, and shopping windows twinkling with the smiles of children dreaming of that special gift. This is also the time of year that we Christians start getting asked the question of our loyalty to Christ. Should we Christians be celebrating Christmas?

I was reading an article in a Christian magazine, Beyond Today, and it covered a perspective on this very topic. Of course the reporter of Beyond Today has a very biased opinion as to why we should not celebrate Christmas. There were plenty of great arguments as to why we should not, such as; the Bible does not support or mention it, December 25th is not Jesus' actual birthdate, Santa Clause is a lie, Christ does not mention it, and God condemns it as he explicitly orders the Israelites to not copy or adopt the religious practices of the pagans. (Duet. 12:28-32). My question is then, why do we honor the cross as a symbol of Christianity? As most of the before mentioned beliefs of Christmas could also apply to the cross.

The cross is mentioned in the Bible as a pagan device of torture and murder. Also, the Greek word commonly translated as "cross" in the New Testament is *Stauros*, which simply means pole or stake. But, Christians chose to use the translation of cross. Christ does not mention it as anything that is good. And again, God condemns the worshiping of all pagan practices. So again, why do we celebrate Christmas, and now, why do we use the cross as a symbol for Christianity, as the arguments used for one can easily be used for both?

Here is my reason for both; the Cross as being my symbol, and why I celebrate Christmas;

- Do we really think that Jesus cares what day we honor him? My guess is that he does not, just as long as it is "Him" that we celebrate. The Bible does not give a specific date as to Jesus' birth, only clues. Theologians have argued and cannot come to an agreement as to the actual date, so no human but Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, truly know. What I do know is, God has a great power and knack for taking things that are bad, and turning them into something that is good in glorifying Him.
- St. Nicholas, he was real! He was not the man that we dress up as, and picture in a red suit trimmed in white, but he did do great things for the poor. He was a priest that did sneak about distributing gifts for the less fortunate.
- God does condemn pagan practices, in the Old Testament. But when Jesus came, did he not make all things new. The cross, a symbol of torture, pain and suffering, and murder. But after Jesus, this symbol has become a symbol of belief, hope, and of faith. Christmas, which was once a pagan holiday worshiping the son god, now a day of celebration for the birth of our Lord and Savior. The way I see it, everything does not happen for a reason, as God gives reason to everything. Our Lord has taken a lot of really bad things and/or situations, and made them into something extremely good. That is what I love the most about our Loving and Caring Father.

So, why do we Christians celebrate Christmas? It is my way of encouraging those who may not attend church on a regular basis, or not at all, and educating them on the Glories of God and what His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, did for us all. It can also be used to point out the wonderful works of God and how he can take a moment in our life, "the mess", and turn it into, "our message." Or, as my favorite saying goes, "Our biggest misery can turn into our biggest ministry." Enjoy this season of giving. Giving thanks to our Lord for teaching us the love that we must share to all of those around us!

Many Blessings for a Happy Holiday Season!

Pastor Eric.

Christmas by Candle Light

(sponsored by UMW)

Tuesday, December 12
6:30pm

Join us for a fun filled family evening. Wonderful stories, tasty goodies, Christmas carols and great fellowship. There is something for every age during this evening of celebration.

Please join us, all are welcome!



“All Things CHRISTmas”

**THANK YOU!
Thank you!
Thank you!**

To everyone who donated items to display and especially to those who helped to plan, set up and take down the display!

It was wonderful!
WE APPRECIATE YOU!

Next year will be a quilt display...spread the word!



“Join us for fellowship, food and solving the world’s problems as we see them... We meet every Wednesday at 8:30am at City Limits Restaurant – (next to McDonalds)

UMW-LADIES NIGHT

Meets the second Tuesday of the month. Next meeting will be on Tuesday, December 12 @

6:30pm—Christmas by Candle Light is this evening. Please remember to decorate your table anytime after worship on the 10th—12th. Those bringing goodies please plan to have your goodies to the church by 6pm so we can get everything set up.



This is also the United Methodist Women’s meeting where we make decisions that affect the UMW as a whole. Please try to attend as often as you are able. Your input is important to us.

