



- Worship
- Teaching
- Example



Volume LXXX
 DECEMBER 2015
 JANUARY 2016



Lovilia Circuit Writer

Our mission at the Lovilia United Methodist Church is to show the love of Jesus the Christ to our community through worship, teaching, example and tangible acts of love.

FROM THE PASTOR

GREETINGS!

We are preparing to close out 2015 and begin 2016 – in a very literal way. Due to some time constraints, Judy Conner and I have decided to do a single newsletter for the December and January months. This format does present some challenges. One is that scheduling may not work out as anticipated, or that additional events may need to be added. Also, some activities may be cancelled. This is true anytime, but may be more common for the second month’s calendar. Please let us know if you are wanting us to continue with the bi-monthly format, or if you prefer us to attempt a monthly edition. (Doing a 2-month newsletter is also somewhat more cost effective.)

Although the early church chose to focus mostly on the Holy Week and Easter events, it soon became apparent that there was a need to affirm how it all began. So, the events recorded in Matthew and Luke about the birth of Jesus became more important to the Church. Those references to the Christ-child remain important to Christians today, even though commercial interests have certainly posed a threat to the meaning of the season.

So, MERRY CHRISTMAS! and a HAPPY NEW YEAR! to each and every one of you. May you find new meaning in the Christmas celebration, and may you experience a very significant beginning to a new year!

God’s blessings to all!
 Pastor Raymond Doser

BLESS US LORD, THIS CHRISTMAS, WITH QUIETNESS OF MIND; TEACH US TO BE PATIENT AND ALWAYS TO BE KIND. – HELEN STEINER RICE

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In This Issue...

Pastor’s Column

Lectionary Scripture Readings

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Thoughts & Prayers

**DECEMBER CALENDAR
 JANUARY CALENDAR**

LECTIONARY SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR SUNDAYS IN DECEMBER

- 6** – Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6
- 13** – Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18
- 20** – Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:47-55; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45
- 27** – 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52
- CHRISTMAS EVE (12/24)** – Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20
- CHRISTMAS (12/25)** – Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 98; Hebrews 1:1-12; John 1:1-14
- WATCH NIGHT (12/31)** – Ecclesiastes 3:1-13; Psalm 8; Revelation 21:1-6a; Matthew 25:31-46

LECTIONARY SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR SUNDAYS IN JANUARY

- 3** – Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72; Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12
- 10** – Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29; Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
- 17** – Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11
- 24** – Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21
- 31** – Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30
- NEW YEAR’S DAY (1/1)** - Numbers 6:22-27; Psalm 8; Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 5:15-21
- EPIPHANY (1/6)** – same readings as 1/3

WORSHIP AT NURSING HOMES

Worship service at Monroe Care Center is scheduled for Tuesday, **December 22**, at 10:00 a.m. and Tuesday, **January 26**, 2016, 10:00 a.m. Pastor Raymond Doser would welcome anyone who wishes to help with this endeavor. Thanks to Goldie Kraber for helping.

AFTER SCHOOL KID’S CLUB

Our last get together for the After School Kid’s Club was held November 18th. There were several of the Kids' Club participants who came to the special Thanksgiving worship service on Sunday, November 22. We were blessed when they sang two of the songs that had been used during our after-school gatherings this fall. Their participation is one more reason we were thankful that evening.

Did you know that according to the song, "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer", Santa has twelve reindeer? Sure, in the introduction it goes "There's Dasher and Dancer and Prancer and Vixen, Comet and Cupid and Donner and Blitzen..." That makes eight reindeer. Then there's Rudolph, of course, so that makes nine. Then there's Olive. You know, "Olive the other reindeer used to laugh..." That makes ten. The eleventh is Howe. You know, "Then Howe the reindeer loved him..." Eleven reindeer. Oh, and number 12? That's Andy! "Andy shouted out with glee." The proof is in the song!



DECEMBER

- 1 Bill & Debbie Conner (A)**
- 11 Tom Hastings**
- 13 Steve Gilkerson**
- 15 Taylor Hastings**
- 23 Heidi (Conner) Bell**
Dan Kimball

JANUARY

- 4 Virginia Weldon**
- 6 Calvin & Pam Chamberlain (A)**
- 9 Cody Bakalar**
- 12 Libby Bakalar**
Renee Bonnett
- 13 Leroy Hogeland**
- 19 Alyssa Gilkerson Swayne**
- 21 Luke Conner**

LOVILIA UMW by Goldie Kraber

Our Christmas party was held on Thur. December 3, with 20 persons attending. The pot luck dinner meal & a gift exchange was enjoyed by all. Pastor Ray presented the program. He gave the origin of hymns plus a story by Reba Macintyre, the Christmas Guest.

