



Weekly Booster

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Sunday Media Booth

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Sunday Facebook Host

Craig Harris,

Facebook Contributors

Pastor David B. Clark,

Barb Cunningham,

Craig Harris, Jeff Hiser

Sunday Praise Team

Terry Stafford, Linda Haldane,

Margaret Brady, Deb Finlay,

Jeff Hiser, Drew Morelock,

Pastor David



Simeon's Story: Waiting Gives Way to Joyous Wonder

We meet Simeon on the day Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple for his circumcision ceremony. As they were preparing to dedicate their eight-day-old son to God, in another part of town, Simeon felt a nudge to get to the temple (see Luke 2:27).

Ever had a divine prompting like that? It might be mysterious; perhaps a name you haven't thought of in years flashes through your mind, and you feel the urgent need to pause and pray. Or it might be disguised, a text from a friend inviting you somewhere.

Whatever the case, Luke tells us this wasn't the first time God had spoken so clearly to Simeon. Once before, God had assured this old saint, who longed to see the Messiah, that he would see him before he died (see Luke 2:26).

Lots of people rolled their eyes whenever Simeon shared that story. So be it. He knew what he knew. For Simeon, it wasn't a question of if it would happen, but when. And so he waited, almost craning his neck some days, looking for a sign. So on this day, when the Spirit poked him hard, right in the heart, Simeon was out the door like a man 50 years his junior.

Continued page 2.

Quote

“If I’m not back in five minutes, just wait longer.”
Ace Ventura: Pet Detective

RemindersDecember 16th

Men’s Bible Study – 8:00 a.m.

December 17th

Third Sunday of Advent
Men’s Breakfast – 8:00 a.m.
Children’s Program – 9:00 a.m.

December 20th

Bible Study – 11:00 a.m.
Praise Team - 5:00 p.m.
Choir – 5:30 p.m.
Bell Choir – 6:30 p.m.

December 21st

T.O.P.S.
The Longest Night Service-6:30 pm

December 24th

Church Service – 9:00 a.m.
Christmas Eve Service – 7:00 p.m.

****Worship Assistant is needed for**
December 31st & January

**** Fellowship Volunteers needed**
sign-up in Fellowship Hall



Two Volunteers Needed each Thursday
to Deliver Meals
Sign-Up Sheet is on the
Welcome Center Counter

Simeon’s Story - Continued from page 1.

Here’s something a lot of people don’t know: Biblical hope isn’t wishful thinking with your fingers crossed. The old Hebrew word for hope is often translated as wait. That’s what Biblical hope is—the confident expectation that something good is just ahead. But since it’s not there yet, we have to stay alert because hope pays attention. And one day, hope pays off. All the waiting gives way to wonder.

This was the experience of the expectant Simeon. Spotting the infant Messiah, “Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: ‘Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace’” (Luke 2:28–29). His careful watching had led to joyous wonder.

Article by Max Lucado adapted from The NIV Lucado Encouraging Work Bible. HarperCollins Christian Publishing. All Rights Reserved 501 Nelson Place, Nashville, TN 37214, USA, NIV Weekly Blog, December 11, 2023.

A Lesson from Mary: God’s Humble Servant**Rabbi Jason**

God chose perhaps His most unlikely vessel to set into motion the salvation of mankind: a teenage girl named Mary. Mary thought she was waiting for a wedding to a carpenter named Joseph, but something came to her that was far different—an improbable event she never would have dreamed of. A holy interruption. Much about Mary and her relationship with God is revealed when we read about her response to the angel when she was told she would give birth to the promised Messiah (see Luke 1:26–38). Mary showed tremendous humility of heart—the same humble quality we find in Yeshua (see Philippians 2:6–11).



A characteristic of humility is receiving. Probably understanding some, though not all, of the misunderstanding and scorn that would surely come, Mary embraced God’s new vision for her life without complaining or sarcasm. 1 Peter 5:5 tells us that “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (NKJV). Do you want God’s grace? Become humble.

Continued page 5.

