

Pastor Peter's message notes from Nov. 29, 2020

## Giving Thanks

This has been a tough season. But as we look towards the birth of Jesus, we remember it is important to give thanks for the blessings we do have.

Throughout the centuries people of faith have prayed through the Psalms by giving thanks to God and patiently waiting for his deliverance from suffering. Psalm 34:3 says, "I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together."

Throughout the scriptures we are also encouraged to give thanks to God. When Elizabeth sees Mary pregnant with the baby Jesus for the first time, she "exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.'" Mary responds by giving thanks saying, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" Luke 1:41-42; 46-47

Giving thanks to God is important to maintaining our faith. It is essential to keeping our joy. Giving thanks doesn't mean that we ignore the real pain and suffering we and others experience. It reminds us that our pain and suffering is not the end of the story. Giving thanks reminds us of the message of Advent, that Christ is coming into the world to make all things right.

The message of Psalm 34 and the Christmas story according to Luke is that God hears the cries of the righteous and will deliver them from their struggles. Elizabeth and Zachariah and Mary faced many struggles in their lives. The people of Judea were occupied and faced daily humiliation, abuse, and taxation from the Roman empire. Elizabeth and Zechariah experienced the pain of wanting children and not being able to get pregnant for most of their marriage. Mary faced the uncertainty of what her life would become when she became pregnant out of wedlock. The promise that she would bear a child who would be the messianic king was a direct threat to both King Herod and the Roman Empire. She and her child could have been killed. And yet, they all give thanks to God for the blessings He brings into their lives.

This Christmas Season, I wonder if God might be calling us to be his messengers of thanksgiving and redemption. Maybe God might be calling you this season to speak a word of hope to someone who God puts in your path. Maybe God might be calling you to share your resources so that others might have enough food to eat this Christmas season.

Psalm 34 ends with the final assurance that even though we suffer, God is with us. Those who wait on the Lord will be delivered.

As we wait patiently for the birth of the Christ child, give thanks. God is with us. All shall be well.

## Preparing For Worship

### Scriptures for the coming week

Monday	Dec. 7: Luke 1:26-33
Tuesday	Dec. 8: Luke 1:34-37
Wednesday	Dec. 9: Luke 1:38
Thursday	Dec. 10: Isaiah 7:13-14
Friday	Dec. 11: Isaiah 9:1-5
Saturday	Dec. 12: Isaiah 9:6-7

### Upcoming Worship Messages

- Dec. 6: Christmas According to Luke: Zechariah's Story
- Dec. 13: Christmas According to Luke: The Good News
- Dec. 20: Christmas According to Luke: Mary's Message
- Dec. 24: Christmas According to Luke: The Birth of the Savior
- Dec. 27: Christmas According to Luke: The Blessing

## Our Church Family

### Prayer concerns from our church family

Aura Tavernner, Judy Murray, Donna Rosiere, Jaccie Blaszczyk, Linda Riddle, Camden Garcia, Peggy Province, Irene Miller, Ann Wilson, Nancy Walters, Michael Smith (Hubert Neth's son-in-law), Jim Hudson, Alice Hanrahan, Waneta Lane; Anastasia, Tilly Agymang's sister-in-law in Ghana; June Mellinger on the loss of her brother Herald Merle; Barb Carder, Larry and Cheryl Yung; Harvey Christie's sister Lillian Christie; Genevieve Case's son, Mark Case

### Birthdays for the coming week

- Dec. 6: Dee Hudson, Hannah Hunt
- Dec. 7: Janet Humphrey, Carys Rowland
- Dec. 8: Jeri Braun, Mary Stevens
- Dec. 9: Perry McCandless
- Dec. 12: John Hays, Claude Jones

### Anniversaries for the coming week

- Dec. 11: Steve and Melva Andrew

Please note that though our service is live-streamed on Facebook, watching the stream or video of it afterwards does not require any kind of Facebook account, merely a reliable internet connection. DVDs of worship can be arranged and mailed to you as well if needed. Should you have any technological issues, you can call the church office or reach us at [contact@umcburg.org](mailto:contact@umcburg.org).