MARY MARTHA CIRCLE



Meets the Third Tuesday of the Month. Next meeting: Tuesday, December 19, 2017 @

12:00pm—at Janet Fishers Home. Please bring a dish to pass and come enjoy great food and fellowship for our annual Christmas gathering.

Women gather together monthly to support each other, pray study the bible, have devotional time and discuss ways we can help with missions in the surrounding community and beyond.

We are currently studying the book “Living the Beatitudes” by John W. Fogal, Sr.



MILITARY PRAYER CHAIN

Please keep all persons serving in the US military branches in your prayers every day. Below are persons currently serving in the military who are loved ones of your church members.

- Staff Sargent Mandy Hagan
- Sargent First Class Frank Arnold
- Spec. Kathleen Arnold
- Ashley Friend
- Clint Walls
- Elliott McBride
- Christopher Peterman
- Jacob Shain
- Jeremy Cook
- Tyler Friend



Father,

Thank You for the men and women that protect this nation! Father, as they protect us, protect them as well! Lord, You know where they will be today and we pray that You will be there with them to guide them through whatever challenges and trials they face this day. We thank You for these men and women, Lord! We love You! Amen

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS



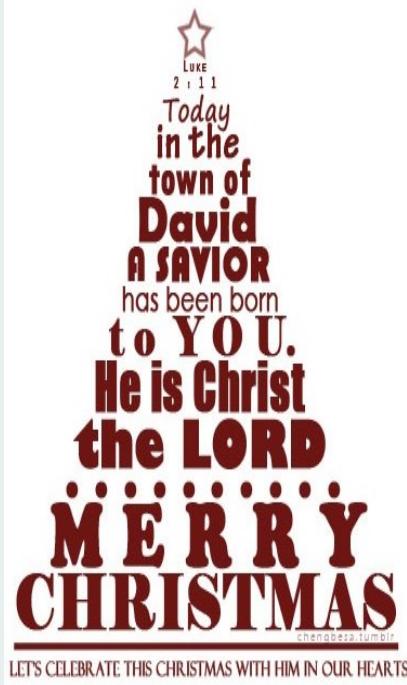
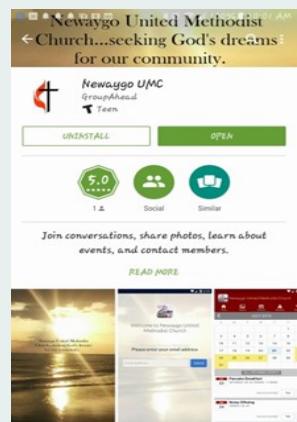
Amelia Stine—Doris Jacques—Edna Schilling—Family of Fern Glasspoole —Jean Bumstead—June Wade—Susanne Geerdink—Barb Westbrook—Peggy Hill Zoodsma (Jen Larsens Mother) - Family of Carol Gage (Deb Prins Grandma) - Unspoken Prayers—Military Service Persons—Peace in the World

If you have a loved one or a concern you would like added to the prayer list, please contact Deb Prins in the church office at 231-652-6581 or by email; debprins@sbcglobal.net.

When you have an immediate prayer chain request please call Carline Knoll at 231-652-1147. If she is not available call Deb Prins at the church office at 231-652-6581 or cell 231-335-8737.

NEWAYGO UMC APP

(android or apple):
[SMART PHONE](#)
USERS – Go to your app store on your phone and search for “newaygo umc” and download our app. This is a great way to get connected and get updates and reminders. There is a current calendar that updates daily. If you need help please see Deb Prins.



LET'S CELEBRATE THIS CHRISTMAS WITH HIM IN OUR HEARTS



SUNDAY SCHOOL

10:45am to 11:30am—

Children's Sunday School

11:00am to 12pm—Adult

Sunday School—Current

Study is “Redemptive C
ompassion” by Lois M.

Tupyi

All are welcome!

Children's Christmas Program

Sunday,
December 17

9:30am

(during worship)

Come and hear the true meaning of Christmas through the voices of the children of Newaygo United Methodist Church.

