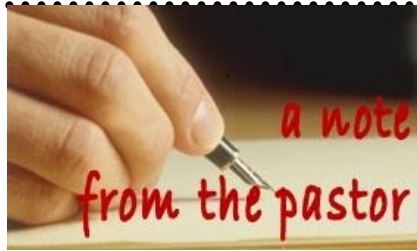


The Springs



Rev. Don Tabberer

December 7, 2011



Advent... the beginning of a new church year... the beginning of the greatest story ever told...

And so the story begins again, as it does every year at this time.

The gospel text for the First Sunday of Advent, November 27th, was taken from Mark 13:24-37. Here Mark offers us an apocalyptic vision. Some see this as a prediction of the future; others see it as a present commentary. I tend toward the latter interpretation. Mark's words here use familiar imagery to cause us to think about who we are and what we are called to do as we journey through this life prepared for us by God. This is a gospel of expectation for the future, while also presenting commentary within the context of its hearers. The neat thing about this is that, no matter when a person hears this text, they can relate to the context of its message. This is a text that speaks to generations of hearers throughout the ages. This is a text that tells us - in 2012 - to be alert; to stay awake and pay attention; to always be ready to meet Jesus again. This text is filled with expectation and promise. We hear Jesus talking about preparing a way for the Lord to come again as he assures us this will most certainly take place. Jesus gives us a warning that is surrounded by prophetic comfort.

It seems a little odd that the story would begin at this place. The lectionary texts normally lead us through a series of readings that tell a story from beginning to end. This year, however, we begin Advent with a story that begins at the end and then thrusts us back to the beginning again. It is a hint that this Advent season may be different than those we are accustomed to; this season may be jolting for us; it may lead us through unexpected territory even though we are hearing the same stories we hear every year. Maybe this Advent season is going to challenge us more - to be more aware of who we are as disciples of Jesus. Maybe this year we are going to spend less time at the manger and more time walking in the footsteps of Christ. Maybe this Advent we are going to be asked to place ourselves into the story

more directly and really realize what it might mean to meet Jesus walking in our front door this season.

As we look at how this first text fits into the narrative we might think about how it places us in the same shoes as were those who awaited the first coming of the Messiah. The people of God who waited for centuries to greet the coming king had no idea when he would arrive; as we wait for his return, we also have no idea when that might happen. We are waiting. The Advent season is all about waiting, expecting, preparing, being ready to meet Jesus. It doesn't matter if you've met Jesus before or if he is a complete stranger to you... This is a great time of year to meet Jesus... Maybe meet him **again** - *for the very first time*.

As we live through the expectancy of Advent we are forced to realize that we live in a time that is in between, caught in the middle, ripe with joy and anticipation at the same time. We recognize in this story that Jesus came and established for us the means through which we are drawn into the Kingdom of God - this is the **"already"** of the gospel. We also must know that there is so much more that has not been fulfilled in our relationships with God and with one another - this is the **"not yet"** of the gospel. We are caught between the already and the not yet... We already have an experience of the presence of God in Jesus Christ and yet we yearn for the fullness of that relationship that is not yet fulfilled.

We are called to live in this in between time. We've seen the already and we point others to the not yet. We participate in the present presence of God who actively draws us closer to the kingdom we will one day inhabit. We are drawn to God and blessed by God. We cry out to God and feel our brokenness knit together with God. All at once we are at the beginning of the story, in its middle, and nearing its ending. The story has begun again and will play out with endless beginnings until that one day when the master comes back suddenly and forever. Amen.

*Peace on Earth; Shalom,
Pastor Don*

Special Music Next 2 Sundays



Praise Team &
Kingdom Kids present
their special
Christmas musical
next Sunday,
December 11
at 6 p.m.
Chancel Ringers &
Chancel Choir
present their musical
on Sunday,
December 18
at 6 p.m.
Refreshments follow

Nametags

It is important to wear your nametags so that guests will know who to go to for help. But we also ask you to encourage visitors to sign the friendship pads so we have a record of their visits in the office. This allows Rev. Don to send them a personal welcome letter and it also allows us to track the number of times they visit, making sure they have nametags after 3 visits and finding them a Sunday School Class. It takes the help of everyone!

