

WINTER 2016

FIRST EDITION

PONTIAC FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Lift up your eyes...

“Do you see it?” | A Pastoral Perspective

A PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE



PASTOR TOM GOODELL

“And Mary pondered these things in her heart.” Luke 2:19

I was heading back into my office, one final check to make sure I had everything ready for the Christmas Eve service, the “Super Bowl” for pastors. Bible, check; hymnal, check; sermon notes....Just then a voice spoke to me. “Pastor Tom,” looking down I saw Isaac. Isaac! He was all boy, and though just a kindergartener, always full of questions, full of wonder, full of life. I looked for his mother or father hoping they would call him away. I did not have time for him now. But he was persistent, “Pastor Tom.” “Yes, Isaac”, I answered. “I want you to come outside with me and see the magic star.” “What magic star?” I half-heartedly asked. “The star that shines with Jesus tonight” he replied. I had no idea what he was talking about and to try to fend him off suggested he go out and find it again (*brilliant by the way, send a kindergarten boy out into the cold*) and then report back. But he was not swayed, I would have to go too. He even took my hand.

I thought of all I needed to do in that moment to get ready for services but his resolute nature won me out. Just to quiet him I agreed and out the front door we went. He pointed to the sky. “Do you see it?” he exclaimed. I looked but could only see the same old stars in the same old December night sky. I saw nothing new. He asked again. And I thought. I had been thinking about Christmas Eve services, and the many things I would still have to do to help Santa prepare Christmas at my house for our sons. I had been thinking about candles and flowers and whether I had put out the right bulletins for the service. Now, however, I realized that Isaac was thinking about and seeing Jesus on Christmas Eve while I was thinking about and looking for anything and everything else.

So I looked again. I could not be sure, but the star he was pointing to did seem unusually brilliant. I pondered for a second. I even thought about walking into the sanctuary and announcing to those already gathered that we would be going outside with Isaac to see the Bethlehem star. Christmas is coming. I know we have much to do. We must shop and bake. We must make lists for Christmas cards and shopping. We must juggle parties at work or with family and friends. We must decorate and wrap and do all of the things that we think bring meaning to Christmas.

Luke tells us that amidst the hustle and bustle of the first Christmas, as people made their way in and out of the home where Jesus was born. As animals were fed, and bedding replaced, and water drawn, and the chores completed (*there was a baby there now, after all*). As magi appeared suddenly from far away bearing gifts. Amidst all of this chaos, Luke reminds us Mary pondered. What is God giving to me? Why is this child born? What does this mean? But unless, like Isaac and Mary, we are also pondering, we will miss the star of Christmas.

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| There is still time. | Set aside some time to read again the Christmas story in Matthew and Luke and ponder what sort of blessing God promised to Joseph and Mary. |
| There is still time. | Set aside some time to pray for the world, for those who have turned away from Christmas. |
| There is still time. | Set aside some time to shop for an angel (<i>we will have a tree at church with names and shopping lists</i>). |
| There is still time. | Ponder. Gaze at the night sky. Anticipate what is coming. |

And may you and I, and Isaac and Mary, this year ponder what Christmas really is about! Amen.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Tom

Children and Family Ministry "Growing Together" Workshops

Beginning this fall the Children & Family Ministry team started a new ministry focus. The focus is known as "Growing Together" Workshops. These workshops will be held in the fall and the spring with an emphasis on family involvement.

The following are the workshops that will be available on a two year rotational basis:

- * Baptism for new parents and children who have not been baptized
- * Story Bible for 1 & 2 year olds
- * Taking Your Kids to Church for 3 & 4 year olds
- * How to Pray for Kindergarteners
- * Communion for 1st & 2nd graders
- * Bible for 3rd & 4th graders
- * Fasting for 5th graders



We held our first workshop on November 5th. Pastor Tom led our Communion Workshop with our 1st and 2nd graders. The children learned about Communion and then participated in an activity of creating their own special Chalice and Patten. The next morning the children and their families were served Communion first in our worship services. Stay tuned for the next workshops coming up in the spring!

