

## Winsted United Methodist Church

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December, 2016

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### From The Pastor

As I write this, it is Thanksgiving week; this coming Sunday will begin the season of Advent. Advent, which refers to “coming,” is the season when Christians prepare for the coming of God’s gift of love wrapped in the human form of a baby, who grew up to become the embodiment of God’s Love, Light and Hope for the world.

It seems that our world needs God’s Love, Light and Hope today more than ever (though I guess most times in history have seemed needy as well!). In the United States we were battered by harsh rhetoric and name-calling and abuses throughout the presidential campaign; now we are trying to find our footing as we wait to see how the results of the election will change our lives and the lives of others who live in our country.

The world situation seems even worse, as threats abound, bombings wipe out hospitals in Aleppo, and refugee families are repeatedly turned away from countries overwhelmed by their needs. There seems little to trust in this world, near and far. Scandals keep breaking, cheating in the Olympic Games is once again in the news, leaders cannot seem to find reason or ways to cooperate. All while drug addiction keeps on killing our children and our neighbors. We need God’s Love, Light and Hope!!

So we look to Christmas, perhaps with spirits wondering if anything about it can really make a real difference this year. Children love it. Parents sometimes struggle with it, especially financially. For many, the season makes memories more painful and grief heavier. I have heard people say, “For me, it’s just something to get through...”

If we were just remembering an act long ago, the birth of Jesus Christ, we might get tired of Christmas or even give it up. Peggy Lee’s old song, “Is That All There Is?”, might be appropriate. Thankfully, that’s NOT all there is!! Because Advent and Christmas may point to a holy night some 2000 years ago, but

they are really about God at work in our dark world TODAY! And when God is at work, there is nothing old or even predictable about it!!

In our darkness, whether it’s failing health, fear of the future, despair over our children, a broken relationship (death, divorce, disagreement, etc.), loss of a job, depression, grief, homelessness, WHATEVER, God can shine a light and give hope and let us know that we are loved. Most of the time God works through other people to shine the light, but sometimes God just “snuggles” us, so that the darkness lifts a bit and our hearts become warmer and a little hope sneaks in. However God does it, that’s what Christmas is really about: God reaching into our dark worlds to give us a new way of looking at and living life!

I close with a prayer, gleaned and then edited a bit from *Worship & Song*, # 8:

*God of glory,  
Your splendor shines from a manger in  
Bethlehem into the darkness of human night.  
Open our eyes to Christ’s presence in the  
shadows of our world  
so that we, like him, may become beacons  
of your justice, sharers of your light,  
and defenders of all for whom there is no  
room. Amen.*

Have a blessed, heart-dancing, joyful Christmas!  
- Florence Eddins

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### Advent

Advent begins on Sunday, Nov. 27<sup>th</sup>. The four Sundays before Christmas, we watch for the Coming of our Lord and prepare ourselves to celebrate the birth of the Bethlehem baby. A candle will be lit each week, signifying the Light of the World (God’s love in Jesus) coming into the world.



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## Happy Birthday!

*(If YOUR birthday is not listed and you would like it to be, please call the church office. If some are listed that should not be, let us know.)*

### December Birthdays

- 1 Linda Kellogg
- 2 - Bob Hope
- 2 Peter Lovely
- 3 Yvonne Gower
- 4 Sue Dwyer
- 6 Norma Jarvis
- 9 - Vanessa Gagnon
- 11 Norma Jones
- 15 - Joel Gannon
- 16 - John Lundy
- 18 - Bill Perry
- 23 - John Gouthier
- 27 Richard Palmer
- 31 Darlene Grant

### December Anniversaries

- 15 James & Carol Hague
- 28 Sam & Ruth Francis

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Our sympathy to Matt and Sarah Zordan. Matt's Aunt died Nov. 17, 2016 at the age of 57. She was Amelia and Parker's great-aunt.

### Marilyn's Pantry

The pantry has been extremely busy. The cold weather has sent a lot more people in. Thankfully Barbara V. From the Simsbury church came in with a car load of food and articles for the Thrift Shop. Thanks to all who have donated this year, it is very appreciated.

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### Church Council -

Thanks to the congregation for your generous donations for UMCOR, we collected \$410.50. We

accepted our proposed budget which will be hopefully voted in during the Charge Conference. Christmas Caroling is designated for December 18<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve will be at 7:00 and Christmas Day we will have an Impromptu Nativity Celebration Play. We will tell the old, comfortable story of the birth of Jesus and sing all the favorite carols.

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### Charge Conference

Charge Conference - Sunday, Dec. 4<sup>th</sup> Our District Superintendent, Rev. Ken Kieffer, will preach and share communion with us, and then will lead us in our annual meeting after worship. Trustees and other officers of the congregation will be elected. **EVERYBODY, please come and be a lively part of this!**

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### Operation Christmas Boxes

Operation Christmas has come and gone. We had a total of 49 boxes.

Good job everyone. You have helped make 49

kids very happy. That's what it is all about, the kids. Thanks to everyone who contributed and special thanks to Carol for all the work she has done.