Quote

“My mama always said life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you’re gonna get.” Forrest Gump

Volunteers Needed



LAST PERSON LEAVING
PLEASE TURN OUT LIGHTS
AND LOCK DOORS

First United Methodist Church
Please wear your name tag on Sunday mornings



Church Office Hours

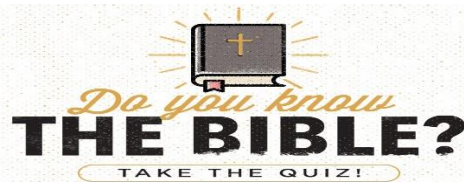
**** Children & Jr.-Sr. High Sunday School – PK-6 during service, Jr/Sr High at 10:30 a.m.**

****Choir –** Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m. Sunday 8:30 a.m.
****Bell Choir –** Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.

The front door to the church will be unlocked during office hours and closed only for errands and lunch.

Monday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Tuesday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Wednesday
CLOSED
Thursday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00
Friday
9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00

Please continue to call in advance if you need in the church to make sure someone is in the office. If you reach the answering machine please leave your name, number, and a brief message and your call will be returned. Calls after 2:00 p.m. may be returned the next business day.



In his greeting in 1 Timothy, what did Paul call Timothy?

- a) fellow servants
- b) co-labourer
- c) true child in the faith
- d) pastor

What did King Artaxerxes give Ezra unrestrained access to when he was sending him out?

- a) King's throne
- b) King's treasury
- c) King's tributes
- d) King's customs

Who was the father of Rachel and Leah??

- a) Isaac
- b) Laban
- c) Bethuel
- d) Jacob

Check page 4 for answers from the previous week.



17th – Ron Manrose, Carleen Perry
18th – Bentley Bowers, Evelyn Lorimor, Charles & Sharon Hall
22nd – Pam Antons
23rd – David & Vicki Skinner

****See a wrong birthday or anniversary, or need one added, please call the office, or send an email to office@shen.church**

**Shenandoah First United
Methodist Church**

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Shenandoah, IA 51601

Phone 712-246-2081

Church E-mail
office@shen.church

Same address – a new look at
<https://shen.church>



<https://shenchurch.onechurchsoftware.com/>



United Methodist Church,
Shenandoah, IA

<https://www.facebook.com/methodist.church.shenandoah>



Services are now on our YouTube
channel only.

<https://www.youtube.com/@shen.church8192/streams>

***Prelude/Postlude/Accompanist: Terry Stafford**

Call to Worship

Leader: Come, friends, and shout for joy in God!

People: We lift up praises from deep in our souls!

L: Each of us has a story to share.

P: A story filled with gratitude for God's presence among us.

L: Not just in my life, or in yours; the Spirit is at work in all of creation!

P: We will listen. We will explore. We will take time to delight in the joyous good news unleashed on this world.

“Unrelenting Joy”

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 10-11

Songs

Angels We Have Heard on High v.1-3 #238

Away in a Manger #217

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing v.1-3 #240

Last Week's Attendance

In-Person Worship – 98

On-Line Worship – 14

Our Mission:

“Know & Serve God by Sharing Christ's Love.”

Our Vision:

“We will grow in holiness, our community will thrive, & we will make a difference in our world.”

**Answers for Dec 10th are c) true child in faith b) King's treasury b) Laban
Quiz hints – Q1) 1Timothy Q2) Ezra Q3) Genesis**

Mary's Lesson - Continued from page 2.

Mary was humble in spirit. Being willing to decrease so that others can increase is the essence of humility (see John 3:30). It's important to note, however, that I'm not talking about self-abasing. A truly humble person is secure and confident in God's love. They know who they are. Genuine humility is not thinking less of ourselves. It's thinking of ourselves less.

It also takes humility for us to be completely transparent before others, allowing them to speak into our lives, encourage us, sharpen us if needed, and help us in our journeys. Notice that when the angel ended his time with Mary, he said, "Nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37 TLV). Mary needed to be transparent to receive that word and then live by it. She responded by humbly worshiping and magnifying the Lord (see verses 46–55).

Think of what obedience meant to this young girl. She needed to confront Joseph and risk a divorce. She had to face her neighbors, whose imaginations must have run wild. She had to confront her parents and Joseph's parents. But through all this confrontation and gossip, she was able to cling to the angel's promise to her and to Joseph's loyalty to her after his angelic visit (see Matthew 1:18–25).

I find it interesting that Mary obeyed without hesitation. Obedience was her delight. Looking back at the times God has called me to do something, I have to ask, *Did I react like Mary?* Not all the time. There were moments of hesitation. I wonder what blessings from God I lost. Today, we often regard obedience as a weakness. Mary's example should correct our thinking. In Scripture, we can almost see that His will became her will. She willingly yielded to what God wanted for her instead of fighting for her self-defined life direction.

As in Mary's experience, faith and humility together will lead us to God's favor. To walk in our divine assignments and sing our unique songs, we will need to seek God's presence, understanding that He is the source of favor to open the doors that only He can open— doors that no man can shut. Humility is knowing that you are in God's control and, when the situation calls for it, having the bold faith to do what God has asked you to do.

Kathie Lee

Mary was most likely a young teenage girl when the angel Gabriel visited her in Nazareth with a startling message: she had been chosen by God to give birth to the long-awaited Messiah, whom the prophets had foretold for centuries.

In Isaiah 7:14 we are told that a "virgin will conceive and give birth" to this Redeemer of the world (NIV). The fact that this young peasant girl's response to the angel was, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be unto me as you have said" is unbelievable to me (Luke 1:38, paraphrase)!

She—like Abraham and Sarah and Moses and Joshua before her—was willing to give up everything she knew and depended on to obey the calling of God in her life to journey into an unknown future.

When we *believe*, miracles abound.

Adapted from *The God of the Way: A Journey into the Stories, People, and Faith That Changed the World Forever* by Kathie Lee Gifford and Rabbi Jason Sobel.

“Each of you should GIVE what you have decided in YOUR HEART to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for GOD LOVES a cheerful GIVER.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)



NOISY OFFERING

The Noisy Offering is one more way to do ministry for those in need and also teach your children the importance of giving and serving. Each Sunday a new opportunity for mission giving will take place after the Children’s Message. Sunday School students will walk around the congregation, collecting your loose coins and currency in their colorful metal pails. This would be a good time to clean out the loose change from your pockets or purse. The money donated in December will go to the Shenandoah Food Pantry.



January

Peanut Butter & Jelly, Pineapple, Mandarin Oranges, Peaches, Spaghetti Sauce and Spaghetti Noodles, Cake, Brownie, Cookie, and Muffin Mixes, Pancake Mix & Syrup, Sloopy Joe Mix (canned), Soda Crackers, Cereal, Bar Soap, Deodorant.

There are times when people who use the Food Pantry come to the pantry on foot. They are then forced to walk home carrying, pushing, or pulling several pounds of food. Southwest Iowa Transit, for a very reasonable fee of \$5.00, will take individuals with their food items home. If you are interested in helping pay for these fees, simply seal your cash (whatever you would like to give) in a plain envelope and add it to your donated food items.

The PK-6 Sunday School students have been busy decorating bags so they can be placed around the church. They are collecting food for the food pantry to help the holidays a little better for others. Each month we receive a list of food items that the food pantry could use. The congregation has touched so many lives that need assistance and it is a great project for the Sunday School students to be involved in and learn what it means to help others. We are still collecting First Fruits at the beginning of each month.



WHAT: The Iowa United Methodist Foundation has over 100 scholarships available for the 2024-2025 academic year. There are scholarships specifically for high school seniors, general scholarships for students going to non-Methodist colleges, scholarships for students going to United Methodist colleges, and seminary scholarships designated for individuals following the call to join the ministry.



WHEN: Applications will be accepted starting December 1, 2023, and will remain open until March 1, 2024 (see the tentative timeline below).

HOW: Check out the criteria on our website for any scholarship at any time to make sure you are eligible to apply. After December 1, go to our website at <https://iumf.org/scholarships> and click APPLY NOW to begin the application process.

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIMELINE:

Dec. 1-March 1: Submit Applications

March 5: Recommendation letter turned in

April or Earl May: Notification of your application status

May to June: Accept or decline your scholarship(s) online

The Longest Night

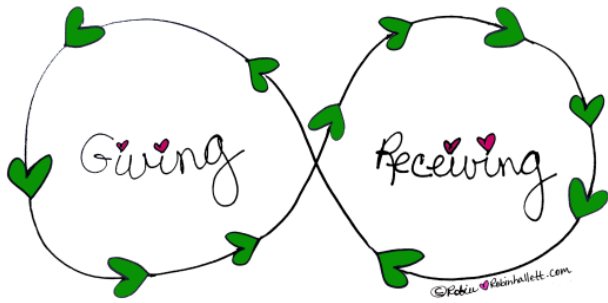
DECEMBER 21, 2023 @ 6:30 PM



The Longest Night Service creates a sacred space for those in a place of loss, pain, loneliness, and doubt. Through reflective prayers, songs, and silence, we will seek to encounter a God that meets us in the depths of our lives. You are invited to join us in this contemplative space on Thursday, December 21 at 6:30 pm.



Giving and Receiving



“What are you getting for Christmas?” “What do you want for Christmas?”

How many times have you heard these questions lately? Christmas shopping is in full swing. For the next two weeks, many gifts will be given and received. Which do you enjoy the most – giving or receiving? Unfortunately, for many people, the truthful answer to that question conflicts with the answer they know they should give. Honestly, receiving gifts, especially the ones we’ve always wanted, brings a lot of pleasure and happiness. But there’s no honor in receiving gifts (however, there can be dishonor in the way we act when we don’t get the gifts we’d hoped for).

Several years ago, Calvin Coolidge, our 30th president, said, “No person has ever been honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave.” Can you think of an award or honor given to someone who received the greatest or most gifts? There may be, but nothing comes to my mind. On the other hand, there are numerous honors and rewards for those who excel at giving to an individual. Oscars and Emmys are given to the person who contributed the most to the music and entertainment industry. Athletics have their Most Valuable Player awards. Universities, governments, and even zoos have buildings named after major contributors.

This probably doesn’t surprise you at all. No doubt you have heard many times the statement of Jesus: “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). The best-known verse in the Bible honors God for what He gave, not for what He received (John 3:16). What does surprise many people is that when God honors giving, it has nothing to do with the amount of the gift. Generation after generation honors the poor widow who, even though it wasn’t much, gave all she had (Luke 21:2). The Macedonians are also esteemed for their giving, even though poverty-stricken themselves (2 Cor. 8:1-5). In contrast, very little is said about those receiving the gifts. What do you know about the poor saints in Jerusalem other than they were famine-stricken and very poor? The only thing we know about how to receive gifts is to do so with gratitude and in a way that glorifies God. Perhaps we need to work a little harder at becoming a generous giver and spend less time hoping and dreaming about all the things we might receive. That’s hard to do, especially at this time of the year, but by doing so, we will become a little bit more like the God we love and serve. Givers truly are more blessed than receivers.



Sunday evening, December 10th, this group of carolers loaded a bus and set off to carol at locations and homes in the community. It didn't take long for this group to show up on Facebook. A woman posted the group singing at the house next to her home. She was amazed at the number of carolers and what a great feeling it gave her as she watched and listened. Della Staples said, "It was a wonderful treat! I appreciate all the carolers who came out on a cold night. Thank you all!"

The best way to spread Christmas cheer is by singing loud for all to hear. What an incredible turnout for Christmas caroling on Sunday night! Almost 50 people were there to sing and help get everything ready for the soup supper. A huge thanks to everyone who attended - it was a fun and joyous night of fellowship! Maybe next year two buses will be needed!

REMINDERS



Our regular Sunday morning service starts at 9:00 a.m.



Our candlelight Christmas Eve Service will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Bring your family and friends with you for both the morning and evening service on Christmas Eve.