

December 2008 through
January 2009

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Sunday
Schedule

9:45am
Hymn Sing

10:00am
Worship

11:15am
Fellowship

Deadline for Next Issue:
January 18

Birthdays

December

6	Kathy Scott
12	Danika ODell
14	Bill Leonard
15	Dana Shibley
22	Kevin Kirby
26	Valerie Webb
28	Jim Roden

January

6	Lucy Olson
7	Micah Shibley
16	Wilma Guttridge
24	Jennie Lou Poore
24	Ruth Cromer
27	Tami Guttridge
28	Greg Jeppeson
29	Cindy Woodbury



Wedding Anniversaries



December

16 Rick & Eileen Parfrey

January

None



CALENDAR

- Nov 30: Liturgical art during Sunday School time
- Dec 3: Wednesday Advent activities
- Dec 4: Personnel meeting - 3pm, Session budget meeting - 5pm
- Dec 6: Youth deliver wreaths to Grange - Shopping - Bowling
- Dec 7: Advent Sunday School - Greening the church, Youth deliver wreaths to church - (after worship)
- Dec10: Wednesday Advent activities
- Dec 14: Advent Sunday School - Caroling (4:00 p.m. at church)
- Dec 17: Wednesday Advent activities
- Dec 21: Advent Sunday School - Children re-enact the Christmas story (after worship)
- Dec 24: Service of Lessons and Carols, 7:00 p.m.
- Jan 11: Session meeting at 2:00
- Jan 18: Annual congregational meeting following worship

PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Merchants and consumers struggle with the political correctness of wishing each other "Happy holidays!" while Christians wonder why *their* holiday of all the holidays in our pluralistic culture is the one that cannot be spoken aloud.

Believe it or not, the early Church thought the time before Christmas—Advent—was a time to await the Second Coming.

Advent deserves more than just surviving. It deserves some preparation. Let this Advent be a time of anticipation for you.

As Christians at this time of year, we find ourselves caught in the tension between **the cultural idea of "Christmas"** and **the Christian celebration of the Incarnation of God in Jesus**. Merchants and consumers struggle with the political correctness of wishing each other "Happy holidays!" while Christians wonder why *their* holiday of all the holidays in our pluralistic culture is the one that cannot be spoken aloud. What's a Christian to do?

THAT'S NOT THE POINT

It was Victorian England that gave us the cultural holiday we've come to know and love as "Christmas"—caroling, gift exchanges, mistletoe and holly, greeting cards and parties. You know the drill.

Historically, the Church has taken a more theological view. It's more about the God-human relationship than about the human-human relationship. The time leading up to Christmas was a time of **penitence, preparation and waiting**. For the last 150 years, our waiting has focused on the Feast of Incarnation—Christmas Day and the twelve succeeding days. But believe it or not, the early Church thought the time before Christmas—Advent—was a time to await the **Second Coming**.

IT'S NOT THE END OF THE WORLD (IS IT?)

It's true that, for many busy people, this season of the year *feels* like the end of the world. The reason Advent's lectionary readings always begin with the apocalypse—the end of world—is because for the early Church, that's what this season was about. **Waiting** is not very festive when it's the apocalypse you're anticipating.

So it is that 21st century Christians live, doing the seasonal "Christmas" thing at home during the week, while Sunday mornings (if we can afford the time with what all is going on!) we note that another candle has been lit on the wreath. It's a tough act to develop, straddling the Christmas vs. Advent line, let alone executing it.

But believe me, it's the key to successfully navigating the season. **Develop a plan, learn to say no, allow the liturgical tide to carry you.**

SURVIVAL OF THE PREPARED

Elsewhere in this issue of *Currents* you'll find tips for surviving the season. One set of tips (from WebMD.com) focuses on emotional well-being. Another set of tips focuses on spiritual well-being, with activities, practices and resources—ways to "allow the liturgical tide to carry you."