Ruth Esther Circle

Ruth Esther will be meeting at Copper Oaks Bed and Breakfast at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday, December 15th. If you need a ride, call JoAnn Nelson at 918-245-5944.

SOMEONE'S PRAYING,

LORD..... As Christmas approaches, I would like to share this Christmas Prayer with you. It was written by Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894.)

Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds and the wisdom of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world.

Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.

Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clean hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be Thy children, and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake,
Amen.

Mission Committee Ornaments

The Mission Committee will be selling glass ornaments with a picture of our church inside for the next 2 Sundays. The ornaments are \$3 each.

Join Us For Two

GREAT Fellowship Opportunities

December 11

After the Praise Team and Children's program, we will have a Happy Birthday Baby Jesus party with cake, cookies, punch and



coffee in the Fellowship Hall.

December 18

Bring your favorite dessert to share with everyone after the Chancel Choir and Bell Choir program. We



will meet in the fellowship hall and with the delicious desserts that everyone brings we will also have coffee, punch and apple cider.



Offices Closed...

The offices will be closed:

Monday, December 26

Tuesday, December 27

Wednesday, December 28

Thursday, December 29

Friday, December 30

Monday, January 2

January 2nd offices are closed, however, it is also a Newsletter Day so please, have all articles in by noon on that day. I will be in sometime Monday to work on Newsletter (weather permitting) so that it goes out on time.

Tracey

Needlers-this week...

The Needlers will have a Potluck in the Fellowship Hall on December 8th at 11:00 a.m. If you have participated in the sewing group present, past or if you plan to join us, bring a favorite dish and come join us. For questions, call Mary Kay Schwartz or Greta Green.

Seniors In Action

SIA! It's time to gather for our annual Christmas Potluck Lunch! Please come, one and all, to the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, Dec. 21st, at 11:30 a.m. Bring a dessert, vegetable or salad. Ham & drinks will be provided. Please bring 1 or more canned or boxed food items for Sand Springs Community Services. No sign-up needed.

2nd Monday Book Club

Our 2nd Monday Book Club meets again on January 9th. We will decide on meeting dates and reading selections for the coming year. Our book club is open to anyone in our community, guys and gals, so invite a friend. See you in January!

Estate Planning Thoughts

Did you know that, for purposes of estate taxation, there is no limitation on the size of a charitable gift that you may give to your church at the time of your death? No matter how large, the gift is deductible for estate tax purposes.

2012 UMW Year Books

Would you believe JoAnn Nelson has already turned in her information for the 2012 yearbook?! It would be great to have them ready by the 3rd week of January so that everyone can have them for their first meeting of 2012. There is a folder on my desk marked "2012 UMW Yearbook." Please be sure every page is together in an envelope or stapled with the circle name at the top of every page. If you have changes, please be sure to include the changes-new addresses, phone numbers, new member information

including birthdates... Your thoroughness makes this yearbook easier every year.

Friendship Pads

Please remember to sign in on Sunday morning in the Friendship Pads. This allows the office to keep a record of visitors as well as realize someone is out and we can check on them. It also gives you a chance to meet a visitor in your row by explaining the friendship pad.



Upcoming Events-

Mark Your Calendar If you have an event not on the calendar, call Tracey...

