

MAPLEWOOD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MESSENGER

December 2012

Pastor's Letter

Dear Friends,

Advent is upon us! The countdown to Christmas is growing shorter and shorter. For some of us this means the excitement is building. For some it means the anxiety is growing. For some it means both!

One of the most wonderful traditions that we have at Maplewood UMC is the lighting of the Advent wreath. Each week we light one more candle on the wreath. Each of these candles signifies something that is related to our faith and the coming of Jesus in our lives—hope, peace, joy, and love. Finally on Christmas Eve we will light the candle which represents the source of all these wonderful gifts—the Christ Candle.

Our weekly Sunday worship services during Advent will be centered around the meaning of each week's candle—what it means to both receive and share hope, peace, love and joy. Each week there will be a small gift for every person to take home as a reminder of the gift that we are celebrating that week. The hope is that these simple gifts will be a reminder to us that worship does not last for an hour or so each week on Sunday morning. Rather our whole lives can be lived in the spirit of worship.

It is such a privilege to share this season with you! May the hope, peace, joy, and love of the Christ whose coming we celebrate be with you in new ways during this season of Advent.

Blessings,

Pastor Kim



Annual MUMC Holiday Craft Fair on December 9th & 16th

Looking for unique Christmas gift ideas AND a way to give families a chance for a brighter future? Then you'll want to shop Maplewood United Methodist Church's annual holiday craft fair on [December 9th](#) and 16th! This event is sponsored by our amazing children and youth. ALL proceeds support the [Heifer International](#), www.heifer.org, an organization that provides livestock and seedlings for impoverished families around the world. Families receiving gifts through Heifer International are expected to "pay it forward" once they are established. A gift to Heifer continues giving!

If you are looking for specialized handmade craft items just right for that someone special, please consider checking out our goods. You'll feel good about gift giving this season!

If anyone would like to donate handmade items for the sale, please feel free to drop them off at church anytime before service on December 9th. You are welcome to put them in the meeting room next to the office with a note indicating they are for the craft fair. Any and all crafts are welcome! Pre-pricing items will be most appreciated.

We will also be looking for young volunteers to finish making the left-over Build-A-Gift items to include in the sale!

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Samantha Schaffner at 314-647-7421.

light DOES overcome the darkness

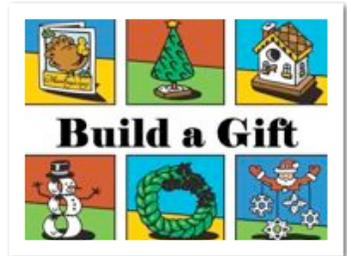
Longest Night' service set for December 20th

For many people, the Advent season and the approaching Christmas holiday do not bring with it the joy and happiness that is advertised on television or in greeting cards, or that we hear in endless Christmas carols and holiday songs on the radio. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job or financial emergencies, living with cancer or some other disease that puts a question mark over the future, and a number of other human situations make parties and joviality painful for many people in our congregation and community. For those who are far from their hometowns or friends and family, often for the first time, feelings of loneliness can be stronger than celebration. Even the fast pace and pressures of the holiday season can be too stressful and overwhelming for many, turning the "happy holidays" into a time of sadness, frustration, or anger. Instead of the traditional red and green holiday colors, for these people, the color of Christmas is blue.

Held when the nights are at their darkest and when it seems that the light may never return, the "Longest Night" service at Maplewood UMC creates a sacred space for people living through dark times. The service is reflective, accepting where we really are, and holding out healing and hope, as we remember that the dawn does defeat the darkness, and that Jesus, whose birth we anticipate and celebrate this season, came to bring the Light to all the world.

If you are experiencing a "blue" Christmas - whether due to loss, crisis, separation, or stress - please join us for this special service on December 20th, at 7 PM, as we gather to watch through these longest nights, and remember that the Light does overcome the darkness, and that there is hope in the coming dawn of Christ.

Build A Gift! Such a gift!



On December 1 at 10 a.m. Maplewood UMC opened her doors to the community, welcoming 61 children to make handcrafted Christmas gifts for family members. It was a wonderful day! Parents were happy! Children were happy! The thirty-six Maplewood UMC event workers were happy! It was a blessed day!

Thank you to each and every person who prayed, planned, donated, and helped on the day! A special thanks to the folks who took charge of the individual crafts, some of which required extensive preparation before the event. And a more special thanks to Hope Watkins who coordinated the entire event. God is so good and God did some good work through the folks of Maplewood UMC through Build A Gift!

