

Mayflower Congregational Church



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Rev. Mark McCormick
Pastor

December



BIRTHDAYS

12/6 - Pastor Mark McCormick

12/8 - Carleen Brammell

12/28 - Zidam Dwin

HEAD USHER

Candy Bywater

OUTREACH FOCUS

Mitten Tree, Salvation Army



Mayflower Financial News

Our November Second Saturday Supper was all but a sell-out, which resulted in proceeds of \$887. It would be great to have another sell-out in December. Thanks to all who helped. Come, eat, and work at the suppers as often as you can!

Other recent fundraising events included \$650 to the Salvation Army for hurricane relief, \$550 for the CROP Walk, and \$400 for Hannah's House (the charity chosen to receive the love offering collected at the recent music/comedy event). Thank you for your generosity! In addition, the thrift sale total is about \$2950 as of today.

The following is a summary of our finances as of October 30:

Income:	\$ 9,008.70
Expenses:	<u>7,567.01</u>
	\$ 1,441.69

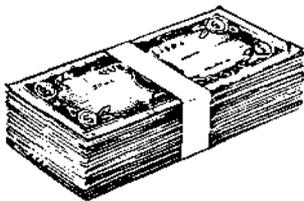
YTD for Ten Months:

Income:	\$ 83,221.35
Expenses:	<u>72,600.99</u>
	\$ 10,620.36

Fund Balances:

Checking:	\$ 12,289.53
Savings:	54,554.07
Heat Fund Savings:	20,852.52
Savings CD:	<u>22,468.57</u>
	\$110,164.69

A very detailed financial report is available in the brochure rack near the church office. Let me know if you have questions at any time.



— Linda Wheeler, Treasurer



Christmas Cards for Veterans

Holiday greeting cards to be sent to Veterans in Michigan VA Hospitals will be available in the Social Hall beginning Sunday, December 1st. Signed cards must be returned no later than December 15th so they can be distributed in time for Christmas.

Please take this opportunity to extend your appreciation to our Veterans.

Questions ??? See Ann McClelland



If You Look for Me at Christmas...

Author Unknown

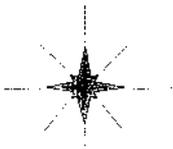
If you look for me at Christmas,
you won't need a special star;
I'm no longer just in Bethlehem,
I'm right there where you are.
You may not be aware of Me
amid the celebrations.

You'll have to look beyond the stores
and all the decorations.

But if you take a moment
from your list of things to do,
and listen to your heart, you'll find
I'm waiting there for you.

You're the one I want to be with,
you're the reason that I came,
and you'll find Me in the stillness,
as I'm whispering your name.

Love, Jesus



Music Notes from Barb Fuller

Music Notes

From Barb Fuller



I'm sure you have heard the phrase, "It's not the destination it's the journey. As I have prepared for something special in my life I have often found that by the time the event arrives, I have gained more satisfaction from the preparation than from the actual happening. The celebration of the birth of Christ "the destination" is a rare exception of that saying for me. The season of Advent, "the journey" takes a close second to Jesus' arrival, but I love every minute of it. And so the more I study hymnology and the hymns that are present in my life year after year, the more I feel the hymns of Advent reaching out to me in very special ways.

The Advent hymn "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" speaks of great anticipation.

Come, thou long expected Jesus, Born to set thy people free:

From our fears and sins release us; Let us find our rest in thee.

The Advent hymn "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" speaks of great hope.

O come, Desire of nations, bind All peoples in all heart and mind;

Bid envy, strife and quarrels cease; Fill the whole world with heaven's peace.

And finally, the Advent hymn "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates" speaks of great joy.

So come, my Sovereign; enter in! Let new and nobler life begin;

Thy Holy Spirit guide us on, Until the glorious crown be won.

Let me suggest that you borrow a Pilgrim Hymnal from Church for a week or two and read through the words of the Advent hymns starting with #102 and going through #115. I believe you will find them inspiring and spirit-filling. I believe that through the busy-ness of our modern-day Advent season, you will also find quietness and peace.

Wonder

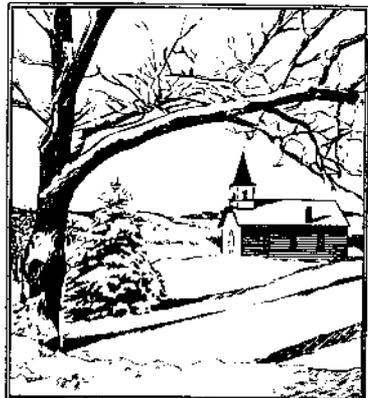
By Nancy Buckley

*There is faint music in the night,
And pale wings fanned by silver flight;*

*A frosty hill with tender glow
Of countless stars that shine on snow.*

*A shelter from the winter storm,
A straw-lined manger, safe and warm,
And Mary crooning lullabies,
To hush her Baby's sleepy sighs.*

*Her eyes are rapt under His face,
Unheeded here is time and space;
Her heart filled with blinding joy,
For God's own Son, her little Boy!*



Baby Boxes for Haiti

Once again during the holiday season the Mayflower family will be supporting the "Baby Boxes for Haiti" program. We will be collecting new or gently used baby clothes and/or donations during the months of December and January. For \$30 you can also sponsor a complete layette in honor or memory of a loved one.

