

Another Thought For Advent

ADVENT HANDS
By Catherine Alder

I see the hands of Joseph back and forth along bare wood they move. There is worry in those working hands, sorting out confusing thoughts with every stroke.

**"How can this be, my beautiful Mary, now with child?"
Rough with deep splinters, these hands, small, painful splinters like tiny crosses embedded deeply in this choice to stay with her.
He could have closed his hands to her, said, "No" and let her go to stoning. But dear Joseph opened both his heart and hands to this mother and wood pressed tight between them. It is these rough hands that will open and be the first to hold the Child.**

**I see the hands of John, worn from desert raging storms and plucking locusts from sand ripped rocks beneath the remnant of a Bethlehem star.
A howling wind like some lost wolf cries out beneath the moon.
This loneliness, enough to make a grown man mad. He's waiting for this, God's whisper. "Go now, He is coming. You have prepared your hands enough. Go. He needs your servant hands, Your cupping hands to lift the water, and place his feet upon the path to service and to death.
Go now, John, and open your hands to him. It is time."**

I see a fist held tight and fingers blanched to white. Prying is no easy task. These fingers find a way of pulling back to old positions, protecting all that was and is. Blanched to white. No openness. All fright. But then the Spirit comes. A holy Christmas dance begins and blows between the twisted paths. This fist opens slowly, gently, beautifully the twisted fingers letting go, their rock-solid place in line has eased. And one by one the fingers lift. True color is returned and through the deepest of mysteries, the holiest of holies, O longing of longings, beyond all human imagining this fist, as if awakened from Lazarus' cold stone dream reaches out to hold the tiny newborn hand of God.



WELCOME VISITORS!

We are delighted to have you in our service this morning! Every Sunday, we are privileged to have people attending our church for the first time and we want you to feel welcome among us. **Please stop by the Welcome Center right after service. We have a special gift for you.**

PLEASE SIGN THE FELLOWSHIP BOOK found in the pews. We would like to know of your presence this morning. **PLEASE SHARE PRAYER JOYS/CONCERNS** on the Prayer card; they will be included in the Prayers of the People during the service, and then added to the Prayer Chain.

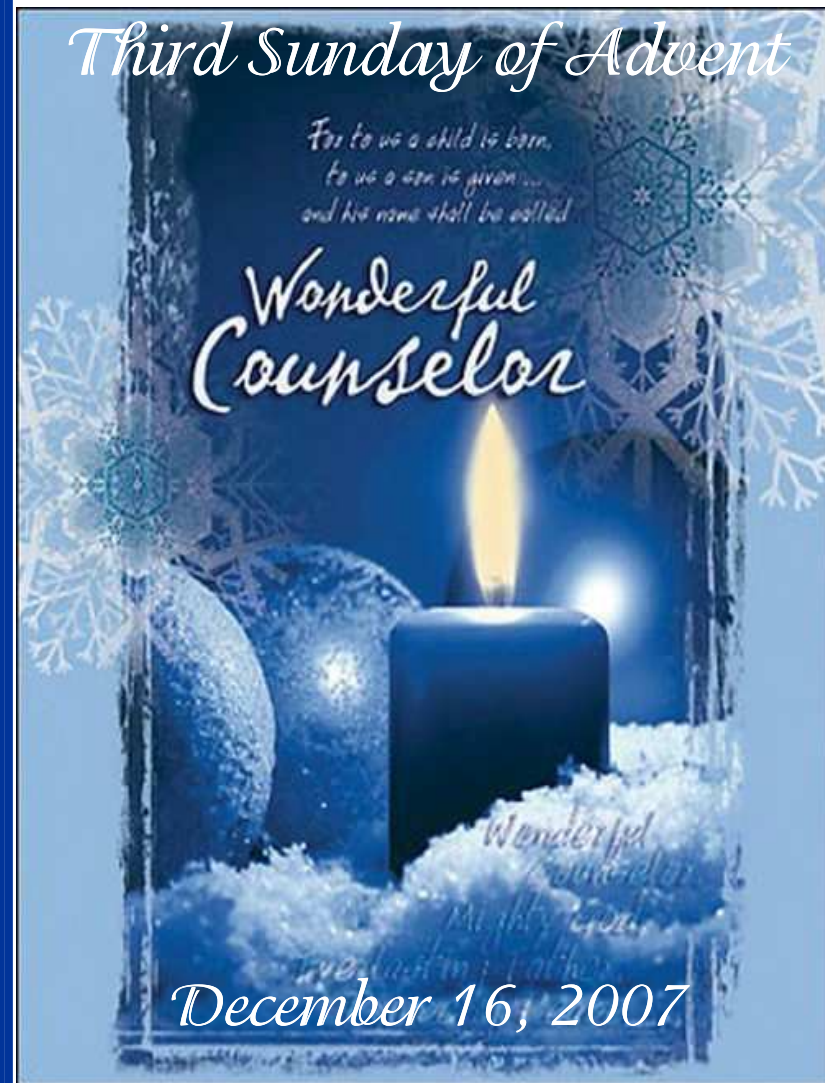
A PERSONAL SOUND SYSTEM FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED IS AVAILABLE. WORSHIP BULLETINS FOR CHILDREN are available. Contact an usher for assistance.

