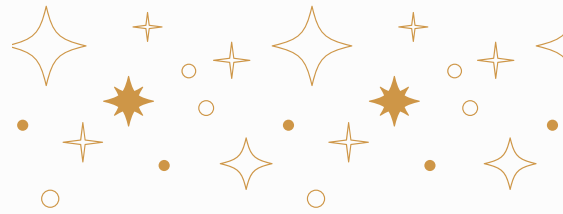


DECEMBER 26, 2021 - ADVENT 5

CROWN HILL NEWS



Merry Christmas! From Crown Hill Mennonite Church



Prayers

- Continue to lift up the Ramseyer family in your prayers.
- Pray for Austin Zuercher in Costa Rica who we support through EMM.
- Remember Beulah in prayer as she begins radiation treatment on December 20th at Wooster Hospital.
- Larry Morrison as he begins chemo treatments early in January
- Continue to pray for Win as she works on building strength back up in her foot.
- Remember our people in nursing homes: Patt (&Earl), Suzan, Martha & Carolyn.
- Pray for our shut-ins: Pete Stauffer, Paul Troyer, Elmer Richard, Mary Nussbaum, Ila Zimmerly, Win Ramsyer, Brady Murray and Fred's mother Doris Hoffman.

Upcoming Events/Announcements

- Christmas Eve Service Dec 24, 6:30pm. We will celebrate Christ's birth with a traditional Lessons & Carols Service, finishing up with candle lighting.
- Sunday, December 26th we will have a "Finger Food Carry-In" during the Sunday School hour. Church will start at 9:30am as usual, but instead of Sunday School we will fellowship together with all the tasty treats you bring in!
- This month's Food Pantry dates are December 30 & 31.
- On Sunday, January 2nd, we will be having an "Ebenezer Sunday." Just like the children of Israel gathered to pile stones to remember God's faithfulness, we will raise our Ebenezers on January 2nd. Please be thinking of a story of God's faithfulness or provision that you could share that day--and go out and find an actual stone to bring to church that Sunday!

December 26

Preaching: Thomas Dunn

Scripture: Colossians 3:12-17

Sermon: Donning New Robes

**"Happy Christmas all the year through,
because this world is with child;
its womb is filled with a kingdom to-come,
and that kingdom to come is leaping with joy."
-Fr. Joseph Donders**

Pastoral Letter: The Gift Of The Incarnation

This week the Holiday Season reaches its zenith with Christmas Day and New Year's Day both coming on a Saturday. In the midst of the holiday fever, Christians around the world seek to peel back the layers of the festivities and reflect on the meaning of the Christmas celebration. We center on a word that doesn't make it into many greeting cards, Hallmark Movies or the jingles that have been playing in stores since Halloween: Incarnation.

The Bible talks about incarnation as "The Word became flesh and dwelling among us." (John 1:14) Philippians 2 describes the incarnation as, "God made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself..." Of course the most popular scripture passage on the incarnation is the story of baby Jesus entering this world in a manger outside Bethlehem.

What does the incarnation mean to our faith? What does it mean that we worship a God who decided to come to his creation? To enter into the created world the exact same way that we all entered this world: crying, helpless and completely dependent on others. What does it mean that God chose to enter into a lowly stable when the palaces and temples of Jerusalem, Rome or Egypt would all have been available to him?

Like everything else that God does, the incarnation both comforts us and challenges us. It challenges our notion of what is important in the world. It challenges our view of power, of might and success. Although we all know it's wrong to think such thoughts, we are tempted to think that children born into poverty in this world won't amount to much. We love a good rags to riches story, but we don't usually pay attention to people until they've got to the "riches" part of the narrative. The incarnation tells us that the rags part of the story is just as important--maybe even more important the way that Jesus talks about riches...

The incarnation also brings us comfort. Jesus entering into this world as fully human blesses all the aspects of our humanity. This is not to say that Jesus blesses or condones all that humans do. Rather, it is an affirmation of what God said at the creation: "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good." Our human bodies, made in God's image, are very good. Good enough to be incarnated by the Lord and Creator of the universe. If these earthly bodies are good enough for God, they should be good enough for us! The incarnation means all things that come with being human are good: emotions, physical strength & weakness, awkward moments, painful losses, joyous moments, aging, loving, singing, worshipping etc. When God entered this world at the first Christmas, we received assurance that the human experience is good--not just something to be endured until we die. This holiday season, may you have a deep sense of joy knowing that God has created you in God's image and pronounced it very good.