

# The Lyons Community Church Mid-Week Message

Thursday, December 1, 2016

Greetings Friends,

December 1st, how can that be? I don't know about you, but this year has flown by for me! However, as I look around the church and around the town, I am enlivened by the beautiful Christmas decorations. As the carol goes, "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!" We now find ourselves in the midst of the Advent season, which is a time of the Christian year that is centered around preparing and waiting. Often during this season of advent folks will take some time to reflect on what Christmas is all about and the impact the birth of Jesus has on the world yesterday, today, and tomorrow!

This Sunday is the second Sunday of the Advent season. During this season I am preaching a series based on the book *The Redemption of Scrooge* by Matt Rawle. This book offers an opportunity to look at the redemption of scrooge through the life and teachings of Jesus. This week we will be focusing on Ebenezer Scrooge's visit from the Ghost of Christmas Past. This visit reminds Scrooge, and in turn each of us, the impact our past can have on our present and on our future. However, more than that we are also reminded that our past does not define us, but is simply a page in the story of our lives.

I look forward to gathering on Sunday as we continue through our Advent series. Throughout this season may we be reminded to live our lives in God's grace! Indeed, the miracle has just begun in each of us! God Bless us Every One!

Blessings,

*Pastor Emily*



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## Sunday, Dec. 4, 2016 Communion Sunday

**Message:** "The Remembrance of Christmas Past: Hope from Heart-break" - Pastor Emily Kintzel

**Scripture:** Isaiah 9:2, 6 (CEB) and Luke 2: 8-14 (CEB)

**Advent Candle:** Hunter Family

**Reader:** Mark Browning

**Refreshments:** Nancy Reckling, Debbie Tabor, Karen Schwenn

**Greeter:** Mark Browning

**Flowers:** Debbie Tabor

**Children:** Kitty Keim

## Estimate of Giving Cards

If you have not returned your "Estimate of Giving" card to the church, please do so at your earliest convenience. These pledges make it possible to plan for the upcoming 2017 year. We encourage you to actively participate to the fullest extent that you are able and make your personal commitment to Lyons Community Church through your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

## Prayers

Joy: Birthday of Brian Whitehead (12/5)

Joy: Diana Boulter, daughter Anna's cancer is in remission

Joy: Jean Peila, upcoming fundraising brunch at The Learning Center in Longmont

Joy: Thanksgiving with friends and family

Sonny's gift of laughter over being one hour late and one day early to church

Continued prayers for Nancy Thorwardson who is doing better and has been moved to Manor Care

Prayers for the Brighton family and baby Michael who is growing stronger everyday! His surgery is scheduled for December 12th

Prayers for Phyllis Casey whose Melanoma has returned

Prayers for Scott Crutchfield, friend of the Beck's, who was recently diagnosed with Stage 4 Pancreatic Cancer

Prayer for John Burke's leukemia

Prayers: Ruth Wilson's friend Stephanie who recently passed away

Prayers: Sergeant Major Richard Palmer lost his life while serving in Syria

## Prayer Requests

Contact Kitty Keim, [kathkeim@earthlink.net](mailto:kathkeim@earthlink.net), 303-823-6586

Prayer team: Pastor Emily, Holly & Steve Beck, Mark & Christine Boys, Pam Browning, Sandi Fikes, Janet Freeman, Vance French, Alyssa Frideres, Ellen Hine, Jani Little, Steve Mikesell, Jerry & Jean Peila, Carol Pranschke, Richard & Deborah Salmon, Debbie Tabor and Sandra Willis.

## Announcements

**Parade of Lights Chili Supper**, Saturday, December 3, 5:30pm. Bring chili or other fixin's and family and friends.

**Nominations Committee Meeting**, Monday, December 5, 1:30 pm.

Our **Annual Charge Conference** is scheduled for **Sunday, December 11 at 11:30 am**, following worship. All are invited and encouraged to attend.



