



# News From The Rock

December 2017

Solid Rock United Methodist Church • Warren, Indiana

*Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.*

## “Kitchen” class beginning Christmas study

The adult group that meets in the church kitchen on Sunday mornings will be looking at “The Wonder of Christmas” during the month of December. Christmas is the story of a *star* shining brightly, a *name* declared joyfully, a *manger* waiting expectantly, and a *promise* given freely. Without Christmas we could never fully know the wonder of God’s love. The wonder of Christmas is that God loved us more than we could imagine and came to live among us so that we could experience God with us.



“The Wonder of Christmas” walks us through the four weeks of Advent, exploring four elements of the Christmas story that teach us about the wonder of God’s great love for us: the wonder of a *Star*, the wonder of a *Name*, the wonder of a *Manger*, the wonder of a *Promise*. Please join us at 9:00 on Sunday mornings.

## Thank you!

Thank you to the veterans, veterans’ families, and active duty military who attended the Celebration Sunday. Thank you to the Solid Rock Church family who joined in to show your love and support of our veterans and military.

Solid Rock Church is truly blessed by God with amazing volunteers and talented members and guests! Thank you to the video and sound department for going above and beyond for the veterans. Thank

you to the Hog Roasters, Lynn and Vicki Bonewitz, and the dessert makers for the delicious food. Thank you to Rochelle and



**HONORING  
OUR  
VETERANS**

the kids for getting drinks to everyone.

Thank you to the Korporal family for donating the

“Stand for the Flag, Kneel for the Cross” plaque (raffle item) for the veterans! Thanks so much to Kelly Leidig for providing cover for the guests with her umbrella. Much appreciation to Larry Ryan, Huntington Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the musical group led by Linda Walters, “A Few Good Men,” for sharing their talents!

Approximately 216 attended the celebration with approximately 47 veterans and active duty honored. Praying that Solid Rock and guests provided our veterans and military with an honorable service, meal and entertainment that they are so deserving of! Most of all, thank you, veterans, for serving and sacrificing. God bless you, and God bless America!

## Christmas Practices

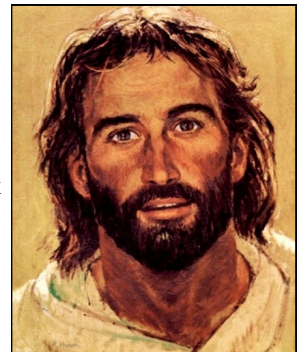
The Solid Rock youth group will meet at the church on December 23 at 7:00 p.m. to practice for the Christmas Eve service.

The children of the church will practice after worship on December 3, 10, and 17 for a program they will present during worship on December 24.



from  
Pastor Paul

You share Christ by imitating Christ. A story is told – by Fredrick Beuchner I believe – called “The Happy Hypocrite.” It is a story about a man who was born with an awful facial deformity. He grew up alone and lonely. When reaching adulthood, he decided to move from his town to begin a new life. On his way he discovered a beautiful mask that fit him making him look handsome. At first the mask was uncomfortable and he was afraid that people would find out who he really was, but he continued to wear the mask every day.



In his new hometown, he made many friends and fell in love. But one day a wicked woman from his old home came to his town and discovered this man’s true identity. In front of his friends and fiancé, she forced him to remove his mask. When he removed the mask, it revealed a handsome face. His face had conformed to the mask.

Becoming like Christ is analogous to this. Go ahead and put on Christ. At first it may feel unnatural or uncomfortable, and you may think, “who am I trying to fool?” But every day just keep putting on Christ and every day you will grow to look more like him.

See you Sunday,  
Pastor Paul

*Our Vision: Sharing and experiencing the life-giving message of Jesus, to restore wholeness and build an intentional community of hope, relationship, and purpose for everyone.*

## “Feasting on the Word”

By the time you receive this message, the Solid Rock Bible study group meeting on Monday evening at 7:00 p.m. will already have begun our Advent studies. Pastor Paul began the series with Malachi 3:1-7 along with Luke 3:1-16.

Now this December we will be preparing our lives for the celebration of Jesus’ birth and for his second coming. Feasting on the Word means that we are feeding on the amazing way in which God has chosen to make himself known to us this year. The season of Advent is the historic church’s way of getting ready for the arrival of Jesus into human existence. Even though this



time of the year is BUSY, BUSY, you are invited to set aside time to learn of God’s great love for all humanity – including you!

The following Bible scriptures will be our study guide.

- December 4: John 3:16 (Joe Haney, leader)
- December 11: Isaiah 40:1-11 (Perry Spahr, leader)
- December 18: Luke 2:1-20 (Jorita Banter, leader)
- December 25: Christmas Day! Receive the gift! (No study gathering.)

