

WILLOW UM CHURCH

THE COMMUNICATOR

DECEMBER 2013

BLESSED CHRISTMAS



A NOTE FROM PASTOR MARIANNE:

As Advent approaches, I find myself reflecting on what it must have been like to live in a time before Christ; in “waiting mode” for the Messiah.

Before Jesus came, God seemed distant, hidden in the Holy of Holies in the temple, accessible only to the high priest. Worshipers wondered whether their sacrifices were acceptable and pleased God and they must have often cried out to God – “when will the Messiah come and redeem us from our oppression?”

I’m sure at times they felt hopeless.

We have never needed to feel that way. The Good News of Jesus Christ has been a reality long before any of us were born.

For millions of people, the Advent season means nothing more than parties, gifts, decorations, and time off work. For Christians, however, this time of year is a reminder of the hope we have because of Jesus Christ.

Jesus the Light that came into the darkness.

Christ means hope—to the person out of work, to the struggling single mother, to the dying believer. Even if we are just hanging on by our fingernails through the disappointments of life, if we have Jesus, we have hope. And he is not a false hope, a childish fairy tale that we wish will have a happy ending. By the power of God who rose Christ from the dead, we too can live with hope in our situations.

Christmas is a renewal of that hope. It reconfirms it for us if our vision has grown dim. It was settled long ago, so we don't have to doubt any more. Jesus is the fulfillment of our hope, our deepest longings come true.

The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 33:22 – “May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you.”

May this season fill you with hope and a spirit of expectancy as you go into the year ahead.

My love to you, Pastor Marianne

December Sermon Titles and Scriptures

- December 1: “Stay Awake”
Matthew 24:36-44
- December 8: “Go Out on a Limb”
Matthew 3:1-12
- December 8: 4pm Blue Christmas Service
“Light in the Darkness”
- December 15: “What Do You See?”
Matthew 11:2-11
- December 22: “I Am With You”
Matthew 1:18-25
- December 24: “Love Was Born”
Luke 2:1-20
- December 29: “The Hebrew Diary”
Isaiah 63:7-9



Ministries of Willow Church



Food Pantry

Ethel's food pantry offers short term assistance for any in need. 1 bag of groceries at a time. The food pantry is open 24/7. Please call the church for information or to request assistance.

Spiritual Growth and Bible Study

A weekly study fellowship with emphasis on deepening personal spirituality with practical disciplines. Study group meets Thursdays at 7:00. All are welcome.

Prayer Ministry

Our congregation offers through prayer and meditation, intercessory prayer for any concern 24 hours a day. Please call the church office to leave your prayer requests.

AA Ministry

Utilize a 12 step spiritual program to help those suffering the effects of alcohol addiction. Meetings are held Wednesdays 6:00 pm here at the church.

Music Ministry

Choir and worship opportunities through music participation. Practice is every Wednesday at 7:00 p.m.

Children's Ministry

Christian education during worship service is offered twice a month to foster and guide our children in their faith under the direction of Jeanne Lochner. Children's Church the first Sunday of the month coordinated by Jennifer Johnson.



Ethel's Food Pantry Ethel's Food Pantry is an outreach of our church and community as we strive to help those who are in need of food assistance. All food is donated. If you would like to donate at any time, see Helena, contributions are always needed. Please remember, misc. items are needed all the time. This month's item: **BISQUICK**

Scrip Program



Our church benefits from the purchase of Scrip gift cards. Every time you purchase a card we receive a percentage of the purchase price. Use the cards not only to give as gifts, but also consider buying them for your own personal use, i.e. dining out, home improvements, gas, personal items. If you would like an updated list of retailers, please see Martha Molnar.

Thank you for your continued support

MAKES GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFTS!!!

This newsletter is compiled by Donna Lee Hornyak. A special thanks to Gail Sobeki and all who submit articles for our newsletter. If you would like to add to "The Communicator" please email : dhornyak2@gmail.com (Donna Lee Hornyak)

Sanctuary: Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true. With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

From The Faith We Sing Hymnal



Altar Flowers Altar flowers can be displayed as a memorial or in honor of someone or something

or a special event. Cost per bouquet if only 1 bouquet is purchased for the same week is \$15.00. Cost if 2 bouquets are purchased for the same week is \$12.50 each. Please remember.. Do not take the vases. They must be returned to the florist. Make all checks payable to Darlene's Flowers. If interested in donating altar flowers please contact **Vanessa Lenz** at 734-731-9611. **Please get your flower order and payment to Vanessa 2 weeks ahead of time or your order may be canceled. If you have an altar vase, please return it to the church.**





MITTEN and HAT TREE

During the holidays it's important to think how you can

give to others...providing them with some warmth during the cold Michigan winter is a great place to start.

Please donate NEW mittens and hats for the children in our area. Just "hang" them on the mitten tree in the vestibule.