We will fill our "Goody-bags" on Monday, December 21 at 10:00 am and then deliver them. We have about 20 some names. If you want to submit one, just tell any of us. We don't want to miss anyone.

Please have your cookies - bars or whatever to the church by 10:00 am on Monday the 21st. The UMW will be providing the fruit.

Our January meeting will be Thurs. the 7th and we will be planning our activities for the coming year. Please attend and remember to bring your ideas for our activities.

Thou crownest the year with thy goodness.

Psalm 65:11

REMINDER:

Men's Prayer Breakfast at Bussey, January 7, at 7:00 a.m.

Lyle Kumer, Scott Hugen, Norma Barnes, Norma Jean See, Phil Lundstrom, Sheila Lundstrom, Virginia Weldon, Merlin Newman, Gayle Hastings, Connie Barnes, Linnette Holley, (Max & Lorena Bowman's granddaughter), Angie Geno, Teresa (Conner) Williams, Nile Cook, Max Bowman, Frieda Davis, our service men and women around the world, our shut-ins, and their caregivers and our leaders. Remember to offer prayers of thanks for each blessing we receive.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

Jenny Kimball, University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls

Taylor Hastings, granddaughter of **Gayle Hastings**, Indian Hills Community College, Ottumwa.

KEEP THESE IN YOUR PRAYERS

Please pray daily for Bishop Julius Trimble, our District Superintendent, Rev. Paul Smith, our Field Outreach Minister, Rev. Dr. Jaye Johnson, and your pastor.

Please pray also for our Conference Lay Leader, Margaret Borgen; our District Lay Leader, Sharon Spear, and the lay leadership and people of the church.

Please pray for the ministry of our sister congregation, Women at the Well UMC inside the walls of the Iowa Women's Correctional Institute at Mitchellville and their pastor, Lee Schott.

***Christmas is forever, not for just one day.
For loving, sharing, giving, are not to put
away like bells and lights and tinsel, in
some box upon a shelf.***

***The good you do for others is the good you
do yourself.....***

Don't you hate that awkward moment when Santa Claus has the same wrapping paper as your parents!

DECEMBER CALENDAR

6 – SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.; Worship, 10:00 a.m.

7 – Pastor's day off.

12 – Pastor's day off.

13 – THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.; Worship, 10:00 a.m.

14 – Pastor's day off.

15 – Monroe County Ministerial meeting, 9:00 a.m.

16 – Kids' Club Christmas Party, 3:30 to 5:00 p.m.

17 – Clergy Cluster, Oskaloosa, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (Senior Citizen bus trip from Albia to Ottumwa to the lighted display in the park – Raymond Doser to drive bus.)

18 – Albia Banks to hold Open Houses. At least one gives a donation to our church if it is listed on registration forms.

19 – Pastor's day off.

20 – FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.; Worship, 10:00 a.m.

21 – Pastor's day off.

U.M.W. to prepare "Goodie Bags."

22 – Worship service at Monroe Care Center, 10:00 a.m.

23 – No Administrative Board meeting – if anything comes up needing to have action, a special meeting will be called, possibly after a worship service. The next one scheduled is January 27. (Albia & E-B-F schools are off 12/23 to 1/4. It appears that T.C. schools dismiss at noon on 12/23 & resume classes on 1/5.)

24 – **Christmas Eve Candlelight worship service**, 6:30 p.m. (It had originally been scheduled earlier, but the town Santa Claus visit was moved to 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.)

25 – **CHRISTMAS!** May it be a special day for everyone!!

26 – Pastor's day off.

27 – FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.; Worship, 10:00 a.m.

28 – Pastor's day off.

31—**NEW YEAR'S EVE**

COMING: Annual reports will be worked on during January.