Come to think of it, this whole Advent and Christmas bag isn't about whether or not we "survive the season." It's certainly a "special" time of year. But it deserves more than just surviving. It deserves some preparation. Let this Advent be a time of anticipation for you. Follow some of our suggested emotional and spiritual survival tips. I guarantee that you will know **it is God who awaits you**.

See you in church.



TIPS FOR SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS

It's not the holidays that disappoint us, it's our rigid expectations of them.

Give yourself the gift of "No" Save yourself some time, energy, money by setting aside 3 minutes every day to sit quietly with the mantra, "I will not give in to the pressure."

Get your exercise

Call the people you miss

Avoid those who make you feel bad

Volunteer - give yourself

Look forward to something



Advent begins a new Church liturgical year, but for many people it's a season to dread, not one to anticipate. **Everyone else** seems to be having a good time. Families gathered around food-laden candlelit tables, reading each other poetry and singing beautiful carols. Friends gathering for laughter and good cheer. The bustle of plays and music and parties, shopping, baking, eating, drinking. This is the "Christmas" of expectation, but it's rarely the one of reality. Whether or not this is a difficult time of year for you, these tips on Surviving the Holidays (gleaned from WebMD.com) might be helpful.

Steer clear of the Ghosts of Christmas Past If sad events are associated with this time of year, plan ahead and avoid the associations.

Give yourself some encouragement Writing about your deepest feelings can help you change your viewpoint from negative to positive, so take 10 or 15 minutes for 3 or 4 days in a row, writing each day about what upsets you and why.

Lay off the eggnog It's not just that it's eggnog. It's all the things that go with it and its friends—alcohol, cholesterol, weight gain. You know you don't want the consequences; stay away from the whole rich food and drinking thing in the first place.

Unwrap your heart Take some pressure off the gift-giving experience to give gift certificates for time or your services. Or make a donation to Heifer Project in your loved one's name. A sincere note about how much that person means to you is always a priceless gift.

Leave the rutted road If you expect something to happen and it doesn't, you're sure to be disappointed, so this year start a new tradition. It's not the holidays that disappoint us, it's our rigid expectations of them.

Reach out and touch someone If you're sad because you miss family or friends—*call them*. Or email or write, but get in touch.

Avoid Scrooge and the Grinch You know who we mean—the energy vampires, drama queens, sob sisters, blamers, criticizers, guilt trippers. Try to sit next to someone else at dinner, or offer to help clear the table.

Give yourself the gift of "No" No one gives out medals for burning the candle at both ends. Save yourself some time, energy, money by setting aside 3 minutes every day to sit quietly with the mantra, "I will not give in to the pressure."

Going home for the holidays Is it really good for you? Is it good for them?

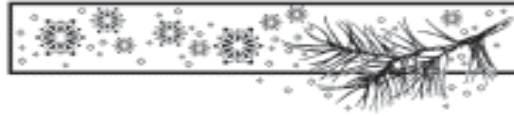
Dashing through the snow One word: exercise.

Become Santa's helper Give your *self away*. Volunteering, altruism, acting compassionately will help you feel better about yourself, and you won't feel so isolated. Help at the Food Bank, with the Christmas Family efforts, offer to provide no-cost childcare for a busy parent.

"It's a Wonderful Life" Talk to supportive friends on the telephone, be supportive to others. Concentrate on the half-full glass, rather than half-

empty, on what you *do* have and can enjoy, rather than on what you do not or cannot have.

Look forward to something Some people really do love the bustle of the holidays but feel let down when they are over. January will be here before you know it, so plan ahead with activities you can anticipate—sharing or exchanging photos, outings, activities with friends, time with that good book you didn't have time to read.



Green Team Begins collecting Batteries and CFL light bulbs for Recycling

Bring your used batteries and CFL light bulbs to church; the Green Team will see that they are responsibly recycled. All types of batteries will be collected: alkaline, rechargeable, cell phone batteries, button batteries, wireless phone batteries; anything except car batteries, please. Place your batteries and CFL light bulbs in the bucket in the fellowship hall.

