



# Connections

We are about relationships. . .  
with Christ,  
with one another,  
and with God's  
hurting world.

I have to be honest. Christmas can be a trying time for me. Not because I have a long list of gifts to buy or parties to go to, though I do. Not because my kids have a dozen different holiday-related projects or activities, though they do. Not because the house has to be cleaned and decorated and cleaned again, though it does.

No, Christmas can be trying for me because I am a pastor. During the season of Advent, I feel like I'm fighting this great battle with the Christmas Juggernaut. (To make sure I was using that word "juggernaut" right, I looked it up and found this definition: "any large, overpowering, destructive force or object, as war, a giant battleship, or a powerful football team." Yep. Sounds about right.) But in these weeks I feel as if I'm struggling to keep at bay all the commercialism and materialism that distract us from the good news of the Incarnation. I feel like I'm trying to guard a little outpost of serenity in the midst of a culture gone crazy.

Honestly, I can get a bit Scrooge-ish during these last few days of the season. Tired of the "Chestnuts Roasting" and the Cool Springs traffic, I find myself saying "humbug" to the whole scene. I want to shout, "This is not what it's all about! Is Christ really in any of this?" And I begin to long for January.

I was in such a mood yesterday, when something unexpected happened. After the kids went to bed, David and I decided to wrap a couple of their presents and put them under the tree. In the morning as I was making my breakfast in the kitchen, I heard the familiar pad of little feet making their way into the living room. Then I heard the squeals of delight: "There's a present with my name on it! What is it? Can I shake it?"

Seeing their delight turned my Scrooge-ish, Grinch-ish heart into jelly. At the core of their excitement, I think, was not materialism or consumerism. Though I'm sure they're excited about getting new toys, I think it was more than that. They just seemed excited to see their name on a gift. There were gifts for them, picked out and wrapped in love especially for them.



Then it occurred to me. Their excitement and joy is a glimpse of the kingdom of God. Something about their anticipation is related to the waiting and hoping we do in Advent. We are waiting for this gift that God is giving to us. It is a gift that has our names on it. And it is given to us in love, not because we deserve it or have asked for it, but because God loves us. Just as we are.

Hmm. God loves us just as we are, which means Jesus came into this world just as it is. With all our materialism and distraction and selfishness and greed and wrong-headedness, Jesus came. Jesus didn't wait until the world was ready. Today, Jesus doesn't wait until we've removed all distractions and gotten our priorities straight. Jesus doesn't wait until the traffic dies down and the chestnuts stop roasting. Jesus comes now. Jesus comes here. Jesus comes in the midst of this messy, noisy world. May we receive that gift with childlike joy!



*Carol*

### Sunday Worship Schedule

- 8:00 am Riverbend Max. Security Institution-Communion Service
- 8:30 & 11:00 am Worship Services
- 9:45 am Sunday School



CHRIST  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
Go to [www.christum.net](http://www.christum.net)  
for information on our church  
and to hear past sermons.

# WITH CHRIST

Please call or e-mail the church office with additions or changes to the prayer list. Names will appear for four weeks, unless you request they remain longer.

## Prayer Concerns

The church prayer list cannot be included on our website due to privacy issues. You can find the list in the church bulletin or in the emailed newsletter.

If you would like to receive the newsletter by email please contact the church office at 790-2112

A more detailed prayer list is found in the Prayer Room (room 202)

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### Worship This Sunday

December 25, 2011

Scriptures:

Psalm 98

John 1:1-14

### Attendance

December 18, 2011

Worship: 642

Sunday School: 246

### Advent and Christmas Schedule

#### Service of the Longest Night

Wednesday, December 21, 7:00 pm

#### Christmas Eve Worship

Saturday, December 24, 4:00 & 9:00 pm

*Nursery provided at the 4:00 pm service only*



#### Christmas Sunday Worship

Sunday, December 25, 10:00 am

#### Worship on New Year's Day

Sunday, January 1, 2012, 10:00 am

# WITH ONE ANOTHER

## Children & Families



### This Week at Christ UMC

**Sunday, December 25**  
*Christmas Day*  
10:00 am Worship Service

**Wednesday, December 28**  
5:00 pm Children's Fun Event

**Thursday, December 29**  
6:00 pm Room In The Inn

**Friday, December 30**  
*Church Office Closed*

**Saturday, December 31**  
*New Years Eve*



### Regular Events:

For information on the young adult ministry contact John Hill at 615.790.2112 or [jhill@christum.net](mailto:jhill@christum.net)