# Advent 2016

## Lyons Community Church

**Sunday, December 4, 10:00 am–2<sup>nd</sup>**  
**Sunday of Advent**

Sermon: "The Remembrance of Christmas  
Past: Hope from Heartbreak"

Scripture: Isaiah 9:2, 6 & Luke 2: 8-14

**Sunday, December 11, 10:00 am–3<sup>rd</sup>**  
**Sunday of Advent**

Sermon: "The Life of Christmas Present: Look  
Upon Me"

Scripture: Deuteronomy 15:7-11 & Matthew 2:  
1-18

(Annual All Church Charge Conference follow-  
ing Worship)

**Sunday, December 18, 10:00 am–4<sup>th</sup>**  
**Sunday of Advent**

A Service of Lessons and Carols and Children's  
Pageant

Sermon: The Joy of Christmas Future: Death-  
Defying Acts

Scripture: Luke 4:18-19 & Revelation 1:4b

**Saturday, December 24, 7:00 pm–**  
**Christmas Eve**

Sermon: "The Redemption of Scrooge: Keep-  
ing Christmas Well"

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20 & Matthew 2:1-14

**Sunday, December 25, 10:00 am–**  
**Christmas**

Come in PJs, Potluck Brunch, Hymn Sing/  
Storytime

Sermon: "God Bless Us - Every One!"

Scripture: John 1:1-17

To the People Called United Methodist:

Grace and peace in the name of Jesus Christ!

On the eve of Advent and in the post-election climate in the United States, I write as President of the Council of Bishops to call for a renewed commitment to the vision of the Beloved Community of Christ.

Isaiah prophesized that a child would be born to re-establish the beloved community – a time of endless peace, a time of justice and righteousness, a time of reconciliation and unity.

*For a child has been born to us, a son given to us;  
authority rests upon his shoulders;*

*And he is named*

*Wonderful Counselor,*

*Mighty God,*

*Everlasting Father,*

*Prince of Peace.*

*His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom.*

*He shall establish and uphold it with justice and righteousness  
from this time onward and forevermore.*

Isaiah 9:6-7 NRSV

In a post-election article, Bishop Gregory Palmer eloquently stated the reality of a divided United States. “Everywhere we turn we are reminded of the profound fissures along the lines of gender, race and class, just to name a few. The truth is these fissures and divisions are not new and not directly attributable to the long campaign season just ended. For many years, there has been a growing trust deficit in public leadership and institutions. These are trying times, and the fabric of who we are and who we aspire to be has been stretched beyond anything we desire to look upon. But look upon it squarely we must.”

This state of division and discord is global, fueled by the racist, sexist and xenophobic rhetoric of the recent U.S. election cycle. Recently, Pope Francis warned against the “virus of polarization” and hostility in the world targeting people of different nationalities, races and beliefs. He was blunt and warned against animosity creeping into the church, as well, noting “we are not immune from this.” Pope Francis reminded us of “our pitiful hearts that tend to judge, divide, oppose and condemn” and cautioned somberly against those who “raise walls, build barriers and label people.”

As followers of the Christ, we are harbingers, models and guardians of the Beloved Community. As those baptized into the Body of Christ, we “accept the freedom and power God gives us to resist evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves” and to renounce the spiritual forces of evil in the world, our respective nations and the church. As disciples of Jesus, we stand against all expressions of hatred, discrimination, oppression and exclusion. As those who serve Christ, we love whom Christ loves. As stewards of Jesus’ Good News, we are peacemakers, pray for our enemies and seek reconciliation with those from whom we have become estranged.