Why recycle batteries? Why not just discard them? Batteries contain heavy metals and other toxic materials that leach out of landfills. The EPA says that though batteries generally make up less than one percent of municipal solid waste they account for a disproportionate amount of the toxic heavy metals in landfills. In 2005 each person in the United States discarded an average of eight dry-cell batteries. That adds up to over 179,000 tons of batteries a year. Recycling batteries keeps heavy metals out of landfills and provides an important source of metals for manufacturing.

Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) contain a small amount of mercury and cannot be thrown in the garbage. Bring them to the bucket in the fellowship hall and the Green Team will see that they are recycled.

Thanks for your stewardship of the earth and its resources.

Renate Jeppeson



*Please
Give Generously*

This Is The Worst Time of Year To Be Hungry

- The temperature is dropping. In Estacada, temperatures average about 43 degrees for the high & 34 degrees for a low.
- It Rains an average of 8.5 inches in Estacada in Dec & Jan.
- People are spending their extra money for the holidays, they are not contributing as they normally do to shelters and food banks.
- When you're hungry, you aren't as capable of withstanding the cold. Hungry children aren't able to stay as warm, they get sick more easily and they miss more days of school than children who have enough food.
- Being hungry make a child even more isolated than they normally are.

Give generously to the Estacada Food Bank.



Sunday School Program continues in January

This fall the preschool through 4th grade Sunday School class has taken a closer look at some stories from Exodus and Matthew. We spent September experiencing stories of Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness through some interactive lessons from a website called www.rotation.org. This rotation style of teaching recognizes that all people learn differently, and approaches the same story with many styles of lessons, from art to drama to games to food, and of course storytelling. I've really enjoyed teaching and learning this way, and watching our children respond to the stories wholeheartedly. In November, we used the same approach to learn about Jesus' Parable of the Talents.

In January and February we will continue this method of teaching with new stories from the bible. I'm really looking forward to it, and I hope you are too. Please consider helping us out downstairs by assisting a teacher, it's quite an experience.



WAYS TO WAIT FOR CHRISTMAS: WHAT HAPPENS ON WEDNESDAYS?

Wednesday evenings during Advent are always special at Springwater. This year, on December 3, 10, and 17, we'll gather at the Grange at 6:00pm, where **Barbara and Don MacKinnon** will feed us a wonderful meal (please help pay for the costs with a free-will offering).

After our meal, we'll go over to the church. **Erin Roden** will lead children's activities. **Pastor Eileen** will use lectio divina (holy reading), art, poetry, and activities for the adults to explore three of the Christmas characters: Zechariah, Joseph, and Mary.

Come and enjoy this special season with your church family.



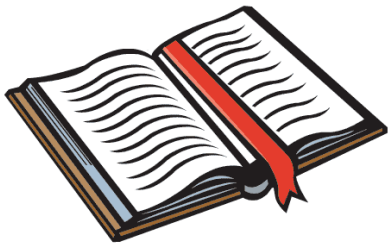
**Invite Your Friends:
Spread The Word**



**Flyers advertising our Service of Lessons
and Carols are available for you to distribute
to your friends and neighbors.**



LECTIONARY READINGS



Advent's theme is always the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation. Its tides begin with the end of time and apocalypse and move through judgment, liberating joy, to the coming of the Promised Messiah: God's plan of salvation fulfilled through Jesus Christ.

This year, our primary means of negotiating Advent's tides will be the story of Jesus healing Blind Bartimaeus, a man who could [ital] see Jesus for who he really is. [unital] This story from the gospel of Mark will be paired with lectionary texts.

Advent begins a new liturgical year, which this year focuses on the gospel of Mark. Mark is a very concise, well-crafted gospel, and this story is the gospel in a nutshell. Mark's message is that **the kingdom of God liberates from all oppression and offers life**. Bartimaeus' story shows us how to receive this gift, how to live and be empowered by it. Theologically speaking, all of scripture tells us that God is always revealing the Divine Self to humans, but in a delicious ironic twist, it is **a blind man who sees Jesus** as God's agent.