You won't want to miss this worship service!

Come and help the children celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ!

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Ways You Can Help

- **Children's Worship**—We will not be having Children's Worship on the first Sunday of each month as we would like the children to have this opportunity worship with the congregation and be a part of communion if they wish. **HOWEVER**—We still need volunteers to provide Children's Worship downstairs after children's time in regular worship once a month or if we get enough volunteers once every other month. HELP! HELP! Your help is needed! Has God been nudging you to move out of your comfort zone and do something different? Please consider Children's Worship.
- Snacks—We are also looking for persons to donate healthy snacks for the children.
- Nursery—We are looking for a couple more nursery volunteers for during worship on Sunday Mornings.

Please contact Anne Henning (Christian Education Director) at 652-6191 or annehenning1@comcast.net if you have any questions or would like to help.



Children's Sunday School Christmas Gift Making

Thank you to everyone who donated items for the kids to use to make Christmas goodies to sell at the Christmas Walk. The kids and adults alike had a great time decorating jars for “cookies in a jar”, dipping pretzels, spoons (for coffee/coco stirs) and we even dipped Oreo cookies. The children raised \$386.49 which they will decide as a group if they will donate that to Heifer International or to Make a Wish or if they will be supporting both charities.

Again...Thank you for all you do to support the children of Newaygo UMC!

Next Christian Ed Meeting

Monday, December 11 @ 6pm.

Please mark your calendars!

Mission Minutes

We have had a very busy fall in the mission field. Here are the highlights.

- **CROP Walk**-The entire community of walkers raised \$7,100. Our church contributed \$2,444 with 17 walkers participating, A big **Thank you** to everyone who walked, supported a walker or helped out with the meal. We couldn't do it without you.
- The **Mel Trotter** noisy offering (\$256.56) was collected in October to feed the homeless and hungry at Thanksgiving time. I'm sure that everyone had a delicious meal. **Thank You!**
- **Coats for Kids Drive** brought in 18 used coats to help keep people warm this winter. **Thank you.**

You are such a loving and caring congregation. God's love shows through your giving and support of those less fortunate than you.

- **Angel Tree Ministries** is our mission for November/December. The Angel Tree program seeks to provide the children (of prisoners) with gifts at Christmas time. Angels were placed on the Narthex tree with requests for the children. If you were able to take an angel please use the information to purchase a gift/or gifts (not more than \$20), wrap the gift/s and return it (with the angel attached) to the tree by Dec. 10th. The Mission committee will then mail or deliver the gifts before Christmas. The noisy offering from Nov. will be used to pay the postage to send the gifts to children who live out of our county. Money that is left will go to our Sunday school children to add to their fund raising efforts for a charity of their choice. If you have questions, please feel free to ask.,

Janet Fisher—Missions Chair

December 2017—Kids Hope USA

December and the end of the year already, can you believe it? Christmas and New Year is just around the corner. The midway point of our Kids Hope year is approaching. It seems we were just getting reacquainted after summer and here we are, preparing for Christmas. Time really does fly. I can feel the year rush by in a blur. Put away the flip flops, break out the Advent Calendar. Where is that elf on the shelf?

I have to remind myself to live in the moment and not let myself be carried away by the joy and pressure of the season. Christmas is not always my favorite holiday. I'm not the best example of peace on Earth goodwill to men. We all bring baggage to this wonderful and complicated season. I want to focus on the joy, but I often dwell on how exhausting Christmas can be. Our kids have the same of the same issues. They may not be able to put it in words, they may be 'naughty' instead. Your connection to your Kids Hope kid is so important. We all need to know we matter, even when it is busy and chaotic.

One final note NUMC, prayerfully lift up our new substitute mentor. I don't know who this person is, but there is a need. Everyone needs time off, even the most dedicated. The substitute would fill in during the school year, letting our students know they are a priority even if their 'regular person' can't make it in. This person needs to be a member of our church and undergo some training and a background check, both of which are relatively painless. I'm just kidding, not painful only a little time consuming. If you are interested, please contact me. Have a wonderful holiday.

