

Greetings to each of you as we begin our Advent journey together and the third year for the intentional interim time together. Let me share my gratitude for a wonderful church wide celebration of my 25th anniversary of my ordination into the Christian ministry. The gifts were lovely and received with appreciation and deep meaning for me. Nov. 22 was a good Sabbath for all of us. Thank you.

Beginning on Dec. 1, I will start to more keenly focus on two initiatives as we approach the end of the interim. First is leadership development in a broad sense. Second, we will explore together corporate spiritual discernment. The three quarter time schedule, rather than full time ministry for your pastor essentially means that I will not attend evening meetings. My involvement with preparation for them, attendance at them and the follow up that is required if we want to have a smoothly run organization will not be part of my work week. Those responsibilities will fall on the committees themselves and especially on each chairperson.

Listening for God's lead, an aspect of discernment could be our Advent motto. First, we have a lovely opportunity to listen to the **Springfield Chorus** on Sunday, Dec. 6th at 3:00 p.m. The sanctuary dedicated to listening to God, to one and another and to the world is the central "heart" of our church and will be full of people! We are so blessed to have wonderful instruments of praise and beauty we can share with the community in pipe organ and the baby grand piano. We have the talents of music ministry in Candace Montesi. Then all the voices and instruments that "make" music. Why not carpool to the concert and plan a meal with friends to celebrate?

You may have already read of our activities for December but I especially highlight **BLUE CHRISTMAS, Dec. 16th at 6:00 p.m.** We are celebrating a third year for this tradition and are reminded that all traditions begin as something new! "Candles and Colored Lights" is the theme and we will meet in the chancel (choir loft). We will listen to a story, sing, will honor our departed loved ones and pray for joy in a dark world. Need a ride? Ask for one and come. You will value the experience. Of course, refreshments will follow!

I am pleased to share that this year we will have a special tree in the narthex covered with lights. Lindsay Rounsefell has offered a lovely one for the occasion. Beginning on November 29th, your job is to bring one ornament from your home to place on **OUR CHURCH FAMILY** tree. If possible, put your name or initials on it. Each person or family may bring one ornament for our tree and will symbolize how each person's faith contributes to the whole as a church. Ornaments will be available for pick-up beginning Sunday, January 10th. Won't this be fun!

Listening for God's lead will also take us to join in the Community Carol Sing on Sunday afternoon on December 13th. So many community residents will hear our voices bringing love and cheer to their lives. Stay tuned for more information so you and your family can join us. Finally we will have our traditional pageant on **Sunday, December 20th** at 9:30 a.m. and our **Christmas Eve Worship at 5:30 p.m.** Plan to attend as many activities as possible so you may prepare yourself for the coming of Jesus. Listen to God's voice in the cry of a new born baby, Jesus. May this season be one of wonder and of gratitude for what God has done, is doing and will continue to do as we journey into the future together.

Pastor Christine