As we celebrate the season of Advent, we reflect on the story of the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In the book of Matthew, Chapter 2, verses 1-2, it reads... *Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."*

King Herod had heard the news of Jesus' birth, and he was very troubled, as he thought the arrival of Jesus would overthrow his kingdom. He then sent three wise men to Bethlehem where Jesus was born to find the child and bring him to Jerusalem. King Herod told the wise men that he wanted to see Jesus so he could worship him. But in truth, King Herod really wanted to eliminate Jesus because of the threat he posed to Herod's kingdom.

When the wise men departed Jerusalem for Bethlehem, they saw the great star over the place where baby Jesus lay in the manger. When they saw Jesus, they fell down and worshipped him, for the love of God had been bestowed before them. This love is what influenced the wise men to give baby Jesus their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, after the wise men had given Jesus their gifts, they had a dream in which they were warned not to return to Herod, so they departed Bethlehem and went their own way.

The second candle of Advent represents love, and the birth of Jesus Christ is one of the greatest examples in the Bible of true love: that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had come to Earth and was born of the Virgin Mary to save sinners. Even though we are unable to gather in person to celebrate this season of Advent, God is still here for us, and the gift of his son Jesus Christ has not and will not be taken away from us.

The wise men were first-hand witnesses to the love and glory of Jesus Christ, and now, the same love from above has been bestowed upon us during this season of Advent. As we prepare for the return of Jesus Christ, let us be filled with love for the son of God who came down from heaven 2000 years ago. O come, O come Emmanuel!

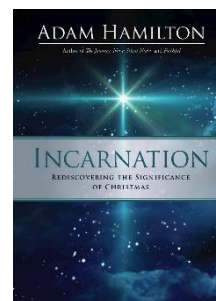
-Evan Holmes

## Adam Hamilton's Advent Study *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*

This Advent season is the perfect time to reflect upon the significance of the Christ child for our lives and our world today. To further your understanding, consider establishing a small group Bible study based on the book *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas* by Adam Hamilton, in which he examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, exploring the historical and personal significance of this birth.

Gather a group of friends together to meet in person or on Zoom. If you're interested but need help being connected with others, contact the church for help in organizing a group.

Resource materials and videos are available through the church office. The book can be purchased online but is not necessary for the study. For materials, support or more information, contact Pastor Susan.



Your continued support allows our church to continue accomplishing our mission to live that all may know Jesus.  
To make your financial pledge for 2021, please mail in your Giving Card and your Time and Talent Sheets to the church office.



Volunteers gathered at UMC-Burg Nov. 26 to provide Thanksgiving meals for members of our community. Thank you to our church congregation for their continued support. With your help, over 350 meals were served.



## MVCAA Provides Aid To ‘Cliff Hanger’ Families Struggling To Meet Housing Expenses

Along with COVID came the loss of jobs and therefore a struggle for people to make ends meet with rent and utilities. Fortunately for these people, Missouri Valley Community Action Agency (MVCCA) can help.

MVCCA, one of 19 community action agencies in Missouri, serves Carroll, Chariton, Johnson, Lafayette, Pettis, Ray and Saline counties. The programs and services MVCAA provides are designed to equip those they serve to transition from poverty to self-reliance. However, this year they are seeing an increase in those who do not fall below the poverty level but need help paying for housing expenses due to their job being affected by COVID, whether it being losing their jobs or hours being cut back.

According to Mandy Baker-Schull, Community Services Manager for MVCAA, they started seeing an increase in those struggling in general with housing last April and May. Employees, such as health care workers, had a cut in hours; since they were not laid off, they did not get the benefit of unemployment.

MVCAA has the Community Services Block Grant to help those who meet the income guidelines restrictions. To receive emergency assistance through this grant, a family of four cannot make over \$32,750 annually. The federal poverty level is \$26,200. A problem occurs when a family is considered “over income.” They are called “cliff hangers.” On paper they make too much to receive any assistance. They also don’t qualify for food stamps

Shull said, “They don’t qualify for assistance but are one crisis away from being in a situation where they need the help. Locally donated funds can be that intervention and can help them from falling into the poverty range.”

Shull said that people who make enough on paper are not able to get enough help, so they will sacrifice in areas of their lives to be able to pay bills such as going to the

doctor—health is the easiest thing to sacrifice. People will avoid going to the doctor or getting their medications so they are able to pay for rent or pay the light bill.