TAPES OF THIS SUNDAY'S SERMON are available. Contact the church office or Art Sattler.

If you are in need of **Pastoral Care** or know someone who is, please call Rev. Pat at the church (419-475-4436) or at her home (419-534-3739).

Fairgreen Presbyterian Church
3220 Laskey Road
Toledo, Ohio 43613
419-475-4436
Email: fairgreen.church@sbcglobal.net
Webpage: fairgreenchurch.org

Third Sunday of Advent





10:00 AM



Welcome to worship with the Fairgreen family! The * symbol means, "All who are able, please stand." † indicates when latecomers may be seated.

Third Sunday in Advent

SILENT REFLECTION

God of grace, ever faithful to your promises, the earth rejoices in hope of our Savior's coming, and looks forward with longing to his return at the end of time. Prepare our hearts to receive him when he comes, for he is Lord forever and ever. Amen.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS Please sign fellowship book found in pews.

This is the day that the Lord has made!

Let us rejoice and be glad in it!

GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

CHORAL INTROIT

"Sing Out Your Joy to God"

Geneva Choir

CALL TO WORSHIP ~ Based on Psalm 72: 18-19

Fred King, Liturgist

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

We will praise the Lord as long as we live!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

We will sing praise to our God all our life long!

Praise the Lord, O my soul!

We will turn in worship to God, who is our help, our hope, our God!

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES ~ Confirmands ~ Aaron Winslow & Jody Skinner

One: Today we light the third Advent candle, the candle of life. As we light this candle let us remember that it is God who gives us the gift of life as each one of us is born; we remember that it is Christ who redeems our life through the gift of forgiveness and that it is the Holy Spirit that continues to sustain our life for the living of each and every day.

All: O God, at this time each year, we remind ourselves that you have come and continue to come into our lives bringing us new life through the gifts of forgiveness and transformation. We are watching and waiting anticipating once more the gift of your words - words that give us new life. May we gift one another with the words of your promises just as you continue to gift us. Amen.

Little Drummer Boy ~ On December 23rd during regular worship service, there is a particular theme planned: Little Drummer Boy Sunday, for the 4th Sunday in Advent. The focus is on gifts, giving and receiving, and God's Gift to us. Please consider taking part. Do you have a gift to offer that morning? Perhaps yours will be a silent offering-written on a piece of paper that will be available that day in your pew. Or perhaps you have a piece of artwork we could see (on the projector or on an easel). There will be other "offerings" of this kind throughout the worship service, and we're really hoping to count you in! Please RSVP if you have an interest in "giving" your gift in this way to the congregation and the Glory of God that morning. Let us know by Sunday, December 16th-call 419-893-3426, or email cinshan@sbcglobal.net. Talk with Cindy Smith if you have any questions. Thank you and God bless!

A Baby Shower ~ Bring your baby shower gift to worship service on Sunday, December 23rd. We're having a baby shower for the Baby Jesus. These items will be donated to a local charity for families in need.

Scrip Cards ~ Are you interested in purchasing a Bob Evans gift card? How about a Speedway gas card or a Kohl's card? These cards and many others are now in stock. Please see Julie Murray or Darlene Hughes for filling your immediate needs. Several businesses have been added to the Scrip order form: Beirut, Family Christian Store, Golf Galaxy, Handel's, Menard's, and PF Changs are all on the newest Script list. Are you going to Café Maries, Classic Café or Applebee's? Do you need a gift card for Blockbuster, Family Video, National Amusement Movie Theaters, Marco's, or Bath and Body Works? These are just some of the variety of cards available on the Scrip order form and can be delivered within a week's time. Scrip card sales help to support the Deacon's charitable donations like IHN.

Christmas Basket Packing ~ Once again the Deacon's are very busy and they could use your help.

Deacon Basket packing will take place on Thursday, December 20 at noon.

Deacon Basket delivery will be on Thursday, December 20 from 5-6pm and Friday, December 21 from noon to 1pm.

If you wish to help with either of these Christmas service opportunities, please see Carol Yeager or Linda Hoover.

A Warm Thank You ~ To all the "angels" who continue to drop off bags of food for the Food Pantry. Grocery bags full of vegetables, fruits, soups, crackers, tuna, macaroni and cheese, etc. seem to "amazingly appear" in the Narthex or by the Food Pantry. The weekly need continues to be great; the Deacons are grateful for the extra giving.

Sunday School 11:15am – 12:00pm

FOR ADULTS:

Bible Study.....In Lounge
Faith Sharing Bible Study.....In Library

FOR CHILDREN:

Nursery Room (birth – 4 yrs. old).....Rm.105
Kindergarten – 5th grade.....Room behind Sanctuary
6th – 8th grade.....Downstairs Junior High Room
9th – 12th grade.....Downstairs Senior High Room

Join us for Coffee Hour at 11:00am in the Commons.

Information for the Newsletter should be received by the 3rd Sunday of each month.

Visit **THE CARD TABLE** in the narthex to sign or request cards to remember members of the Fairgreen family.

