

Mayflower Congregational Church



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Rev. Mark McCormick
Pastor



It's happening at Mayflower in December...

- 12/5 Women's Bible
Study 10 a.m.
- 12/8 Second Saturday
Supper 5 p.m.
- 12/9 Last day to order
poinsettias
- 12/13 Trustees Meeting 3 p.m.
- 12/15 Deadline for Notes
- 12/16 Children's Christmas
Play
Prudential Council -
noon
- 12/24 Christmas Eve - office
closed
- Christmas Eve Service -
7 p.m.
- 12/25 Christmas Day - office
closed
- 12/30 Advent House lunches
- 12/31 New year's eve



Pastor Mark's Musings

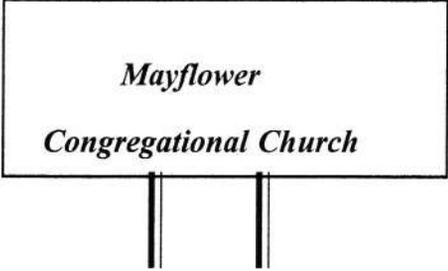
Season's Greetings! You will see this message a lot during this month in many different venues and places. In our culture, we treasure the opportunity to express holiday greetings to all we meet during this most joyous time of year.

In the community of faith, including our church family we affectionately call Mayflower, we have an even greater opportunity to reflect and then share the depth of meaning and understanding of this "season". I hope that each of the things we do and proclaim during Advent and then Christmas (which lasts for twelve days!) will be something which will reverberate throughout the year in our relationship to each other and to God. And while we always want to look for a nugget of something "new", this season also reminds us of past memories which have special meaning in the form of tradition. So there will be several things we do at Mayflower which we hope will foster new understanding, and at the same time remind us why tradition helps reinforce our beliefs and commitments. So...I look forward to sharing with you in spoken word fresh insight and Biblical perspective each Sunday. Our music program, while keeping traditions alive, will bring fresh and new inspiration each Sunday and then again on Christmas Eve. Another play, written and directed by my wife DeeAnn, will be presented on the 16th and we will sing extra Christmas Carols on the 23rd. The sanctuary will be lovingly decorated, the poinsettias will appear and we will have some special "eats". We will also be given the opportunity in several ways to remember those less fortunate.

So the next time you see the expression "Season's Greetings", may it stir in each one of us the message of new life and hope as we continue and renew our role as ambassadors of the coming kingdom expressed fully in Jesus, the Christ. Hallelujah! Amen!

Pastor Mark





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From the Lay Leader

Believe it or not, we are near the end of another year. One reason I know that is because of the fact that we are in the Advent season. I googled and read that technically the beginning of Advent is the beginning of the liturgical New Year. Advent starts on Advent Sunday which is always the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. Depending on which day of the week Christmas falls on, Advent Sunday falls either at the beginning of December or, like it did this year, on the 30th of November.

One of Advent's most prominent symbols is the candles lit at the beginning of each week. There are 3 purple or blue candles and one pink or rose candle – four in total with one for each week. We light a fifth white candle, the Christ candle, on Christmas Eve. At Mayflower we read scripture that depicts hope and expectation of the coming Christ as we light each candle.

Hope and expectation are wonderful concepts. I believe they are requirements of a happy life. In their absence, there is despair. Our world needs more hope and expectation. Listen to the advent scriptures. These prophetic words tell of the One who will speak only truth. Good news!

How the Fir Tree became the Christmas Tree

At the time when the Christ Child was born all the people, the animals, and the trees, and plants were very happy. The Child was born to bring peace and happiness to the whole world. People came daily to see the little One, and they always brought gifts with them.

There were three trees standing near the crypt which saw the people, and they wished that they, too, might give presents to the Christ Child.

The Palm said: "I will choose my most beautiful leaf, and place it as a fan over the Child."

"And I," said the Olive, "will sprinkle sweet-smelling oil upon His head."

"What can I give to the Child?" asked the Fir, who stood near.

"You!" cried the others. "You have nothing to offer Him. Your needles would prick Him, and your tears are sticky."

So the poor little Fir tree was very unhappy, and it said: "Yes, you are right. I have nothing to offer the Christ Child."

Now, quite near the trees stood the Christmas Angel, who had heard all that the trees had said. The Angel was sorry for the Fir tree who was so lowly and without envy of the other trees. So, when it was dark, and the stars came out, he begged a few of the little stars to come down and rest upon the branches of the Fir tree. They did as the Christmas Angel asked, and the Fir tree shone suddenly with a beautiful light.