December 7-6 p.m.-Youth Christmas Party
December 8-11 a.m.-Needlers Pot Luck-F. Hall
December 8-7 p.m.-Faith Circle-Parlor
December 8-7 p.m.-Evangelism
December 9-Chancel Choir Dinner-Barb & Eldin Fisher
December 11-6 p.m.-Praise Tm. & Kids Christmas Music
December 13-7 p.m.-Stewardship Meeting
December 15-11:30 a.m.-Ruth Esther to Copper Oaks
December 17-9 a.m.-Chancel Choir rehearsal
December 17-2 p.m.-F. Hall being used
December 17-6 p.m.-Youth Movie Night
December 18-5 p.m.-Gomez family in FLC
December 18-6 p.m.-Chancel Choir & Ringers Musicals
December 20-11:30 a.m.-Staff Parish/Staff luncheon-Napolis
December 21-11:30 a.m.-SIA Potluck-F. Hall
December 21-6:30 p.m.-Youth Winter-fest Ice Skating
December 24-5:00 & 9 p.m.-Christmas Eve Services
December 25-No Sunday School
December 25-10:30 a.m.-Christmas Worship Service
December 26-January 2-Offices Closed
January 2-All Newsletter articles due by noon
January 4-No Chancel Choir or Ringers
January 8-12 p.m.-Dinners for 8 Plus
January 9-6:15 p.m.-2nd Monday Book Club-Parlor
January 10-7 p.m.-Stewardship Meeting-Parlor
January 15-2:30 p.m.-Council On Ministries
January 15-4:00 p.m.-Church Council
January 15-6:00 p.m.-Prayer & Healing Service
January 16-Offices Closed
January 17-Newsletter Week
January 22-1 p.m.-Finance Meeting
January 28-Happy Birthday Rev. Don!
January 30-Newsletter Week



KidZone

It's hard to believe Christmas is almost here! And we are certainly busy in Kidzone.

The children will be practicing on Sunday as they will be joining the praise team in their special Christmas musical on Sunday night at 6pm in our sanctuary. The children are very excited. Please make plans to attend!

The next two weeks we will be learning about Advent in Children's Church and Kidzone.

Please keep Ms. Marty in your prayers as she will be out the next couple of weeks. We will miss her and look forward to seeing her again real soon! We love you, Ms. Marty.


See you Sunday!

Crumbs From The Cracker

Are you on the Internet? Our youth are!! Stay Connected to "The Awakening" online!

 Follow us on Twitter: theAwakening_

 "Like" – Facebook: "The Awakening" Ssumc youth

 YouTube Channel: SSUMCTheAwakening

Important info!!!! Students and parents please if you have not filled out the new "Parent/Youth" Covenant paper work for this year, be sure to fill it out and have it turned in as soon as possible. We want to make sure that we have the most up to date info on your students!

I want to give a shout out to our SSUMC Youth and volunteer team! They did an amazing job displaying what it meant to be "All In" during the month of November! Here are a few service projects that our youth were apart of:

- Making 400 plus Thanksgiving cards to be delivered with our Thanksgiving dinners
- Putting together 57 Operation Christmas Child boxes
- Donating a box of canned food products to Restore Hope
- Assembled 700 Thanksgiving day baskets at Restore Hope
- Deboned Turkey
- Helped Deliver Turkey

SSUMC youth! You are awesome! Thanks for all of your great work in the month of November! Let's keep it up in December and continue to live "All In" for Jesus, the Church, and the Community!

Students and Parents!! Mark your Calendar's! December 15th we will be having a brief meeting about our upcoming mission trip to Quad Cities, Illinois. The mission dates for the upcoming summer mission are July 1st- July 8th. This means the students will be on the mission trip July 4th but it also means that they will save \$70 each. Reminder: deposit for the mission trip is due Dec. 15th at our meeting. Spots are filling up quick! We will be doing a number of fundraisers to help pay for the trip so don't let money be an issue!

Calendars for sale by youth to help fund our 2012 Summer Mission Trip-\$10 each.

Upcoming Dates:

- December 7th- Youth Christmas Party \$5 dirty Santa, and make Christmas cards for Oakdale Manor (Everyone 6pm-9pm)
- December 11th- Small groups attend SSUMC Praise Service 6pm
- December 14th- Community Wide Christmas Caroling (No meal provided)
- December 15th- Brief Youth/Parent Mission Info Night 7pm-8pm
- December 17th- Youth Christmas Movie Night 6:00-8:30pm
- December 18th- Small groups attend SSUMC Music Service 6pm

(If you are interested in being apart of any of these upcoming events please do not hesitate to call me at 918-245-5955, or email me at gcollett@sandspringsumc.org)

Weekly Youth Topics:

Can we talk about "Sex" in church? Is it in the Bible? Well the SSUMC youth will be starting their purity series in the beginning of January. This series will take a Biblical perspective to help our students see what God and the Bible says about this touchy subject. (Parents please do not hesitate to speak with me if you have questions about this series.)

