



The Encounter

December 2016



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Come to the Manger

A self-guided, prayerful experience of over 60 nativity scenes for all ages.

Sunday, December 11, 2016
Open house from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Refreshments will be provided.

You are invited to bring a non-perishable food item for Ankeny's IMPACT food pantry.

Ankeny Presbyterian Church — 317 SE Trilein Drive, Ankeny, IA
www.ankenypcusa.org 515.964.0264

How Do You Picture Christ's Birth?

On December 11, you can see more than 65 artists' visions. Cheryl Schwickerath and her mother Darlene Schuster have collected about 50 different nativities. Some focus solely on the Holy Family. Others include a stable packed with worshipers and animals. One is so small it can fit in the palm of your hand. Another made out of nails features Mary, Jesus and Joseph as well as shepherds, an angel and the three Wise Men. In a south-of-the-border nativity, Mary, Jesus and Joseph sit on top of a bus surrounded by the belongings of the passengers inside.

A stable provides the setting for Sue Tomlinson's Willow Tree nativity. Shepherds and the Wise Men, along with sheep and camels honor the newborn babe, Mary and Joseph.

Sandy and Renny Wagener's collection has an international flair, including an origami nativity from Japan. Others were created by craftspeople in Africa, Peru and the West Bank.

We encourage you to share this memorable experience with others in Ankeny. Please invite your family, friends and neighbors to join you for this free, and oh-so-inspiring Christmas celebration. (Above is a copy of an invitation postcard you can use.) After viewing everything, you can compare your favorite nativities over refreshments in Fellowship Hall.

Donations of nonperishable food items for Ankeny's IMPACT food pantry will help make the holidays brighter for those in need.



A Word from the Pastor

This month we continue our journey through Advent and on to Christmas. There are a number of special events taking place of which you might like to be aware.

On **Sunday, December 11**, our choir will be taking on a larger-than-usual role in leading worship, singing **five choral anthems** throughout the course of the service. Music Director Eric Mohlis has been hard at work with the choir to make this a very special time of worship.



That same day, from 6:00-8:00 p.m., we will be hosting a **display of over sixty nativity scenes** called "Come to the Manger." (See front page for more details.)



On **Sunday, December 18**, the **children will be leading worship**, presenting a musical program celebrating the birth of our Lord. We can be thankful to Jill Vander Wilt (with assistance from Sandy Wagener) for making this possible.

Our **Christmas Eve** experience includes two components: First, some of us will be going to Central Iowa Shelter and Services to **provide the Christmas Eve meal to homeless individuals**. This has been a long-standing tradition at APC that we are happy to resume this year.



On December 18, please plan to stay after worship for the youth's

Annual Breakfast Fundraiser.

Proceeds from the breakfast will go towards the 2017 summer youth mission trip.



The second part of our Christmas Eve celebration is worship. **The Christmas Eve service will be held at 7:00 p.m.** (Saturday, December 24), and will include **carols, candlelight, communion and a brief sermon**.

This year is also one of those years in which **Christmas Day falls on a Sunday**. It was the decision of our Worship Committee and Session to follow precedent from the last time this happened and forgo a morning worship service on Christmas Day, opting to hold **worship at 7:00 p.m. on Christmas Day**. This will be a **Service of Lessons and Carols**, and will not include a sermon. (On New Year's Day, which is also a Sunday, worship will be at the usual time of 9:30 a.m. but Communion will not be served until Sunday, January 8th.)



As the song goes, it's the most wonderful time of the year. It is also the busiest! I pray that, in the midst of all your Christmas preparations and celebrations, you will find some time to focus on the true meaning of this sacred season, and give thanks to God for the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ. Merry Christmas!

Your Companion on the Journey,
Pastor Eric



Stewardship News

On commitment Sunday, APC members provided 71 pledges for a total of \$244,000. Thank you for your efforts! We are still waiting for several more pledges to come in. If you have yet to submit a pledge, please help the Stewardship Committee by making sure your pledge gets to the office as soon as possible. The Session will need an accounting of all pledges to set the 2017 budget at its December meeting. Our congregation depends on your generous giving for us to carry out God's work in Ankeny and beyond.