Finance reimbursement requests

As we approach year-end and look to finalize our financial reports, please be sure to turn in any outstanding receipts you have for reimbursement prior to **December 31st** (or earlier), if at all possible. This is also important as we begin the work of putting together next year's budget of expenditures. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask Courtney Stotler, Finance Chair, or Larry Schmid, Treasurer. Request for Reimbursement Forms can be found in the office and can be placed in the Treasurer's mail slot upon completion. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

*You are cordially invited
to share coffee and cookies
before/after church
refreshments are located in the
Narthex, by the church office.*

Church Calendar

9 - Second Sunday of Advent. We light the candle of Peace

16 - Third Sunday of Advent. We light the candle of Joy! Children's Christmas Pageant during worship. All children are welcome to participate.

20 - 7p.m. Longest Night Service

23 - Fourth Sunday of Advent. We light the candle of Love.

24 - 5 p.m. Christmas Eve Service.

25 - Christmas Day

Apportionment Update

As of November 30th, we have paid \$15,381.00 (or 92%) of our apportionments for the year. Thank you to everyone who has adopted an apportionment or contributed to the general budget of the church. As we approach year-end, we are on track to pay our apportionments 100% the 6th year in a row!

Over 85% of the adopted apportionment pledges have already been paid. If you have not yet paid for your adopted apportionment and are able to do so, please remit by December 31st

Thank you, again, for all of your extravagant generosity!



We Are on Facebook....
just go to....

<http://www.facebook.com/mumcstl>
and like us.



Carrie Ford joined MUMC last Sunday. Husband, Brent, was happily surprised! Carrie (with Pastor Kim's help) did a great job of keeping this a secret.



DECEMBER

- 1 Fred Olver
- 2 Sharon Housewright
- 4 Mary Kunce
- 7 David Schaffner
- 8 Velma Jordan
- 8 Josie Cammarata
- 11 Steve Findley
- 12 Shay Blackwell
- 14 Kimberly King
- 14 Ken Cohen
- 17 Kevin Watkins
- 18 Tom Cordeal
- 26 Kevin Watkins, Jr.
- 30 Jaden Raniero



Kathy, Roark & Emma check out tags from the Giving Tree. (The children's Sunday School classes created the tags this year!) If you haven't selected your tags yet, they will be available this coming Sunday, December 9. **All gifts are to be returned to MUMC no later than Sunday, December 16, wrapped and with the tag attached.**

Person-2-Person

Dave Phelps

One Sunday morning earlier this year, I was filling in for our pastor, Kim. Shortly before the service started, I realized there were no acolytes. Just as I was about to panic, the two Watkins cousins, Brooke and Paige, came in together. "Hey, can you guys acolyte?" I asked. "Sure!" they said in unison. They then dashed off toward the church office to get their candle lighters. The two of them are as close to being "old hands" at acolyting as anyone that young can be at doing anything, and I knew the job was in good hands and that the day—or at least the church service—had been saved. Afterward, I turned to Mike and said, "We should change the name of this church to 'The Church Of The Last Minute.'" Mike joined me in a brief chuckle.

In movies and television shows, it's a cliché that the "big save" happens at the last minute. We've all seen the bomb that stops counting down only when the timer reaches "00:01," or the cop who shows up just as the bad guy is about to pull the trigger, or the rescuer who reaches out just as the victim can no longer hold on to his or her precarious perch. The same thing happens throughout the Bible. The truth is that we're not only "The Church Of The Last Minute" but "The People Of The Last Minute." And we have a God of the last minute as well.

We're all familiar with the story of the time God asked Abraham to sacrifice the younger of his two sons, Isaac (Gen. 22:1-19). We're told that Abraham had waited until he was one hundred years old to have a son by his equally aged wife, Sarah (21:5). And then God asked him to give up his son (21:1-2). Abraham cut wood for the burnt offering (vs. 3b), built an altar, laid the wood on the altar he had built, and tied up Isaac and laid him on top of the wood (vs. 9). At the last minute, an angel called out to Abraham, "'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.'" (vs. 12 ESV). Then Abraham looked and there was a ram stuck by its horns in a thicket (vs. 13) and Abraham sacrificed the ram instead of his son.

But this pales into insignificance when compared with the coming of Christ. Paul wrote to the

Christians in Rome, "For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom, 5:6 ESV). Jesus came "in the nick of time." Paul also wrote to the Christians in Galatia, "But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." (Gal. 4:4-5 ESV).

We don't always understand God's timing though. After Lazarus died (John 11:1-44), his sister, Martha, said to Jesus, "'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.'" (John 11:21a ESV). She had understandable questions about Jesus' timing. But he said to her, "'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet

shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.'" (vs. 25b-26a ESV). And of course then he raised her brother, Lazarus, from the dead. Peter wrote in faith, ". . . with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, . . ." (2 Pet. 3:8b-9a ESV).

