



LYNNHURST LEDGER

LYNNHURST UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST

Volume 2019, Issue 49
December 22, 2019

Lynn Hurst United Church of Christ is faithful to loving and honoring the still-speaking God while serving our community and welcoming everyone.

AROUND LYNNHURST

*Sunday, December 22nd
4th Sunday of Advent*

Worship Service	9:30 AM
Fellowship Time	10:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 AM
Christmas Caroling	12:00 PM
Rental - McFarland	12:00 PM
Friends Church	1:30 PM
Rental (Parlor) - Whalin	2:00 PM

*Monday, December 23rd
Church Office Open
10 AM-2:30 PM*

*Tuesday, December 24th
Church Office Closed
December 24th-January 2nd*

**Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service
7:00 PM**

*Wednesday, December 25th
Christmas Day*



Thursday, December 26th

Friday, December 27th

Saturday, December 28th

Friends Church	3:00 PM
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Sunday, December 29th

Worship Service	9:30 AM
Fellowship Time	10:30 AM
Sunday School	11:00 PM
Friends Church	1:30 PM

The Christmas Fund Offering Collection will be this Sunday, December 22nd

“And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet: “Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’ ” ~Matthew 1:21-23

Dear Friends in Christ,

A name is important. The name of a product has to make people want to try it. The name of a book should entice people to read it. If a manufacturer of a washing machine or freezer has a good reputation that name says quality and trustworthiness. As we name our children and our pets, we often want names that have a meaning and that carry the aura of friendliness, strength or leadership.

And what is God’s child to be named? He could be a Moses after the one who led God’s people to freedom; he could be a David after his great-plus grandfather who was king; he could be an Isaiah after the prophet of hope.

But God’s child was to be named Emmanuel, which means ‘God with us.’ What a comfort in times of crisis and stress – God is with us. What strength in times of challenge in our lives – God is with us. What assurance at our baptism and confirmation – God is with us. What peace during an illness and at our death – God is with us. God is with us always, forever, continually. God is with us, filling us, guiding us, comforting us, encouraging us. This knowledge fills us with new possibilities, peace, joy and hope.

This week, as we go from preparation for Jesus Christ’s coming to celebrating Christmas day, I invite you to remember God is with us, God is with you!

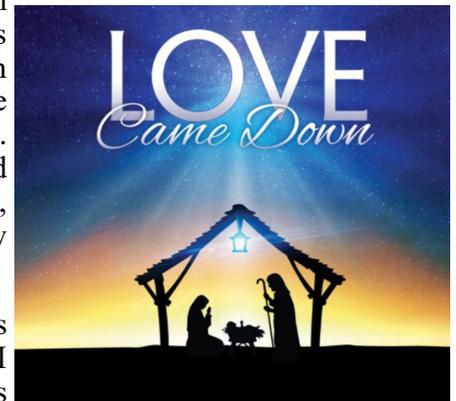
Prayer

God of light, please prepare our hearts for the coming of your son, Emmanuel, into the world. Strengthen our faith, give us hope, and help us act always in the name of

Star Word Stories

In January of this year I gave everyone in the congregation a yellow star with a word written on it. The word you chose was the word God wanted you to have for this year. I asked you to let this word from God speak to you. and I invited you to reflect throughout the year on where this word appears in your life, the stories that connect with your word, how is it played out in your daily life. Now I am asking you to write a paragraph about how and where this word showed up in your life and played a part in your faith journey this year. I will share these stories during my sermon on January 5, and give you a new star word for the year 2020. Please send your story to me at pastor@lynnhurstchurch.org.

Thank you. Pastor Monica



Scripture Readers

LOOK FOR AN EMAIL ON
WEDNESDAY OR THURSDAY OF
THE WEEK YOU ARE
SCHEDULED

DECEMBER

- 01 None
08 *Ryan Carden*
15 *Jeff Murrell*
22 *Savannah Bibbs*
29 *Kathy Matheny*

Fellowship Time Hosts/Hostesses

Sign Up Sheet On the
Bulletin Board by Church
Office

DECEMBER

- 01 *Compton*
08 *Tiitsman*
15 *Mathenu*
22 *Maier*
29 *Crosby*

SAVE THE DATE!