Thanks again for your faithful support!



found faithful
in little
with much
with all
1 Corinthians 4:1-9

END OF YEAR

GIVING

The financial secretaries would like to officially close the books for contributions on Dec 31, 2016. Please have any pledges or offerings to APC prior to that date.

Session Action Items

Session took action on the following items during November:

- ◆ Reinstated Doris Anderson to the membership roll.
- ◆ Approved Sunday School Curriculum.
- ◆ Approved Youth Fundraising Meal during December.
- ◆ Approved Nativity Scenes Open House December 11th.
- ◆ Began development of strategic planning process.

Please contact any of your Session members with comments or concerns.

There will be a congregational meeting in the sanctuary following worship on **Sunday, January 8th**, to elect the 2017 Nominating Committee and vote on Pastoral Terms of Call.



SPECIAL OFFERINGS

CHRISTMAS JOY

Each year during the Advent and Christmas season, we turn our eyes to Bethlehem and celebrate the wondrous gift of Jesus Christ, our Savior. By giving to the Christmas Joy Offering, you honor this gift by providing assistance to current and retired church workers in their time of need and developing our future leaders at Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges.



From the Christian Education Wing

Sunday School: 10:45 – 11:45

Children – Are learning about the Christmas story and where in the Bible it is located.

Christmas Program – The children have been working really hard on their Christmas program this year. They will be celebrating Jesus's birthday with a party this year and you all are invited to come on **December 18** during worship. It will be a Birthday Party you won't want to miss!



No Sunday School for all ages on the following days: December 18, December 25, and January 1

APC Wednesday

Children's Choir, for kindergarten through 5th graders meets from 4:30 – 5:00 p.m.
led by Jill Vander Wilt

APC Wednesday, for kindergarten through 5th graders meets from 5:00 – 6:40 p.m.

Youth Group, for 6th through 12th graders, meets from 5:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Dinner time with table activities for all ages is served from 5:30 – 6:15 p.m. The cost of dinner is \$4 per person per week or a bargain at \$40 per person per semester (2nd semester starting January 4). There isn't a better dinner value anywhere in town!

No APC Wednesday activities on the following days: December 21 & December 28.

Youth Group

December 18 – The Youth will be hosting a **Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser** after worship. The funds will be used for their Mission Trip in June.

Mission Trip – Mission Trip is set for June 25-30. The Youth decided as a group to go to Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake in Michigan. It is a ministry of Westminster Church of Detroit (Presbyterian). There will be kids attending camp at this time, however, our group will support the mission of the camp by working on camp maintenance – painting, trail maintaining and other work to keep up camp for the campers. This trip comes with the opportunity for our Youth group to experience their own group building.



FOR ADULTS—STARTING IN JANUARY...

THE BIBLE IN 90 DAYS

A high-level overview of the entire Bible featuring weekly sermons, short daily readings, and a weekly class for adults called "The Bible from Scratch." Keep your eyes open for the daily reading guide, which will appear this month. The reading schedule begins January 2.

APC Wellness—Let's get healthy together



9 Tips for Healthy Eyes

There is so much to see at this glorious time of year, so make sure your eyes are in top condition. If you're lucky enough to have a health savings plan, buying new glasses or contacts is a good way to use your reserved funds before December 31 so you don't lose those valuable dollars. To preserve your precious eyesight, keep these pointers from the National Eye Institute in mind.

