

Pastor's Pen

Good News

I have no memory of not being a Christian, nor have I experienced a season of life without the church. Thinking of Advents past, the shift from childhood anticipation of gifts on Christmas morning, to current eagerness to be present in worship on Christmas Eve happened seamlessly. That the story of the incarnation is so well rehearsed in my heart and mind provides a wonderful, orienting gift; my life is defined by my understanding of God's love.

That being said, I took note of something I read recently about the intersection of the Christmas narrative and contemporary culture. The writer posed the question, if the birth of Jesus isn't news, how can it be good news?

I will grant that, even in 2015, there are people in the world who have not heard of Christ Jesus, and there are young lives for whom the story of the birth of Jesus is clearly what TS Eliot called "the hint half guessed, the gift half understood" (from poem *The Dry Salvages*). And I fully expect that the very good news the angels brought to the shepherds (Luke 2:10) will find new ears, and once again capture imaginations and transform lives. Yet, for many, a virgin conceiving and bearing a child born in Bethlehem is not news.

And so we are back to the question, if it is not news to us, how is it good news? One answer might be to consider that the qualifier is determined by our response. I will allow that angels are going to do what angels do, consequently angels reacting to the birth by winging their way to shepherds and praising God in song is angels being angels.

However, in Luke we are told the shepherds return home from visiting the baby Jesus praising God for all they had seen and heard. Other responses emerge in Matthew's telling. Three visitors from the East greet the news by bringing gifts for the Christ child, and King Herod reacts to the news by having every child two years old or younger, living in and around Bethlehem, killed. The news is the same but the responses are dramatically different.

I look forward to our time together on Christmas Eve (**December 24th @ 5:30**); singing, communion, candlelight, and hearing again the story of the birth of our savior creates a beautifully sublime worship experience each year. If you will be out of town over Christmas, I trust you will find a Christmas Eve service to attend.

Given that the song *A Little Good News*, for which Anne Murray won a Grammy in 1984, strikes a familiar cord, I would conclude that the desire for good news has not diminished. Indeed, while not a generational competition, one could argue the 24/7 nature of media coverage and instant access have made the longing for good news even greater and more pervasive. "We sure could use a little good news today".

That the incarnation happened is not news to me, but whether or not others receive it as good news is influenced by my response, your response, our response to the coming of Christ into the world. Some children will be present Christmas Eve, and we have the joy of sharing the story of the incarnation with them, in hopes that it takes deep root in the soil of their lives. The world really can use a little good news today, every day. May it flow through us, Merry Christmas!

Peter van Eys

Up-Coming Events

Celebrate the Season

The Chancel Choir will share a musical gift with us on Sunday, **December 20**, at the traditional service as the choir presents their Christmas cantata, **One Holy Night**. Nursery and Children's Church will be offered. Please plan to attend this special Christmas worship.

Caroling Party

A caroling party is coming this Sunday, **December 20** at 4:00 p.m. Please RSVP to Sharon Ferrell at director@crievewoodumc.org or call 615-834-7255 to reserve your family's spot on the Big Red bus! A chili supper follows for all carolers.

Christmas Eve Service

Join us at 5:30 p.m. in the sanctuary on Christmas Eve. This family friendly service is open to all ages. Don't miss the beauty of fellowship and worship in the candle lit sanctuary adorned to celebrate the birth of Christ.



Missions

Room in the Inn

Our United Methodist Men's group and the Missions Ministry Team have joined together to offer Crieveewood UMC as a host site for the Room in the Inn Ministry during the month of January. Room in the Inn is a 30 year old ministry through which Nashville's homeless are provided meals and a place to stay the night from November 1st through March 31st.

It has been a Crieveewood ministry goal for some time to partner with Room in the Inn, so with the completion of our building renovation and expansion it was decided that now is the time to do so. We will host six men each Wednesday night in January. There are many ways to be involved. A driver is needed each Wednesday evening for pick-up of our guests and each Thursday morning for returning our guests downtown. Innkeepers are needed to spend Wednesday night at the church. Breakfast will be prepared for the guests each Thursday morning, as well as sack lunches that are sent with the guests when they depart. Finally, folks are needed to come Thursday mornings to clean up and prepare the building for the Child Care Center day.

We also need prayer for the ministry and for the individuals whom we will be hosting. The Men's group and the Mission Ministry team hope to see our participation in the Room in the Inn ministry grow. There is a sign up poster in the narthex, or you may call the church office for more information about how you can be involved.

The Contributor Newspaper

The Contributor newspaper is different this holiday season, composed of sheets of wrapping paper designed by the talented vendors themselves. The special wrapping paper edition, which Crieveewood helped to sponsor, is available through the month of December.

