

Elmwood Christian Church

December 2019

"Good News from your Pastor!"

The theme of this year's Holiday Extravaganza/Starry Night Parade in Elmwood is "I Remember". Remembering is good. It's when we remember that the lessons our parents and grandparents taught us are brought to the present and we are able to put those lessons to practice again.

Going a little further back in time, okay, maybe a lot further, we recall how God chose to come into the world to save it from the corruption, violence, and disregard for humanity that the Roman Empire had enacted on the whole known world in that time. Oh, and God didn't come marching in on a battle-ready steed, sharpened sword drawn, ready to defeat Caesar and take names later. Instead, God arrived in a tiny bundle of Love born in a barn to a poor couple. Can you imagine how Joseph must have fussed trying to keep Mary and their firstborn thriving and healthy in that stable in such a delicate condition? What Love he must have felt for them. Can you imagine how frightening it must have been to be in a town not your own and forced to give birth in a barn because no one would make room for them? People can be cruel, can't they?

Later, this precious little bundle of Love all grown up, rode a donkey's colt into one gate (a one person parade!) while across town the Roman Army held a huge parade complete with the dancing steeds, the shining weapons of war, and all the soldiers sweating in the sun, just itching for a battle. Can you imagine the fanfare? Can you feel the crowds rushing forward to cheer on their favorite warrior? Power is attractive, isn't it?

These soldiers would later crucify Love, but instead of being the end of the story, it just turned the page. Oh, Mary, Joseph, did you know? Did you know how cruel people can be to others? Did you know your little Love would undergo such hardship in his life but that Love would also save the world?

It's been said that if we don't remember our past, we are doomed to repeat it. Sometimes that's good-- like when we repeat the lessons we were taught by our parents about being kind, habits, and mistakes that didn't bring us life.

Philippians 4:8, reads, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things," This verse, written by Paul (probably when he was a

prisoner in Rome) to the first known Christian congregation in what is now Europe, prompts the mostly-gentile congregation to stay positive in the face of any negativity, pain, or suffering. And Paul knew pain and suffering. So did Jesus. Yet, both were experts at staying positive, at keeping Love burning in their hearts.

This coming Sunday as church family, we acknowledge the arrival of Advent. Advent is the time of remembering the long wait of the oppressed Hebrews for the arrival of the Savior, as well as a time of looking forward to Jesus the Christ's return. It is a season of looking back and looking forward: of remembrance and preparation. Not too much unlike the march through the dead of winter to the life and joy of spring.

Are you feeling too busy for your own good right now? Maybe wondering how you're going to get everything done and keep your heart-light warm and receptive to others? There's a song that I always love to remember at Christmas (there's many, actually). Maybe you remember it, too. It goes like this: 'Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens, bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens, brown paper packages tied up with strings, these are a few of my favorite things.' These opening words to the song, "My Favorite Things" in the musical, "The Sound of Music," always remind me of things to consider when life is getting harried, as it often does during the holiday season.

As we move through the coming weeks, as we march towards Christmas and remember Christ's birth, may we really SEE the Light of Christ in the candles that ring the Advent wreath in the church, may we really FEEL the warmth of Christian Love dancing in our hearts, and may we INVITE Christ into our lives so that our "silver white winters" will "melt into spring"; so that we offer Love to the struggling and lost.

May we SHINE that life, that Love, to others. (Perhaps it's a novel thing to think of people as packages, as presents from God tied up with string, waiting to be engaged- opened and the blessings inside discovered- but they are!)

This winter, this Advent, if you know of someone who will be alone, invite them to a meal, or shopping, or to coffee with you. Let's go out of our way to reach for and do things that are true, noble, right, pure, and lovely. Who knows?! We may just make all the difference in the world to a child of God...and we may just find Christ in that person for our own hearts.

May the ornaments on our trees sparkle brilliantly this year, reminding us to shine with joy for Christ.

Merry Christmas!!

