

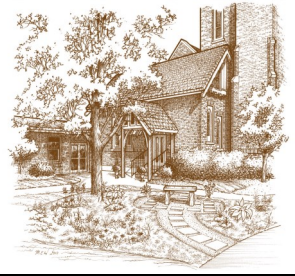


The Stidham Story

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December 2015

Stidham United Methodist Church

Dave's Diary

Another church year begins!

Last Sunday, November 29th, was the official start of a new Christian year. Advent is the start of the Christian year and is the time we anxiously anticipate the historic birth of Jesus. Advent comes from the Latin *adventus*, 'coming'. The Vulgate translation of the Greek Bible into Latin has '*adventus*' for the Greek word '*parousia*', which means 'coming' or 'presence' and more often than not refers to the eschatological coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, or to the Lord, or of the Son of Man, or simply to his coming. The season of Advent begins the fourth Sunday **BEFORE** Christmas and focuses on the past, the coming of Christ at the incarnation, and on the future; His coming as judge at the *parousia*.

The adult Sunday class is doing a Bible Study on Advent called 'Finding Bethlehem in the Midst of Bedlam' by James W Moore. If you are interested in reading the book we can certainly order more. It is an in depth study on the Old Testament scriptures that point to Jesus, and the New Testament fulfillment of the Old Testament scriptures.

I will most likely use the lectionary during this Advent season in sermons because it is the start of year C of the lectionary which has Luke as the primary gospel reading, a guide for sermons which has three scripture rotations (A-B-C) or three years of suggested scriptures. Year C is from Luke and is written in the perspective of a Gentile. It is my hope that you will enjoy this season of sermons and will learn more from the Bible on your walk with Jesus.

I pray that this is a joyful Christmas season for one and all; that we can count our blessings and demonstrate our Christianity to all through our witness.

Blessings to you;

Dave



PASTOR DAVE'S SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

Pastor Dave's class is studying "Finding Bethlehem in the Midst of Bedlam" this Advent season. Please join us Sunday mornings at 9:00 am during Advent. It should be very interesting!

January 2016, Newsletter articles are due by Wednesday December 25.
Thank you

Stidham UMC

Attendance and Weekly Giving Report

<i>Attendance</i>			
	SS Totals	Worship	Totals
11-01-2015	16	93	109
11-08-2015	15	104	119
11-18-2015	12	73	85
11-25-2015	14	86	100
11-29-2015	12	91	103
October Totals	69	447	516

<i>November</i>			
	Budget Income	Specials	Total Deposit
11-01-2015	\$ 4,169.71	\$ 940.00	\$ 5,109.71
11-08-2015	\$ 2,541.25	\$ 1,420.00	\$ 3,961.25
*11-10-2015	\$.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00
11-18-2015	\$ 1,783.96	\$ 574.00	\$ 2,357.96
11-25-2015	\$ 2,634.25	\$ 420.00	\$ 3,054.25
11-29-2015	\$ 3,495.25	\$ 173.00	\$ 3,668.25
November Totals	\$ 14,624.42	\$ 9,527.00	\$ 24,151.42

* Deposit 11-10-2015—Donor Deposit to Specials

October 2015 — Income & Expenses

General Acct Jan—Oct Income	General Acct Jan—Oct Expenses	Specials Acct Oct Income	Specials Acct Oct Expenses
\$ 132,333.99	\$ 138,003.92	\$ 7,078.00	\$ 12,856.60
<i>Checkbook Total—10-31-2015</i>			
	\$ 17,824.19	<i>Checkbook Total 10-31-2015</i>	\$ 34,919.34

Complete monthly reports are available. If you would like a copy contact Paula in the church office: 765-474-2806 or email: stidhamumc@yahoo.com

YOUR 2016 OFFERING ENVELOPES ARE ON A ROUND TABLE IN FELLOWSHIP HALL.

PLEASE TAKE 1 BOX PER FAMILY.

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO SIGN FOR THEM.

THANK YOU, JUDY HENDERSON, FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Cathy's Corner

The Gold and Ivory Tablecloth

Reader's Digest Magazine

Rev. Howard C. Schade

December 1954

At Christmas time, men and women everywhere gather in their churches to wonder anew at the greatest miracle the world has ever known. But the story I like best to recall was not a miracle—not exactly.

It happened to a pastor who was very young. His church was very old. Once, long ago, it had flourished. Famous men had preached from its pulpit, prayed before its altar. Rich and poor alike had worshiped there and built it beautifully. Now the good days had passed from the section of town where it stood. But the pastor and his young wife believed in their run-down church. They felt that with paint, hammer, and faith, they could get it in shape. Together they went to work.

But late in December, a severe storm whipped through the river valley, and the worst blow fell on the little church—a huge chunk of rain-soaked plaster fell out of the inside wall just behind the altar. Sorrowfully the pastor and his wife swept away the mess, but they couldn't hide the ragged hole. The pastor looked at it and had to remind himself quickly, "Thy will be done!"