Are you in need of prayer? The **FAIRGREEN PRAYER CHAIN** is here for you. Call Leone Sattler at 419-474-1723 or Darlene in the church office at 419-475-4436 or indicate that you have a request for the Prayer Chain on your Prayer card.

Number who worshiped with us on December 9, 2007: 72

TODAY'S GREETERS & WELL WISHERS 10:00: Bonnie Buehrer

TODAY'S USHERS: Mike Roadruck, Capt./ Barb Roadruck, Kay Amendola, Bob Martz

NEXT SUNDAY'S USHERS: Fred King, Capt./ Bev King, Kay Amendola, Betty Geniac

NEXT SUNDAY'S GREETER: Dick Schroeder

MONDAY DECEMBER 24 GREETER: Marilyn McAfee

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

January Newsletter ~ We are in the process of working on this newsletter and we are asking that if you have an article that you would like to submit, please do so before Wednesday, December 19th.

HYMN OF LIFE #38

"It Came Upon A Midnight Clear"

CALL TO CONFESSION

Rev. Pat

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart and mind and strength. We have not loved our neighbor as ourselves.

In your mercy forgive what we have been, help us amend what we are, and direct what we shall be, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your way, to the glory of your name. Amen.

*SILENT CONFESSION

*ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Rev. Pat

*RESPONSE OF PRAISE ~

The Gloria Patria #577

THE WORD OF GOD

TIME WITH THE YOUNGER CHURCH ~ "Unwrapping the Gift of Life"

Rev. Pat

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Fred King, Liturgist

FIRST READING

Isaiah 40: 1-5

pg.1119 (OT) in the pew bible

ANTHEM

"A Voice Cries Out, "Prepare the Way of the Lord"

Geneva Choir

By Lloyd Larson

A voice cries out, "Prepare the way of the Lord, Make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain made low." All people shall see it together. The mouth of the Lord has spoken it. The glory of the Lord shall be revealed!"

Comfort, comfort my people; proclaim the promise of the Lord: his name shall be called Emmanuel! The glory of the Lord shall be revealed.

SECOND READING

John 6: 35-51

pg.1657 (NT) in the pew bible

SERMON

"Christmas: the Gift of Life"

Rev. Pat Lawrence Shafer

OUR RESPONSE

*HYMN OF RESPONSE #2262

“Let Us Offer to the Father”

THE GIVING AND RECEIVING OF GIFTS
THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION
THE INVITATION
THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

God is with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give you thanks and praise, Gracious God. You created us and loved us, even when we turned away. Through your prophets you promised to send us a savior. Prepare our hearts and minds to receive your Incarnation, that we may know you through Jesus Christ and sing with all the saints in glory:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might.

Heav’n and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!

Holy are you and blessed is your son, Jesus Christ. He came and lived among us, teaching and healing, showing us new ways to live and love. At his final meal with his disciples, Jesus took a loaf of bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” Jesus did the same with the cup after supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant sealed with my blood.” In remembrance and thanks for this gift of Jesus Christ, we give ourselves to you, O God, as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ was promised; Christ is born: Christ will dwell among us.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on this bread and cup, and on us your children. Form us into your body, the church, that we maybe your body in the world.

Through Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

THE BLESSING OF THE BREAD AND CUP
THE COMMUNION OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

(As you come forward using the center aisle to receive the gifts from God, please place your gifts to God in the offering plate and then receive first the bread and then dip it into the cup to receive communion. If you are unable to come forward, please stay in the pew and we will come to you.)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION
HYMN OF SENDING #29

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

*CHARGE & BENEDICTION

*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE— #2260 Let Us Be Bread

**Let us be bread, blessed by the Lord,
broken and share, life for the world.
Let us be wine, love freely poured.
Let us be one in the Lord.**

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Next Week ~ The Fourth Sunday of Advent will be celebrated as the Little Drummer Boy Sunday. There will be the lighting of the Advent Candle-the candle of gifts. While our children will be providing the special music all of you are invited to participate by bringing “gifts” for Baby Jesus to place around the chancel. Bring a baby shower gift or bring a personal offering. Remember all the suggestions that you read about in the last copy of the leaves?

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 17-23 , 2007

- Monday, Dec. 17 ~** **No Adult Volleyball**
Set-up chairs etc. for Preschool Holiday program in Commons
- Tuesday, Dec. 18 ~** **Preschool Holiday Program in the Commons**
- Wednesday, Dec. 19 ~** **Preschool Holiday Program in the Commons**
Staff Mtg. 11am
Deacon’s set up for Basket Packing
- Thursday, Dec. 20 ~** **No Potluck or Lectionary Bible Study**
Deacon’s Basket Packing at noon
Caring Cupboard Carry out 4:30pm
Confirmation Class & supper from 5-8pm
Choir 6:30pm
Building & Grounds meeting 7pm
- Friday, Dec. 21 ~** **Food Pantry 10-12pm**
Preschool’s Christmas Break
- Sunday, Dec. 23 ~** **4th Sunday in Advent; Christmas Joy Offering;**
Advent Wreath Lighters ~ Confirmands ~Emma Bosley-Smith and Derek Nordhoff