Advent Devotionals

Willow UMC is offering a daily Advent Devotional to be used starting the first Sunday of Advent, which is December 1st. The cost is \$1.00. If you paid in advance, please pick up your copies on the table in the church entryway. Extras were ordered, so please feel free to purchase one at any time.

Visitation Opportunity

While visiting with the pastor in their home, Ed and Jean Miller shared that they would love to have you, church friends, come and visit them anytime you can. Please call Jean at 734-753-9260 to make arrangements, as she has dialysis on Mon/Wed/Fri.



January Sermon Series on "Forgiveness: Finding Peace Through Letting Go"

Rev. Adam Hamilton pastor at Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas writes:

"Forgiveness is essential to our lives. Without it, no marriage can survive, no family can stay together and no society can be sustained. It is a necessary part of lasting friendships and work relationships. . . We are bound to hurt others and they are bound to hurt us. If we are to live successfully and to know freedom and joy, these 6 words must be a regular part of our vocabulary: 'I'm sorry,' and 'I forgive you.'"

Our sermon series will help us to focus on the practice of forgiveness as we begin the New Year.

- January 5: Receiving Forgiveness from God
- January 12: Forgiveness in Romantic Relationships and Marriage
- January 19: Forgiving Others
- January 26: Forgiving Family



Parenting Study

"Handling Anger in Your Home"

Willow UMC continues to offer a free parenting study for parents of children of all ages. The study utilizes a parenting series by Jim Williams who is a national parenting advocate and speaker and the director of Parent Education and Asset Development for STARS, a school based program helping students make healthy lifestyle choices.

"Handling Anger in Your Home" is a 4 week study to help parents learn new ways to manage their own feelings of anger and frustration. By modeling good habits of control and communication, parents can better teach their children to handle their own emotions in a positive way.

All are welcome.

Dates of the study are the 4th Sundays of the month. We are breaking for December and will begin again in January.

The study starts at 11:00am with snacks and ends at 12:00pm.

Meet in the home of Tyler and Jennifer Johnson at 25305 Bernadine Rd., New Boston.

If you have any questions about the class or location, please contact Pastor Marianne, parenting study facilitator (248-875-3783), Jennifer Johnson, co-coordinator (734-625-5750).



Women's Social at Wanda Young's...Friday, December 13th...any time after 6:00 PM. The ladies of Willow Church are invited to spend the evening at Wanda's...Please join us for some Christmas fun...including food and fellowship.

Were you here?

- When Pastor Marianne showed up for Sunday service on crutches and led us in worship?
- When we asked ourselves: "who do we know who is "up a tree?" in their love of God and how can we help them?"
- When Pastor Marianne told us that "true love is an acceptance of what is and will always be."
- When Jeanne Lochner explained to us that "faith can give us the strength we need to be a Christian."
- When Mark Buttignoli, in his message, told us that Jesus refused to be a King and became the King of Kings!
- When we gathered for our Thanksgiving Eve Service and Pastor Doug asked us to give Thanks for Nothing = "No Thing"!



Cookie Walk: The women's group is hosting cookie walk on Sunday, December 15th, immediately following church. Members of the church will be donating cookies to the church for you to purchase. Cookies will be \$5.00 per pound...

***If you have volunteered/or would like to make or bring in cookies: We will be at the church on Saturday, December 14th from 10am—11am for you to drop off your "yummy treats!" If this time frame does not work for you, please contact Vanessa Lenz for other arrangements. Thank you

Willow UMC Choir wants YOU!

Choir Rehearsal has begun and it's not too late for you to join!



Choir Rehearsal is every Wednesday at 7:00pm for one hour.

Please contact Karen Struble, choir director.

FOR SALE:

Church Pews...8 feet long and/or 16 feet long...makes excellent entry benches....please see Karen Wilson...Best Offer



Willow United Methodist Church

36925 Willow Road
New Boston, MI 48164

www.willowchurch.org

Marianne McMunn, Pastor

Email address: marianmcmunn@sbcglobal.net

Pastor's Schedule: Monday—day off Tuesdays and Thursdays at church Wednesday—home office and choir rehearsal at Willow Church Friday—Study Day Saturday—Home office

Phone: 734-654-9020

Pastor's Cell: 248-875-3783

Fax: 734-654-9020

Sunday Service 9:30 AM

Jeanne Lochner: Children's Ministry

Karen Struble: Music Director

Santa and Grandma author unknown

I remember my first Christmas adventure with Grandma. I was just a kid.

I remember tearing across town on my bike to visit her on the day my big sister dropped the bomb: "There is no Santa Claus," she jeered. "Even dummies know that!"



My Grandma was not the gushy kind, never had been. I fled to her that day because I knew she would be straight with me. I knew Grandma always told the truth, and I knew that the truth always went down a whole lot easier when swallowed with one of her "world-famous" cinnamon buns. I knew they were world-famous, because Grandma said so. It had to be true.

Grandma was home, and the buns were still warm. Between bites, I told her everything. She was ready for me. "No Santa Claus?" she snorted.... "Ridiculous! Don't believe it. That rumor has been going around for years, and it makes me mad, plain mad!! Now, put on your coat, and let's go."