The joyful purpose of the storm that had knocked a hole in the wall of the church was now quite clear.

But his wife wept, "Christmas is only two days away!"

That afternoon the dispirited couple attended an auction held for the benefit of a youth group. The auctioneer opened a box and shook out of its folds a handsome gold-and-ivory lace tablecloth. It was a magnificent item, nearly 15 feet long. But it, too, dated from a long-vanished era. Who, today, had any use for such a thing? There were a few halfhearted bids. Then the pastor was seized with what he thought was a great idea. He bid it in for six dollars and fifty cents.

He carried the cloth back to the church and tacked it up on the wall behind the altar. It completely hid the hole! And the extraordinary beauty of its shimmering handwork cast a fine, holiday glow over the chancel. It was a great triumph. Happily he went back to preparing his Christmas sermon.

Just before noon on the day of Christmas Eve, as the pastor was opening the church, he noticed a woman standing in the cold at the bus stop.

"The bus won't be here for 40 minutes!" he called, and he invited her into the church to get warm.

She told him that she had come from the city that morning to be interviewed for a job as governess to the children of one of the wealthy families in town but she had been turned down. A war refugee, she had imperfect English.

The woman sat down in a pew and chafed her hands and rested. After a while, she dropped her head and prayed. She looked up as the pastor began to adjust the great gold-and-ivory lace cloth across the hole. She rose suddenly and walked up the steps of the chancel. She looked at the tablecloth. The pastor smiled and started to tell her about the storm damage, but she didn't seem to listen. She took up a fold of the cloth and rubbed it between her fingers.

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The Gold and Ivory Tablecloth

(Continued from page 5)

“It is mine!” she said. “It is my banquet cloth!” She lifted up a corner and showed the surprised pastor that there were initials monogrammed on it. “My husband had the cloth made especially for me in Brussels! There could not be another like it!”

For the next few minutes, the woman and the pastor talked excitedly together. She explained that she was Viennese, that she and her husband had opposed the Nazis and decided to leave the country. They were advised to go separately. Her husband put her on a train for Switzerland. They planned that he would join her as soon as he could arrange to ship their household goods across the border.

She never saw him again. Later she heard that he had died in a concentration camp. “I have always felt that it was my fault—to leave without him,” she said. “Perhaps these years of wandering have been my punishment!”

The pastor tried to comfort her, urged her to take the cloth with her. She refused. Then she went away.

As the church began to fill on Christmas Eve, it was clear that the cloth was going to be a great success. It had been skillfully designed to look its best by candlelight. After the service, the pastor stood at the doorway; many people told him that the church looked beautiful. One gentle-faced, middle-aged man—he was the local clock-and-watch repairman—looked rather puzzled.

“It is strange,” he said in his soft accent. “Many years ago, my wife—God rest her—and I owned such a cloth. In our home in Vienna, my wife put it on the table”—and here he smiled—“only when the bishop came to dinner!”

The pastor suddenly became very excited. He told the jeweler about the woman who had been in church earlier in the day.

The startled jeweler clutched the pastor’s arm. “Can it be? Does she live?” Together the two got in touch with the family who had interviewed her. Then, in the pastor’s car, they started for the city. And as Christmas Day was born, this man and his wife—who had been separated through so many saddened Yuletides—were reunited.

To all who heard this story, the joyful purpose of the storm that had knocked a hole in the wall of the church was now quite clear. Of course, people said it was a miracle, but I think you will agree it was the season for it!

I hope you enjoyed this Christmas story as much as I did. We all know there are often miraculous happenings during the Advent season – the greatest of which was Jesus’ birth.

Merry Christmas to you all;

Cathy



A NOTE FROM NOBLE KIZER WHO IS IN CHARGE OF OUR HELPING HANDS FUNS

The Helping Hand Fund is your church’s program to help individuals, or families, who need help, particularly emergency situations. The Fund’s purpose is to assist the members of your congregation who need support, for example, with utility payment, medical bills, food needs, and other personal concerns.

Secondly, we offer the same for people in the townships in the surrounding areas: Jackson, Randolph, Union, and Wea. Occasional requests for assistance by those outside of these townships are rarely considered.

The HHF is supported by our member’s contributions in the Bible Study and Thursday Prayer Group meetings. All other members are otherwise requested on the first Sunday of each month to contribute, during our Communion Service. This is a “free will” donation which may be made by using the envelopes in the pews and placing them in the Offering Plates. Just put “HHF” and your name on the envelope to receive credit for your generosity. This contribution, of course, is tax deductible.

The Helping Hand Committee thanks everyone for their help.

FOOD PANTRY

On six days during 2015, members of Stidham UMC worked at the new Food Pantry at N. 14th Street and Tippecanoe Street in Lafayette. Each day, for two and a half hours, food was given to the needy of our community. The work was hard, but the need was great.