## PUMP IT UP

### THE INFLATABLE PARTY ZONE

### Family Fun Night at Pump it Up - December 28

Looking for something fun to do in the middle of Christmas break? Do you and your kids need to work off some extra energy (or the extra Christmas goodies you ate?) Join us for a Family Fun Night at Pump It Up in Brentwood (7104 Crossroads Blvd., Suite 128) on Wednesday, December 28, from 5:30 - 7:30

pm. The requested donation is \$5 per family, which is an incredible deal for a private party! Invite your friends! All jumpers (kids and adults) must wear socks, and parents need to complete a waiver for their kids. If you have additional questions, contact Karen Byrd: 595-1500. Hope to see you there!

## Church Wide Activities

### Room In The Inn

Room in the Inn is in need your help, **in Jan. and Feb.!** Sign ups are in the Narthex. As part of our 10:00 am Christmas Sunday worship, we will be collecting hats, gloves and winter coats for men, women and children for Room in the Inn. Please bring your new or gently used items to give during the worship service that morning.

### Ladies Night Out

Who/What: Ladies Night Out  
Where: Jasmine Restaurant – 8105 Moores Lane, near Home Depot and Michael's  
When: Tuesday, January 10th, 6:30 pm  
RSVP to: Beth Kitson – [kitson@comcast.net](mailto:kitson@comcast.net) or 791.4487

### Join the CROP CIRCLE in 2012!

Make your New Year's Resolution to preserve your cherished memories in fellowship with friends at Christ UMC. Bring a snack to share. Childcare is available upon request 10 days prior to each event.

January-March 2012 Dates

### Weekday

Wednesday, January 4th, February 8th, and March 7th, 9am Commons

\* RSVP to: Stacey Cooper at [stacylpage@yahoo.com](mailto:stacylpage@yahoo.com) or 525-5001

### Weekend

Saturday, February 11th, and March 17th, 9 - 1pm - Fellowship Hall

\* RSVP to: Jen Fuqua at [jennifermfuqua@yahoo.com](mailto:jennifermfuqua@yahoo.com) or 477-2754

### Ingrid McIntyre of Open Table of Nashville, Inc.

is inviting the Christ United Methodist congregation to be a part of a worship service on December 23rd. She hopes you all can make it. It's going to be an amazing way to love into our Nashville community!! Thanks!



**Sassy Steppers** - We will not be walking as a group the next two Saturdays. We will start back up January 7th, 7:30 am at Radnor Lake. For any of you that have not yet joined us, it's the perfect time to get started. If you have any questions, you may call Barb Auten, 794-3108.



**NO  
Wednesday Night Together  
December 21 & 28**

**The kitchen crew wishes you a  
Happy Holiday Season!**

## WITH GOD'S HURTING WORLD

### Room In The Inn Special Collection

As part of our 10:00 am Christmas Sunday worship, we will be collecting hats, gloves and winter coats for men, women and children for Room in the Inn. Please bring your new or gently used items to give during the worship service that morning.



### Help Wanted: Room in the Inn

Since our ministry with Room in the Inn has expanded to include families now, we are in need of some additional leadership help. If you would be interested in serving as a co-chair for the ministry or helping to organize the small clothing closet on a weekly basis, please contact John Hill at [jhill@christum.net](mailto:jhill@christum.net) or 790-2112.

### Flower Calendar

A flower calendar for 2012 is found on the bulletin board outside the Fellowship Hall. If you would like to give flowers in honor or memory of a loved one, please sign your name on the calendar at the appropriate week and we will send you a reminder and more information when the date draws near.



On behalf of all of the men and women in the Building Lives and The Academy programs, we wish to thank each of you for your participation in our recent fund raising Warehouse Sale. Whether you were a volunteer, or a shopper, or both, your presence made a difference in these folks lives, and we wish to say THANKS and MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Tim Gregath, Bobby Dodd, & Dave Edmunds