



[bearcreekumc.org](http://bearcreekumc.org)

December 8th  
2016

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*worship... walk... work...*

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## Altarnative Thoughts

By Dr. Jonathan Bynum.

Our righteous indignation boils in our modern-day Christmas wars:

- fighting for the "right" coffee cups;
- outrage at being greeted with, "Happy Holidays!";
- annoyance that children now get a Winter Break at the end of the year;
- the sacrilege of having a creche on government property.



*walk*

It's time for a yuletide throw-down, with the lambs vanquishing the lions...

But before you beat your plowshares into swords so you can do battle to make sure Jesus gets an appropriate reception, you might be interested to know some of the history of Christmas. Facts like we don't know why the early church chose December 25 as Christmas - the Bible doesn't help us. Actually, Epiphany was the big celebration and Christmas an afterthought. Yet, by the Middle Ages, Christmas was known for its drunken revelry as the "Feast of the Ass." That explains the actions of England's Parliament when it became dominated by Puritans and banned Christmas.

While Charles Wesley wrote great Christmas hymns like, "Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus" and "Hark How All the Welkin Rings" (thankfully, reworded, "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"). It wasn't until the 19th century that people like Charles Dickens started to reform Christmas. Clement Clarke Moore played a major role when he wrote, "Account of a Visit from St. Nicholas," with its well-known opening line, "Twas the night before Christmas..." Santa's image eclipsed Europe's nocturnal visitor, "Perchta the Disemboweller" (you should read up on that one - she's like Kris Kringle's dark side). It wasn't long before Christmas was associated with family and charity and retailing.

In summary, celebrating Christmas has always been a mess - as it should be. After all, that's how God came among us: Jesus was born in the midst of the mud, muddle, and manure of a barn so he could share life with us.

## *Christmas Cantata*

The Winter Rose.

For their Christmas offering, the Chancel Choir will present "The Winter Rose" this Sunday, December 11 during the 11:00am service. Written by Joseph and Pamela Martin, this cantata uses the symbolism of a rose as an "expression of love and peace both inside the Church and the outside world." The composers' desire was that our spirit be encouraged by the beauty of God's greatest gift and to remind us that, even in the deepest winter, we are a people of joy and life.



*walk*

The Chancel Choir, directed by Sean Saunders, will be accompanied by Diane Garrett on the piano, as well as a 14-piece orchestra. Youth from Cy-Woods High School will be guest singers. Please join us for a Christmas celebration!

## *Christmas Cards for Sale*

Featuring original artwork by our Youth & Children.

Help our Children's Ministry fund their summer field trip by purchasing Christmas cards featuring artwork drawn by the youth and children of Bear Creek UMC. **This Sunday, December 11 is your last opportunity to get these unique cards**, which will be available in the narthex of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall.



*work*

## *Christmas Giving*

Double December needed for a strong finish.

After a challenging year, please consider how you can help Bear Creek UMC close out the year strong financially, meeting our "Double December" budget needs (remember, we need twice as much giving during December). Please note, all financial gifts and contributions to Bear Creek are considered charitable giving and are tax-deductible.



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According to IRS rules, a contribution is recognized on the date of delivery - so, mail must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2016. If you plan to bring your contribution to the church office the week after Christmas, we are open on Wednesday and Thursday, December 28 and 29.

## *Christmas Lunch*

Don't spend Christmas Day alone.

If you do not have plans to join family members for Christmas, you are invited to stay after the 10am worship service on Christmas Day for a Christmas meal at Bear Creek UMC. Instead of eating alone, cooking when you do not have the energy, or finding a



*work*

restaurant when most will be closed, come to the Family Life Center to join with others in our church family and share a meal in the gym. **RSVP to the church office so we know how much food to prepare.**

There was no room in the inn, but we will have a plate for you in the gym. Merry Christmas! ~ *BCUMC Prayer Ministry*

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## *Angel Tree Reminder*

Sharing God's love with children in our community.

All gifts, stocking stuffers, and gift cards **must** be returned by noon on Sunday, December 11.



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The Angel Tree committee will be packing the gifts this Sunday afternoon. Thanks to our church members for showing a tremendous response to this mission outreach. Thanks to your generous support, 85 children will have a very Merry Christmas! Thank you. ~ *Betsy Ayers*

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## *Thank You!*

Christmas Block Party.