Christmas Fund Offering
Collection
Sunday, December 22nd

Christmas Eve Service
Tuesday, December 24th
@ 7 PM

Consistory Meeting
Sunday, January 12th
@ 12PM

Here are ways you can
embody LOVE during the
fourth week of the Season of
Advent:

Monday: ADVOCATE | Donate food to a local food pantry, but also advocate for food justice in the community. Speak to local government representatives about the need for inner city access to nutritious foods. #LoveOfCreation

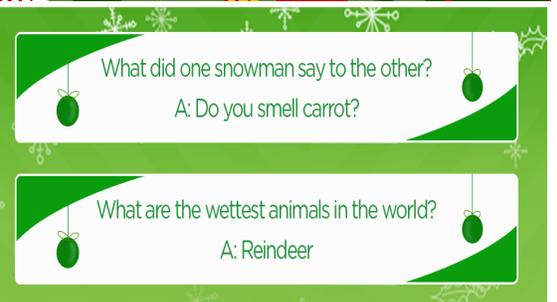
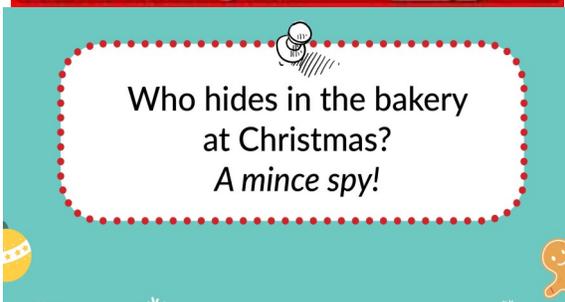
Tuesday: CONSERVE | Whether there's snow or sunshine outside your windows this time of year, it's always a good time to save on home energy use. Schedule an energy audit for your church or home in the New Year. #LoveOfNeighbor

Wednesday: WATCH | Choose a socially conscious family movie like Brave Girl or The Lorax to watch together as a family or with the children at church. Discuss ways to be caring and conscious with others. #LoveOfChildren

Thursday: CALL | Reduce your carbon footprint by personally calling some of your close friends and family instead of mailing them a Christmas card. Tell them about your intentional change and encourage them to do the same. #LoveOfCreation

Friday: GIVE | For every gift you buy for a family member, give a gift of your time to a local charity group. Encourage your family to buy fewer gifts for each other and give more time to others in need. #LoveOfNeighbor

Saturday: ARRANGE | Plan a get together of different congregations or community groups and build new relationships on common ground. Maybe these groups can all participate in a recurring mission project together. #LoveOfChildren



My sincerest apologies to all those with December birthdays. I am late getting your cards out to you and I apologize. They will be late but they will get there soon.



Christmas Grief: A Blue Christmas Meditation

Source: [Crazy Whole Life](#)

by [Josephine](#)

“But I’ll have a blue, blue blue blue Christmas” – *Blue Christmas*, Elvis Presley

It’s almost Christmas, the carols are pumping, the presents are piling up, and you are a *very* rare and lucky person if you aren’t missing someone right now.

Blue Christmas

Here’s the thing about humans, we all die. Unless you have been a hermit your entire life, or you are very young and lucky, someone you love has died. Because Christmas is what it is, that loss is usually especially painful this time of year. Someone doesn’t even have to have *died* for you to be mourning. Maybe your marriage ended; or the one you thought was *the one*, wasn’t. You might be estranged from a family member or friend right now. Perhaps your faithful dog died after 12 long years together and you’re missing the wet nose in your ear every morning. Death and loss don’t take a vacation over the holidays.

Elvis croons it beautifully, for a lot of us, it’s a blue Christmas. **It’s a hard place to be in the middle of the “happiest time of the year.” So if you’re feeling blue, you aren’t alone.**

I’m giving you permission to feel as rotten as you need to. There’s no shame in mourning, a person, a dream, whatever it is that is missing from your holiday this year it is worth taking some time to miss and honor.

Grief Without Guilt

It can be hard to let ourselves feel honestly. **Right now you might just feel like curling up at home and crying; while everyone else is having a party.** That can feel like *you* and your feelings are wrong. They aren’t. There’s no need to apologize or pretend. Holiday depression, Christmas depression is real. Start by being honest with yourself, if you are depressed, sad, or angry this Christmas allow yourself to feel those things. Ditch the guilt. You aren’t required to feel a certain way just because there are twinkle lights *everywhere*.

There are no time limits on mourning. Nearly 20 years after my grandparents died I still miss them. This Christmas I will miss getting to see my sweet Mother-in-law. And that won’t change 10, 15, or 20 years down the road. Here’s the lie we tell ourselves about grief: you don’t “go back to normal” after a loss. You find a new normal, but that new normal includes an empty place where someone or something important once was. **Give yourself permission**

Get Help for yourself or someone else:

- Crisis Hotline ~ 2-1-1
- Centerstone Crisis Hotline ~ 1-800-221-0446
- Suicide Hotline ~ 1-800-273-8255

to feel whatever you feel without judgement.

Christmas Self-Care

If you are feeling something *other* than happy about Christmas this year the solution isn’t to try to *force* yourself into happiness. Quite simply forcing ourselves to be happy doesn’t work, and second it’s a shitty way to treat yourself. That’s not to say you should wallow in grief, but you should be *gentle* with yourself. What do you need this year? If you are recently divorced maybe you need to skip the Christmas Eve party that will be all your married friends kissing under the mistletoe. Perhaps instead you need to invite your other single friends over for an anti-romance Christmas. Everyone’s needs are different, unique, and worthy.