Love, Pastor Di



December Serving Schedule

Fellowship~~Angie and Jan
Communion~~The Day Family

January~~Joann and Brenda
January~~The Richter Family

	12/1	12/8	12/15	12/22	12/29
Greeters:	Deb	The Days	Dean & Judy	Carolyn	Jenifer
Worship Leader:		Jim W	Judy	Gus	Jim McR
Elders:	Jayne/ Kris	Scott / Brandon	Judy / Jim W.	Scott / Jayne	Brandon / Jim W
Deacons:	Kurk – Deb Anne – Gus	Tom – Dean Kurk – Anne	Mario – Deb Glenn – Carolyn	Tom – Glenn Mario – Dean	Gus - Kurk Anne - Dean
Acolytes:	Lily & Marion	Lily & Sophie	Tucker & Marissa	Jeffery & Marion	Lily & Marion

December Birthdays 4 – Brandon Collins 9 – Eula Swarts 13—Sophie Collins
15—Aroara Lenz 18—Deb Lenz 22—Glenn Hall

Elmwood Christian Church 402-994-2355
311 North Fifth Street Box 281 Elmwood, NE 68349
Services: Sunday School 9 a.m. Worship 10 a.m.
Facebook: Elmwood Christian Church DOC
Website: elmwoodchristianchurch.weebly.com

Bits and Pieces 402-994-5755 Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday 9:00 – 4:00
Wednesday 9:00 – 12:00 Friday 9:00 – 5:00 Closed on Monday

Pastor Dianna Clark 402-297-5217 livingwatersgal@gmail.com
Office Hours Wednesday 9- 12 Thursday 5 - 6:30
Monday and Tuesday are Pastor Dianna's days off.

When you would like prayers for yourself, family, or friends, please call or send a note to Pastor Dianna. We will activate the Prayer Chain and have many hearts joined in prayer.

- 12/4 CWF 7:00 p.m.
- 12/8 Bits & Pieces 1:00 – 4:00
Support the Power of Pink
- 12/11 Board Meeting 7:00 p.m.
- 12/12 E-M Elementary Music Program
7:00 p.m.
- 12/19 E-M JH/HS Music Program
7:00 p.m.
- 12/24 Christmas Eve Service
5:00 p.m.
- 12/15 Merry Christmas



And now a word from our sponsor:

It's a boy !! His name is Jesus and he's my Son. . . God

Church Board Minutes November 13, 2019

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Kurk Shrader at 7:00 p.m. Pastor Dianna opened the meeting with a devotional and prayer. Those in attendance were Kris Shrader, Kurk Shrader, Randy Willey, Brenda Vogt, and Pastor Dianna Clark. The board reports were reviewed. Kurk asked if a bill had been received from Brody Baer for replacing the parking lot lamps in the back. Randy hasn't received a bill yet. Randy reported that he's had to take \$3,000 from the thrift store account to cover expenses for the third consecutive month. (This is a concern and will be reviewed by the long-term financial planning committee which will meet before the first of the year). Dianna reported that there have been a couple of instances when her pay did not transfer to her bank account as expected. A possible solution would be a local account so money would move within the same bank. She would consider that possibility. Randy moved and Brenda seconded a motion to approve both the October and November reports. Motion passed.

Old Business:

Visioning process-next step: following board discussion, it was determined that it would be best to follow the usual protocol for the nominating process for one more year. The board felt it was important for the congregation to have input so this will be discussed at the next annual congregational meeting in February.

Long term financial planning committee: the committee will consist of Kurk and Kris Shrader, Randy and Angie Willey and Tom Day. Meeting dates to be determined.

New Business:

Upper Room: Kurk mentioned that a lot of the Upper Room pamphlets are being thrown away. Kris suggested that the greeters hand them out to see if that helps.

Smoke detection system: unsure if a bill has been received. Randy will check on it.

Printer research: the inexpensive cartridges worked well for a time but now are causing issues with the quality of the printing. The board will research options for a different printer that has cheaper toner cartridges.

Men's restroom repair: in progress.

Thanksgiving community service: will be held Wednesday November 27 at 7 at the Methodist church in Elmwood.

Christmas: plans for Advent and Christmas Eve are being developed.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m. The next meeting is December 11 at 7.

Respectfully submitted, *Kristyn Shrader*, Secretary

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Love came down at Christmas, Love a lovely, love divine;
Love was born at Christmas; Stars and angels gave the sign.



Attendance and Offering

11/3	27	\$ 28.25
11/10	33	\$ 784.50
11/17	48	\$ 860.00
11/24	38	\$ 827.70

Bits & Pieces November

Sales	\$ 6201.67
Commission	1550.42
Rent	400.00
Labor	86.00
Phone	57.35
Tags	118.00
Rack and Supplies	23.00
Clothes to Lincoln	86.00
Donation	250.00
(Bits & Pieces \$150 / Scholarship \$100)	
Balance	\$ 3628.90

"The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear."

"There's room for everyone on the nice list."

ELF The Movie



Christian Women's Fellowship November 6, 2019

President Carolyn Golden opened the meeting with the CWF prayer. Those present were Carolyn Golden, Judy Douglas, Mary Peterson, Jenifer Irons, Deb Lenz, Brenda Vogt, and Kris Shrader. There were several prayer requests. The minutes from October were approved as read.