"Go? Go where, Grandma?" I asked. I hadn't even finished my second world-famous cinnamon bun. "Where" turned out to be Kerby's General Store, the one store in town that had a little bit of just about everything. As we walked through its doors, Grandma handed me ten dollars. That was a bundle in those days. "Take this money," she said, "and buy something for someone who needs it. I'll wait for you in the car." Then she turned and walked out of Kerby's.

I was only eight years old. I'd often gone shopping with my mother, but never had I shopped for anything all by myself. The store seemed big and crowded, full of people scrambling to finish their Christmas shopping.

For a few moments I just stood there, confused, clutching that ten-dollar bill, wondering what to buy, and who on earth to buy it for.

I thought of everybody I knew: my family, my friends, my neighbors, the kids at school, the people who went to my church.

I was just about thought out, when I suddenly thought of Bobby Decker. He was a kid with bad breath and messy hair, and he sat right behind me in Mrs. Pollock's grade-two class. Bobby Decker didn't have a coat. I knew that because he never went out to recess during the winter. His mother always wrote a note, telling the teacher that he had a cough, but all we kids knew that Bobby Decker didn't have a cough; he didn't have a good coat. I fingered the ten-dollar bill with growing excitement. I would buy Bobby Decker a coat! I settled on a red corduroy one that had a hood to it. It looked real warm, and he would like that.

"Is this a Christmas present for someone?" the lady behind the counter asked kindly, as I laid my ten dollars down. "Yes, ma'am," I replied shyly. "It's for Bobby."

The nice lady smiled at me, as I told her about how Bobby really needed a good winter coat. I didn't get any change, but she put the coat in a bag, smiled again, and wished me a Merry Christmas.

That evening, Grandma helped me wrap the coat (a little tag fell out of the coat, and Grandma tucked it in her Bible) in Christmas paper and ribbons and wrote, "To Bobby, >From Santa Claus" on it.

Grandma said that Santa always insisted on secrecy. Then she drove me over to Bobby Decker's house, explaining as we went that I was now and forever officially, one of Santa's helpers.

Grandma parked down the street from Bobby's house, and she and I crept noiselessly and hid in the bushes by his front walk. Then Grandma gave me a nudge. "All right, Santa Claus," she whispered, "get going."

I took a deep breath, dashed for his front door, threw the present down on his step, pounded his door and flew back to the safety of the bushes and Grandma.

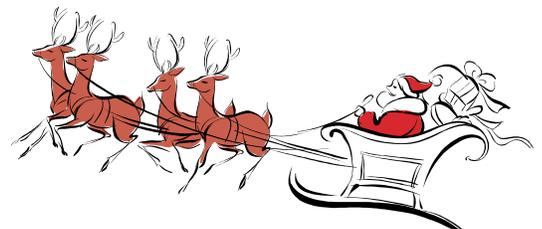
Together we waited breathlessly in the darkness for the front door to open. Finally it did, and there stood Bobby.

Fifty years haven't dimmed the thrill of those moments spent shivering, beside my Grandma, in Bobby Decker's bushes. That night, I realized that those awful rumors about Santa Claus were just what Grandma said they were -- ridiculous. Santa was alive and well, and we were on his team.

I still have the Bible, with the coat tag tucked inside: \$19.95.

**May you always have LOVE to share,
HEALTH to spare and FRIENDS that care...**

And may you always believe in the magic of Santa Claus!



December 2013



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

<p>1</p> <p>1st Day of Advent</p> <p>Holy Communion</p> <p>Children's Church</p> <p>Women's Meeting</p> <p>Loretta Maxwell</p>	<p>2</p> 	<p>3</p> <p>Rotary 6:30</p>	<p>4</p> <p>AA 6:00</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 7:00</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Bible Study 7:00 at church</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Progressive Dinner</p>
<p>8</p> <p>2nd Sunday of Advent</p> <p>All Church Breakfast</p> <p>Blue Christmas Service 4:00</p> <p>Helen Koszykowski</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Rotary 6:30</p>	<p>11</p> <p>AA 6:00</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 7:00</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Women's Social at Wanda Young's home</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>15</p> <p>3rd Sunday of Advent</p> <p>Children's Christmas Program</p> <p>Cookie Walk</p> <p>Ella Mumford</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Rotary 6:30</p>	<p>18</p> <p>AA 6:00</p> <p>Choir Rehearsal 7:00</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Goodfellows Christmas basket sorting 9-12</p>
<p>22</p> <p>4th Sunday of Advent</p> <p>10 am-2 pm Goodfellows distribution of Christmas Baskets</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Rotary 6:30</p> <p>Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7:00</p>	<p>25</p> <p>BLESSED CHRISTMAS THE LORD IS BORN</p> 	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Phillip Reynolds</p>	<p>28</p>
<p>29</p> 	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p> <p>Rotary 6:30</p>	<p>1</p> 	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> 	<p>4</p>