

Pastor Ray's Ramblings:

Was Jesus made to feel welcome and was there room for Him in our daily lives during Christmas observations? Is our annual celebration of Christmas a regular inoculation of human invention so as to prevent us from catching the "real" visitation of Christ? Have all of our busy preparations and rituals given the real Jesus time to affect our lives in any way or do we "escape" another incarnation moment in pretty much the same spiritual place in our lives that we were in before Christmas of 2017?

Everyone one of us enjoys the opportunities of fellowship and family gatherings that this annual event affords. Every one of us is captivated over the glee we see, for example, in a little child receiving a special gift chosen carefully just for him/her. But if those are the things we would cite if someone asked us, "What was your most meaningful experience during your Christmas experience of 2017?"; then I dare say we are like the Innkeeper or the indifferent masses that Jesus experienced during his earthly sojourn. If the reason Jesus came from Heaven, to be born of a virgin named Mary, to live among humanity can be summarized, Jesus Himself later encapsulates it all when asked about who He was: "In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." (John 18) It is pretty much impossible to listen to Jesus and hear truth from Him, when at the same time we so busy ourselves with dinners, concerts, gift giving and buying and all the other trappings. The special events, the gatherings to celebrate the season, the



decorations we use to remember may have some importance. But remembering Jesus and finding Him can be mutually exclusive. To really find Him, we must leave the group gathering, find a quiet place outside the cacophony of seasonal "noise", find a place where we can get away from the party atmosphere where any in depth conversation with a single person is impossible and unwanted. We must step out for our "inn" and go to the "stable". Where is that? It is where in a quiet place we can spend time alone with Jesus and tell Him that you are thankful that He has come to offer you forgiveness of sins, to save you from judgment, and that you love Him and again commit yourself to live for Him. He wants for us to experience Him and to hear truth from Him. That is hard to do in the midst of all the noise, busyness, and bright lights that most remember as what Christmas is about. Step out into still of the moment when you can visit and experience the true Christ Child.

Announcing "ConGo Enjoy-Meant" Events

We are "ConGo" (Christians on the Go) and **meant to go** and **enjoy** good food and fun activities together!

"Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord.

Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Neh. 8:10

"Go and enjoy":

Sunday January 14- Lasagnarama and Charades,

5:30-7:00pm-

More info to come!

Please RSVP with Mat, 231-414-7501



children plus 19 grandchildren and 19 great grandchildren. Memorial services will be held in 2018.

Thank you

A great Thank you comes from your church's staff to all who gave so generously to the Christmas Purse. We feel truly blessed to serve in this caring family of believers!

Pastor Ray, Mat & Deb, Jack and Lorene

Plum Pudding:



With a great deal of thankfulness I would like to first of all thank my committee for all their help on 2017 Plum Pudding organization, set up, pricing and the actual sale. To all of the members of FCC I want to thank YOU for your donations to the project. Total sales from Home Tour as of this date (12-13) are \$10,400 with Plum Pudding contributing \$1,650.
Mary Butterick

Women's Fellowship:



Happy New Year! Often during the new year people sort cupboards, drawers, and closets, clearing out things that are not needed. If you come across unused items that could be put in gift baskets or gently used books, please bring them to church and put them in the room off of Fellowship Hall. They will be included in baskets to be sold at Plum Pudding during Home Tour 2018.

Once again, our Home Tour was a great success! Thanks to all of you for your part in this annual fundraiser. We will let you know our final proceeds once we have received and paid our bills, but we can tell you now that our final figure will be close to the same as last year. We couldn't have done it without all of you. THANK YOU!

January Birthdays



- 9 Ponnie Foster
- 10 Erik St. Peter
 Anne VandeKieft
- 13 Collin Zeerip
- 14 Nathan McKivitz
 Terri Wahl
- 15 Lauren Stroschin
- 19 Don Potter
- 20 Marjorie Derks
 Ann Werner
- 21 Mat Emerick
- 22 Fran Stewart
- 24 Garrison Frei
- 29 Matthew Daugherty
 Barbara Blass-Frisbey

January Anniversaries:



- 2 Van & Judy Nadeau
- 3 Bob & AnneVandeKieft
- 22 Steve & Karla Johnson
- 29 Jack & Mary Butterick