You have permission this year to spend some time figuring out what will help you meet your needs this year. To help with that, ask yourself these questions:

- What situations and activities do I normally do this time of year that feel **extra painful and difficult**? (*You are hereby excused from said events.*)
- What situations, activities, or people feel like a **healing balm** right now? (*You are hereby ordered to partake.*)
- Who can I **reach out to** when I’m feeling particularly badly? (*You are hereby ordered to text/email/call said person and talk about what’s going on and how you feel.*)
- Who should I *not* trust with my feelings and emotions right now? (*You are hereby given permission to deflect all inquiries from said person with “I’m fine, thanks, I’ve got to go.”*)

The Joy Miracle

Once we’ve taken care of setting some boundaries around our own emotions (avoiding those people and situations that will be harmful to us, and identifying what we need) it’s a good idea to do something that might seem counter-intuitive. **I have discovered (and wise folks like the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu will back me up) that to find our own happiness we must concentrate not on ourselves but *others*.** Think about it.

How *amazing* does it feel to make someone else’s eyes light up with joy? How awesome is it when we make someone laugh with happiness, or squeal with delight? Pretty damn awesome, that’s what. (See: [The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World](#))

There’s science behind this: bringing joy to other people is the most reliable way to bring happiness to ourselves.

Which is good news when you are feeling like crap in the middle of the holiday season. While you should be taking care of yourself there is danger in focusing exclusively on ourselves when we are in darkness. We can dig ourselves in deeper and lose sight of the light that is all around us. But trying to *make* ourselves happy doesn't work either. So what should we do? **Make others happy, give to others the gift we cannot give ourselves and slowly, gently you may find joy creeping quietly back into your own life.**

Strategies for Surviving Christmas Grief

So, how do you bring joy to other people while you are enduring tough times? It doesn't all involve presents. You don't have to be wealthy to make others happy, so first step away from the credit card. Your family members and loved ones probably don't really need more stuff anyway. **Joy isn't about stuff, often the best gift you can give someone is your presence.** That might seem counter intuitive when you are sad yourself, but it's true.

Misery Loves Company

Though we rarely talk publicly about grief or sadness it is pretty certain that someone in your circle of friends or family is also blue this Christmas. There are other people in your life who are missing someone, or who are experiencing a loss of some sort. Make a point to reach out, even if just to send a Christmas card with a heartfelt note. **You'll make someone feel less alone, which is perhaps the best gift you can give.** Maybe no one seems to notice that your husband died this year and you're alone for the first time on Christmas, so be the person who acknowledges that loss for *someone else*.

Be The One Who Remembers

It's a hard time of year to be one of the forgotten people in our country. People like an elder in a nursing home without family nearby, the homeless vet estranged from his family, or the runaway teenager. **There are many people who feel alone and forgotten this time of year, you might be one of them. Be the person who remembers.** Get out of your house and a group caroling at the local nursing home, drive your elderly neighbor to Christmas Eve service, or call a local nursing home and find out if there are residents who will have no visitors on Christmas day. **Show up for people who expect nothing and you'll give them (and yourself) the world.** It isn't hard and it doesn't require a lot. The greatest gift you can give is your presence: show up, listen to their stories, and tell your own. You might just make a new friend.

If it's too hard to be home on Christmas day find a soup kitchen or shelter that's doing a Christmas meal. A change of location, and a break from your regular traditions can be just what you need. Eat dinner with the homeless vet, listen without judgement to the runaway kid, sling some mashed potatoes and turkey around. You'll feed more than hungry stomachs and you will almost certainly find your own heart and soul lightened as well.

Worship/Prayer/Spirituality

Even if you aren't normally part of a religious community you might want to look into "Blue Christmas" or "Longest Night" services. Many churches, realizing that this is a difficult time of the year for a lot of people, have begun doing something about it. Usually falling around the solstice (December 21st) these services acknowledge the darkness in our lives. Most of them have times and rituals meant to honor missing loved ones, or other losses that have taken place in our lives. They honestly face sorrow, anger, and struggle in the midst of Christmas cheer. And these sorts of rituals can be deeply healing.

Break Bread With Loss

One of the most powerful human experiences is the act of eating together. There is very little you can do that is more healing or holy than gathering a group of people you love and sharing a meal. This might be your family, or it could be the "family you chose." [There is no requirement that your house be clean](#) (do not invite anyone who would criticize your house cleaning), or that the meal be fancy. Order pizza if you like, it isn't *what* you eat that matters. What does matter is sitting down with a group of people who love and care for each other and spending time feeding your bodies and your hearts.

Eat whatever you like, and tell stories. Stories are the seeds that help joy grow out of loss. Tell the story of how your parents met, your husband proposed, your child was born. Tell the stories that make you laugh, and the ones that make you cry. Pass stories around among you, each offering your own dish of memories until everyone is full.

If you have never been to a rowdy wake, or a funeral after party you might be surprised how soon the laughter comes, how cathartic it is, and how much better you feel.

