

Motley Crew

what a motley crew
to welcome you into the world!

a horse stamping its feet
to keep warm;
a cow murmuring
because you've disturbed her calf;
a dog whimpering and twitching,
chasing, in his dreams,
the cat in the corner of the barn,
who stares wondering
what all the fuss is about.

(of course, it's no surprise
they are there, at that moment:
since they sprang from this Child's imagination
at creation's birth)

and then the folks
who show up from
Bethlehem's welcome wagon?

loners
(why else do they spend their nights
on cold, rocky hillsides);
introverts
(who else enjoys a job where
you never meet another person);
the strong, silent type
(why else would they want to spend
all their time with sheep?!?)

and yet, there they go:
running and grabbing everyone
like they are best friends,
almost shouting:

"You won't believe who we just met!"

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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 9:15 service, and added to the Prayer Chain if submitted at the 11:30 service.

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 (419-841-7954).

Fairgreen Presbyterian Church

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**December 24, 2006
11:30 AM**

**"PREPARE
YOURSELF
FOR THE WAY
OF THE
LORD"**

11:30 AM

“Celebrate Jesus!” Worship Of Word And Sacrament

GATHERING MUSIC ~ Instrumental
WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING SET ~ Glory, Hark the Herald Angels Sing
PRAYER OF PRAISE AND ILLUMINATION
RESPONSE ~ Awesome in Power

Candle Lighting Liturgy

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE ~ The Candle of Love

In this season of anticipation, Loving God, call us to our own birthing. In the womblike darkness of this Advent, prepare us for the birth of the Christ in us; prepare us to be born anew.

Bring us into the world in a new way through prayers and preparations.

Bring us forth into your Loving Presence with renewed hope for the world. Amen.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Living God, help us to hear your holy Word that we may truly understand; that, understanding, we may believe, and, believing, we may follow in all faithfulness and obedience, seeking your honor and glory in all that we do; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Time to Prepare

Instructions to the participants

**#1 ~ Time to Prepare the Community
“To Bethlehem”**

Pastor:

God is always preparing us, God’s people... As Jesus stands in our midst today, the Spirit of God speaks to us as a church asking us ... Are you prepared to receive Jesus?

Hymn ~ #38 It Came Upon a Midnight Clear, verse 1



The poinsettias decorating the sanctuary today are given in Dedication to:

- In loving memory of our parents.....Rick & Kay Amendola
- “Joy to the World”.....Jeff & Denice Skinner
- In loving memory of Edna Mae Kinzie
- and Philip and Regena Anderson.....Len & Jan Anderson
- In loving memory of Matthew, Karen and Bill.....Dick & Gayle Bell
- “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”.....Isabella Wu
- In loving memory of Mary and Elmer Taylor.....Marilyn McAfee
- In loving memory of Gerald and Elizabeth Herren
- and Andy and Charlotte Kononen.....Gary & Karen Herren
- “O Come Let Us Adore Him, Christ the Lord!”.....Chuck & Pat Gibson
- In loving memory of Estella Hall.....Sally Kille
- In loving memory of our parents.....Don & Jackie Campbell
- “Joy to the World”.....Ken & Mary Ellen Campbell
- In loving memory of our son, Kent.....George & Janet Kadesch
- In memory of our special loved ones who
- live in our hearts.....The Bandfield Family
- In loving memory of our parents.....William & Suzanne Fotoples
- “Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow!”.....Web & Woody Cole

The Chancel Guild thanks all who have made our sanctuary beautiful this Advent Season. Poinsettia plants may be taken home after the 7:30pm Christmas Eve service. Any plants left after the service will be delivered to shut-ins.

**the wonders of your love. Be born again in us this Christmas day.
Amen.**

Song of Celebration ~ Happy Birthday Jesus!
All the young people will come forward to sing

The Celebration of Holy Communion

Charge and Benediction

Closing Hymn ~ #40 Joy to The World

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 25-31, 2006

Monday, December 25 - Merry Christmas!; Church Office Closed; No Adult Volleyball
Tuesday, December 26 - Church Office Closed
Wednesday, December 27 - Church Office Opens at 8:30am
Thursday, December 28 - Praise Band practice and potluck at 6:30pm
Friday, December 29 - No Food Pantry
Sunday, December 31 - Services 9:15 & 11:30 with Communion at the second service; New Years Eve Day/ First Sunday after Christmas

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Elders/Deacons Orientation Class ~ All newly elected elders/deacons are invited to attend on Tuesday, January 2, 2007 at 7pm in the Commons.