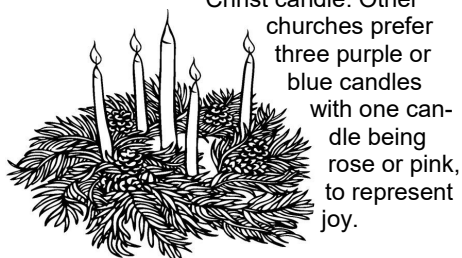
Come join us in our life changing feasting!

### October Financial Update

|                             |          |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| General Offerings .....     | \$30,955 |
| General Fund Expenses ..... | \$14,208 |
| Mortgage Balance .....      | \$60,621 |

### What do the candles in our Advent wreath mean?

The Advent wreath, four candles on a wreath of evergreen, is shaped in a perfect circle to symbolize the eternity of God. In some churches, four purple candles, one for each week in Advent, are used with one larger white candle in the middle as the Christ candle. Other churches prefer



three purple or blue candles with one candle being rose or pink, to represent joy.

While the Advent wreath with its four candles did bring light to churches, it was not to illuminate the interior as much as to symbolize the coming of Christ. The Advent wreath began in the time of the Protestant reformer Martin Luther.

During each Sunday of the Advent season, we focus on one of the four virtues Jesus brings us: Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. Others consider the lighting of the first candle to symbolize expectation, while the second symbolizes hope, the third joy and the fourth purity. The Christ candle is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day reminding Christians that Jesus is the light of the world. The order and exact wording vary among churches, but the wreath continually reminds us of whom we are called to be as followers of Jesus.

—www.umc.org

## Christmas carols: “Above all sing spiritually”

As you turn the pages of *The United Methodist Hymnal* during December, often you will end up singing some of the most popular Christmas carols ever composed. Two favorites, “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing” and “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus,” were written

by Charles Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism. Here is a short compilation of some of the songs we love the most in this holy season.



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### “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

Written by Charles Wesley within a year of his conversion, this song was first published under the title “Hymn for Christmas Day” in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739). There is no gentle warmup for this song; it jumps right into the action when the angels appear to the shepherds and herald the birth of Jesus. Much of the text in the first stanza is an adaptation of Luke 2:14. Wesley does inject his own theological interpretation of this grand event with the statement “God and sinners reconciled.”

### “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

First published in 1744, Charles Wesley also wrote this popular Advent hymn. The song uses imperative verbs like “come,” “rule” and “raise” to enhance our longing for the Savior. The hymn was included in the small collection of hymns, *Hymns for the Nativity of the Our Lord*. Like others published by the Wesley brothers, these collections produced a way to spread Methodist theology, enhance the prayer life of those in the Society, and give them a body of songs to sing when they gathered.

### “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893), an Episcopal priest and rector of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Philadelphia, wrote this popular carol. Brooks was inspired when he visited Bethlehem and Jerusalem in 1865. Three years later Brooks wrote the poem/lyrics and Lewis Redner, the organist of the church, added the music. Most renditions of this carol uses Redner’s tune, simply titled “St. Louis.” However, there are at least three other tunes used with Brooks’ lyrics, such as the version often performed during “Nine Lessons and Carols” at Kings College, Cambridge.

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### News From The Rock

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#### Solid Rock United Methodist Church

P.O. Box 322

Warren, Indiana 46792

[www.solidrockumc.com](http://www.solidrockumc.com)

#### Worship Schedule

Sunday School at 9:00

Worship at 10:00

at 485 Bennett Drive, Warren

Church Phone: 375-3871

#### Church Office

Office Phone: 375-3873

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Wednesday

9:00 a.m. - Noon

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News deadline for the January newsletter: December 24

## Food Pantry Needs

- Cereal
- Canned Spaghetti
- Juice Packs
- Chicken Noodle Soup
- Pudding Snacks
- Popcorn
- Peanut Butter
- Snack Cookies



Also needed: plastic bags, books and magazines (6 months through adult)

Please leave your items in the wooden boxes in the narthex.

## United Methodist Women

The United Methodist Women met in the Calico Room at Heritage Pointe on November 2, 2017 at 9:30 a.m. President Barbara Hart welcomed everyone and shared a meaningful devotional entitled “I Give You Thanks, O Lord.”

The purpose of the United Methodist Women was recited by the members. The prayer calendar showed the mission focus as the Haiti Hope House. The birthday of the month is Sandra Kaye Raasch, missionary with Global Missions - Honduras.

Joys and Concerns were taken by Bernie Garrett who then offered prayer for those mentioned. The Mission Moment was given by Mick McNany. Roll Call and the Secretary’s Report were voiced by Martha Plummer and the Treasurer’s Report by Barbara Hart.

Pledges for next year were discussed. Carolyn Winters made the motion, seconded by Martha Plummer, to send \$300 to the Lucille Raines Home. It was also agreed to send the Conference asking of \$2 per member for the School of Christian Mission and \$1 per member for Youth Ministries.

Barbara Hart gave the World Thank Offering program, “A Community of Thankful Women,” and a collection was received.

The next meeting will be held on December 7, 2017, in the Calico Room at Heritage Pointe at 9:30 a.m.