Sherry Graham—Kids Hope USA Director



STAR POLISHER

The children of Newaygo United Methodist Church are working hard on a **CHRISTmas** play to present to the congregation on Sunday, December 17th @ 9:30am

We want to show the children how much we appreciate their hard work and how much we believe in them.

Remember to please send your child notes and words of encouragement (**SHHH it's a secret**) throughout the rest of December. Then on the day of the Christmas play (Sunday, December 17th) please bring a special gift (**PLEASE SPEND NO MORE THAN \$10**) to share with your star after the play.





Newaygo United Methodist Church Activities

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 12pm-9pm “All Things Christmas Display” 5pm-7pm— Soup Supper	2
3 9:30am – Worship 10:45am—Children’s Sunday School 11:00am—Adult Sunday School	4 11am-3pm—Pastor Eric Magner Office Hours 1:00pm—Wired Word Bible Study	5 11am-3pm—Pastor Eric Magner Office Hours	6 11am-3pm—Pastor Eric Magner Office Hours 12pm—Soup’s On @ St. Barts 12:30pm—Choir Practice	7	8	9
10 9:30am – Worship- 10:45am—Children’s Sunday School 11:00am—Adult Sunday School 6pm—Community Christmas Concert @ Grant	11 11am-3pm—Pastor Eric Magner Office Hours 1:00pm—Wired Word Bible Study 6pm—Christian Education Meeting	12 11am-3pm—Pastor Eric Magner Office Hours 6:30pm—Christmas by Candle Light	13 11am-3pm—Pastor Eric Magner Office Hours 12pm—Soup’s On @ Trinity (River Valley) 12:30pm—Choir Practice	14	15	16
17 Children’s Christmas Program 9:30am – Worship NO SUNDAY SCHOOL	18 11am-3pm—Pastor Eric Magner Office Hours 1:00pm—Wired Word Bible Study	19 11am-3pm—Pastor Eric Magner Office Hours 12pm—Mary Martha Circle Meeting @ Fishers	20 11am-3pm—Pastor Eric Magner Office Hours 12pm—Soup’s On @ Family of God Church 12:30pm—Choir Practice	21	22	23
24 Noisy Offering 9:30am – Worship NO SUNDAY SCHOOL 7:00pm—Christmas Eve Candle Light Service	25 11am-3pm—Pastor Eric Magner Office Hours 1:00pm—Wired Word Bible Study	26 11am-3pm—Pastor Eric Magner Office Hours	27 11am-3pm—Pastor Eric Magner Office Hours 12:30pm—Choir Practice	28	29	30
31 9:30am – Worship- 10:45am—Children’s Sunday School 11:00am—Adult Sunday School						

If you have something you would like added to the church calendar, please let the church office know as soon as possible. If you are planning an activity please check the large wall calendar in the church office or call the church office at 231-652-6581 to be sure the date is available for church use. Dates and times are subject to change so check the calendar often.



Treasurer's Report

Prayerfully consider how you can help support the ministries of Newaygo United Methodist Church in the coming year. Please remember when looking at the below figures that several contributions were

received for November after the last Sunday (November 26th) so they will be recorded in the contributions for December. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Deb Prins and she can give you a more detailed report of giving and expenses. Office 231-652-6581 or by email at debprins@sbcglobal.net.

Contributions through November 30, 2017 -	\$ 6,267.33
Expenses through November 30, 2017 -	<u>\$ 7,838.50</u>
Total	<u>\$1,571.17)</u>



December Birthdays

- 12/1 Greyson Magner
- 12/4 Ashley Friend
- 12/7 Sue Irwin
- 12/7 Amy Magner
- 12/17 Melven Carr
- 12/18 Dolores Cook
- 12/21 Taylor Prins
- 12/22 Paul Gray
- 12/26 Dave VanderHyde
- 12/27 Linda Geddes
- 12/30 Marilyn Dawson



Safety Team Update

Safety Teams in place for Sunday mornings during worship service.

