

December 2017



# The Messenger

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## In the Spirit of Christmas - Pastor Mike Mirakian

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What does the Christmas season feel like to you? For some, Christmas shines with candlelight and rings with carols. For others, it's childhood memories of snow and Santa and candy canes. For some, Christmas brings bittersweet memories of loved ones no longer near. For others, the most wonderful time of the year revolves around Advent wreathes, nativity scenes and church events.

As we enter the Advent season, our feelings and memories may vary, but at the center of the celebration will remain Jesus the Christ, born to save us from our sins. During December, I will preach on the "Spirit of Christmas," focusing on four ways we come to Jesus to celebrate His birth.

We will begin with a call to **hope** in the Lord through the trials and struggles of a broken world. Isaiah 40:28-31 invite us to renew our strength and soar on eagle's wings with the hope of God's redeeming power. In Jesus, we find a certain hope, a sure desire, that God is good no matter how often the world may disappoint us.

Long ago, the people of God placed their hope in a promise. God had told them that one day He would send a Savior, a Redeemer, to break the chains of suffering and oppression, to free them from spiritual bondage. They held to hope through slavery and exile and famine and injustice and war and persecution. They hoped for the Savior, and in the little town of Bethlehem, God fulfilled His promise.

We will also proclaim our **belief** in God's saving grace. Romans 10:9-13 gives us the spiritual formula for salvation, that if we declare that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved.

Believing means more than knowing a statement of faith; it's deeper than acknowledging what others have told us is true. Believing in Jesus means seeking daily after God's Kingdom rather than chasing the fleeting things of this world. It means loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and body. It means loving other people in the self-giving ways that Jesus loves us. We believe in Jesus because He has changed our hearts.

On the third Sunday of Advent, we will talk about imitating Jesus by **giving** to those in need. At Christmas, we give gifts as a reflection of the great gift of love God gave us. 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 teaches us about the grace of giving and that Jesus chose to make Himself poor for the sake of enriching our lives.

Giving is a tangible way to express our faith. Whether we give money or gifts or our own time and energy, generous giving allows us to respond with compassion to real people with real needs. We give to the church to enable ministry. We give to missionaries to spread the gospel in far away places. We give to community organizations to improve the lives of people we may never know. We give to neighbors or friends or even strangers to lift up the brokenhearted.

On Christmas Eve morning, we will talk about the spiritual practice of **waiting**. The Christmas season teaches us how to wait, and Philippians 2:1-11 reminds us that we wait with faith for Jesus' return. One day, every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. For generations, God's people waited for the Savior to be born. Now, Jesus' followers wait for Him to return and bring to completion all God has promised.

Whatever we feel through the Christmas season, we can express our love for Jesus by hoping, believing, giving and waiting.



## Birthdays

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- 3 Richard Peterson
- 4 Carl Ecklund  
Emily Lorbach
- 5 Mark Montoya
- 6 Crystal Burdick
- 8 Florence Boyer
- 13 Judy LeGault  
Aidan Breese
- 14 Brandon Melin  
Ryan Melin
- 15 William Evans
- 17 Jill Page
- 19 Christiana Melin
- 20 Nancy Ilgen
- 21 Christopher LeJuene  
Noelle Mirakian
- 22 Claire Gray
- 25 Dylan Pronti
- 26 Noah Melin
- 27 Shelby Holmertz
- 28 Kay Forsen  
Jeanine Parker Heck



## Anniversaries

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- 19 Lillian & Richard Slack

## Serving in December

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### Head Usher:

Tom Heck

### Counters:

Dave Holmertz & Robin Robinson

### Nursery Workers:

- 12/3 Jeanine Heck & April Parker
- 12/10 Kathy Holmertz & Jon Brown
- 12/17 Kim Lape & Stacey Parlapiano
- 12/24 Gene & Colleen Felts
- 12/31 Gene & Colleen Felts

### Coffee Schedule:

- 12/3 Marcia Johnson
- 12/10 Ryan & Kara Woodrow
- 12/17 John & Kathy Loven
- 12/24 Gary Ecklund
- 12/31 Theresa Gregorcy



## Remember in Prayer

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**Justin Murdock**, Ft. Sill, OK

**Joyce Cosman** recovering from knee surgery.

**Dave Lape** recovering from surgery.

**Dennis Norman and family** in the death of two siblings last month.

**Denise Suhr and family** in the death of her husband Dennis.

**Family of Florence Boyer** who passed away last month.

## Thank You

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To all my friends at Broadway Covenant Church, thank you for your many cards, visits and especially your prayers during my illness. I miss you and hope to be back one of these days soon. **Peggy Frint**

## 60 Plus Lunch

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Join 60 Plus, December 19th, 11:30 for lunch at Thunder Bay on East State Street. Following lunch we will go to church for a Christmas Carol sing-a-long followed by dessert. Please call your reservations to Karen, 815-399-1523 by Sunday, December 17th and let her know if you need a ride. Remember to invite others to join you. Be thinking of restaurants where you would like to have lunch or things you would like to do in 2018. Let Dan & Aina Hitchcock, Doug & Mary Gibson, Judi Papka or Dave & Karen Holmertz know before they meet in January to plan 2018.