Session Retreat ~ This retreat is for all Session members incoming, outgoing and those still serving their term of office. The dates are Friday, January 5 (7pm) through Saturday, January 6 (5pm) at the Lial Center in Whitehouse, Ohio. All those planning on attending will need to call the church office to confirm by Wednesday, December 27, 2006. Cost is \$25.

Offering Envelopes ~ You can pick up your offering envelopes today at the close of the service. They will be located on the table in the Narthex.

**#2 ~ Time to Prepare our Homes
The manger, the hay and the animals**

During the singing of the hymn you will journey down the center aisle carrying the manger, the hay and the animals ... a few animal sounds would be really great!

Pastor:

Christmas is a special time ... A stable was prepared by God to house God's precious Son. A manger was the crib that Mary placed her baby in. Just as we have prepared our homes for Christmas Day, so do we need to prepare our hearts to house the Christ Child. As Jesus stands in our midst today, the Spirit of God speaks to our hearts asking this question ... are you prepared to receive Jesus?

Hymn ~ #25 Away in a Manger
As the congregation sings "Away in the Manger" you will journey back to your pews where you will all sit together.

**#3 ~ Time to Prepare Our Greetings
The Angels!**

As the Animals leave the manger... all of the angels will begin flight around the outside of the pews and settle in on the steps of the sanctuary.

Pastor:

By now most of us have written our and mailed out Christmas cards. ... God sends us greeting not just once a year as some of us do at Christmas. Every day God is there to tell you that you are loved by God. Each time we hear God's name, God is there to greet us for god never leaves us. As Jesus stands in our midst today, the Spirit of God speaks to our hearts asking this question ... are you prepared to receive Jesus?

Hymn ~ #56 The First Nowell, verses 1 and 2
As the congregation sings the First Nowell, the angels will go back to their pews and sit together as a group.

**#4 ~ Time to Prepare our Tree
The Shepherds**

As the angels return to their heavenly cloud, the shepherds will begin their journey around the outside of the pews and settle in on the steps of the chancel steps around the manger ...

Pastor:

Some of us go to great lengths in preparing to put up our Christmas trees. ... Christmas proclaims, "Jesus Christ is born!" The Shepherds returned home to share that good news with their family and friends. As Christians, God prepares to send us out and announce to the world that salvation was born in a stable. We witness to the fact that the Christ Child, who was placed in a wooden manger, is the Savior Christ, who was placed on a wooden cross to die for the forgiveness of all the sins of the world. As Jesus stands in our midst today, the Spirit of God speaks to our hearts asking this question ... are you prepared to receive Jesus?

Hymn ~ #29 Go Tell It on the Mountain

*As the congregation sings "Go Tell it on the Mountain"
the shepherds will return to your seats.*

**#5 ~ Time to Prepare Our Gifts
The Wise men, the Scholars, the Kings!**

As the Shepherds return to their seats all the kings and queens will journey up the side aisle to steps of the chancel with their gifts in hand...

Pastor:

Christmas is a time when we give gifts to those we love. We take time to prepare the gifts ... As the kings – the scholars – beheld the perfect light, they presented their gifts and paid honor to the Christ Child. The gift that he would return to them would open heaven's door and bring them salvation. These friends rejoiced as they beheld the Lord Jesus, and they returned home praising God. As Jesus stands in our midst today, the Spirit of God speaks to our hearts asking this question ... are you

prepared to receive Jesus?

Hymn ~ #66 We Three Kings of Orient Are, verse 1

Leave your gifts and return to you pew as we sing.

**#6 ~ Time to Prepare Our Hearts
Mary and Joseph and the Baby!**

As the kings return to the East ... all the Marys and Josephs need to come forward with babies in arm and take their place on the steps.

Pastor:

Advent ... The time has come for us to prepare our hearts once again for Emmanuel, God with us. As Jesus stands in our midst today, the Spirit of God touches our hearts asking this question ... are you prepared to receive Jesus?

Hymn ~ #9 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, verse 1
As we sing everyone returns to their seats.

#7 ~ Time to Prepare Our World

Pastor:

God gives us the power to go out into a hurting world and proclaim that Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace has come. Jesus, the infant king that was born in a stable, will come again to take his faithful, prepared people home. We pray that the message we have all heard again this day, has touched your hearts in a special way. My Christmas prayer for each and everyone of you is that you will say, "YES!" for the first time or once again as Jesus stands in our midst and asks this all important question ... are you prepared to receive Jesus?

Let us together pray...

All: **Lord, Jesus thank you for this time to prepare
once more for your birth. Almighty God, we receive the gift of
you Son who was born for all of us. Pour out your Spirit that we
may go forth from here today singing with joy and proclaiming**