Thank to the following helpers who took time to make this a better and more caring community: Allen & Margaret Cummins, Sue Davis, Larry and Jane Hand, Cathy Inskeep, Shirley Powell, Diann Robinson, Judy Wagner, Jim & Susan Walters and Dave and Susie Webb.

BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM

Monday nights at 6:30pm and Tuesday morning at 10:00am, Pastor Dave has a Bible Study.

He is a Great Teacher of the Bible! Come join us!!

We are studying the Book of Wisdom

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KIDS NIGHT OUT PROGRAM

The Kids Night Out Program has started and will be the first Wednesday of each month September-December, 2015 and February-April in 2016.

We are in need of people to help with the program. If you are interested, please see Arletta Brown. It is a wonderful opportunity to work with the children. God Bless our children!

BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER 2015

ANNIVERSARIES

6- Lee Yoder

7-Tim Driscol

13- Fern McDowell

16- Susie Webb

19- Pam DeVault

19- Tera Driscol

22- David Joseph

Congratulations to Pat & Melinda Wheeler on the birth of their daughter Paige and to Jared & Molly Slaven on the birth of their son



7- Ray & Mary Lou

10- Dave & Arletta Brown

19- Tom & Natalie Kanaby

30- Pastor Dace & Cathy Inskeep

31- Jon & Jeanine Newman



PRAYER LIST

Everyone needs prayer every day. Let us give thanks and ask God to be with those who are on our prayer lists and those going through personal struggles, health issues and other worries that they may have. Let us share our faith and show love to one another each and every day. Amen

Caitlin Wethington, Mary Kaiser, Bill Byers, Barbara Lawson, George & Doris Carlton, Tim Hilton, LeeRoy & Emma Lou & Williams, Meve Bowden, Karen Fridlin, Brenda Walker, Marilyn Bigelow, Roy Becker, Frank Arihood, Mike & Teresa Matthews, Cindy Lindstrom, Our Military, Our World Leaders and those who are prayed for silently.



THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY!!

It's a blessing to love those whom God brings into our path.

God's faithfulness endures forever.

Our godly lives and actions can draw others to Jesus.

The Lists

I celebrated Thanksgiving, first with my church family, then with my biological family. I prayed in each occasion that I was thankful for the blessings God has bestowed on me. The list comprised of health, a comfortable home, adequate food, a loving family, a caring church family, and a complete caring Heavenly Father. But — did I forget to be thankful for the greatest gift of all? I need to tell God— thank-you for giving me Jesus, His one and only son. He let me have a glimpse of His heart when He asked Mary to bear His son and to send him into the world as the world was recognized over 2,000 years ago. His assignment was to teach us to first love our Heavenly Father and to love each other. Scribes have recorded some of his teachings in the New Testament of the Holy Bible. There is enough scripture written down that if I follow his direction I will be a better person.

How do I say thank-you for such a perfect gift? What should be on my list of preparations for the birth of my savior? First I will honor the Advent season. Advent begins on the Sunday four weeks before Christmas day. This year it begins on November 29th and concludes on Christmas Day. The Upper Room devotional booklet provides meaningful litanies for four Sundays and Christmas Eve/morning on pages 40-42. Worship service in church each of those dates will have advent time to help me prepare for the greatest gift of all, Jesus.

It is a challenge to not become overwhelmed with preparation for Christmas day. I want to show love and caring for others by gift giving, baking, candy making, preparing a sumptuous meal and cleaning my home for the guests that will be arriving. Let's see — I'll need a list for gift shopping, a list for the grocery store, one for Christmas cards and stamps. I must call Sarah, my magical cleaning angel, for a cleaning date. A list for replacements of worn out decorations. The lists are endless. I just finished leafing through the latest catalogue from the Family Christian Bookstore. It is full of gift ideas. I also checked out the last issue of Taste of Home magazine and found many culinary suggestions to serve on Christmas day. Some way, I have no idea how, I have received twenty-five Christmas gift interest catalogues. Recycling will get them soon. I think the one catalogue used last year for children's gifts has shared my name and address. The mail carrier will be glad when the holiday season is over for 2015.

The commercial world has latched on to a beautiful gift given to me by God to make living financial gurus, forecast the holiday spending, will either make or break many of the industries that deal in merchandise. The reason for the season is forgotten and greed takes over. I can visualize tears falling from the eyes of Jesus as he watches the people forget him and center on themselves.

Isaiah 9:2-7 gives us a glimpse of what was to come to the world. On verse 6 I read "For to us a child is given and the government will be on his shoulders, and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace". (NIV) Luke records the following in Chapter 2:1-20. Verse 6 and 7 says, "while they were there (in Bethlehem) the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her first born son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn". (NIV) The description of the event continues in Luke to conclude the account of the birth of Jesus in verse 20.

I ask myself, will I find a room in my life for Jesus to be born? Come with me, experience the Advent season at Stidham UMC and make room in your heart for the Savior of the world; if we will find room for him on our Christmas Lists.

Have a blessed Christmas and a heart-felt New Year.

Love and prayers,

Betty Greene