



A Simpler Christmas

I cannot imagine a busier time of year. Shopping, parties, gift exchanges, cooking, sending cards and traveling to visit friends and family, there is just not enough time to get it all done. It always comes too fast, and before you know it is over and we look back and say next year I will cut back.

If we look at the list of activities that we engage in during the Christmas season we might find that we are ignoring the real reason for the holiday. Perhaps we should go back to our roots and drop the secular aspects of Christmas. A simpler time when a hand-made gift, a good meal and fellowship with family and friends. Time to reflect just what it is that we are celebrating.

The birth of Jesus was a humble beginning for our Lord. Let us embrace the simplicity of the season and enjoy the lessons to be learned from that birth in a stable.

May God Bless you and yours during this Christmas Season.

***You are invite to celebrate Christ birth with us.
Sunday, December 23, 7:00 pm, Kids & Choral Program.
Tuesday, December 25, 10:00 am, Christmas Day Worship***



*May the Love of Christ fill your heart with Joy!
Merry Christmas Sweet Friends!*

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Weekly Calendar

Sundays Worship 9:30 am
Sundays Studies 10:45 am
Gardeners Tuesdays 9:00 am
Wednesdays 6:30 pm
Pastor's Bible Study
Thursdays Ensemble 7 pm

Center's Calendar

Sunday, Dec. 23, 7:00 pm
Christmas Celebration
Tuesday, Dec. 25, 10 am
Christmas Day Celebration
Monday, Jan 14, 7:00 pm
Church Board Meeting
Tuesday, Jan 22, 6:30 pm
Fellowship Night
Monday, Feb. 11, 7:00 pm
Church Board Meeting
Saturday, Feb 23
Annual Chili Supper
and Auction
Tuesday, Feb 26, 6:30 pm
Fellowship Night



Fellowship Night

Center's 4th Tuesday
Fellowship Nights
Tuesday, Jan. 22
Tuesday, Feb. 26
Tuesday, March 26

Join us on the 4th
Tuesdays of each month.
We gather for a light
supper (carry-in style)
at 6:30 pm

Or the 1st Sundays of
each month at 10:45 am.

“Fellowship” “friendly
association, especially
with people who share
one's interests.”

*Great time just
relaxing with your
Center Friends.*



Contributions for
the newsletter are
always welcome.
Email them to
billijanetburkey
@yahoo.com

Newsletter deadline for
Winter issue is
Tuesday, Jan. 15!

Brothers, Sisters, Family,

“For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being may boast in the presence of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:26-29

Center Church, some have said we are small but mighty. The twist is, we are not mighty. Our God is mighty.

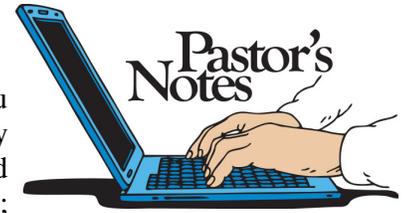
I want to praise the work God has done here for a bit. We are who we are by the grace of God! I've been thoroughly encouraged by who God has made us to be. I can see His order and His provision in every one of you. You are talented. The diversity of talents God has ordered for this church is amazing! We are a puzzle put together by the hand of God. He is fitting each one of us into the picture in our own special way. You have proved over and over again how amazing you are at service to this church and this community. Everyone does something and everything is getting done by someone. Many hands work in many areas here and it is a beautiful thing to behold. In personality and character we are diverse. We are funny, we are cheerful, we are serious, we are laughers, we are thinkers, we are both pressing and patient. We are challenged and deepened by our diversity in who we are. We learn to speak well around each other, to deal with our quirks and to enjoy how fantastically unique God has made each one of us. We are made for great things! I hope that is easily seen.

We are the best of church bodies I've seen in my 39 years in the church. Good bodies, healthy bodies get things done. Praise God! do we get things done around here! I think we all tend to be amazed and so are others. Good bodies, healthy bodies, they reach with strength, they walk with purpose and they grow as they are made to grow. We are reaching. Let's reach our immediate community. Let's keep walking and we'll keep growing, not just together but in our family of believers.

