THE PILGRIM MESSENGER
DECEMBER 31, 2017

"Welcoming, Loving, Serving, Where God Has No Limits.
More Than Church On Sunday!"

December 31 thru January 7, 2018

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Sun	**10:00 am**	**SERVICE OF REMEMBERANCE**
	1:15 pm	JMM @ Brookdale North
Mon	**CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED**	
Tues	6:45 pm	Alive Now Book Study
Wed	10:30 am	Quilters
Thurs		
Fri	6:30 pm	Hobby Horse Preschool Open House
Sat	**EPIPHANY**	
Sun	8:15 am	Chapel Worship
	9:00 am	Gathering Worship
	9:15 am	Choir Practice
	10:00 am	**3rd Grade Bible Class Parent Meeting**
	10:30 am	Traditional Worship
	11:45 am	**UNDECORATE THE CHURCH**
	11:30 am	Hunger Outreach Meeting
	2:00 pm	JMM @ Evergreen
	4:30 pm	Youth Group

Worship Highlights: 10:00 am
Isaiah 40: 1-8, 28-31
"The Vast Void"
Rev. Luke Lindon

SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE
ONE SERVICE OF WORSHIP –
Sunday, December 31st –10:00 am

OFFICE HOURS:
We will be closed on Monday, January 1st and will reopen Tuesday, January 2nd.

NEW MEMBER CLASSES

Would you like to become a member of our church family? Join us for our next new member class! The next classes will be held:
Monday, January 22nd & Monday, January 29th.
Class will be held from 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm. in the New Library. New members **will join the church on Sunday, February 4th.** Childcare is provided if needed. Please contact the Church Office at 330-725-4559 if you are interested and let us know if you will be in need of childcare.

UPCOMING YOUTH EVENTS

*Dec. 31 – NO F.I.S.H. – Happy New Year!
*Jan. 7 - 3rd Grade Bible Class
Parent Meeting 10:00
*Jan. 7 – Youth Group 4:30-6:00
*Jan. 14 – Confirmation Mentor Meeting 2:30
*Jan. 14 – Confirmation Class with Mentors
3:00-4:30
*Jan 21 – Youth Group 4:30-6:00
*Jan 26 – Confirmation Class to Temple Israel and Lock-In
*Jan 28 – Confirmation Class 3:00-4:30

OFFERING ENVELOPES

If you requested offering envelopes they are available on the table in the East Room

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

Thank You to those of you who have returned your pledge cards for 2018!
All 2017 contributions must be postmarked by December 31st, 2017, to be eligible for tax deductions. In order to best forecast 2018 budgets the church is still in need of your 2018 Faith Offering Card. Blank cards are available in the pew racks.

WHAT GOES UP… MUST COME DOWN

Thank you to the wonderful volunteers who help with the hanging of the greens and decorating the entire church. It is indeed a very welcoming area. As easily and quickly as the decorations were hung, they are just as easily taken down, carefully labeled and stored for the next advent season. **We will plan to remove the decorations on Sunday, January 7th after the 10:30 service** (approximately around 11:45). If you are able, please come and help! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

BAKERS NEEDED!!!

The Breadmakers need a few extra pair of hands. They meet every third Monday of the month from 1:00 pm until about 5:00 pm. The team makes and bakes about 20-24 loaves each month. Church members deliver the bread. Those receiving the bread are church members that have had a difficult time due to illness or death in the family, or a great joy such as the birth of a child, as well as visitors that have attended one of our services.

Please consider joining in the fun of making and baking bread for this appreciated service. If you have questions, please contact Pat Hale (330-723-5203), Shirley Krcmar (330-764-3364) or Carolee Rafn (330-052-0258).

3rd GRADE BIBLE CLASS
MEETING SUNDAY, JAN. 7th

Do you have a 3rd grader this year? If so, this is an exciting year! There will be a meeting for all parents and third graders on **Sunday, January 7th at 10:00 am in the library.** During the meeting we will go over information for the Bible classes and Bible Sunday. If you cannot attend or have any questions, please contact Stacie Yates.

WE WILL NOT BE MAILING THE PILGRIM MESSENGER THIS WEEK. MAILING WILL BEGIN AGAIN ON JANUARY 4th.

ANNUAL REPORTS AND MEETING

Save the date!

Our Annual Budget Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 28th immediately following the 10:30 service.

If I have asked for an annual report from you, **the deadline is Monday, January 8th.**

This means: Endowment Committee, Stewardship Committee, Finance Team, Treasurer and Church Clerk.

Please email them to me: office@uccmedina.org or drop them off in the church office.

BLANKET+ SUNDAY

Mission Leadership Team would like to remind you Church World Service's Blanket+ Sunday will be January 28th. Over 8,000 congregations and groups across the U.S. are responding to the call to be good neighbors to those in need here at home and around the world. For over 60 years Church World Service has helped by providing:

- Blankets, tents, food and other emergency supplies in the wake of a disaster
- Tools and seeds for refugees returning home to replant their fields
- Wells for families living in drought prone areas to provide clean, safe water to drink and to irrigate crops and gardens
- Literacy training and microcredit for women struggling to realize their potential.

Contributions to Blankets+ help families recover from disasters and help those who are struggling against poverty. Your contributions go a long way to help families in need so please be generous in your support for Blanket+ Sunday. Thank you!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR OFFERING

Thanks to your generous gifts our church collected $2.267.00 to give to the *Veterans of the Cross* as well as being able to help out those in need right here in our own neighborhood! Your donations are greatly appreciated!

GOSPEL GALLEY

by Mark Armstrong

Our Father (Abba) who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name...

When he taught us to pray, Jesus taught us to start by referring to God as our loving “Abba”, a word more intimate than “father” and more respectful, perhaps than “daddy”.

After that, Jesus tells us to acknowledge that God’s name is holy. It might remind us of the third commandment - “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.”

This means we approach God with a very deep sense of reverence. In the Bible, something Holy is something separate. It is not common or ordinary. It is set apart and unique. It is God’s.

There was a wall around the Temple to keep it separate from the realms of business, politics and everyday life. Inside that temple, specially designated people “sanctified” themselves (or set themselves apart) for God’s service using special instruments that could not be used for anything else. Even the fire on the altar was special. Once a year, one priest went into the inner chamber of the temple - the “most holy place” - to intercede for God’s special, chosen people.

This inner chamber was separated from the rest of the world by a very heavy curtain, made to precise specifications. It was this curtain that was miraculously ripped apart when Jesus died on the cross. What did that mean?

Did it mean God was no longer separate or distinct or worthy of a deep, profound reverence? No. God didn’t change.

Instead, through the touch of Jesus (and only through his touch), we become clean, holy, separate and unique - devoted to God. We actually become priests who can worship and intercede before a God who is no less holy than ever.

It is a great calling, open to all who are willing to come, be touched by Christ and devote their lives to God. In The words of the apostle Peter, “You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own possession that you might show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light, which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God.“. This is extravagant welcome.

This holiness doesn’t mean we are always somber and filled with false piety. It does, however mean that, even in our merriment and joy, we bring real piety - a deep respect, no rather a deep reverence, to God, whose very name is holy.

We do this before our first request to God, our first word of praise, our first act of intercession. It is foundational. So let us come reverently to our Abba in heaven..!

The deadline for submission of articles for NEXT Sunday’s *Messenger* is this Sunday at 11:30 am.

Submit articles to: office@uccmedina.org Or: messenger@uccmedina.org

*******CHURCH OFFICE HOURS: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm MONDAY THRU FRIDAY*******