Because of the income guideline restrictions for the grant, locally donated money is helpful because it is not as restrictive. Locally donated funds can help with a variety of needs such as prescriptions, co-pays, transportation, rent/mortgage payment or deposits, and utility payment or deposits.

As an example of how MVCAA helps people, Shull said they helped a woman get new tires for her car so she could get to work. Shull explained that they “use funds

to eliminate the barrier that prevents people from being self-sufficient. We also help working individuals. We had people who had just started their own business and when pandemic happened, lost their business.”

Shull noted that they do not receive a lot of locally donated money in Johnson County, and it affects how many people they are able to help in our community.

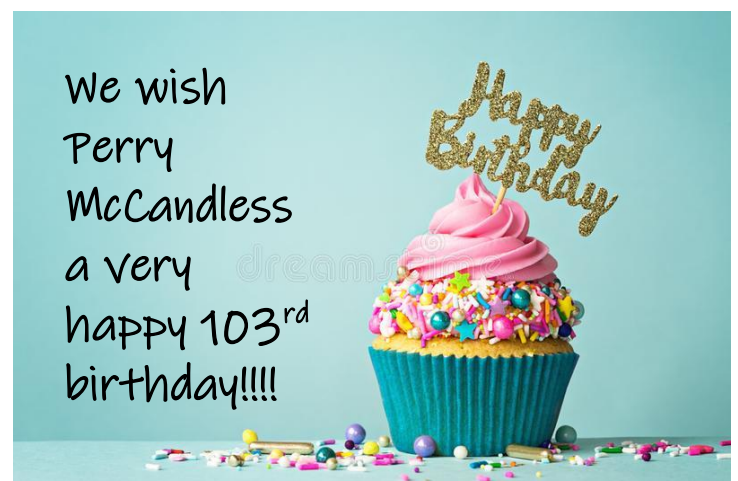
However, she noted, “We do a pretty good job in most of our communities that we partner with. In Warrensburg we work really well with Salvation Army and the Ministerial Association.”

Clearly, there is a need in Warrensburg to help others, and donating to MVCAA provides us another avenue to share our gifts. As you plan with your family how you will celebrate Jesus’ birth this Christmas season, we invite you to consider giving a portion of your Christmas gifts to help working families in the Heartland get through this tough season. You can send your donations to the church. Make checks payable to UMC-Burg with MVCAA in the memo line. We will be collecting money until Dec. 24. Let’s help MVCAA fulfill their vision of creating “a future in which all people have the opportunity to thrive.”

**A future in  
which all  
people have  
the  
opportunity to**



Please join us in celebrating the birth of Christ during our online Christmas Eve service. The services will be posted online at noon Dec. 24, giving families flexibility of when to watch the service. We encourage congregants to worship online with each other at 4 p.m. for a traditional service and at 11 p.m. for a contemporary service with our Praise Band.



Due to the current pandemic,  
You are cordially **NOT** invited  
to our

## “Mask” erade Christmas Dinner

**NOT** to be held on November 31st  
benefiting

### The Jamaica Mission

What do you usually spend when you attend a fundraiser?  
Look at it this way. If you don't have to go, there is

- NO** Babysitter
- NO** Silent Auction
- NO** Raffle Tickets
- NO** Rubber Chicken Dinner



Just make a donation to  
**UMM Jamaica Medical Mission**  
AND you will be doing yourself and us a **BIG FAVOR!**  
And besides that, all of it is **TAX DEDUCTIBLE!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Look forward to NOT ATTENDING the “Mask” erade Christmas Dinner by giving:

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$350 (to thank you for not asking us to buy a table for all our friends and employers)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$300 (to thank you for not having to mingle with other people and make small talk)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 (to thank you for not having to wear uncomfortable clothes and high heels)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$200 (to thank you for letting us order food we like and catch up on our favorite shows)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 (to thank you for letting us stay comfy in our jammies on the couch)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 (to thank you for allowing us to help the Jamaica Mission from our home)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (an amount just to help the Jamaica Mission)

Please make checks payable to UMM Jamaica Mission and mail to UMC-Burg.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