1. **Have a dilated eye exam.** It can detect eye diseases like glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration and diabetic eye problems early while they are more treatable.
2. **Share your family's eye health history with your eye care professional.** This can help them determine if you are at higher risk for certain eye diseases and conditions.
3. **Eat eye-friendly foods.** Load up on fruits and veggies, especially dark leafy greens like spinach, kale and collard greens. Also include fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon, tuna and halibut.
4. **Maintain a healthy weight.**
5. **Protect your vision with safety eyewear.**
6. **Don't smoke.**
7. **Wear sunglasses.**
8. **Rest your eyes periodically.** Looking away can help reduce eyestrain when you're using a computer or doing other close work.
9. **Avoid infection.** Always wash your hands before touching your contacts and disinfect your contact lenses.



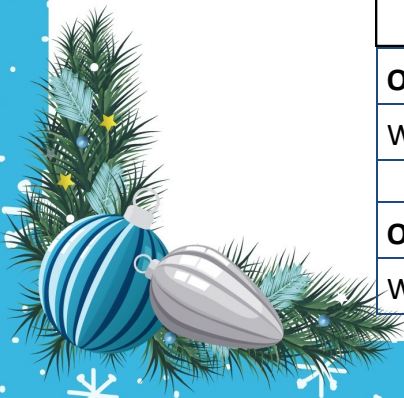
Help Wanted:

Christmas Eve Dinner at the Central Iowa Homeless Shelter.

We will once again be serving Christmas Eve dinner at the Central Iowa Homeless Shelter, 205 15th St, Des Moines. We need help to provide the food for this dinner and to serve the dinner Christmas Eve. We will gather at the church at 3:30 p.m. and serve the dinner at 5:00 p.m. All food donations should be delivered to the church by 3:30 p.m. This should allow us enough time to return to our church for the Christmas Eve service at 7:00 p.m. Please sign up on the sheets provided in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings or contact John/Jane Middents at 963-0467 or jmiddents@yahoo.com if you are able to provide food and/or help with serving the dinner.



Worship Service Attendance			
October 2016	562 (5 Sundays)	November 2016	476 (4 Sundays)
Weekly Average	112	Weekly Average	119
October 2015	490 (4 Sundays)	November 2015	636 (5 Sundays)
Weekly Average	123	Weekly Average	127



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Sonja Maxwell | 20 Warren Brooks |
| 2 Max Simpkins | Karisa Pasanchin |
| 4 Jo Thorpe | 20 Rick Ruff |
| 7 Sue Musoro | 22 Michael Murray |
| 8 Gary Cloud | Eric Morris |
| 9 Janie Owens | 24 Lori SchraderBachar |
| 11 Phyllis Christensen | 26 Doris Anderson |
| 12 Al Wyckoff | 27 Jason Ingwersen |
| 13 Katie Stewart | 28 Sandy Wagener |
| Ken Nelson | 29 Tim Little |
| Jim Nurnberg | Carolyn Rudisil |
| 14 Sandy Taylor | 30 Jackson Nutt |
| 16 Laurie Berry | 31 Wade Cloud |
| 17 Connor Hilsenbeck | |



THANK YOU

Worship Committee thanks all those who stayed to decorate our church for Advent. We had many helpful hands and we so appreciate your time and talents.

May the Season of Advent be a blessing to all as we prepare for the arrival of baby Jesus.

Worship Volunteers

December 4

Greeters: Verne & Kelly Murray, Randy & Rita Korn
Ushers: Mark & Marcia McAdoo
Worship Leader: Debi Garner
Youth Ushers: Kyla Morris, Abby Seedorf
Font of Identity Deacon: Shirley Pease

December 11

Greeters: Tom & Jo DeHart, Cheryl Schwickerath
Ushers:
Worship Leader: Ray Peters
Youth Ushers: Rachel Stephany,
Naomi SchraderBachar
Font of Identity Deacon: Bob Zinn

December 18

Greeters: Carla Yeager & Tim Little, Diana Haines
Ushers: Gary & Mary Weeks
Worship Leader: Marcia McAdoo
Youth Ushers: Theo Housker, Nathan Stephany
Font of Identity Deacon:

December 25

Services will be at 7:00 p.m.