At the November 2010 meeting of the Council of Bishops in Panama, the Council issued a pastoral letter calling for United Methodists to be bearers of the beloved community across the globe. The letter is eerily contemporary and relevant to our current context. It points to the opportunity that is uniquely ours to bind up the wounds and to proclaim the Advent prophecy of a time of justice and righteousness. I include the full text as a reminder of the kingdom reality we are called to incarnate:

*“We, the bishops of The United Methodist Church, feel compelled to renew our commitment to work to become the beloved community of Christ. We, as a Council, desire to deal with the crucial issues of racism and the sacredness of every human being. Therefore, as the spiritual and administrative leaders of the church, we issue an urgent call to the whole people of God, lay and clergy: to speak the truth in love in public and private discourse, to act with compassion, and to work for peace with justice in the world.*

*In order to transform the world, in faithfulness to Christ’s command, we must model respect and kindness and extinguish the fires of animosity. And thus, we call on all churches to engage in genuinely honest dialogue and respectful conversation, such that others who observe the action in our lives might declare, ‘See how they love each other!’*

*As people of faith, we are charged to build the beloved community because Christ has broken down the dividing walls and ended the hostilities between us. Yet, we continue to build walls in the church and the world which separate us and cause our hearts to grieve.*

*On the continent of Africa and in many parts of Asia, including the Middle East, the Philippines and India, the historical and contemporary impact of colonialism, racism, tribalism, hostility and religious persecution continue to affect human relationships. The challenge in the Philippines is to break down the barriers between mainline society and tribal peoples. Meeting this challenge will accord equal rights such as land possession and free education for all.*

*By nature, colonialism in Africa thrives on hostile, violent and demeaning human relationships. Racism and tribalism cut deep wounds, not in one's flesh and blood, but also on the soul and the spirit. These gaping wounds leave permanent scars.*

*In Europe racism is a growing issue, with political parties openly working against minority, ethnic and religious communities. Prejudice is overly articulated in the media, in politics and even in churches.*

*Throughout the United States, there has been a rapid escalation of violence related to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and religious preference. This escalation includes personal attacks, bullying and vicious and criminal acts of violence to the mind, body and spirit of persons. These actions diminish life for victims and their families, as well as for the perpetrators and the whole community. They are the ultimate, insidious and irreverent attacks on the sacredness of God-given life.*

*Across the world, terrorism – as demonstrated by wanton acts of violence against innocent persons – leaves a trail of loss of life, limb, home and community. Discriminatory treatment is widely practiced against immigrants and refugees everywhere around the world. All of this creates a universal atmosphere of suspicion, mistrust and fear. Often this is the result of religious persecution of various faith communities, including Christians, which threatens the capacity or hope for reconciliation and peace. The church is called to decisively and directly counter these acts and engender and empower a 'perfect love that casts out all fear.' (I John 4:18, NRSV) Through intentional action we can 'overcome evil with good.' (Romans 12:21, NRSV)*

*It is incumbent upon the bearers of this vision of a beloved community to do whatever we can today to hasten the day of a just world with peace. This is our hope, our prayer and our commitment."*

Friends in Christ, this is not an invitation to naiveté. People's lives, livelihoods, security and well-being are at stake. Immigrants are scrambling for the shadows. Indigenous peoples are disrespected and forgotten. Children of color are being bullied and threatened. Muslims are being labeled and listed. Women are ridiculed and objectified. The LGBTQ community is filled with fear. Racism is being legitimized. Hundreds of millions remain impoverished without access to educational opportunities, economic resources, or equal justice.

We must stand against the meanness and hatred that is upon us. We must stand for what is best in us as People of God. We must not address the anger, fear, confusion and insecurity of the prevailing culture with more blame, attack and criticism. As Richard Rohr recently noted, "The best criticism of the bad is the practice of the better." We must stand against bigotry, hate and discrimination in all forms and settings. We must proclaim from our pulpits the Good News that overcomes hatred and fear. We must be quick to confess our own sin and places of complicity and vigilant against all that diminishes the worth of any individual.

So, I urge all who follow the Christ to remember who we are in this time. We are the People of God called to proclaim the mighty acts of Christ who calls us out of darkness into his marvelous light. We are the People of God called to create the Beloved Community of Christ. We are People of God commanded to love as Jesus loved. We are People of God created to be the kingdom of God envisioned in the Advent prophecy and fulfilled by Jesus. This is our vision, our hope, our prayer, our opportunity, our commitment. May it be so!

Bishop Bruce R. Ough, President  
Council of Bishops, The United Methodist Church