We want to thank Gaylynn Brewer for all her hard work planning and organizing our Annual Christmas Block Party. Also, thank you to all of our volunteers for your willingness to participate even though the weather didn't cooperate for the Block Party to happen as we'd planned. The contingency plan (transitioning everything to the FLC gym Sunday morning and serving the parade participants that staged in our parking lot) was very well received and the community was served in a different, yet meaningful, way this year.



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## *EHS Materials*

Please return DVDs and unused material.

For you leaders or hosts of our Emotionally Healthy Spirituality study, please return the DVDs and any unused materials to the church office so we can help others in their journey.



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## *Emmaus Prayer Clock*

Sign up to pray for pilgrims.

The Walk to Emmaus Men's Walk #95 is February 16, 2017 through February 19, 2017. Click [here](#) to sign up to pray for the pilgrims and the team. Thank you!



*walk*

## *Hour of Prayer*

Second Tuesday. Fellowship Hall @ 7pm.

Hour of Prayer (HOP) will be on the second Tuesday of the month (December 13) in the Fellowship Hall. Please come to join us in song, readings from Scripture and meditations, and prayer. You will share in a Joy to the Lord and a Blessing to each of us.



*walk/worship*

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## *Youth News*

Movie Night. Gift Exchange.

This week at Youth @5 we will have Christmas Movie Night and snacks! During Faith Groups on Wednesday we will have a \$5 gift exchange, so get creative and come for our **last midweek gathering** until we resume on January 11, 2017. Check out your weekly Youth Newsletter for all of the Youth information and upcoming dates. Contact [Lea Bynum](#) for more information.



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## *AWANA on Wednesdays*

December 14 @ 6:30pm in the FLC gym.



*worship*

Bear Creek United Methodist is devoted to nurturing your children with scriptural teaching, fun activities, and opportunities to cultivate great friendships that last forever.

Here are a few things to remember:

- On Wednesday, December 14, please drop off (6:30) and pick up (8:00) your child in the Tree House on the second floor of the Family Life Center.
- Fill out a new Kidzone Registration ([English](#) or [Spanish](#)) form for 2016-17.
- Pay the \$20.00 registration fee per family for 2016-17.

Please contact me if you have questions concerning any ministry to children here at Bear Creek United Methodist Church. Click [here](#) for the schedule.

Thanks,  
John R. Henley  
281.463.2330

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## *Online and Text Giving*

Electronic giving. From your smartphone.

We now offer online and text giving on our website. Both options are facilitated through Shelby Systems, Inc., our church administration software, which is highly secure. You will find links and instructions on the [giving](#) page of our website.

**Thank you** for your faithful contributions that allow us to continue the various ministries of Bear Creek United Methodist Church!



*worship*

## Energizers

December 16. Clay's. 11:00am.

**Energizers**, a group of active adults age 50-plus, enjoy gatherings that include day-long excursions. On December 16 we will meet at Clay's (17717 Clay Road) @ 11:00am; everyone is responsible for their lunch. If you would like to participate in the gift exchange, please bring a \$10.00 gift marked "female", "male" or "either". Come and join the fellowship.



walk

**Fellowship Friday**, an Energizers outreach ministry, provides a loving, welcoming and fun environment for family members with mild to moderate memory loss who do not require skilled care. This program, a partnership between Interfaith CarePartners and BCUMC, is designed to give caregivers some much needed time away. **Our next meeting is December 9 from 10am to 1:30pm.** The theme for December is *Christmas* and the entertainment is the Decibells (group of singers/entertainers).

## Western Prayer Wall

FLC 101. Leave a Prayer Request.

Been to the Holy Land? If it's too far or you've already been, visit our BCUMC Western Prayer Wall any time during church office hours or on Sunday. Please leave your prayer request in the crevices of the wall. Thank you - the Prayer Ministry Team.



walk

## A Time to Pray Together

Prayer Room - Ministry Village. Wednesdays @ 9:15am.

Come to pray with us for the congregational needs of BCUMC and for what God puts on our hearts. We are trusting in His Promise, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." ~ Matthew 18:20



walk

Blessings, **James Sharp, Communications Director**  
281.463.2330 X109

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