It's odd to think of someone as young as Brooke or Paige saving the day but Jesus came to "save the day" as a baby. Having no acolytes that morning wouldn't have been a calamity in the great scheme of things, either for our little church or for me personally, but having no savior surely would have been for all humanity. We not only have a God of the last minute but a savior for all time (Heb. 10:12-14). "For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified." (vs. 14 ESV). This is the message we must proclaim: Jesus is Lord and Savior for all who receive him, just in time and for all time.

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." (Eph. 1:7-10 ESV.)

our gift of love

Let me tell you about our 2012 Christmas offering

The storm known as 'Sandy' had made her visit, leaving behind an awful lot of damage and loss. You saw the pictures in the papers; you heard the reports and films on TV. Through the Deaconess office in New York and a deaconess friend, I was able to get in touch with the pastors of two small churches on the New Jersey shore (together these congregations number about 50 people) I shared with them that we would like to be their partner in recovery and this is the response I received.

Dear Shay-

Greetings from the Jersey Shore! We are battered, bruised, and BLESSED! Please forgive us for taking so long to respond. We have been hoping things would slow down - lol - slow down - now thats funny :)

Thank you so much for reaching out to us. We can use all the help we can get at the moment and we know that God will provide each day our daily bread. The Belmar church was hit hard. 3 feet of water throughout the entire building and did not recede for 5 days. Everything in it was removed. Altar, pulpits, pews, Bibles, hymnals, pianos, all of our Fellowship Hall tables and chairs - and yes - even the kitchen sink. Structurally - the building is ok. The church is a little wobbly (the congregation) as most of them saw the building burn down back in the 60's. But Ellen and I refuse to let them forget who it is we come to worship every week.

We also lost almost everything in the parsonage. Most of the downstairs is getting gutted. Walls, floors, ceiling... but again - God is faithful and we are resting in His promise.

Any support you all could provide would be greatly appreciated. The biggest thing for Ellen and I is knowing where to start. Thankfully - the Bradley church took no damage at all. During the weeks after the storm - with the help of local businesses and many volunteers - we were able to feed people hot meals everyday. It has been wonderful watching people come together. Bradley has also been a local relief center giving out free supplies, food, clothes, blankets, and whatever else we can.

We can now be reached by email at this email

address - or by phone 732-614-5988 (Gene's cell) anytime after 5PM is best because I also deliver school lunches during the day and by 5 we have the kids home from school and such.

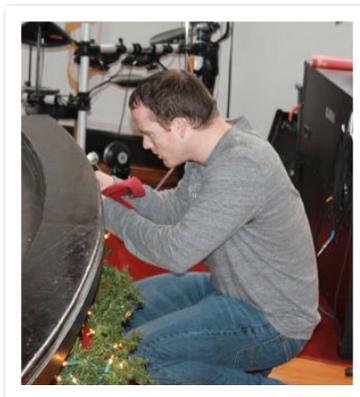
We are so blessed to know that we are in your thoughts and prayers. It is the prayers of our sisters and brothers in Christ that has kept us going in God's grace.

Talk to you soon.

In Christ's, perfect love,
Gene & Ellen Chamberlin
Romans12:12



Pastor Kim said, "This is how we train our future leaders"



Decorating the sanctuary for Advent

some news about the family

Bits 'n' Pieces

* Congratulations to **Chris Shirar** who will be playing the Tin Man in Ladue High Schools production of "Wizard of Oz" in February. Chris was in the production of "Twelve Angry Jurors" in October and did a great job.

* MUMC was recognized in the current *MRH School News* for their contributions of food to the Weekend on Wheels program with MRH. The article is "Celebrating our Community – The Power of Partnerships at MRH" and highlights the August Concert for a Cause.

Snapshots from Build A Gift



Watch for more pictures in the mid December *Messenger*

in our family ...

We say "Thanks"

...to Shay & Jerry Blackwell for organizing the Christmas Giving Tree and for coordinating the Christmas offering. They are enabling us to share God's blessings! We thank you for that.



... to our Sunday school children for creating the tags for the Christmas Giving Tree and to their helpers, Rona, Stacey, and Kathy. You did great work!

... to everyone who helped prepare the church for Advent and Christmas with the Hanging of the Greens. Thank you to Amy and Tom Cordeal and Michael Chance for their leadership. The church looks beautiful!

... to members of the Consecration Sunday Team and their chairperson, Kevin Watkins. It is good to be reminded each year of our call to be good stewards of all that God has given us. We are grateful for your work!

... to Hope Watkins for heading up a very successful Build A Gift again this year. Approximately 61 children participated with 36 adults working. Thanks also to the folks who worked in the Second Time Around Shop. It was a great day.