- We will try to schedule a four-week Bible study using Mayberry (Andy Griffith) television programs sometime during the winter. Some suggestions have been Wednesday evenings at 5:30, and possibly in February or the last 2 weeks of January and the first 2 weeks of February. What works best for you?
- The Spring edition of Kids' Club may begin on February 17, one week after Ash Wednesday. This would allow six sessions to end on Wednesday, March 23, or two days before our Good Friday worship service. What works best? (We have discovered that scheduling of 6 weeks after Easter has too many conflicts with Spring sports.) We may try to schedule a town clean-up in May. What would be a good date? Supper too?

JANUARY CALENDAR

1 – HOLIDAY: NEW YEAR'S DAY (Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus)

2 – Men's Breakfast at Bussey, 7:00 a.m. * Pastor's day off.

3 – EPIPHANY SUNDAY

Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.; Worship, 10:00 a.m.

4 – Pastor's day off.

6 – EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

9 – Pastor's day off.

10 – FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.; Worship, 10:00 a.m.

11 – Pastor's day off.

16 – Pastor's day off.

17 – SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.; Worship, 10:00 a.m.

Human Relations Day special offering.

18 – HOLIDAY: REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BIRTHDAY OBSERVANCE

The "Week of Prayer for Christian Unity" begins today and runs through Monday, January 25.

20 – We may begin our video "Mayberry" Bible study this day, 5:30 p.m.

23 – Pastor's day off.

24 – THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY. ECUMENICAL SUNDAY

Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.; Worship, 10:00 a.m.

25 – Pastor's day off

26 – Worship service at Monroe Care Center, 10:00 a.m.

27 – This may be a day for the "Mayberry" study, 5:30 p.m. If so, it will require a rescheduling of the Administrative Board meeting to another time or another date. (Also, the fourth session would fall on Ash Wednesday, which would also require some scheduling changes.)

30 – Pastor's day off.

31 – FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

Sunday School, 9:00 a.m.; Worship, 10:00 a.m.

This may be a "Great Day of Singing" emphasis.

COMING:

- A wedding is being planned at the church in March.
- GENERAL CONFERENCE is May 10 – 20, 2016.
- Pastor Raymond Doser is likely to be on vacation May 29 (Memorial Weekend) as granddaughter Taylor Doser is to graduate from Southeast Polk High School. Many of you know she was designated an Academic All State recipient on the Southeast Polk High School varsity volleyball team. She plans to attend the University of Northern Iowa to study accounting and possibly International Business. Pastor Raymond is also considering February 28 as a vacation day.
- Annual Conference is June 4-6 in Des Moines.

***WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU COME TO SUNDAY SCHOOL ==== 9:00 A.M.
ALL AGES ARE WELCOME. COME HELP US STUDY THE WORD OF GOD.
WORSHIP SERVICES FOLLOWS ==== 10:00 A.M.***

Here is a letter received from Nathan Chamberlain in November regarding the renewal of our website's annual storage and hosting fees:

"It's hard to believe the new **www.loviliaumc.org** site turns one year old this month. Every month, the home page shows birthdays, anniversaries, weekly service times and the events for the month. Occasionally it also showed a temporary feature article such as the annual UMW dinner, Bible School or the Lovilia Fall Festival. We also introduced Pastor Ray's autobiographical page, "Our Pastor," and added several photos to our photo gallery. Each month we also uploaded the newsletter so those near and far could access it and our thoughts and prayers have been raised to the website so those that can't be in services may keep informed and express their thoughts and prayers as well from wherever they may be.

Something I always find interesting when working with the website is knowing how much it's used. In the past year, we've had **1,290 visitors** and **3 months with visitors of 200 or more that month (Feb, Mar, June)**. It's good to know that the work being done locally at the Lovilia church is extending to an audience that can't make it regularly to services and events. And it's nice to think that no matter where we are or who we're visiting, we're able to download and print the current newsletter to share with friends and family.

Donations keep our web presence going. Last year, the website received a generous donation that covered the first five years of our address (www.loviliaumc.org) and the first year of hosting/storage (which connects our content to that address). We own our address until November of 2019, but it's time to renew the hosting/storage part of our web presence. It takes \$50 to renew the hosting and storage for our website each year, but it doesn't necessarily have to come from one person. And if we raised more the \$50, it would go toward future years' expenses.

We've set up a donation link on the website (scroll to the bottom to find it) in which you can donate any amount of your choosing (from \$1 on up) securely and online using PayPal. The donation is transmitted directly to me via email and I can then apply it to our account at that time. Another option is cash or check which can be given to Judy Conner or Pam Chamberlain.