November 30 (**REVEALING: What Do You See?**): Mark 10:46-52; Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19



December 7 (**REVEALING: Growing Perception**): Mark 10:46-52; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

December 14 (**REVEALING: Staking Everything**): Mark 10:46-52; Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Luke 1:47-55



December 21 (**REVEALING: The Name**): Mark 10:46-52; 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:47-56

December 24 (**INCARNATION**): Christmas Eve, Service of Lessons and Carols at 7:00 p.m

December 28 (**CELEBRATION**): Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Luke 2:22-40; Psalm 148

January 4 (**DESTINATION--Epiphany**): Jeremiah 31:7-14; Ephesians 1:3-14, Psalm 147:12-20



January 11 (**Baptism of the Lord**): Genesis 1:1-5; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11; Psalm 29

January 18 (**Annual Congregational Meeting**): 1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20); 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18

January 25: Jonah 3:1-5, 10; 1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20; Psalm 62:5-12

HOW TO BE AN ADULT

I have been reading David Richo's book entitled "How To Be An Adult In Relationships". He writes that there are five keys to our feeling loved: attention, acceptance, appreciation, affection, and when we are allowed the freedom to live in accord with our own deepest needs and wishes. I would like to discuss and expand these ideas to the context of a loving community. How do we feel loved within our church community?

- **Attention:** Do we listen to each other with respect and full awareness? Are we sensitive to each others needs and feelings? Are we attentive to each other all the time and not just when there is a problem? Do we exercise genuine interest and curiosity about each other?
- **Acceptance:** Do we treat each other respectfully and in a way that makes it safe for each of us to be ourselves? Do we relate to each other without preconceived ideas or expectations? Do we accept each other unconditionally? Do we embrace each other as worthy, each in our own uniqueness?
- **Appreciation:** Do we say "thank you" to each other? Can we let go of being critical?
- **Affection:** Do we hug each other? Do we smile at each other? Do we genuinely like each other? Are we committed to being with each other in a loving community? Can we let go of being selfish?
- **Allowing:** Are we flexible enough to allow others to be themselves? Can we let go of trying to control or manipulate others? Do we create an atmosphere of joy and (if necessary) forgiveness? Can we have fun?
- David Richo says, "behind every complaint is a wish for one of the five A's."

I think Springwater does rather well at being a loving community. I wrote this article because thinking about what makes a loving community increases are awareness of what we do and perhaps helps us do it better. It also helps us become aware of where we need work and it keeps us humble. Now, can we expand the five A's to Estacada, our state, our nation, or the world?

Gwen Shearer



NEW BIBLE TRANSLATION COMING

Who needs another translation of the Bible? What's wrong with the ones we've already got? Called the Common English Bible, this translation is geared toward congregational practices of Christian education and worship. Translators aim for a "plain speaking" clarity of language, with an assumption that scripture has the power to transform lives and bring believers to both love and know God. Pitched at an 8th grade reading level (the NRSV is 11th grade), the new translation will be used in the teaching and worship practices of congregations in at least the following traditions: Presbyterian, Episcopal, Methodist, Lutheran, Baptist, Disciples of Christ, and the United Church of Christ.

Because music and worship practices have shifted significantly in the previous 15 years, this translation will have a greater emphasis on image and metaphor. Globalization, technology, and the internet have brought enormous changes to the English language since the major translations were prepared a generation or two in the past, and developers believe it is time for a new translation that responds to the more recent needs and idioms of Bible readers.

Pastor Eileen has been invited to participate in the final stages of a new translation of the Bible as a reader. "Her" book, Deuteronomy will come late summer or early fall 2009. She will need a small group of 4-6 readers to assist in this project, testing the "readability" of the translation.

If you are interested in following the progress of this translation, the project's website is www.commonenglishbible.com.

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Forward & Address Correction