

Thoughts from Tom: Awaiting the Already

Ah, the Christmas season is upon us. While we wistfully long for silent, holy nights with beautiful scenes of shepherds on a hillside lit by a bright star overhead, we are faced with an artificial world of our own making. We want to ponder the mysteries of faith and trust, but we are stuck in a pressurized trap of deadlines and instant results. We find ourselves speeding through life, jaded by cynicism and worry.

When people say they are not ready for Christmas, they have no idea how true those words are. We are not ready for God to break into our lives because we find ourselves trapped in our own self-made worlds. And when we think we are finally ready for Christmas, we jump right into the good stuff—things like a donkey carrying young mother-to-be; a stable, a manger, lowing cattle, shepherds, angels, a bright star, three kings, and a drummer boy (thrown in for good measure). We do that because of nostalgia. We want to go back to our days of innocence, days before life became so chaotic and confusing.

But imagine what might happen to our celebration of Christmas if we learn something new about the Advent of Christ. Maybe it's not new, but has been hidden by all the secular pressure and artificial expectations we've forced upon a holy event. Can we take some time to un-knot the mess we've made? How can we be excited about something that happened more than 2,000 years ago? How can stories so familiar change our outlook and our lives?

Our Christmas series this year is called "Awaiting the Already." It is based on a book written by Magrey R. deVega. During our Sundays in December, we will look at the four Gospels in the New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—and discover what each of them would have us learn about waiting for Christ, who has always been and will always be.

Mark asks that we slow down and prepare the way for Jesus.

Matthew wants us to confront, rather than ignore, the realities of those who hurt by looking for Jesus, who is already there.

Luke encourages us to sing songs of obedience and praise.

And John wants us to see the Light in the midst of darkness and share that light with others.

By the end of these messages we will have a better understanding of the Christmas story as it is told in the Gospels. And we should come away with an appreciation of waiting for a Christ who is already here; of receiving Him in a fresh, new way. Let's "await the already" together!



First Church of Christ

300 W. Spruce Street, Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

Know Jesus • Follow Jesus • Share His Love

December, 2018



Christmas Eve Service

December 24th at 6:00 p.m.

Ardis Bruno's 100th birthday is January 7th!



See the display by the office window, sign a card, and place it in the basket.



We will surprise Ardis with her FCOC church family's birthday wishes!



FCOC Family Christmas Caroling!

December 9th at 2:45 pm

**Meet at the church to carpool!
Come make a joyful noise as we praise God,
fellowship together, and encourage others!**

See Randy or Ann Peasley for more information.

Announcements



Operation Christmas Child boxes have been delivered!

Area churches donated over 423 boxes!

Thank you for helping to make a child smile and giving them the opportunity to learn about how much Jesus loves them!



FCOC is ready for Christmas!

Thanks to those who helped decorate the building!

Thanks to the Klier Family and the Hoolsema Family!

And thank you to the Metrish Family for donating the 2 beautiful trees in the lobby, and Marion Rogers for trees outside the building!

**Christmas is coming quickly!
We are collecting food items for our**

Christmas Baskets to help those in need.



Please sign up in the lobby to donate food for these meals.

Items due after service December 23rd.

SIMPLY give

Meijer Simply Give is still available until December 29, 2018!

The "Simply Give" display in the lobby has information cards. Grab a card and take to our local Meijer store, where you can purchase a food card for \$10, which will go directly to our food pantry. **Meijer matches all donations, and Double Match Day is December 7th!**

See Bob or Marie Smith or Teresa Pietrangelo for more info.

Giving Information

November	Giving
4	\$8,761.64
11	\$4,087.05
18	\$2,586.31
25	\$4,544.18
Average	\$4,994.80

Prayer Concerns

(Please call the church office with updates)



Our country and those serving in the military, those adjusting after service

Kevin Farrar—Breathing issues due to RA, RA flare-ups

His House Ministries

Kenn Filkins—Serious health issues

Jeannine Kelly (Therese Boucha's mother) - Parkinson's Disease

Ron Atkins (Pam Postma's brother) - Cancer treatment is working! Continuing treatments

Linda Gades (Nancy Earl-Wojo's sister) - Metastasized cancer, on Hospice care now,

prayers also for her daughter's family, who is caring for her

Brenda Brown—Health issues, that doctors would figure out how to help her

Therese Boucha—New treatment begun. Continued prayers for healing.

Gary Ferns (Mary Armstrong's bro) - Tumors are dying! Continued prayers please!

Trudy Ranta—Melanoma now in her brain, in LTC at WMH

Evelyn Henry, Terry Lawson, Lee Lawson, and Patty Jones—Family issues

Jennifer Veum—Tumors shrinking with chemo, having monthly infusions & PT

Rachael Jones (the Henry's granddaughter) - Strength to stay drug and alcohol free and

turn to God, trying to get her children back

Joanne Arbic (Anne Abbott's sister) - Stent placement successful, prayers for improvement

Tanya Moore (Phyllis Miller)—Cancerous brain tumor removed, to Detroit for chemo

Leslie Belleau (Judy Vert) - Pancreatic cancer, starting radiation

Barb Farrar—High muscle enzymes, testing for muscle diseases

Gary Matheny (Dave's brother) - Diagnosed with stage 4 kidney cancer which is preventing

a needed lung transplant, may need kidney transplant first

Rob Ward (Pam Lahti) - Going through a difficult time

Odin Eitrem—On list for a kidney transplant

Carol Garlinghouse (Swick) - Breast cancer, treatment starting soon in Florida

Gail Williams—Kidney problems

Caleb, Dianne Baker's grandson—Biopsy showed cancer, started chemo last week

AJ Rogers (Marion Rogers) - Health concerns

Hannah Grace Monroe—Praise! No more feeding port!

McKenzie Monroe—Praise! Matt & Leslie's new daughter is home from the hospital!

Evelyn Henry—Praise! Doing much better, and was in church last Sunday!

Tyler, Jim & Debbie Howie's nephew—Praise! Doing well after accident crushed his leg!

Kevin Miller—Praise! Out of the hospital after surgery for a broken leg. Doing well!