It has been my pleasure serving as volunteer webmaster over the past year and I've enjoyed receiving the newsletter, joys and concerns and photos that you've all shared with me to post online. I look forward to another great year and hope our site will continue to serve as a ministry to both those at home as well as those of us at a distance. Best wishes to you all for a happy and healthy month.

Thanks,
Nate Chamberlain

T'was the night before Christmas and all through the house, Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. The stockings were hung by the chimney with care. They'd been worn all week and needed the air.

Teach The Children...

The True Meaning Of Christmas

Late one Christmas Eve, I sank back, tired but content, into my easy chair. The kids were in bed, the gifts were wrapped, the milk and cookies waited by the fireplace for Santa. As I sat back admiring the tree with its decorations, I couldn't help feeling that something important was missing. It wasn't long before the tiny twinkling tree lights lulled me to sleep.

I don't know how long I slept, but all of a sudden I knew that I wasn't alone. I opened my eyes, and you can imagine my surprise when I saw Santa Claus himself standing next to my Christmas tree. He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot just as the poem described him, but he was not the "jolly old elf" of Christmas legend. The man who stood before me looked sad and disappointed, and there were tears in his eyes.

"Santa, what's wrong?" I asked, "Why are you crying?"

"It's the children," Santa replied sadly.

"But Santa, the children love you," I said.

"Oh, I know they love me, and they love the gifts I bring them," Santa said, "but the children of today seem to have somehow missed out on the true spirit of Christmas. It's not their fault. It's just that the adults, many of them not having been taught themselves, have forgotten to teach the children."

"Teach them what?" I asked.

Santa's kind old face became soft, more gentle. His eyes began to shine with something more than tears. He spoke softly. "Teach the children the true meaning of Christmas. Teach them that the part of Christmas we can see, hear, and touch is much more than meets the eye. Teach them the symbolism behind the customs and traditions of Christmas which we now observe. Teach them what it is they truly represent."

Santa reached into his bag and pulled out a tiny Christmas tree and set it on my mantle. "Teach them about the Christmas tree. Green is the second color of Christmas. The stately evergreen, with its unchanging color, represents the hope of eternal life in Jesus. Its needles point heavenward as a reminder that mankind's thoughts should turn heavenward as well."

Santa reached into his bag again and pulled out a shiny star and placed it at the top of the small tree. "The star was the heavenly sign of promise. God promised a Savior for the world and the star was the sign of the fulfillment of that promise on the night that Jesus Christ was born. Teach the children that God always fulfills His promises, and that wise men still seek Him."

"Red," said Santa, "is the first color of Christmas." He pulled forth a red ornament for the tiny tree. "Red is deep, intense, vivid. It is the color of the life-giving blood that flows through our veins. It is the symbol of God's greatest gift. Teach the children that Christ gave His life and shed His blood for them that they might have eternal life. When they see the color red, it should remind them of that most wonderful Gift."

Santa found a silver bell in his pack and placed it on the tree. "Just as lost sheep are guided to safety by the sound of the bell, it continues to ring today for all to be guided to the fold. Teach the children to follow the true Shepherd, who gave His life for the sheep."

Santa placed a candle on the mantle and lit it. The soft glow from its one tiny flame brightened the room. "The glow of the candle represents how people can show their thanks for the gift of God's Son that Christmas Eve long ago. Teach the children to follow in Christ's foot steps... to go about doing good. Teach them to let their light so shine before people that all may see it and glorify God. This is what is symbolized when the twinkling

lights shine on the tree like hundreds of bright, shining candles, each of them representing one of God's precious children, their light shining for all to see."

Again Santa reached into his bag and this time he brought forth a tiny red and white striped cane. As he hung it on the tree he spoke softly. "The candy cane is a stick of hard white candy: white to symbolize the virgin birth and sinless nature of Jesus, and hard to symbolize the Solid Rock the foundation of the church, and the firmness of God's promises. The candy cane is in the form of a 'J' to represent the precious name of Jesus, who came to earth. It also represents the Good Shepherd's crook, which He uses to reach down into the ditches of the world to lift out the fallen lambs who, like all sheep, have gone astray. The original candy cane had three small red stripes, which are the stripes of the scourging Jesus received by which we are healed, and a large red stripe that represents the shed blood of Jesus, so that we can have the promise of eternal life."