Come let us
Adore
Him



The treasurer's report gave a balance of \$1465.87 in checking and \$711.25 in Operation Santa.

Old Business: None

New Business: Carolyn has been in conversations with Miki Clements regarding the bank Christmas dinner scheduled for January 4, 2020. The menu is a buffet of baked steak and chicken cordon bleu, scalloped potatoes, mashed potatoes, corn, broccoli, roll, tossed salad and a cheese cake dessert to be provided by Miki. Deb and Kris will meet November 23 at 9:30 to sort and lay out Christmas decorations.

Sunday November 24 the church will be decorated. CWF will order pizza for lunch that day. Kris reported that 49 letters were prepared for Operation Santa. Lists are to be returned by November 22; gifts returned by December 17; wrapping December 18; and pick up December 21. Angie Willey made buttons for volunteers to wear at the thrift store and at church events. She will be paid \$15 for the buttons.

Community Report: Nov 7-9 State Volleyball; Nov 10 Bits & Pieces open, pancake feed at the firehall; Nov 11 Veteran's Day programs; Nov 27 Community Thanksgiving service; Nov 28 Thanksgiving; Nov 30 Holiday Extravaganza. The meeting was adjourned with the CWF benediction.

Deb gave the lesson "Abide in Me as I Abide in You". Jesus calls us to be a good servant and be fruitful in the areas of service and character. Don't let opportunities in these areas pass you by as being fruitful leads to being a better person.

The next meeting is Wednesday December 4 at 7 p.m. Brenda has the lesson and Mary is the hostess. We will have our annual gift exchange.

Respectfully submitted ~ *Kristyn Shrader*, Secretary



I think as you grow older, your Christmas list gets smaller and the things you really want for the holidays can't be bought ~ a phone call ~ a visit ~ a letter ~ a hug ~ an I Love You~~

Charles Bogenreif

Charlie was born January 14, 1928. He and Evelyn Moore were married on December 24, 1946. They were 17 and 18 years old. Whenever Charlie would come home, he would ask Evie, "What's cookin' good lookin'".

Charlie and Evie had 3 children, Mary Ann, Peggy, and Chuck. Their daughter, Mary Ann, died from cancer. Peggy and her husband, Rob, live in Elmwood. Chuck and his wife, Sue, live in Lincoln. Charlie has nine grandchildren and twenty great-grandchildren. Charlie grew up 4 miles west of Elmwood and finished the 9th grade. He farmed and worked at Northern Natural Gas. When he retired, he drove a school bus route and then resettled in Elmwood. His hobbies included woodworking and gardening. Charlie did yard work for many people in town. Now, he spends time at the lake in the summer with his family and at the community center swapping stories with friends. He has a wealth of knowledge and loves to share his experiences and funny stories with others.



In a small Southern town there was a Nativity Scene that showed great skill and talent had gone into creating it. One small feature bothered a visitor. The three wise men were wearing firemen's helmets. Totally unable to come up with a reason or explanation, he left. At a "Quick Stop" on the edge of town, he asked the lady behind the counter about the helmets. She exploded into a rage, yelling at him, "You darn Yankees never do read the Bible!" The visitor assured her that he did, but simply couldn't recall anything about firemen in the Bible. She jerked her Bible from behind the counter and ruffled through some pages, and finally jabbed her finger at a passage. Sticking it in his face she said "See, it says right here, 'The three wise man came from afar.'"



***I told Santa you were good this year....and
He hasn't stopped laughing since!***

THE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS - *Author Unknown*

Far away in Bethlehem, a baby boy was born,
Born with neither riches, nor with fame,
Yet wise men came from all around to bring Him their gifts,
And peace was felt by all who heard His name.
Angels watched him as he slept, and gently rocked His bed,
Their voices singing softly in His ear;
His mother and his father both gave thanks to God above
For the greatest gift of all, their Son, so dear.
They knew His life upon this earth would not be filled with wealth,
They also knew He would encounter strife;
But most of all, they knew that He would be a loving Child,
And teach the love of God throughout His life.
At Christmas we celebrate this birth of Jesus Christ,
Let's keep in mind the truth of Christmas Day;
For it's not the Christmas wrappings, nor not the gifts that lie within,
But our gift of love to others in every way...



THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS -- Tom Krause

"Joy to the World" the carolers sang out
As last minute shoppers scurried about
Desperately seeking that one special gift
That would give Christmas morning a magical lift
As an old man stood standing, listening to the song,
Midst all the madness of the bustling throng,
In a shaky, hoarse voice he began to join in
Singing the words of the famous old hymn.
One by one people stopped with their madness
To join with the old man for a moment of gladness.
By the time the carolers finished with singing the song,
The whole throng was united as they all sang along.
As if by magic from out of the sky
Church bells rang out from a chapel nearby.
And when it was over the people greeted each other
With messages of goodwill, they shared with one another.
You see, that magical gift the shoppers sought for so long,
Was not in the buying or scurrying along.
That magical gift so desperately sought
Was the Spirit of Christmas—which could never be bought.

THE DASH *by Linda Ellis*

I read of a man who stood to speak at the funeral of a friend.
He referred to the dates on the tombstone from the beginning... to the end.
He noted that first came the date of birth and spoke of the following date with tears,
but he said what mattered most of all was the dash between those years.

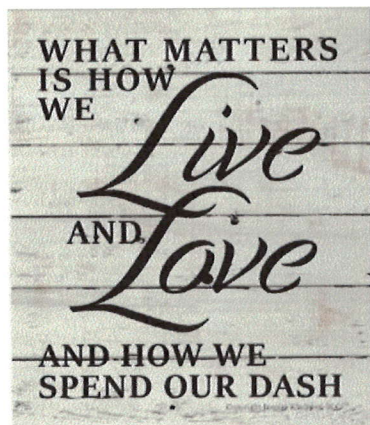
For that dash represents all the time they spent alive on earth
and now only those who loved them know what that little line is worth.
For it matters not, how much we own, the cars... the house... the cash.

What matters is how we live and love and how we spend our dash.
So think about this long and hard; are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left that still can be rearranged.

To be less quick to anger and show appreciation more
and love the people in our lives like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect and more often wear a smile...
remembering that this special dash might only last a little while.

So when your eulogy is being read, with your life's actions to rehash,
would you be proud of the things they say about how you lived your dash?



❖ **Be Slow to Anger** Anger can become like a cancer and eat away at your ability to be joyful and kind. Life is too short – choose forgiveness and let it go. As William Ward says: “Forgiveness is the key that unlocks the handcuffs of hate.”

❖ **Say Thank You** Those two little words hold incredible power. Think about how you feel when someone thanks you. You feel validated and appreciated. When you do the same for other people, you pass along that positive energy. It may be just what they needed at that moment.

❖ **Love People** Our Dash moves with lightning speed. It seems like only yesterday the kids were just toddlers learning to walk, and now they've got children of their own! As they say, “the days are long, but the years are short.” Never miss an opportunity to show love and say “I love you.”

- ❖ **Treat Others with Respect** You have opportunities every day to spend your dash through simple acts of kindness and respect. This quote by George Washington Carver says it best: “How far you go in your life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life you will have been all of these.”
- ❖ **Wear a Smile** Our dash may be short, but it can be wide. Often a simple smile will break through tension and stress. A smile will not only affect those around you, but it will change your attitude and outlook on life. Try it right now – just smile!
- ❖ **Remember Life is Short – make every moment matter** It's been said that “we don't remember days; we remember moments.” Being present and in the moment provides some of life's greatest joys — A crackling fire on a cold winter night, reading a love note from your spouse, watching a beautiful sunset, or having coffee with a friend. It's moments like these that make life worth living.

Merry Christmas

Elmwood Christian Church General Fund Report

	October	Y-T-D 2019
Total Income	<u>\$ 2,365.85</u>	<u>\$ 33,459.16</u>
Expenses:		
Mission	\$ (200.00)	\$ (1,210.00)
Building & Maintenance	\$ (943.59)	\$ (10,177.80)
Miscellaneous	\$ (200.38)	\$ (1,853.22)
Parsonage	\$ (192.60)	\$ (1,746.85)
Pastor	\$ (3,840.05)	\$ (40,105.68)
Sunday School	\$ (131.21)	\$ (497.14)
Total Expense	<u>\$ (5,507.83)</u>	<u>\$ (55,590.69)</u>
Shortage	<u>\$ (3,141.98)</u>	<u>\$ (22,131.53)</u>
Thrift Store Transfers		
Regular	\$ 200.00	\$ 2,000.00
Extra to cover expenses	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 22,000.00
Building Fund Transfers	\$ -	\$ -
Other Transfers	\$ -	\$ 132.00
Total	<u>\$ 3,200.00</u>	<u>\$ 24,132.00</u>
Cash Over/(Short)	<u>\$ 58.02</u>	<u>\$ 2,000.47</u>

Randy Willey, Treasurer

Happy
New Year
2020