

Sandpiper

December Worship Schedule

**Sunday School 9:00am
Worship 10:30am**



Word From the Pastor

Christ, the Cold, and Christmas

It happens every fall. “Marc, aren’t you cold in that?” I am asked as I try to keep summer going a little too long with shorts and t-shirts. Every fall, I see how long I can pretend it’s still summer before finally caving to the cold realities of fall and winter. I have always hated the cold. From the snow shoveling to the bitter wind chills to canceled events (what a change from the days of school when we prayed for snow days!), I prefer almost any other season. But, there is one part of the cold that I do enjoy. Christmas. That never changes with age. In Matthew 1:23, it says, “Behold, the virgin

shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, ‘God with us.’ I’m sure you’ve heard the “real meaning of Christmas” many, many times over. Beyond the gifts and shopping, the kids’ programs and the cooking, Christmas is about “God With Us.” Another word for this is the incarnation. Christmas is when Jesus, the Son of God, came into the world. Just as Christ incarnated into this world, we are called to follow his lead in our community. In the Gospel, we are given the greatest gift and the greatest message ever given. It’s a message of hope, forgiven, and rescue. Sadly, in North America, fewer and fewer people are looking to this hope today. Christianity is expanding worldwide, but it is in decline here. At Christmas, we have opportunity. Perhaps it is the festiveness of the season or the memories of days gone by, unbelievers and former believers are open to Christ in a way they generally aren’t. So, if you want to incarnate your neighborhood, get to know your neighbors. Invite them to the Community Christmas event or our candlelight Christmas Eve service. Share about what Christ has done in your life. I may hate the cold. But Christ has come. Christ has arrived on a mission of hope. You may believe in him, but do you also want to join him on his incarnational mission?



Sands Through the Hourglass...

The Christmas colored sands tumbling from the hour glass are reminders that each of us is an innkeeper who decides if there is room for Jesus. Yes, make room for Him.

Greet your MS friends by putting your Christmas greeting card on the bulletin board near the fellowship hall. Push pins are there for your use.

Gratitude is extended to those who graciously gave \$460. for the Presbyterian Women's sponsored Thank Offering. The money was given to the Alliance American Legion. As Amy Wagner narrated, two of the Legion members showed, in educationally insightful display, of how the American flag is properly folded into triangles. Veterans were honored.

Appreciation was given by Diane Sanor for all who helped to fill 25 boxes for the Samaritan's Purse Christmas gift project. For several years Diane has unselfishly given her time and effort to encourage our congregation in this worthwhile project.

Thanks is extended by David Socotch, Missions' committee chairman, to all who give their tithes and offerings throughout the year. A budgeted 10% is given to support mission and concern needs. Mission dollars are sent to missionaries Paul and Rei hold Sydnor, Jeff and Natasha Bane and Abe and Diane Bible. Others receiving donations for their spreading of the gospel are Bridges for Peace, Girls' Town in Jerusalem, Concept of Truth International, EPC's Theological Ministry Development Network, and Franklin Graham's various programs. Others supported by MSEPC mission giving are for the West Branch Ministerial Association's annual scholarships and to Lisa Smith who shares the Good News with college students.

Welcome continues to be extended to two new families who have been worshipping with us. They are Dale and Sandra Chryst from Alliance and the Miller family, Ken and Lacy and their children Darby, who sings in the choir, and Johnny who live in Homeworth.

Several young MS female athletes met the many challenges they faced this summer and fall. Mary and Elizabeth Mason were both on the Marlinton Dukes' tennis team that had the highest GPA in their league. Junior Mary and freshman Elizabeth are now both members of the Dukes' basketball team---ah, less running for Dad and Mom. Sarah Mason, who has run cross country for ten years, completed in the Great Lakes Region XC Women's Cross Country race in Michigan, representing the UMU Purple Raiders. Hundreds of college students ran. That was Sarah's last cross country competition. Junior Brynn Guist and the Muskingam Muskies' volleyball team were invited to play in tournament competition, also in Michigan. The young women made it to the final round, but after five wins, they were defeated. Senior Megan Hampe, a Louisville Leopard, received her four year letter in soccer. She was also the recipient of first team honors in both Stark County and the District, along with being given the Iron Woman Award and coaches' award. Congratulations to all of you for the hard work you put into you sporting activities.