AWANA

- "This is the best night ever!"
- "I love this church!"
- "I am thankful for AWANA."
- "Can we do this every night?"
- "Jesus is my friend now."

Those are just a few of the things you might hear if you joined us on a Sunday night for AWANA. We have you, the church, to thank for that. You have been supporting AWANA in so many ways great and small. For those who do not know, AWANA is a Christian ministry focused on teaching children the Bible, God's love for them, and how faith can positively shape and focus their lives. The club atmosphere of AWANA is engaging and fun. Children truly enjoy AWANA, which can be seen here in the building on any AWANA Sunday night.



Sparks and Trek at Opening Prayer

We start an AWANA Sunday at 4 pm with a meal for typically about 60 children, youth, and adults. Then we move to the sanctuary for our Opening Ceremony. We have been averaging about 80 children, youth, and adults in our AWANA Clubs. We currently have 63 children and 10 youth



VOLUNTEER BELL RINGERS NEEDED!

Ring a bell...help change a life

DECEMBER 17th AT COUNTY MARKET

*Please sign-up at the Welcome Desk
or contact Martha Slavik at 815-674-5824
or Linda Dionne at 815-674-5799*

Christmas Season Calendar

December 17	Christmas at the High Rise, 5 pm dinner and singing
December 18	Sanctuary Choir program at 8:15 & 10:45 am service Children's Christmas program at PFUMC, 430 pm
December 18	Collection for Angel Tree due <i>(see page 7)</i>
December 24	Christmas Eve services, 7 pm (nursery open) and 11 pm
December 25	Christmas Day service, 8:15 am (no nursery) We will not provide transportation for worship this Sunday No AWANA, Youth
December 26-31	Church Closed – Christmas Observance
December 28	No Senior High Youth
December 29	No Senior Drop In
January 1	New Year's Covenant services, 8:15 am and 10:45 am (no nursery) No Sunday School We will not provide transportation for worship this
Sunday	No AWANA, Youth

UPDATED WEBSITE: We are still at Pontiacfumc.org, but we have a new look and some new (& old) features: You can sign-up for studies, see our monthly calendar of events, contact us directly, see a pdf version of the First Edition Newsletter or subscribe to the online version, connect with community resources, view information about individual ministries, listen to archived Sermons, and inform us about moves, name changes, status changes, and contact information.



Children's Christmas Program

The Children's Christmas Program this year will be on December 18th at 4:30 p.m. Please mark your calendars for this date. We will have the program and then cookies and fellowship to follow. This year's Christmas Program will be a traditional Christmas Story Program with traditional Christmas Hymns. We hope that many from our congregation will join us on the 18th to support the children of our church!

Children's Christmas Program Practice

If your child wants to participate in the program, all they need to do is come to Sunday School! Practice started November 13th and will go through December 18th. Sunday School will begin at 9:15 those Sundays to give us extra time to practice the program. We will still have Sunday School lessons as well.

Christmas Caroling and Dinner at the High Rise

Please join the Children and Family Ministry team on December 17th at 5 p.m. for a traditional Christmas dinner and caroling to follow. The residents at the High Rise speak very highly of this event and love that we take the time during our busy holiday season to visit with them. A good time is always had by everyone who attends!

We also need volunteers to provide and prepare ham or turkey for this event.

If you are interested, please contact Angela Padula or the church office.

The Angel Tree

Soon you will see a Christmas tree in the Narthex. This is the Angel Tree, decorated with paper angels, having a name & age written on each angel. Children-in-need have been identified from our community and if you want to make a child's Christmas bright, please consider buying gifts for them. This has been a huge success in years past and this year we hope to have approx. 80 children blessed through the Angel Tree project.



Remember, gifts should be wrapped, and returned by Dec. 18th. If you take a tag off of the tree the tag must be attached to the items you bring back so we know who the gift will be going to.

Thank you for your loving hearts & contributions.

(Cont. from page 2)

registered for AWANA, 25 adult volunteers, and 13 high school volunteers.