### Scrip Cards



It is getting close to Christmas time which means Christmas Presents. Don't know what to get that

special person? How about a gift card. There is a list of all the cards available for all the different stores. There should be a list in the Social Room if not, ask Issy or Georgette for a copy. Order blanks are on the table in the Social Room and the orders go in the last Sunday of the month. The November order will go out on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Then, the order for December will go in on the 11<sup>th</sup>, this will give enough time for me to place the order, receive the cards and get them out to you.

Christmas and I will see you next year - 2017!

The Bat

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### Christmas Caroling

The date of December 18<sup>th</sup> has been picked to go caroling. Anyone and everyone is invited, just dress warm and bring your singing voice. The caravan of singers will leave the church after coffee hour. When you come back to the church there will be hot cocoa and pizza waiting for you and some more caroling. If you want to go, just stay after church and find a car to ride in or volunteer your car and off you go.

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### Bat Column

I want you all to know that I didn't get any extra shut eye this month. I was up

in my belfry when I heard quite a racket - I thought it was Santa coming but low and behold, it was Barbara Hawley. Had I known she was going to visit, I would have baked a cake or at least had chips and dip! She checked out the belfry and then left. I heard at Trustees that she went up there to see what needed to be done. Sounds like my belfry is going to be spruced up a bit with primer and paint. A new face was here vacuuming the Sanctuary and I found out it was Raymond, Georgette's grandson. Raymond vacuumed and dusted the Sanctuary and the meeting room and brought in bags of food from IGA that Issy had picked up. I watched Barbara H. A couple of days cleaning out the room by the choir loft and hauling music and books up into the balcony. Meanwhile, Georgette and Issy come in every day and I watch them pick up the Sanctuary and get it ready for next Sunday. Corky and Patty ran in one day and Corky temporarily fixed the door bell. And now December is upon us, I love December, I know the church will be bustling with exciting things, people will be in and out, spirits will be high, there will be wonderful music, beautiful decorations and I will be in the middle of all of it. From the bat to you, here is wishing a very Merry

### Visitation

It would be nice to have some people go and visit our shut ins. After Christmas we always have poinsettias left behind or are designated for a shut in. It means a lot to someone who can't get out and be with the rest of us, to have a quick visit. Sometimes a quick visit is all they want, but it means so much to them and it will to you also. If you are interested in visiting a shut in see Pastor Florence. We also have prayer shawls that can be taken and given to the people. Give it some thought, it will only be a little bit of your time and mean so much to them.

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### Sunday School

Well, here is a topic we haven't read about in a long time. With having a few children in church it was brought up at Church Council that we should start a Sunday School. To start a Sunday School we need literature (we have that), we need teachers (any volunteers?) And we need children. It was discussed about having Sunday School before church that way the teachers and the children can go to church. For safety purposes, we need two teachers in with whatever children we have. If you have any interest in being a teacher talk to Pastor Florence about it.

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### Trustees -

The Trustees have hired Terance Graves to rebuild the small roof by the museum. He also has given quotes on repairing the plaster inside the Sanctuary and the Narthex. It should be around \$15,000. And the money will come from the insurance money. It was noted that Sue Bessette has resigned from being Co-Chairman. Barbara Hawley reported that she has been to the Parsonage and all but one window has been repaired. The chimney was inspected by two contractors and both said there is nothing wrong with it.

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### **Thrift Store -**

A new face was seen at the Thrift Shop this past month. John Lundy

volunteered to work Thurs. And work he did. He has cleaned the Thrift Shop, the storage area and the back room. Lots of new things are hanging and up for sale thanks to John and Sandy. We still can use other volunteers for Thursday and Saturday, three hours of your time. The calendar to sign up on is in the Social Room.

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### **Christmas Eve**

Christmas Eve service is 7:00 p.m.

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### **Christmas Sunday**

This year Christmas falls on Sunday. Instead of the usual service, we will be having an improptu Nativity Play. Anyone willing to take part will be nabbed on

Sunday morning (not to worry there isn't a lot of speaking, just walking and standing!) And given a part. It will be the telling of the familiar story with lots of carols to be sung. It will be a wonderful way to start your Christmas Day.

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### **Cookie Walk and Christmas Fair**

Just when you thought you could put your cooking sheets away and sit down and put your feet up - it isn't over. The date of December 3, 2016 has been picked for the Cookie Walk and Christmas Fair. This will be a surprise to you, but workers will be needed for setting up, working the day of and breaking down. Issy is heading the fair up so if you can't wait to get busy, see her about helping out. Don't put those cookie sheets away, we will need lots and lots of cookies. Last year we sold 41 large cans and 34 small cans - that's a lot of cookies! Seriously, give some thought to where you can help out and sign up.

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### **Perry Green**

Perry is at St. Francis Hospital and will be there for awhile. He would love to have visitors.

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### **YMCA Gifts**

The Christmas tree isn't up in the Sanctuary yet, but when it goes up, cards will be put on for gifts for the needy at the YMCA/ The list includes: Pillows (new), Twin Blankets (new or clean used), Twin Sheets and Cases (new or clean used), Toothpaste, Toothbrush, Soap, Deodorant, Shampoo, Shaving Cream or Gel. The cards on the tree will have this list in them, take a card, buy your gift, no wrapping involved, bring them and put them under the tree. Thank you.