## Southwest Indian School

The Southwest Indian School is no longer collecting stamps and coupons.

(Continued from page 2)

### “Angels We Have Heard on High”

The French roots of this carol can be found in the 1700s in “Les Anges dans nos Campagnes,” which means “the angels in the countryside.” The French verses were coupled with a refrain taken from Luke 2:14 in the Latin version of the Bible: “Gloria, in excelsis Deo,” which means “Glory to God in the highest.” The carol was translated to English by Bishop James Chadwick and first published in his 1860 *Holy Family Hymns*. The traditional tune is attributed to Edward Shippen Barnes, an American organist who studied at Yale University from 1910-11 and then briefly at Schola Cantorum in Paris.

### “Silent Night”

The original German lyrics “Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!” were written in 1816 by Josef Mohr, a Catholic priest from Austria. Tradition holds that two years later, faced with a rusty, broken organ (some say damaged by mice) on Christmas Eve, Mohr gave the lyrics to Austrian headmaster Franz Gruber and asked him to compose the melody on guitar. At first Gruber declined because the guitar was popularly used for drinking songs, but finally agreed and created a Christmas song loved throughout the world. “Silent Night” is said to be one of the songs both English and German soldiers sang together in the great Christmas truce of 1914 during World War I.

### “Away in a Manger”

Also known as “Luther’s Cradle Hymn,” a popular belief in the early 1900s held that Martin Luther composed this hymn in the 16th century. One published version of the song in 1887 stated that Luther composed it for his children, though it does not appear in his works or in German church history. It is more likely that the carol was written by German Lutherans in Pennsylvania. The first two verses were published in the 1885 *Little Children’s Book* without an attribution to an author. The author of the third verse (“Be near me, Lord Jesus”) is also unknown.

### “We Three Kings”

John H. Hopkins, Jr. wrote this hymn about the Magi in 1857 for a Christmas pageant at New York City’s General Theological Seminary. Hopkins was a graduate from the Episcopalian seminary and the school’s first instructor of church music. The seminary, located in the wooded, undeveloped northern area of Manhattan, was founded in part through a land gift from Clement Clarke Moore. The son of New York’s Episcopal bishop, Moore’s income and fame were the result of a famous poem he wrote: “Twas the night before Christmas,

when all through the house...”

As you reflect on their meaning and sing these beloved carols during Advent and Christmas, remember the words of John Wesley: “Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing... so shall your singing be such as the Lord will approve here, and reward you when he cometh in the clouds of heaven.” (*Select Hymns*, 1761)

—Christopher Fenoglio

## Where’s your security?

When *A Charlie Brown Christmas* debuted in 1965, religious references were unheard of on television. Yet the show’s climax features the Christmas story verbatim. As Linus begins reciting Luke 2, he’s clutching his ever-present blue blanket.

Yet, as pastor Jason Soroski points out, Linus drops it right as he utters the words “fear not” (Luke 2:10).

Soroski believes the timing is intentional and that “Peanuts” creator Charles M. Schulz sends a simple, brilliant message. “The birth of Jesus separates us from our fears,” Soroski writes. It “frees us from the habits we are unable (or unwilling) to break ourselves. The birth of Jesus allows us to simply drop the false security we have been grasping so tightly, and learn to trust and cling to him instead.”



- “Because of his boundless love, Jesus became what we are that he might make us to be what he is.” —Irenaeus, third-century Christian apologist
- “The Advent mystery is the beginning of the end of all in us that is not yet Christ.” —Thomas Merton
- “I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was 6. Mother took me to see him in a department store, and he asked for my autograph.” —Shirley Temple



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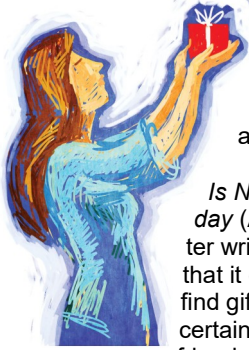
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## The perfect gift

Do you stress about finding just the right gift for everyone on your Christmas list? Does it make the season more a hassle than a joy? Pastor Mike Slaughter reminds us that Christmas isn't about perfect presents for people, as if it were their birthday — or ours. Christmas is about the perfect



presence of Immanuel, God with us, through the birth of Jesus; it's his birthday, after all!

In *Christmas Is Not Your Birthday* (Abingdon), Slaughter writes, "How funny that it can be so hard to find gifts that will please certain family members or friends — the people who

seem to have everything — and yet it is so clear what the Lord of lords and King of kings wants for his birthday. God wants you — your time, your talent and your treasure — used in service to others."

## Advent God,

We journey with you, to Bethlehem's stable and a new-born King, ears attuned to the song of angels, eyes alert for Bethlehem's star.

Forgive us if on our journey if we are distracted by the tempting offers of this world. Keep our hearts aflame with the hope of Christmas, and the

promise of a Saviour. **Amen**

—faithandworship.com