We have new children registering every week!

Understanding that AWANA is a ministry for our whole community is important. To help you understand the community aspect we want to share some numbers with you. We have 41 children representing Pontiac FUMC and 9 other local churches. As impressive as those numbers might be, the most staggering number has to be those children whose parents listed them as not having a church home. That number is 32. That is 32 children or youth whose only contact with a church may be on Sunday nights at AWANA. Our church is making an eternal impact for the Kingdom of God through AWANA.

This past Sunday we had "Pastor Popcorn" Night at AWANA. The children were challenged to ask Pastor Tom questions that might stump him. If they were able to stump him, they were rewarded with a bag of freshly popped popcorn. Every child enjoyed popcorn and lemonade and thoroughly enjoyed their time with Pastor Tom. If you want to know some of the questions, feel free to ask Pastor Tom!

Everyone who has helped at AWANA has had a great time and we welcome more adults to join us. The children are learning great things about God and it is safe to say the adults are learning as well. If you are interested in joining the AWANA team feel free to contact Pastor Tom.



Truth & Training at Pastor Popcorn Night



Meal Time at AWANA

Children and Family Ministry Newsletter

The Children and Family Ministry team will be creating their own newsletter on a quarterly basis. Please feel free to check the Welcome Desk in January, April, July, and October to keep up to date on what the children of our church are up to!





PFUMC PARISH NURSE



HEALTH NEWS

Pain Affects Daily Life and Function...

New research suggests Americans are in a lot of pain. More than half of adults – 126 million, or 55.7 percent – experienced some type of physical pain in the past three months, according to a new analysis by the National Institutes of Health. Approximately 25.3 million adults, or 11.2 percent, experienced pain every day.

“Pain affects daily life and function due to the decreased mobility, but it also affects the human spirit,” says Dr. JoAnna Barclay, pain management physician at the Pain Treatment Center at Advocate Sherman Hospital in Elgin, Ill. “It’s important to voice one’s pain and seek help.”

The findings, published in *The Journal of Pain*, also found that nearly 40 million adults, or 17.6 percent, experienced severe levels of pain. People suffering from severe pain were more likely to have worse health status, use more health care services and suffer from more disability. Women, older people, and non-Hispanics were more likely to report pain.

“Adapting family life, work and relationships to the realities of untreated chronic pain could be very frustrating and disappointing,” says Dr. Sebastian Guman, anesthesiologist at the Pain Treatment Center.

“Chronic pain is associated with anxiety, depression and impairment in functional abilities. It can also impair the performance of activities of daily living, deteriorating the patient’s quality of life in a major way.”

Besides making an appointment with a physician, Dr. Barclay says those in pain need to make it a priority to exercise, eat healthy and continue living an active and social life. Dr. Guman stresses the importance of communicating pain as soon as possible. “It is of fundamental importance that the patients communicate their pain in a timely fashion because when pain is properly treated early, many people can recover and resume their lives,” he says. “Left untreated, pain can result in nerve damage that never heals.”

If there is anything that I can help you with, please contact me.

Mary

*“Dear God, my body is precious but sometimes it feels like it’s fighting against me.
Help me to find support and treatment so that I can be all that I’ve been created to be.”*



First United Methodist Church
"Making Disciples of Jesus Christ"
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"The Mission of our church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of Pontiac and the world!"



OCTOBER 30th NURSERY DEDICATION SUNDAY

Blessing by Pastor Tom Goodell.

Sharing by The Rev. Leah Pogemiller, Ashley Diaz, Nursery Coordinator,
 Michelle Clark, Lay Leader, Doug McCoy, McCoy Construction, and Henry Yedinak.

On behalf of PFUMC we wish to give a "shout out" to McCoy Construction, Brent Harms, BDI, to Diaz Sign Art, to the staff & volunteers who set-up, and to our custodian, Cuong Vuong.



Bill Diaz of Diaz Sign Art and son, Ben Diaz, working on the mural, which has now been completed.