“Little is much when God's in it.” I have heard this said and sung. This is the manner of God. Big churches spend tens of thousands to bring in 10s and 100s. Big churches have a multitude of programs to urge and try to get 10s, 50s involved. They call on their thousands to get 50 or 100 to serve. We will not be so. We work as we are. We are Gideons, we are Davids, we are the 12 apostles who, in the strength and wisdom of God, defeat armies, take down giants, turn the world upside down. We are loaves and fishes in God's hands. We will be, not a boast in ourselves, but a praise to God at last. Do we believe this? When did God use the rich, the proud, the capable to accomplish the impossible? We will reach and serve for the kingdom of God and for the His glory. All praise will belong to Him for accomplishing the otherwise impossible.

I'm blessed to know you Center Church.
I'm blessed and honored to be given the
opportunity to love you and be loved by
you, serve alongside you. Thank you for
being wonderful.

In Love,
Pastor Mark





Somehow, not only for Christmas,
But all the long year through,
The joy that you give to others,
Is the joy that comes back to you.
And the more you spend in blessing
The poor and lonely and sad,
The more of your heart's possessing
Returns to you glad.

—John Greenleaf Whittier



We are excited to prepare for the Christmas Season and will be involved in numerous ways that we can reach and give back to our community this coming month.



Center Church will be participating in the Operation Louisville Shoeboxes for Kids Program. You can pack and wrap a standard size shoe box with age appropriate toys, school supplies, hygiene items, or small clothing items. We are responsible for 0-2 year olds but you can also do older ages as well. Please mark the gender and age on the outside of the box. Deadline is December 16.

We also are bringing back the Mitten Tree which will be setup in the sanctuary. We are asking for hat, scarf, glove, toiletry items, cleaning supplies, and diapers to fill the tree. Deadline is December 16.

Thank you for helping spread God's love this Christmas Season!

In His Love, Laura Kell, Witness Commission Chair

While waiting ...

Advent does not lead to nervous tension stemming from expectation of something spectacular about to happen. On the contrary, it leads to a growing inner stillness and joy allowing me to realize that he for whom I am waiting has already arrived and speaks to me in the silence of my heart.

Just as a mother feels the child grow in her and is not surprised on the day of the birth, but joyfully receives the one she learned to know during her waiting, so Jesus can be born in my life slowly and steadily and be received as the one I learned to know while waiting.

—Henri J.M. Nouwen
The Genesee Diary



Every January, the Christian church worldwide marks the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This ecumenical “octave,” or eight-day observance, lasts from January 18 (the Feast of St. Peter) to January 25 (the Feast of St. Paul).

The week is based on Jesus’ prayer to his heavenly Father in John 17:21 that his followers “may all be one ... so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (ESV). Jesus knew that if Christians were fiercely divided, people outside the faith wouldn’t want to learn more about him.

The theme for the 2019 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is from Deuteronomy 16:20 (NRSV): “Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue.”

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25, 2019.

Small Packages, Great Things

The motto for Hershey’s Kisses used to be “Big things come in small packages!” That also could be a motto for Bethlehem, for Baby Jesus and, indeed, for us. It’s an important message to remember when we fear we’re too weak to fix the world’s problems, too small to fight the gigantic terror that threatens a loved one or too lacking in abilities we see in others.

“But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah,” God declares through the prophet Micah (5:2, NRSV), “from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel.” Bethlehem was a mere village. God’s ruler for Israel started as an infant. His birthplace was a small stable, not a palace or temple. But size is not everything. Big — that is, great — things can come in small packages. And thanks to the tiny baby who grew up to share immeasurably huge love with the world, God can do great things through you, too!



Make this fun decoration as a reminder of the joy Jesus brings.



What you need:

- Pencil
- Poster board
- Scissors
- Craft pompoms (red, white, green, silver, gold)
- Glue

What you do:

1. Trace large capital block letters J, O and Y on the poster board.
2. Cut out the letters.
3. Glue pompoms on one side of each letter, completely covering it.
4. Share JOY by displaying the letters in your home.