"Teach these things to the children."

Santa brought out a beautiful wreath made of fresh, fragrant greenery tied with a bright red bow. "The bow reminds us of the bond of perfection, which is love. The wreath embodies all the good things about Christmas for those with eyes to see and hearts to understand. It contains the colors of red and green and the heaven-turned needles of the evergreen. The bow tells the story of good will towards all and its color reminds us of Christ's sacrifice. Even its very shape is symbolic, representing eternity and the eternal nature of Christ's love. It is a circle, without beginning and without end. These are the things you must teach the children."

I asked, "But where does that leave you, Santa?"

The tears gone now from his eyes, a smile broke over Santa's face. "Why bless you, my dear," he laughed, "I'm only a symbol myself. I represent the spirit of family fun and the joy of giving and receiving. If the children are taught these other things, there is no danger that I'll ever be forgotten."

"I think I'm beginning to understand."

"That's why I came," said Santa. "You're an adult. If you don't teach the children these things, then who will?"

(Author Unknown)

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

- No one will ever get out of this world alive. Resolve therefore to maintain a reasonable sense of values.
- Take care of yourself. Good health is everyone's major source of wealth. Without it, happiness is almost impossible.
- Resolve to be cheerful. People will repay you in kind.
- Avoid angry, abrasive persons. They are generally vengeful.
- Avoid zealots. They are generally humorless.
- Resolve to listen more and to talk less. No one ever learns anything by talking.
- Be wary of giving advice. Wise men don't need it and fools won't heed it.
- Resolve to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and wrong. Sometime in life, you will have been ALL of these.
- Do not equate money with success. There are many successful money-makers who are miserable failures as human beings. What counts most about success, is how a person achieves it!

**Why does Santa have 3 gardens?
So he can ho-ho-ho.**

16 NOMINATIONS – LOVILIA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

Chair: Fred Kraber
Vice-Chairperson: Bill Barnes
Treasurer: Judy Conner
UMW President: _____
Communion Steward: Lola Ivins
Sunday School Sup't: Linda Weldon
Membership Secretary: Christy Newman
Youth Representative: _____
Lay Member of Conference: Christy Newman
Lay Leader: Bill Barnes

Recording Secretary: Debby Conner
Chair of Trustees: _____
Financial Secretary: Marilyn Kraber
Assistant Financial Sec'y: _____
Assistant Communion Steward: Norma Barnes
Sunday School Secretary: Pam & Jennifer
Chamberlain
Youth Coordinator: _____
Alternate Lay Member: Dola Doser

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

2016: Ed Weldon, Phil Lundstrom, Sharon Waters
2017: Pam Chamberlain, Dola Doser, _____
2018: Merlin Newman, _____, _____

PASTOR-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Lay Leader: Bill Barnes
2016: Christy Newman
2017: Debby Conner
2018: Judi Johnson

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Judy Conner, Marilyn Kraber, Fred Kraber, Bill Barnes, Christy Newman, Gayle Hastings, Virginia Weldon, Phyllis Dunkin

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Chairperson: Pastor Raymond Doser
2016: Lola Ivins, Bill Barnes
2017: Calvin Chamberlain, Sheila Lundstrom
2018: Angie Kimball, _____

AUDIT COMMITTEE: Christy Newman, Marilyn Kraber

PLEASE NOTE:

A few positions still need to be filled. Please volunteer, prayerfully consider serving if asked.

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Remember that Pastor Raymond Doser remains "on call" during the listed days off. When vacation plans take him out of the area, there will be another pastor "on call."

***"Star Light, Star Bright, The first Star I see tonight;
I wish I may, I wish I might, Have the wish I wish tonight."***

This poem is known worldwide; many generations of children and adults alike have recited these words as they wished upon the first evening star. Stars are a sign of hope. In this Holiday Season we see many stars representing the Star of Bethlehem. This miraculous star was a sign of the birth of the Messiah many miles away. The star led wise men successfully to their destination.

May you find a guiding star that leads you on your personal Journey of Hope, your Destined Place, Your Best Wish upon a bright-bright Star. Every evening is a chance to be guided a little further down the lighted path with a renewed spirit. May you enjoy your Journey!

***LOVILIA UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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***MERRY CHRISTMAS
HAPPY NEW YEAR***