...to Kevin Watkins, Liston Jent, Bob Harsh and Jerry Blackwell for installing new lighting in the Second Time Around Shop,

and ...our "warmest thanks" to Jason Watkins, Ray Jauregui, and Bob Harsh for their oversight of the boiler installation and the ongoing fine-tuning of the heating system.

Advent for Sunday School **In December, we light the advent candles**



The candles represent hope, peace, love, and joy with a fifth candle representing Christ. In preparation for advent I was thinking about the meanings of all of those candles and how they correlated to my dreams for our Sunday school program.

The first candle was hope. Charlotte and Dave Phelps lit this candle last week and spoke about their hopes for a healthy baby when they were pregnant with Monica. We all have hopes for our children. Sometimes we call them wishes and sometimes they are specific. We hope they get the part they auditioned for or the spot they tried out for on the team. Sometimes they are more abstract. We hope they are safe and happy. We hope they are loved and that they don't get hurt. I'd like to add my hopes for our children in Sunday school. I hope they always have access to the kind of great Sunday school teachers we are blessed with. *I also hope that all of you will consider being a guest teacher in our Sunday School and share your talents and gifts, give the kids the opportunity to learn how you serve the church or just bring your smile and sense of humor to them.*

Peace is the second candle. When I asked my son, Robbie, what he thought peace was he said quiet. I can't imagine why he said that. Anyway, peace is a big deal. So many times we tack it on to the end of a thought as a leftover wish like something we know will never happen but we have to include it because everyone else does. But, peace comes in large and small packages. Peace is the end of conflict between countries or ethnic groups. But, peace is also learning to share our things and ourselves with one another in a way that allows both to be who they are. It's about learning to resolve and respect differences. In Sunday school, it is about children learning how God wants them to resolve the conflicts in their daily lives **and** how he wants them to find a way to have a mutually respectful and constructive relationship with others. *We all have ideas and past experiences with conflict resolution to serve as examples for our kids.*

Love is the next candle. The obvious answer here is that I love my kids (just like all parents) and we all want them to love God as we do. God also loves us and wants us to share our love and be able to accept love from others. Through the teaching of our children we show that we love them by caring for their spiritual selves and helping them to build their spiritual identity. *We again bring our own experiences to the table and show them how we share our love with the people in our lives and with the church family as a whole.*

The candle that represents joy was made for this analogy. Who better understands pure and complete joy than a child? Their eyes light up when they blow out the candles on a birthday cake or when the first snowflakes fall. They experience joy every time they see a bowl of candy on Kim's table in her office and when they get to ring the bell after church. Tori was lit up brighter than the Christmas tree when she got to be an acolyte for the first time. *We all give our children joy by including them and giving them opportunities to be a part of all the goings-on at our church. And how much joy have you received by watching them help or by giving them your attention?* Enough said.

The final candle is the Christ candle. We all know Jesus was a teacher. *I personally can't think of a better way to honor Him than by sharing your gifts with our children – by teaching them through presence and example how you share your gifts with the church. In the last meeting we had about Sunday school I expressed how strongly I felt about getting as many people as possible to teach in our Sunday School program simply because I know that my children (and everyone else's) will be better for it. They will benefit from someone's history with their family, stories about their mom or dad when they were young or how they serve the church. You don't have to be there every week – a time or two a year would be a delight. You do not have to teach the lesson – your input in discussions or help playing a game; just your mere presence will be a true gift!*

*I hope that you will consider being a guest teacher. It will give **joy** to our children and we would love to have you. You will bring **peace** of mind to (at least) this mother.*

Blessings in Christ!
Rona Chandler

Kim Shirar, Pastor
Pastor's Office Hours:
Tuesday: 9 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Thursday: 9 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.
Cell Phone: (314) 651-9999
E-Mail: pastor@maplewoodumc.org

Sally Noel, Secretary
Secretary will be in the office:
Tues. & Thurs. - 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Maplewood UMC phone
(314) 781-5902
Maplewood Official Website:
www.maplewoodumc.org

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Second Time Around Shop is expanding its hours to be open on the first Saturday of each month from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. If you are interested in staffing the Shop on Saturdays contact Bonnie Jent or Shay Blackwell.

Sunday morning coaching positions open. Kid's Quarterbacks are needed. Contact Diane Watkins (781-4718) for details and scheduling.

If you are interested in ringing the church bell on Sunday mornings, sign up in the back of the church. ***This is an Equal Ministry Opportunity. There are no age OR height restrictions***



MAPLEWOOD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

7409 Flora Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63143



Every Sunday
9:45 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Worship