Please support this worthy project.
Questions??? Please call Roger Kennedy.



Salvation Army Bell Ringing

The Salvation Army has again requested Mayflower's help to ring bells for the Red Kettle initiative this season. We are scheduled again at Meridian Mall December 20th and 21st from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. There will be a sign-up sheet on the white board beginning in December.
Ring a bell, help change a life.



Christmas Eve and Outreach

As we continue our mission of outreach and holiday giving here are some Mayflower happenings that you will want to be aware of. The mitten tree is up this week for your donations of mittens, scarves, gloves and hats to be given to Lewton School (student's ages 10, 11, and 12). If you wish, shopping will be done for you.

Our traditional Christmas Eve Service will take place at 7:00 p.m. This will once again be a wonderful service of words, reflections and inspirational music. The offering will once again go to the Salvation Army. There will be a reception and time of fellowship immediately following the service in the Social Hall. Please bring a favorite snack to share.

Poinsettias in honor or memory of someone or an event are again available to enhance the sanctuary. The cost is \$10, order deadline is December 10th. Please contact Sue or Lorraine to sign up.

Please plan to participate as much as possible as we celebrate Jesus's birth.



Thrift Sale

Thanks to all who donated items for the thrift sale and/or worked in setting up, selling, and cleaning up!

Proceeds (about \$2950) 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 ready when the time comes!

Mayflower
Congregational Church

From the Lay Leader

Have you noticed all the outdoor Christmas decorations in the stores lately? All the santas, reindeer, candy canes, penguins, etc.? The bright spotlights, colored lights, tinsel trees, artificial green trees, cartoon characters, and so many others. It's hard to miss, isn't it? I've been watching these displays more carefully recently and I found something unsettling. Nobody has any decorations for sale that relate to the birth of Jesus Christ. After all, isn't that the reason we celebrate Christmas?

Recently I went to Frankenmuth to meet several of my high school classmates for lunch at Tiffany's (no diamonds there!). After a great visit over lunch, several of us went down the road to BRONNER'S CHRISTmas WONDERLAND. Yes, that's the way the store name is present on everything they do. When we entered the huge building, one of the first things I saw was a room full of beautiful nativity scenes made for outdoor display. Once I saw those, I just relaxed and thought to myself, "yes, this IS CHRISTmas!".

No, I didn't purchase one of those displays but I was sure tempted. I came away with a renewed spirit of the season and I will pass on to you, this message from a BRONNER'S package:

Enjoy CHRISTmas | It's HIS Birthday



Pastor Mark's Musings

I'm a sucker for Christmas music. I begin tuning in to radio stations which begin playing Christmas music 24/7 around the first of November. I love the song "The Most Wonderful Time Of The Year." It IS the most wonderful time for many including me. With that in mind, I would remind us of a confusing and possible contradiction when we as the church observe Advent. We display and wear colors and sing songs that remind us a little of Lent. While we gain understanding of all the preparations leading up to the most pivotal event in our history (read Luke 1), it is important for us to remember that unchurched people do not have the same sense of the potentially somber aspects of Advent. To most, it is simply known as the "Christmas Season." So while we might lament over the commercialization of the holiday, and wish everyone understood the spiritual meaning of what we consider sacred, we must remember that in all of our comings and goings we can offer our a complete, unfiltered and unbridled sense of wonder and awe and to join fully in extending the spirit of Christmas to everyone. It is not foreign to me to consider the following a sincere prayer, even without bowing our heads, closing our eyes or kneeling at our bedsides. Saying "Merry Christmas" to a complete stranger, attending and celebrating with enthusiasm every Christmas event possible, and singing a Christmas Carol in church, with gusto, even if it's still technically Advent, or keeping our Christmas decorations up long after the Christmas holidays are all, most certainly, prayers.

With that said, our only restraint, as well as a motivation toward a kind act, is to remember those who have suffered a loss during the past year. While it doesn't have to derail our joyous celebrations, it is well to bring the Christmas spirit of comfort and consolation to those who grieve. And to use our compassion to remind us of how important the message is that we carry in our hearts. The coming of the Christ Child brings exuberant joy as well as deep consolation to all of our hungry hearts.

Merry Christmas, Mayflower Family!

With my love,

Pastor Mark