Fun Fact: "Popular belief holds that 3 wise men visited Bethlehem from the east bearing gifts. However there is no mention in the bible about the number of wise men who visited. Three gifts that were brought - gold, frankincense and myrrh."

Sunday Lists

Sunday Volunteers December 11

Visitors Center & Coffee

Searchers Class

Head Ushers

Charles Campbell

Lay Reader

Jonathan Dobbs

Young Disciples Lesson

Kristen Henry

Children's Church

Debbie & Marty

Counters

Janie Moore & Kent Warkentin

Youth Dinner for Wednesday, *December 7*

Youth Christmas Party

Sunday Volunteers December 18

Visitors Center & Coffee

Searchers Class

Head Usher

Charles Campbell

Lay Reader

Jan Dickerson

Young Disciples Lesson

Jami Warkentin

Children's Church

Marty & Debbie

Counters

Diana Pond & Jack Vest

Youth Dinner for Wednesday, *December 14*

Noah Class

Please Keep In Prayer

Walter Speed, Francis Joslin, Wilbur & Jewel Williams, Mel Jones, Ryder Herring, Ryan Bulmer, Gene Watson, June Horn, Mary Lea Forsythe, Ruth Weaver, Jo Nan Allen, Jim Bostwick, Virginia Vice, Martha Scudder, and all un-spoken requests

Acknowledgements & Information

Thank You!

Thanks to all who assisted with the best ever 18th Annual Thanksgiving Dinner! Volunteers smoked and bakes and deboned over 64 turkeys and delivered meals to over 800 local people. Leftovers were taken to Day Springs Villa, our local domestic violence safe house. Such a spectacular event, and thanks to all who assisted!

Sincerely—Donna, Charlene & Patti

Thank You!

You do the nicest things. Thanks again for the "trip to the Back Door." We both enjoyed the visit. My wife fell in the house and broke both legs (about 1 1/2 years ago) she is still trying to "catch up!"

Thank you all!! Bill & Wilda Leslie

Thank You!

I am sorry to be so late in this, but we want to deeply thank all involved with bringing me Thanksgiving Dinner. The food was great and the portion generous, but the biggest gift was knowing that someone cared if I even ate at all. Most of all I thank Jesus Christ for all the good in the world, especially SSUMC! Jerry W.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

FLC-Family Life Center

Wednesday, December 7

7:30 a.m.-M/W Breakfast—Crescent Café
10:00 a.m.-Exercise to Music-FLC
6:00 p.m.-Youth Christmas Party
6:00 p.m.-Chancel Ringers
7:00 p.m.-Chancel Choir

Thursday, December 8

11:00 a.m.-Needlers Pot Luck-F. Hall
4:15 & 5:30 p.m.-Weight Watchers— F. Hall
7:00 p.m.-Faith Circle-Parlor
6:30 p.m.-Cub Scouts-Caleb House

Friday, December 9

12:00 p.m.-Weight Watchers
Choir Dinner at Eldin & Barb Fisher's home

Saturday, December 10

No Activities

Sunday, December 11

9:00 a.m.-Sunday School

10:30 p.m.-Blended Worship
11:45 a.m.-Praise Team Practice
6:00 p.m.-Kingdom Kids & Praise Team Christmas Musicals

Monday, December 12

10:00 a.m.-Exercise to Music-FLC
7:00 p.m.-Boy Scouts 101-FLC

Tuesday, December 13

1:30 p.m.-Staff Meeting
7:00 p.m.-Stewardship Meeting
7:00 p.m.-Al Anon-Upstairs

Wednesday, December 14

7:30 p.m.-Men's Breakfast-Crescent Café
10:00 a.m.-Exercise to Music-FLC
6:00 p.m.-JH Youth-FLC-Community Wide Caroling
7:00 p.m.-SH Youth-FLC-Community Wide Caroling
6:00 p.m.-Chancel Ringers
7:00 p.m.-Chancel Choir

Thursday, December 15

11:30 a.m.-Ruth Esther Circle to Copper Oaks
4:15 & 5:30 p.m.-Weight Watchers-F. Hall

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