

UNTO YOU

December, 2011



Homer United Methodist Church

“A Light Shines in the Darkness...”

By Charles Martindell

The theme on which I am focusing for Advent 2011 is “A Light Shines in the Darkness...”. I’ll be using that theme to help us connect with a season of waiting and preparing for the coming of the Lord. How will each of us connect to the message of hope this invites in us? I want to bring up a few things that we might want to consider.

First, the light shines in the darkness of *a world that sometimes does not make sense*. Illness, injustice of various kinds, many people in need, powerful people oppressing those who are more vulnerable. This is not everything about life in this world, but it does describe the situation of people in every corner of the globe. The message is that God will never abandon us. The light shines out a message that a new day is going to dawn. It’s the day envisioned by prophets of old, and it can be our vision still today. *“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the survivors of Israel; I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”* (Isaiah 46:9)

Next, the light shines in the darkness of *a long wait*. The message is that whatever kind of waiting we are experiencing at this time, we need not endure by our strength alone. This is a season of prayerful waiting that invites us to experience what is described in the words: *“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.”* (John 1:5)

Finally, the light shines in the darkness of a season of *preparing our lives*. For all who seek God, the kind of preparing we are called to means living faith on a daily basis. This is the invitation to be in the light, and to let the light shine through us all. This is a watching for the coming of God as we reflect on how we live, what we are to do, in the mean time. In the all-the-time. We can connect with the words of John the Baptizer who announced the coming of the Christ: *“And the crowds asked him, ‘What then should we do?’ In reply he said to them, ‘Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.’ Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, ‘Teacher, what should we do?’ He said to them, ‘Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.’ Soldiers also asked him, ‘And we, what should we do?’ He said to them, ‘Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”* (Luke 3:10-14).

To help us with our inner lives (growing spiritually) and our outer lives (what we do in response to God) the four Sundays of Advent will invite us to a season of Preparing, Hoping, Remembering, and Waiting. We’ll be lighting candles and singing all the songs of the season. Our children will help us envision the good news of God’s love. Christmas Eve will be the highpoint of the season. And Christmas Day is on a Sunday this year, so we’ll be together as a church family on the morning of the birthday of our King.

The irony of an Alaskan Advent season is truly rich. As we approach the Winter solstice, we “lose daylight” and the feeling of darkness is very real. The whole time that’s happening we keep saying to each other: “the light shines in the darkness, and will never be overcome.”

December Sunday Mornings

Pastor's Bible Study on December 4th and 11th

We meet starting at 9:45 in the Sun Room and for these two Sunday's the focus will explore the Advent themes of Waiting and Light that we can recognize in the New Testament stories of Jesus' birth. Newcomers and visitors are welcome!

Women's Bible Study on December 4th and 11th

Meeting in the upstairs Classroom at 9:45, this group will study the International Bible Study curriculum and continue their ministry focus of intercessory prayer.

On Dec. 18, at 9:45 am

In the Sun Room, Sarah Martindell will be available to talk with the church family about her experiences serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Namibia teaching English to Middle School and High School students. In preparation for this time, Karen Martindell would like any potential questions to be emailed to her (Karen) at klmartindell@gmail.com by **Dec.11** (these will be printed) so that Sarah will have an opportunity to think about her responses ahead of time. This informal time of sharing is open to everyone (including the two adult Sunday School classes.) Coffee and tea will be provided.

Christmas Eve Worship

Let's share the news and invite neighbors and friends to join at 7PM (come early so you can help welcome others... and find a place to park) for our Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship service. Special gifts of music by our choirs and the sharing in the candlelight help us open our hearts to God. Let us receive anew the gift of God's love through Christ the Lord.

Christmas Sunday, December 25th

After a meaningful and beautiful Christmas Eve together, we plan a special morning on Christmas day. Begin in the Fellowship Hall at about 10:30 and bring some Christmas cookies to share. Coffee, tea and hot chocolate will be ready. We'll move upstairs for a worshipful observance of God's gift to the world of a Savior. Something special is being planned as well to help us share the gift of God's love as we make our way home by noon.

A Season of Gratitude:

- Thank you for all you have done this past year. Without your help it would be impossible to meet the needs in our community. Thanks for all you do with us!
Sincerely, Your Food Pantry Board of Directors
- Happy thanksgiving to all our HUMC friends! All's well here. Miss you and pray for you often!
Char & Bob

“14 Cows” Update

Our Fall Commitment program is nearly concluded. Thank you to everyone who has responded by returning a 2012 Estimate of Giving Form. Our Finance Committee is busy planning the Church 2012 budget. Anyone who would still like to return a 2012 Estimate of Giving Form is encouraged to do so. Extra Forms are available in the Church Narthex (entry area).

Women's Luncheon

Homer United Methodist Women will have a Christmas luncheon at Pat Wise's house on Wednesday, December 7, at 12:00 noon. Meet at the church at 11:30 to carpool. Martha Ellen Anderson will give the program "Christmas in Nicaragua". A "white elephant" silent auction will be held and the proceeds will go toward a scholarship for a student in Nicaragua. All are welcome.