Current Safety Team Members are: Rob Pope, Morgan Pope, Jane Bode Fowler, Dorothy Besemer, Jean Reynhout, Jim Bode, Jo Bode, Deb Prins, Dudley Irwin, Patti Venneman. We need more people to do safety checks on Sunday mornings so if you would like to help please let the church office know.

If you have any questions or concerns you would like to have considered please contact a Safety Team Member or contact the church office at 231-652-6581.

Next Safety Team meeting will be on Monday, December 16th @ 10:00am.



4th Saturday Pancake Breakfast—THANK YOU

Thank you so much to everyone who has helped in one way or another with the monthly breakfasts for 2017. Your efforts have helped to raise money that could be used for needed repairs, updates and other ministry uses this year. You are an amazing group of people. Thanks!

Also thank you to the community and to everyone who has eaten breakfast throughout the year. If it was not for your donations there are many things we would not have been able to accomplish in 2017

Thank you and see you next year!

**Saturday, January 27, 2018
Serving 8am-11am**

All you can eat pancakes, sausage, bacon, biscuits & gravy, scrambled eggs, American fries, fruit & drink. Invite your friends and neighbors for breakfast. Cost is by donation.

December Anniversaries

- 12/10 Bill & Lois VanDyke
- 12/23 Kenneth & Kathryn Cain

If your birthday or anniversary date is missing, please contact Deb Prins at 231-652-6581 and update your information.

WORSHIP HELPERS DECEMBER 2017

December 3

Liturgist: Ben Lester

Inside Usher: Jane Bode Fowler & Harriet Kiper

Outside Usher: Jean Reynhout & Dianna Weaver

Acolyte: Morgan Pope

Projector: Deb Prins

Sound: Need Volunteer

Nursery: Taylor Prins

Children's Worship: No Children's Worship

Safety Team: Jean Reynhout & Jane Bode Fowler

December 10

Liturgist: Carline Knoll

Inside Usher: Ruth Merritt & Janet Fisher

Outside Usher: Anne Henning & Dorothy Besemer

Acolyte: Rachel Larsen

Projector: Taylor Prins

Sound: Deb Prins

Nursery: Harriet Kiper

Children's Worship: Chris & Danielle Gleason

Safety Team: Patti Venneman & Dorothy Besemer

December 17

Liturgist: Ron Pardonnet

Inside Usher: Vern & Carolyn Boose

Outside Usher: Sue Osborn & Karen Winchel

Acolyte: Blake Larsen

Projector: Deb Prins

Sound: Taylor Prins

Nursery: Jane Bode Fowler

Children's Worship: No Children's Worship

Safety Team: Need More Volunteers

December 24

Liturgist: Anne Henning

Inside Usher: Ruth Merritt & Arlene Salacina

Outside Usher: Carline Knoll & Jean Reynhout

Acolyte: Saria Brooks

Projector: Deb Prins

Sound: Need Volunteer

Nursery: Taylor Prins

Children's Worship: No Children's Worship

Safety Team: Rob & Morgan Pope

December 31

Liturgist: Brenda Huckins Bonter

Inside Usher: Ruth Merritt & Arlene Salacina

Outside Usher: Carline Knoll & Deb Prins

Acolyte: Gabriella Brooks

Projector: Elizabeth Brooks

Sound: Deb Prins

Nursery: Amy Magner

Children's Worship: Anne Henning

Safety Team: Rob & Morgan Pope

If you would like to help with worship on Sunday morning please contact the office at 231-652-6581 or debprins@sbcglobal.net and we will put you on our list for worship helpers.

Sunday Fellowship Opportunity

SNACKS

We are looking for persons to sign up to bring refreshments for after church on Sunday mornings. There is a sign up sheet in the coffee area and there are many spots not filled. If you can provide a snack of your choice to enjoy after worship **please sign up for one of the Sunday's that are still not spoken for.** Thank you in advance for your help.

snacks &
fellowship



Preparing for Christmas: Tips for keeping the holiday season holy

"Are you ready for Christmas?" There is so much to do! If we think about Advent a little differently, our "getting ready" could be more of a holy time. Most of us strive to "keep Christ in Christmas," but the busyness has a way of getting in the way. Advent devotional books are available at the church with a meditation for each activity. Pick yours up on Sunday.

