

The days have grown short and the nights long. It is one of the hallmarks of the Advent season, the season the church uses to prepare herself for the coming(s) of Christ into the world. We are amid a busy time in both the church and wider culture. We decorate our homes and make our online purchases. Many of the things we enjoyed in years past have returned in some form or fashion. Yet, in the middle of a busy season, we are getting ready for Christmas.

There are numerous ways that the church helps to orient us toward Christ. Over the past several months, I have prepared a church-wide devotional entitled, *Kith & Kin*. It is full of beloved carols, sacred scriptures, and short meditations to guide us into readiness for the celebration of Christmas. *Kith & Kin* is a free resource available on our church website. If you would like a printed copy, please contact the office and one will be printed at your request. Some are participating in Matt Rawle's book, *The Heart That Grew Three Sizes: Finding the True Meaning of Christmas in the Grinch.* There are copies of Rawle's book available in the office and we are happy to provide a link for anyone interested in watching the study's videos in the comfort of your own home.

During our worship service on Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am we will engage in a little bit of 'interactive theatre,' as the congregation assumes the role of the 'choir' as we sing some of the most beloved traditional Christmas hymns and carols. On the evening of December 21<sup>st</sup>, Hospice Chaplain, Rev. Carmen Perry will lead our church family/community in a more subdued *Blue Christmas* service of Word and Table at 7pm. This is a meaningful service, for those who have lost a family member, a close friend, or who find the high-energy and bright lights too much this Christmas.

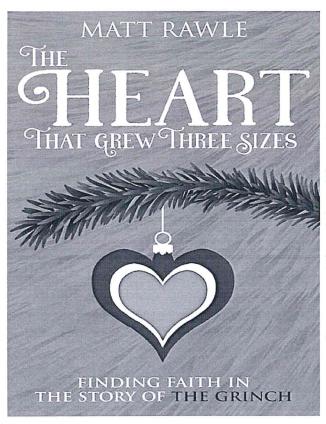
We will hold our traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> at 7pm in the sanctuary. Once again, we will hear the words of the prophet Isaiah 9:2-7 and the Christmas story as told in Luke 2:1-20. One of the highlights of Christmas Eve's past will return as we receive Holy Communion during the service. We will continue to use the sealed wafer and juice cups. It wouldn't be Christmas Eve without singing *Silent Night* with our candles aglow.

Ever feel like you did not get enough of the Christmas carols and hymns in church? Then mark your calendars for Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> at 10:30am for our annual 'Stump the Pianist' service: an entire service dedicated to selecting and singing your favorite hymns, or the one's that we have not sung together. We want to begin the year on the right foot, so on Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:30am we will share together in *The Covenant Renewal Service*, adapted by our founder John Wesley.

Christmas Blessings,

Nicholas Perry, Pastor

## **Advent Schedule:**



## Advent Study 2021 Sundays @ 7pm

Nov. 28th: When Everything Is Wrong

Dec. 5th: When Christmas Isn't Christmas

Dec. 12th: When Light Shines

Dec. 19th: When Joy Is Our Song

All are welcome. Please signup today. Books are available for \$12/a book.

First United Methodist Church of Westfield

Tuesday, December 21 – 7pm – Blue Christmas

Friday, December 24 – 7pm – Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December, 26 –(No Sunday School)

10:30 – Stump the musician

Come and request your favorite

Christmas/ Advent Hymns