And, at that very moment, the Christ Child opened His eyes—for He had been asleep—and as the lovely light fell upon Him He smiled.

Every year people keep the dear Christmas Child's birthday by giving gifts to each other, and every year, in remembrance of His first birthday, the Christmas Angel places in every house a fir tree, also. Covered with starry candles it shines for the children as the stars shone for the Christ Child. The Fir tree was rewarded for its meekness, for to no other tree is it given to shine upon so many happy faces.

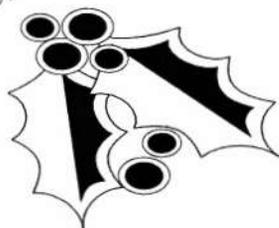
Baby Boxes for Haiti

This holiday season the Mayflower family has a unique opportunity for a special giving experience. Most of us heard the presentation of Baby Boxes for Haiti and the need for baby clothes and funds to help this program succeed.

So, we will be collecting new and gently used baby clothes and/or a monetary donation during the month of December.

For \$30 you can also sponsor a complete layette in honor or memory of a loved one. Information pamphlets will be available during coffee hour. Please join in helping this worthy project.

If you have questions call Roger Kennedy.



Thrift Sale

Thanks to all who donated items for the thrift sale and/or worked in setting up, selling, and cleaning up! Proceeds will go to the church's general fund. We plan to have another sale as usual in late April or early May, so start saving up your items NOW! A good way to do it is to have a box or bag in a closet or a corner of your basement or garage, and as you see things you don't need or want any more, put them there. Then you'll be ahead of the game when the time comes!



Music Notes from Barb Fuller

From a Christian point of view there are so many reasons to love the season of Advent, but often we get caught up in the secular part of the season with the stress of finding the perfect gift for everyone on our list, the worry of how to pay for those gifts when the VISA bill arrives in January, and the fatigue acquired by attending all of those special concerts and parties that just have to be jammed into December!

However, have you ever noticed that many times it is the anticipation of an event that is almost as exciting as the event itself? And so it can be with Advent. If you take a step back from the rat race, wrap up in a fuzzy blanket, sip away at a steaming mug of hot chocolate, and pick up the Hymns for a Pilgrim People you borrowed for a week from Mayflower, you will find some of the most inspirational hymns we have in our hymnal.

Hymn #85, "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates" exudes excitement as it declares, "Redeemer, come! I open wide my heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide! Let me Thy inner presence feel; Thy grace and love in me reveal."

Hymn #89, "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" is simple in its anticipation of the birth of Jesus. "Born Thy people to deliver, Born a child, and yet a king, Born to reign in us forever, Now Thy gracious kingdom bring."

Hymn #92, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" is almost blatant in its jubilation of Jesus' arrival. "O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer Our spirits by Thine advent here; Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadows put to flight. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!"

And so Advent slips in almost under the radar, often taking a backseat to the frenzied Christmas shopping and the glitzy lights. At the point you need a break from all of that, lose yourself in the hymns of Advent, and you will find the serene peace of the season.



Mayflower Financial News

The November Second Saturday Supper was not as well attended as we hoped, but leftovers were sold on Sunday and we ended up with proceeds of \$613. We can always use more help so please come, eat, and then help if you can.

Our new outdoor sign is being extensively used to announce events at Mayflower and community/civic events. We have continued to receive donations from members and friends of Mayflower to help defray the cost of the sign. All donations will be gratefully received!

The following is a summary of our finances as of October 31:

Income:	\$ 10,127.36
Expenses:	<u>15,448.59</u>
	\$ -5,321.23

YTD for Ten Months:

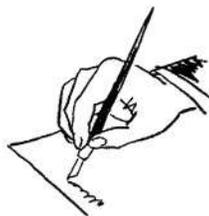
Income:	\$ 90,462.45
Expenses:	<u>85,621.98</u>
	\$ 4,840.47

Fund Balances:

Checking:	\$ 15,953.41
Savings:	31,539.60
Heat Fund Savings:	20,846.26
Savings CD:	<u>22,390.08</u>
	\$ 90,729.35

A more detailed report is available in the brochure rack near the church office. Please ask if you have any questions.

—Linda Wheeler, Treasurer



December



BIRTHDAYS

12/6 - Pastor Mark McCormick

12/8 - Carleen Brammell

12/9 - Mike Graham

12/11 - Barb Parr

12/22 - Remington Graham

12/25 - Darrell Watson

12/28 - Zidam Dwin

Head Usher

Candy Bywater

Outreach Focus

Mitten Tree, Salvation Army