Remember we at MS will be hosting the Trim a Tree covered dish meal starting at 5:30 on Dec. 8th. for our congregation and the Homeworth community. The Young and Alive singers will present the program. Then on Fri., Dec 20, the Homeworth Community Christmas party will be held at the firehouse from 6:30-8:30, with MS participating in the gathering.

The manger was the first KING -sized bed.



**ANNOUNCEMENTS
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Homeworth Community Group

The **Homeworth Community Christmas Party** is on Friday, December 20 from 6:30-8:30pm. We would like to give a pair of socks to all who attend. So if you would like to donate some colorful socks in all sizes (kids to adult) please place them in the pink crate in the narthex.

HOMEWORTH COMMUNITY TRIM-TREE DINNER & PROGRAM

Our annual dinner & program will be on December 8th starting at 5:30pm. The entertainment will be provided by the West Branch Young & Alive. Please bring a meat dish, salad or dessert to share.

You can bring your own ornament for the tree or there will be ornaments provided.



Middle Sandy's Christmas Eve candlelight service is at 9:00pm on Tuesday, December 24th. All are invited to attend. Hope to see you there!

West Branch Middle School

Beth Hall, the RN at the Middle School is collecting food items. She is making up bags of food to be given to families in need so the children will have food for the weekend. The following food items can be donated by bringing them to the church and we will see that they get to the school. Peanut butter & jelly in plastic bottles, cereal boxes, cereal bars, oatmeal, Pop tarts, canned pasta (ravioli, spaghetti-os), canned soup, mac-n-cheese, pasta sauce (cans), fruit cups or in cans, canned veggies, granola bars, crackers & cheese.

• ***Article Deadline Note:***

Please turn in any articles or announcements for the Sandpiper to Carolyn Slingerland by the 22nd of each month. You can e-mail them to middlesandy@frontier.com.



O Little town of
Bethlehem,
How still we see
thee lie!

In Our Prayers

We encourage you to send a card or letter to one or two each month. Addresses are available in the church directory or in the church office.

Continuing health needs:

Dorothy Smythe (Brookdale - Salem)
Tim Hume (blood disease treatments)

Military Service:

Brian Burbick (Navy - NY)
Chad & Christina Gimmi (4823 Unit D Thomas Paine Circle, Scott AFB, IL. 62225)
Eric W. Hampe (Ohio Army National Guard,

Stow, OH)
Ryan P. Lee (Iraq)
Jason Snyder (Ft. Drum, NY) (Carole & Don Mathey's grandson)
Jon Pagnucco (Jane Stryffeler's grandson) - Navy (Alexandria, VA)
-John Hampe (Marines)

Our Missionaries - for Holy Spirit protection and great perseverance in their work.

Jeff & Natasha B. (EPC missionaries in Asia)
Abe & Diane Bible (Missionaries to the Ukraine)
Lisa Smith (Indianapolis)
Paul & Reinhild Sydnor (ministry to refugees in Lille, France and Malta)

In Nursing Homes or Home-bound:

Dorothy Smythe (Brookdale, Salem)
Dorothy McKinley (at home)



DECEMBER

Birthdays

Name - Date

Aaron John Tharp, Jr. - 3
Susan Hume - 6
Thomas Mason - 7
Jim Wallace - 10
Lynne Kidd - 11
Don Bandy - 13
Wendy Weese - 18
Jason Snyder - 19
Joey Bush - 23
Chelsea Tharp - 26

Anniversaries

Couple – Date
Tom & Monika Sawyer - 26



Reminder:

Don't forget the breakfasts at Damascus United Methodist Church on the third Saturdays of each month. Breakfast is served from 7:00-10:30am.

Notes

Brothers In Christ

(Men's Ministry Group)

Men of Middle Sandy

Come for a night of fellowship

Friday, July 12th at 7:30pm.

We will be showing a movie and snacks will be provided. After the movie we'll have a time to get to know each other better. Come and experience a new adventure and learn how important men really are.

in our



prayers

Child Care available during the Worship Service
for ages infant through 5 years