

# First United Methodist Church

## Western Springs

### CHURCH HAPPENINGS

THANKFULL FOR...

JANUARY 2015

### *Pastor's Notes*

It's December 26 as I write this. Yesterday was Christmas, the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Christmas Peace during the War To End All Wars, later known as World War I. I heard a beautiful piece on NPR about that suspension of fighting 100 years ago. In more recent time, it had become thought of as a myth, a nice idea but not really what happened. Yet research into diaries of troops from both sides of the conflict speak to the truth of the peace that descended beginning on Christmas Eve and lasting on some battlefields until New Years 1915. Some of the diaries even contain the scores of the soccer games that, once the bodies of the dead were buried, were played in 'no man's land', the less than a football field distance between enemy trenches.

So much of the story touched my heart. But the most poignant aspect for me that I will carry in my memory was the accounts of reactions of the strategists, the commanders lodged in safely secured occupied chateaus and mansions, far from the blood and mud. At first, these generals were unaware of the holy day truce and interactions between the foot soldiers. From sharing cigarettes and chocolate to barrels of beer and plum puddings, to pictures of loved ones and stories of family and friends waiting at home, the fighting men were more than fraternizing with the enemy. And the generals knew the potential impact. Once you see the enemy as another human being and not an objective to be vanquished, aggression and offensive spirit begin to soften and melt away. On numerous fronts, once orders to end any truce-like behavior were issued, fresh soldiers needed to be sent in to replace the ones who had participated in the cross connection.

Who or what is your enemy? Family member or partner? Former friend or colleague? Another student or a teacher? Your credit card bills or mortgage? Your grief or sadness? Who or what do you battle in a real or metaphorical way?

We get hurt or offended or left behind? Someone must pay! Jesus tells us the opposite of our knee jerk reaction. He says we are to love the enemy. No eye for eye. No tooth for tooth. Offer the other cheek even when another slap may follow. Give more than what's expected or necessary.

The lesson is clear if our enemy is a person. But what if it's a thing or an experience? The same 'rules' apply. Embrace the enemy. To embrace is not to be happy and complacent, or to go 'belly up'. An embrace is an action. It's holding the enemy close, eye to eye. It's taking intentional decisive action towards reconciliation and resolution.

The Christmas Truce of 1914 was not silent and still. It was reaching out, taking risks, give and take, being playful, and for many a permanent change of heart. In the year ahead, may God help us to clearly identify our enemies, not to get them in the site of our weapons, but to embrace them and possibly change the war.

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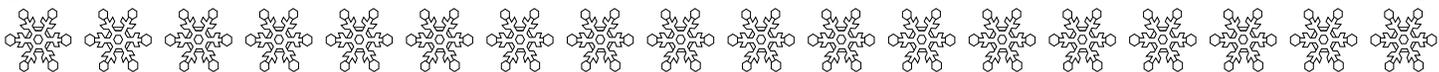
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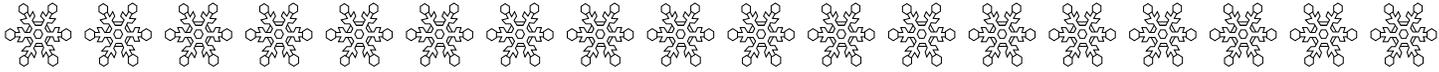
# Looking Forward...



**January 4th– Epiphany**

**Jan 13th-** Western Springs clergy gathering at our church to continue planning ecumenical ministries. If ecumenical community focused ministry is a mission God has placed on your heart, let Pastor know. She is looking for 1 or 2 folks high school age and up from our church to be part of a multi-church planning team.

**February 18th– Ash Wednesday.**The beginning of Lent



## January Birthdays !

- 1/1 David Howorth
- 1/12 Melissa Muckenhim
- 1/15 Daniel Lister
- 1/27 Joyce Lankton



## January Anniversary !

1-30 Will & Dixie Conkis



# Young Adults

**This month:**

## **The Galloping Ghost Arcade**

9415 Ogden Ave.

Brookfield, IL 60513

Everyone welcome! \$15 All you can play!

Young Adults we are organizing a **Game Day/ or Event** every month!

New games are welcome! New ideas are welcome!

Friends are welcome!


 Young Adults if you have ideas or suggestions for a youth group or  
  
 Young Adults Group please let Chris know!  
  
 christo-  
 pher.lubawski@hotmail.com



## Food Pantry Item:

## Paper Products

### **Start the New Year off right by meditating on God's Word:**

1. "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" – Ecclesiastes 3:1
2. "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:18-19
3. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Psalm 90:12
4. "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11
5. "In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps." Proverbs 16:9
6. "Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, <sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13-14
7. "You crown the year with your bounty, and your carts overflow with abundance." Psalm 65:11
8. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1
9. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" 2 Corinthians 5:17
10. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 1 Peter 1:3
11. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-6
12. "...but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31
13. "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." Lamentations 3: 22-24
14. "He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end." Ecclesiastes 3:11
15. "One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your