

# The Lyons Community Church

## Mid-Week Message

Thursday, December 12, 2013

Dear Advent brothers and sisters,

Two down, two more to go! As we approach the manger, first having taken a closer look at Joseph and Gabriel, then at Mary and Elizabeth, we finally come this week to the actual Silent Night... but we find that there is nothing silent about it! Quite the contrary, this Sunday we'll look at the Shepherds and Angels as we focus on Discovering JOY in Darkness.

There has been so much darkness lately - from the early dark evenings of winter to cold, snowy mornings and extreme winds (atop one hill in Lyons this week, townsman Greg Berman clocked an 89 mph gust!) Even the death of Nelson Mandela, which Mark Browning spoke so eloquently of while lighting the Advent candle with Pam last Sunday, reminds us that we have come a long way from apartheid, but there is still so much bigotry and hatred in our world. Yes, there is darkness all around us. And for many people this time of year, there is also darkness within us. Even as the twinkling lights of this season do their best to lift our spirits, we remember friends, family and loved ones no longer with us. We remember all too vividly the trauma and loss that our community has endured this year, and we look ahead to the long road to recovery ahead, recognizing the marathon we have yet to run. Some feel discouraged or depressed this time of year - and there is no shame in that! You are not alone.



Last week, we talked about finding PEACE in community, and so remember as the Christmas season shifts into high gear, that you can lean on this community to lift you up - in prayer, when you need a hot meal or a warm blanket, or in song each blessed Sunday. I have never been a part of such a small church with a mighty BIG heart for God and one another - you will surely find comfort here if you allow yourself to open up to someone.

Speaking of community, it is with great JOY that we celebrate the New Members who joined our church last week:

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## Sunday, Dec. 15

**Sermon:** *Shepherds and Angels:  
Finding JOY in Darkness*

**Scripture:** Luke 2:8-20

## Community Carol Sing

Friday, December 20, 7:00 PM, in the warmth of our Sanctuary. All are invited to join in a Community Carol Sing hosted by a few of the Quarry Gals. The theme is "I'll Be Home For Christmas," and it will be a celebration of so many being back in Lyons for Christmas.

## Christmas Pageant December 22



## Christmas Pageant

Deborah and Richard Salmon, Ruth Wilson, and Dana and Blake Curton (with their sons Jason and Byron). The children did an excellent job of helping us welcome these new members with purple votive candles bearing a growth spiral image and the words, "Grateful to you" on them. The spiral is my favorite symbol of a spiritual journey - sometimes near, sometimes far away, but never outside the reach of God's love. These candles are just a token of our gratitude to each you for committing to be a part of our community, and a reminder to you of our commitment to love and serve you and to serve with you. Together, we can be the light in our own darkness.

Many prayers for Donna Lee and Clay and Emily Dusel, with their daughters Maddie, Hannah and Hailey who had also planned to join, but who weren't able to make it due to the weather. We'll have another New Member Reception early in the New Year. If you have considered joining the church, you are warmly invited to let me know and we'd be happy to include you in the next opportunity.

Also, thank you to those who attended last Sunday's 8:30am class on United Methodist History and Beliefs - I have a hand-out available for anyone who missed it but is curious. Our UMC roots are deep in the striving for personal holiness, and social justice. Our founders John and Charles Wesley sought balance between their inner lives and their outer ones.

So we, too, seek balance during this holiday season - a balance between doing for others, and caring for ourselves; between giving to others, and remembering to allow ourselves to receive; between waiting for that



Lighting of the Second Advent Candle on Dec. 8 by Pam and Mark Browning.

### *Pastor's Message* (continued)

Baby Jesus with hopeful expectancy, and not forgetting that each day, each moment is a gift and blessing - let us come together this week to discover some JOY in worship!

*Pastor Emily*

P.S. Don't forget the annual Charge Conference (business meeting) this Saturday at 2pm at the church - all are welcome to join us! Many thanks to those leaders who have worked so hard preparing their reports and who will give their time on a busy Christmas Saturday to meet together.



New members: (l to r) Richard & Deborah (Debi) Salmon, Dana & Blake Curton, Ruth Wilson.