# December

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Prayer 10:15 Worship	4	5 8:30 Morning Prayer  6:15 Women's Christmas Banquet	6	7 10:30 Men's Bible Study  6:30 Boys Scouts	8	9
10 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Prayer 10:15 Worship	11	12 8:30 Morning Prayer 9:30 Women's Fellowship  6:30 LT Meeting	13	14 10:30 Men's Bible Study  6:30 Boys Scouts	15	16
17 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Prayer 10:15 Worship YOUTH	18 Messenger news due in office	19 8:30 Morning Prayer 9:30 Women's Fellowship 11:30 60 Plus @ Thunder Bay  6:30 Girl Scouts	20	21 10:30 Men's Bible Study	22	23
24 10:00 Prayer 10:15 Worship   5:00 Christmas Eve Service	25 <i>Merry Christmas</i> 	26 8:30 Morning Prayer	27	28	29	30
31 10:00 Prayer 10:15 Worship						

## Mission Report

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As we approach Advent and the Christmas season please pray for the organizations that care for those in need. This month we are praying for two of our local ministries: **Rock River Valley Food Pantry** and **Carpenter's Place**.

**Rock River Valley Food Pantry** "fights hunger in the community by providing nutritious food to those in urgent need". They assist people living in Winnebago County, including those living at or below the poverty line and people in crisis mode. In RRVP's fiscal year 2017 they had 75,154 visits: 33% were children and 7% were adults 65 and older. One mother said "I used the pantry to help feed my two boys this past year. It was a big help." One of the items the pantry likes to give their clients is peanut butter. We continue to collect peanut butter for them. There is a collection box by the office for anyone interested in donating.

**Carpenter's Place** helps the homeless by providing the necessary tools to help rebuild their lives. They provide case management and accountability. On average one person gets into housing every day that Carpenter's Place is open and two people find employment each week. Carpenter's Place offers their clients several support and educational groups. Group Hope is for those needing help with bi-polar and depression. Sarah's Circle is specifically for women. The art program helps their clients discover their creative abilities and learn discipline. They also have several Bible and devotional studies.

### Fabio and Johnna Muniz-France

**Praise:** For house in St Petersburg FL where they are able to stay until May while they are in FL. All the visits they have been able to make in the last few months since they have been in the US.

**Pray:** They will be able to raise the funds they need to France next August.

### Peter & Ruth Dutton- Thailand

**Praise:** Successful and fun English As A Second Language (ESL) language camp.

God's provision of funds through Covenant VBS.

**Pray:** Future of ESL program - that it would grow at a rate appropriate to their number of teachers and funding.

Upcoming plans for Christmas – a time of year where their churches reach out to their communities.

## Christmas Card Banner



Send one Christmas card to your church family and donate the postage savings to Missions! Stop by the banner in the east hallway to view all the greetings.

## Financial Report from Treasurer

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With your generous donations all bills are paid. Although it is lower than the 2017 budget, the Leadership Team hopes to equal the 2016 donations total of \$283,000 for 2017 as we prepare to cover the future costs of a full staff. To reach this goal we need \$73,000 in Nov. & Dec. We received \$28,528 for the first 2 Sundays in Nov. which leaves \$44,472 needed over the remaining 7 Sundays or an average of \$6,353 per Sunday.

## 2018 Offering Envelopes

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The 2017 offering envelopes will be in the lobby for you to pick up during the month of December. If you do not currently have envelopes but would like a box please contact the church office. You can also give online at the home page of our website. Click on "Donate to Broadway Covenant" at the bottom under Quick Links, sign up through [covchurchgiving.com](http://covchurchgiving.com) and make your contribution.



## Youth Ministries

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Hello everybody. Winter has come. It's finally here and December is upon us. I hope we all get our fill of hot chocolate, hot cider, and snow. Bring on the snow! Here's the date for December. I'll only be on for one this December as the other Sunday is Christmas Eve. We're looking at the 17th for regularly scheduled youth group. Outside of that; we will pick up with more events come January. Stay tuned for that. I hope everyone has a safe and festive Christmas! Stay warm!



December 2017  
Broadway Covenant  
Church

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**We're on the Web**  
**[www.broadwaycovenant.com](http://www.broadwaycovenant.com)**

## Leadership Team Update

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The Congregational Business Meeting was held on November 19<sup>th</sup>. Minutes from the meeting will be available in December. Here are a few items from the meeting. A budget of \$297,942.00 for 2018 was approved. Broadway recently received a gift of \$80,000.00 that was designated for the Capital Projects Fund. We are very grateful for this generous donation. As an additional security measure, we decided that the south-east and west doors to the church will be locked 10 minutes after the worship service begins. The north and northeast doors will remain unlocked during worship.

Youth & Worship Pastor Search Team. Continue to pray for wisdom and discernment as we seek to fill this important position. Search team members are Arlene Schweiger, Laura Mirakian, Steve Schweitzer, Tyler Whitney, Mike Mirakian and Keith Holmertz.

Members of the 2017-2018 Leadership Team are Colleen Felts, Dave Holmertz, Kathi Engstrom, Ken Yarwood, Kent Drews, Kim Schweitzer, Mike Mirakian and Keith Holmertz.