Children's Church

Volunteers are needed for children's Church in 2016. Please contact Leigh Ann Cate to volunteer or to obtain details.

Christmas Cards

If you wish to recycle old Christmas cards, the church will accept them to use in mission projects. Please give these cards directly to Nancy Rosdeutscher. There is no receptacle for them in the church building.

Caramel Corn

Charlie's homemade caramel corn will be in the narthex on Sunday, [December 20](#). Purchase this treat as a Christmas delight or half-time snack for your favorite game. Proceeds from this sale go to youth missions.

Crievewood UMC Scholarship

The students of Martin Methodist College send Christmas greetings and grateful appreciation to the members of Crievewood who contribute each year toward the sponsorship of a student scholarship at Martin. This year's recipient of the scholarship is Benjamin N. Forbes, a junior with a behavioral science major whose hometown is Gallatin, Tennessee.

Activities

Men's Breakfast

The next meeting of the United Methodist Men will be on Saturday, [January 9](#), at 8:00 a.m. After the traditional breakfast Molly Martin will speak about the *Contributor* newspaper.

Wednesday Night

Wednesday Night Live dinners, programs, and children's activities will resume on [January 13](#). Have a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

JOY Club

On [January 28](#) Joy Club will meet at the church at 10:00 a.m. and travel to Mt. Juliet to visit NOAA, the national weather service. There will be a one hour tour starting at 11:00 a.m. which includes demos of the equipment used by the service. The tour is followed by a seated program. Lunch is after the program at Golden Coral. This activity is open to all members of the Crievewood family.

Music Ministry and Blessings

Advent Season offers some of the most beloved music of the year. Scripture records several songs offered in response to the events that lead to the birth of Jesus, as well as heavenly choruses announcing the birth. In our liturgical life we return to familiar carols and hymns that delight our souls and express our faith.

These are also days of special gatherings defined by music. And we have been extraordinarily blessed! The congregation would like to thank Barry Coggins for once again organizing Cool Yule and express appreciation for all who participated. It remains a joyful means of living into this holy season.

And then there was the children's Christmas musical **Starry Night, Noisy Night** (some youth joined in) to close out our fall Wednesday Night gatherings. What an amazing gift! Thanks goes to staff members Hailee Hunt-Hawkins (Director) and Robert Grubbs (Sound) for their leadership and expertise, as well as the parents and other adults who helped shepherd the herd in rehearsal and presentation. To hear the story of Christ's birth through the voices of children and youth is to receive God's love in its purest form.

We await the Traditional Service Choir's offering of the Christmas Cantata **One Holy Night** and an evening of caroling in the neighborhood. And of course, many look forward to singing *Silent Night, Holy Night* by candlelight on Christmas Eve.

More blessings await; for there is a song in the air, and we are invited to join all heaven and nature to repeat the sounding joy!

Youth and Young Adults

Graduation

Congratulations to William Tucker for graduating from Georgia Tech.

Youth Group Alumni Night

All youth group alumni and college students are invited to join the youth group for a movie night on **January 3**, 5-7 p.m.

Children's Corner

Volunteer News

Thank you. It is through your generous spirit that we are able to create such a vibrant children's ministry here at Creveewood. We pray for you and appreciate all you do.

Nursery Schedule:

	<u>1st Shift</u>	<u>2nd Shift</u>
December 20	Bob and Mary Bryan	Chris and Joe Carter
December 27	Jani Cate/Jackie Stankiewicz	Lisa Sims and Ali Stoner
January 3	Tom and Becky Freck	Tom and Becky Freck

Child Care Center

Thanks to a generous donation from Jo Newbill, a stackable washer/dryer is on its way. We hope to have it installed in time for the new year.

Christmas season is in full swing in the Child Care Center. We have decked the hall with handmade nativities, handprint trees, handprint angels, self-portrait gingerbread people, and much more. We are filling the air with the joyful noises of laughter and singing. Our classes are practicing for their Christmas program performance, as well as a trip to Elmcroft to sing for our senior friends.

Speaking of singing. . .

You can join the fun when we head out caroling on the Big Red Bus, December 20. RSVP to reserve your seat on the bus, and chili will be provided for all carolers immediately following.

During this wonderful season of giving, I want to stop and thank you for all you have given me. From your kind words and encouragement to the "goodies" you drop off for us to use. All of these things go a long way making the child care a special part of Creveewood.

Sharon Ferrell

Other Items

Reminder:

Any monetary gift that you wish to be counted as a 2015 contribution should be turned into the church office by December 31. Please do not wait until the last minute, as mail delivery has been very slow this month.