Worship

Worship with your church. In addition to Sunday worship during Advent and the Candlelight Christmas Eve service, plan to attend the Children's Program (December 17th @ 9:30am). If you do not have a regular congregation with whom you worship, find one near you using [Find-A-Church](#).

Worship with your family. Purchase or make an Advent wreath and hold a small service each Sunday night to help everyone in the family get ready for Jesus' birth. *Pockets*, a devotional from Upper Room Ministries, has a kid-friendly plan for family devotions around the Advent wreath.

Worship privately. Spending time alone with God can be a great way to draw closer. Upper Room Ministries publishes **devotions every day** of the year that offer a scripture reading, a devotional thought, and a prayer.

Decorating and baking

Pray through your decorating. Many of our Christmas decorations have religious significance. The wreath is round, reminding us of the constancy of God. The Christmas tree is an evergreen, a reminder that God's promises never fail. Even the lights can serve as reminders that Jesus is the light of world! Not to mention the nativity scene on the coffee table and the angels on the special Christmas party napkins. Whether decorating yourself or enjoying others' displays, let the images spur you to prayers of gratitude.

Bake some extra. When baking for guests, the cookie swap, or to give as gifts, take a few extra moments and make one more batch to give away. Then visit the local homeless shelter, food bank, first responders, or others with whom you want to share.

Remember. These preparations are sometimes filled with memories—ornaments from our childhood Christmas tree, recipes your first learned from your grandmother, and more. Take the time to savor the memories and give thanks for the saints who have lived before you.

Education

Study the Bible. The story of God coming to us in the person of Jesus—the incarnation—is central to our Christian faith, and a favorite topic of John Wesley. Get a good, devotional Bible study guide and delve into the meaning of Christmas from a new angle.

Read a book. Maybe you have always wanted to know more about the theology of the incarnation or have always wanted to re-read Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol*. Set aside some time every day to dive into a good book just for fun, or to learn something about Christmas.

Giving

Give fair trade. Fair trade gifts, like those available through the vendors certified through The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), support companies that pay their workers a livable wage. These workers are then able to support their families and contribute to a just and sustainable economy.

Give time. Find a mission to support, or a neighbor who needs a hand and make a gift of your time. You might shovel snow, drive to doctor's appointments or take a meal over once-a-week.

Give money. Continue to support the ministries and missions of your United Methodist congregation by giving a donation in honor of a loved one. Send them a card telling them that you gave in honor of them this Christmas.

Celebrate

Sing. Christmas music is everywhere. Join in the song.

Be creative. Write a poem or song. Paint. Create a collage. Crochet. Work with wood. Use your talents and abilities in celebration of the season and thanksgiving for the gift of Jesus.

Throw a party! Children love birthday parties, so have your kids invite some of their friends to your house for a birthday party for Jesus during winter break. Play games, have some cake and ice cream. Mix birthday and Christmas traditions.

Enjoy the food. You may not need to be encouraged for this one, but remember the gift of food—even holiday treats—though not to excess. Let the abundance of good food be a reminder of the provision of God. "Taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Psalm 34:8).

Be kind to yourself. Sometimes we put a lot of pressure on ourselves during this busy time. Give yourself permission to miss a party or two. Choose to be with family, to spend time alone, to see your child's Christmas choir concert at school, and enjoy the season.

Newaygo United Methodist

Church

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We are God's Dream Seekers who seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ in ways that show love, respect and service to our community.

Join us on Sunday Mornings for Worship at 9:30am with fellowship following. Sunday School for children & youth @ 10:45am. Adult Sunday School @ 11:00am

All are welcome.

If you have any questions or would like more information regarding worship services and activities at Newaygo United Methodist Church please feel free to call the church office Monday-Thursday 9am-1pm.


Newaygo United
Methodist Church
P.O. Box 366
Newaygo, MI 49337

PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE