

HOPEWELL

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

'A Place to Find Hope and Be Well'

20220 Hopewell Road
Mount Vernon, OH 43050

*Our mission is to make and mature disciples of Jesus Christ
and minister to the needs of others in His name.*

December 2020 - January 2021

Pastor's Pondering – *Pastor Lee Cubie*

"In the Beginning"



*"When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep, ...
then I was beside him, like a master workman,
and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always,
rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the sons
of men. Prov. 8:27,30*

"In the beginning..." How many stories do you know that start out this way? Mysteries may start this way. Adventure stories may start this way. Romance stories may start out this way. *In the beginning*, is a good way to start a story. It lets the reader know they haven't missed anything, there is nothing that comes before the story.

"In the beginning" is how the book of Genesis starts. It is a very sensible way for a story to begin. It says here are the facts and nothing but the facts.

"In the beginning" tells us there is going to be more to the story. It could be the beginning of the story of Bilbo Baggins. *In the beginning*, there lived a hobbit over the hill and down under, a very respectable hobbit. One day there came a loud knocking on the door...and you can begin to see what I mean.

"In the beginning God created." What a way to begin the Bible. The very first thing we learn about God is he is creative and he creates. We learn both of these things simultaneously. Creativity always takes a form. What we learn is of utmost importance if it is *in the beginning*. That is because everything flows out from the beginning.

"In the beginning" whets our curiosity. What is it that God is going to create? Is he going to create dinosaurs? I hope so. I had one young friend tell me recently that she figured out why there were no more dinosaurs. She told me that God got rid of them because they were hurting people. It is good to know that *in the beginning* God was making sure we were safe. In fact, the story of the Bible is the story of God working to protect us. He is protecting us from our harmful selves.

Now what does this have to do with Advent, Christmas, or Epiphany? Advent is the season when we anticipate the coming of God into creation. We often think about it as the second coming of Jesus Christ. But it is also about *In the beginning*.

Do you recognize this beginning? *"In the beginning was the WORD, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him nothing was made."* This sounds very much like, *"In the beginning God created."* The quote continues, *"In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* Going back to Genesis we read, *"And God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God separated the light from the darkness."* That is the beginning of the revelation of God in Genesis and the beginning of the revelation of Jesus Christ in the gospel of John. Therefore, *In the beginning* was the advent of God both in the creation account and in the gospel stories.

"In the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." is how the gospel of Mark begins. He then launches into the story of John the Baptist and the beginning of Jesus' preaching ministry. Luke begins by introducing us to the parents of John the Baptist. Matthew begins with Jesus' genealogy from Abraham. In both accounts they are trying to begin the story of Jesus with the events around his birth. Christmas is a story of *"In the beginning."*

Epiphany is also a story of beginnings. It is the story of the first revelation to the gentiles, you and me, represented in the persons of the three wise men.

Within the book of Revelation, which is often associated with Advent, we find this sentence, *"It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end."* Alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet, omega is the last letter. It is like saying 'I am the a and the z. What is Jesus talking about here in the book of Revelation? The alpha refers to *"In the beginning"* of Genesis. The omega refers to the end of a fallen world. There is a sentence before this sentence that says, *"And he who sat upon the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.'"* This makes the omega a beginning, the beginning of all things new.

During the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, it is tempting to think of the end of the world, the birth of a child, and three wise men. When we do this, we lose the mystery of God's creative power. In Genesis it was the creation of the world and all that is in it. In Revelation it is the story of all things being made new. What we miss, is how God has made his creative power personal. In each and every Christian there is a beginning. In each and every Christian there is a, *"Behold, I make all things new."* Within each and every Christian there is a revealing of who Jesus Christ is. These three seasons celebrate our redemption in Jesus Christ, and we are much richer if we remember that.

What is your beginning? How is God making you new?

Art: *The Ancient of Days*, by William Blake, 1794

"Let us go now to Bethlehem,"
They said that holy night.
Unlearned, those hillside shepherds?
No, wisdom at its height.

--1987 Christmas poem by Mary Cryder (1926-2009), Bob Joseph's aunt.

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***You are cordially invited to
A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION***

*You are
invited*

Guest of Honor: Jesus Christ

Date: Every day. Traditionally, December 25, but He is always around, so the date is flexible.

Time: Whenever you are ready. (Please don't be late, though, or you'll miss out on all the fun!)

Attire: Come as you are...grubbies are OK. He'll be washing our clothes anyway. He said something about new white robes and crowns for everyone who stays 'til the last.

Tickets: Admission is free. He's already paid for everyone. (He says you wouldn't have been able to afford it anyway...it cost Him everything He had. But you need to accept the ticket.)

Refreshments: New wine, bread, and a far-out drink He calls "Living Water," followed by a supper that promises to be out of this world!

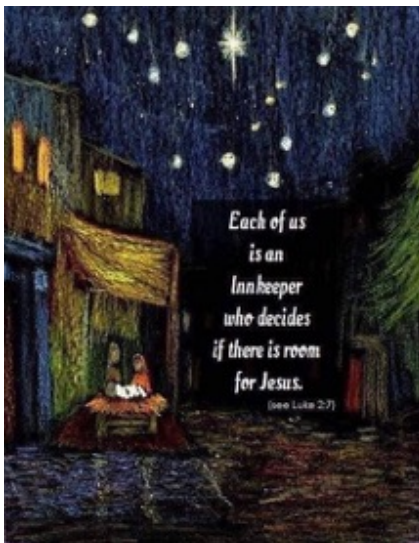
Gift suggestions: Your life. He's one of those people who already has everything else. (He's very generous in return, though. Just wait until you see what He has for you!)

Entertainment: Joy, Peace, Truth, Light, Life, Love, Real Happiness, Communion with God, Forgiveness, Miracles, Healing, Power, Eternity in Paradise, Contentment, and much more! (All "G" rated, so bring your family and friends.)

R.S.V.P. Very Important! He must know ahead so He can reserve a spot for you at the table.

Also, He's keeping a list of His friends for future reference. He calls it the "Lamb's Book of Life."

Hope to see you there! For those of you whom I will see at the party! – *contributed by Marsha Clayborne*



PRAYER

is not a "spare wheel" that you pull out when in trouble, but it is a "steering wheel" that directs the right path through life.

Poinsettias, The Christmas Flower – by United Methodist Communications



Poinsettias are the red, star-shaped flowers often seen in churches and public places during the Advent season. These beautiful plants make a festive display but they also encompass Christian symbolism. Poinsettias, often donated in honor or in memory of loved ones, adorn the altars of many United Methodist Churches. They're a Christmas symbol around the world.

In warm climates, poinsettias grow year-round. The plants are native to Central America. Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, brought plants to the U.S. in 1828. In Guatemala and Mexico, poinsettias are called La Flor de Nochebuena – Flower of the Holy Night.

The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves resemble the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red colored leaves represent the blood of Christ shed for the world. The white leaves represent His purity.

[Ed. note: OSU floriculture graduate Paul Ecke Sr. (1895-1991) developed the market for poinsettias as "the" Christmas flower, and at one time 90% of Christmas poinsettias originated from his 92-acre California farm.]



Hopewell Birthdays

December

- 3 Jessie Gourley
- 7 Joan Coon
- 7 Donna Spinks
- 7 Joe Beran
- 16 Theo Wells
- 17 Jack Laymon
- 29 Tobias Burt

January

- 18 Joe Laymon

Prayer Chain -- Marsha Clayborne

The prayer chain is a way for people to share their joys or concerns within the congregation. Here is how it works: If you or someone you know is in need of prayer, call Pastor Lee or Marsha Clayborne, and they will call the next person on the list. When you call someone and no one answers, be sure to put on their voicemail who is in need of prayer and call the next person on the list, and so forth. Thank you.

If you know anyone that wants to be added to the list, please contact Marsha.

Prayer Chain

Pastor Lee Cubie	740-504-8601
Marsha Clayborne	740-501-5841
Jean Riley	740-392-6171
Joan Coon & Eleanor Doup	740-397-1810
Barb Butler	740-397-7424
Bev Lahmon	740-397-2906
Bitsi Gourley	740-975-0995
Julie Britton	937-243-5672
Bob & Linda Joseph	614-565-1102
Erika Kanuckel-Wolfe	740-397-5515
Ellen Kaiser	740-501-0023
Cary & Joanne Purcell	614-570-7809
Cheryl McCracken	740-397-8207
Bill Lawhon	614-309-4350

[Ed. Note: With apologies, the phone numbers for Ellen Kaiser and Bill Lawhon were incorrectly listed in the last newsletter.]

Church Council Meeting Notes--from the October 11, 2020, meeting

Council Chair Bill Lawhon called the meeting to order, and Pastor Lee Cubie opened with a prayer. Bill reviewed the Church mission statement: To make and mature disciples of Jesus Christ and minister to the needs of others in His name.

Committee Reports:

Finance – Barb Butler summarized the current status of HUMC finances.

Income through 9/30/2020 was \$24,363.17.

Operating expenses were \$19,749.09.

General Fund balance is \$91,370.83.

Building maintenance fund balance is \$26,427.40.

Centennial capital campaign fund balance is \$13,235.35.

The Kroger community support program has brought in \$126.04 so far this year and \$2,245.66 since HUMC joined the program. Barb noted that individuals need to update their Kroger account annually.

Regarding the 2021 budget, Barb said there was little new except for increases in the pastor's salary and pension. Apportionments may be frozen at current level for five years. Donna moved (Julie seconded) to accept the 2021 budget as printed; motion passed.

Pastor-Parish Relations – Hopewell church hosted three churches for a PPR meeting with Rev. Ed Fashbaugh, II, Three Rivers District Superintendent. He was complementary and pleased with programs of the churches and with rural churches' positivity. He commented that Hopewell has a sense of commitment and community and many skills within the congregation.

Trustees – Trustees Chair Mickey Gourley reported that priorities include:

Exterior painting in the spring, possibly RhinoShield

Bids will be sought for replacing old wood boards, perhaps Hardie (fiber cement) board; some wood siding boards will be removed, and insulation will be examined.

Storm window(s) repair after storm damage

Gutter replacement

Dates for 2021 Spring and Fall cleanup are yet to be determined

Fast Eddies has been hired to clean the church before communion [each month].

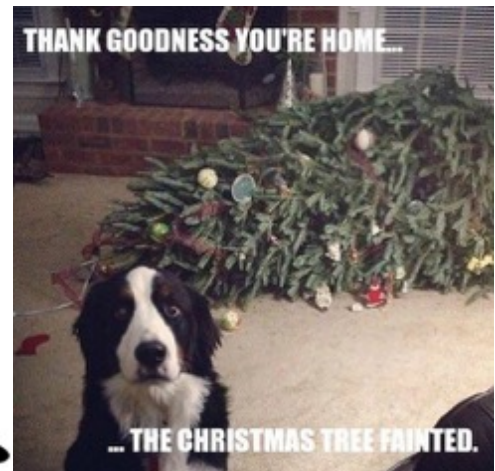
Vision Team – Bob Joseph noted the committee needs to regroup and regain lost momentum.

Pastor's Statements - Lee Cubie said he is excited about the attendance growth (22 today). "Thank God for this." Passing the peace is one of the most dynamic times in our worship; with pandemic restrictions, this "lovely hubbub is lacking—the laughter, the joy, the sharing of news. How can we gain this back?" The virtual services have reached many unknown people. Pastor Lee said, "Thank you for allowing me to be your pastor," now into his fifth year.

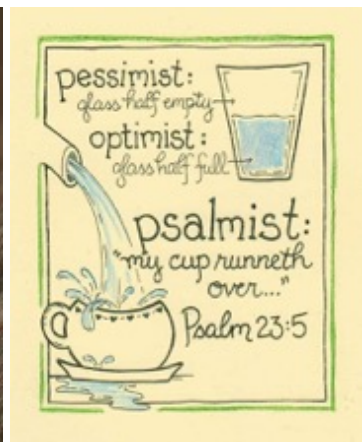
New business - Barb Butler noted the Winter Sanctuary, which operates from November to March in Mt. Vernon, needs support as it provides shelter for men and women and hotel rooms for families. Barb moved (Jade seconded) to provide a \$150 donation. Motion passed.

December 2020						
◀ Nov 2020						Jan 2021 ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bingo Month Write a Friend Month		1 Eat a Red Apple Day	2 National Fritters Day	3 National Roof over Your Head Day B'day: Jessie Gourley	4 Wear Brown Shoes Day Santa's List Day	5 Prohibition Repeal Day
6 2 nd Sunday of Advent Mitten Tree Day	7 Pearl Harbor Day +79 Yrs B'day: Joan Coon B'day: Donna Spinks B'day: Joe Beran	8 National Brownie Day	9 Christmas Card Day	10 Human Rights Day	11 National Noodle Ring Day	12 Poinsettia Day
13 3 rd Sunday of Advent International Children's Day	14 Roast Chestnuts Day	15 Bill of Rights Day	16 National Chocolate Covered Anything Day B'day: Theo Wells	17 National Maple Syrup Day B'day: Jack Laymon	18 Bake Cookies Day	19 Look for an Evergreen Day
20 4 th Sunday of Advent Go Caroling Day	21 Crossword Puzzle Day National Flashlight Day	22 Winter Solstice Hannukah	23 Festivus	24 Christmas Eve National Egg Nog Day	25 Christmas Day	26 Boxing Day
27 National Fruitcake Day	28 Card Playing Day	29 Pepper Pot Day B'day: Tobias Burt	30 National Bicarbonate of Soda Day	31 New Year's Eve Make Up Your Mind Day		

Happy
BIRTHDAY
JESUS



January 2021						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 New Year's Day	2 Run it up the flagpole and see if anyone salutes day
3 Fruitcake Toss Day Feast of the Epiphany	4 National Spaghetti Day B'day: DJ Johnson	5 National Brd Day	6 Old Rock Day	7	8 National Take the Stairs Day	9 Paying God Day
10 Bittersweet Choclage Day	11 Learn Your Name in Morse Code Day	12 National Pharmacist Day	13 National Rubber Ducky Day	14 Dress Up Your Pet Day	15 National Hat Day	16 Appreciate a Dragon Day
17 Ditch New Year's Resolutions Day	18 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Inauguration Day B'day: Joe Laymon	19 National Tin Can Day	20	21 National Hugging Day	22 National Blonde Brownie Day	23 National Pe Day
24 Compliment Day	25	26 Spouse's Datsy	27 Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day	28 Data Privacy Day	29 National Puzzle Day	30 National Inane Answering Message Day
31 Backward Day						



Hopewell United Methodist Church

c/o Bob & Linda Joseph, newsletter editors
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In-person worship services and activities at Hopewell UMC are suspended until further notice. Virtual worship services are offered weekly via YouTube videos. Please contact Pastor Lee (lee@cubie.us or 740-504-8601 if you would like to be added to the e-mail notification list. Or check the HUMC Facebook page (www.facebook.com/HopewellUMCMtVernon) on Saturday or Sunday for a link to the worship service.