



# Reaching Heights

A Newsletter of Heights Christian Church

VOLUME 23, NO. 5

December 1, 2011

## Celebrating the Season with Advent and Christmas Worship and Activities

**Sunday, December 4th**

Psalm 85

**Peace Sunday**

*"Advent Again"*

**Adult Forum—11am**

*"The Cost of U.S. Wars in Dollars and Destruction"*

Presented by Francis Chiappa and Nina McClellan, co-presidents of Cleveland Peace Action

**Sunday, December 11th**

I Thessalonians 5:16-24

**Joy Sunday**

*"Rejoice! - Always?"*

**Fair Trade Shopping—11am**

Following our worship, the Hiram College Fair Trade shop will return during our fellowship time. This is an opportunity to take care of some Christmas shopping and support artisans and craft people from around the world.

**Advent Crafts and Carols—4pm**

Come be a part of this intergenerational event as we make ornaments, pack age fruit baskets, share a light supper, and then travel to Campbell Court to carol and visit with the residents there.

Each family is asked to bring one bag of fruit (10-12 pieces). Please select according to your last name. (A-H: red apples, I-P: green apples or pears, Q-Z: oranges). A wonderful way to share the Christmas spirit.

**Sunday, December 18th**

Luke 1:26-38

**Love Sunday**

*"A Different Love"*

**Tasting Party—11am**

Following morning worship, we will gather in the Campbell Room to share and celebrate this festive season with our annual Tasting Party.

Everyone is asked to bring your favorite finger food to share with our HCC family, friends and guests.

**Saturday, December 24th**

**Christmas Eve**

Our traditional candlelight service will help us prepare our hearts for the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Come be a part of the celebration in song, word and prayer.

**Sunday, December 25th**

**Christmas Day** Carol Sing

**Sunday, January 1st**

Luke 2:22-40

**New Year's Day**

*"New Year, Same Story"*

# Along The Path . . .



As a child I vaguely remember getting up early on Christmas morning (which my brother and I always did), unwrapping presents, and then having to get dressed to go to church. It would have been 1960, I would have been almost 7, and I'm sure, since my dad was the minister, that there wasn't any question about whether we were going or not.

My children are grown and out of the house, so Christmas on Sunday is not an issue anymore. In fact, with work and other family pulls we will be having our big family gathering the day after. But for many people (including us when our children were small) there are many commitments on Christmas that trump going to church.

Yet it does seem that Christmas on Sunday is really a perfect combination - gathering together on "the Lord's Day" to celebrate the Lord's birth. So, if you can, come back to HCC on Christmas day for a warm and relaxed service to remember "the reason for the season." And have a Merry Christmas!

Roger

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## ... IN OUR PRAYERS

Some retail stores hung Christmas decorations in September; "Black Friday" sales began last week but only now are we beginning Advent ... What if we could wear special glasses that would superimpose John the Baptist on every Christmas scene we see? What if we heard "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" instead of "White Christmas"? Interesting thought!

The paradox of spiritual growth is that the more we let go, the richer we are. Despite the heckling of retail Christmas sales, the secret of Christmas lies in a manger. We are invited to "empty ourselves" as God "emptied himself" in becoming a human being ...and a helpless baby to boot! We're urged by great spiritual writers to "surrender", "be grateful" and "wait".



Richard Rohr suggests that we practice "falling into God", sort of a spiritual version of the "trust fall" people use in team building. The love of God can't be earned. We have it. *A gift freely given.* We only come to know this when we ask for understanding and then remain attentive. Hafiz, a 14<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet gives us insight into the greatness of this love:

***One day the sun admitted, I am just a shadow.***

***I wish I could show you the Infinite Incandescence that has cast my brilliant image!***

May this Advent offer you the gift of such a vision.

Until next time, **we'll be keeping you in our prayers!**



## HOLIDAY OFFICE HOURS

The Church office will be closed from December 26th through January 2nd. Voice mail and emails will be checked periodically. If there is an emergency, please contact Pastor Roger at 216.246.9179 or Lynda Ackerman at 216.921.1531.

## CHILDREN AND YOUTH CORNER



**3rd—6th** Grade Sunday School children are brainstorming about their next “giving generously” project. Last year they with your help purchased a flock of chickens for the Heifer project.

Stay tune for the next project.

“**A place for prayer**” area has been set up for our Sunday School children.

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## MEET OUR NEW MEMBERS



Kellie Brown joined our church family on October 23rd. She and her husband reside at 18 Sutton Place. Kellie is a teacher in Lakewood.

Dahlia Cummings joined us on November 12th. She and her daughter, Xemia who is a 6th grader at Woodbury reside at 3619 Normandy Road.

We welcome you to our church family!

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## DECEMBER 11TH ADULT FORUM

Through the experiences of five very normal, Christian, American families, the award winning documentary, “For The Bible Tells Me So,” helps us discover how people of faith handle the realization of having a gay child or family member.

Offering healing, clarity and understanding to anyone caught in the crosshairs of scripture and sexual identity, this landmark film “boldly takes on a loaded topic and examines it both intellectually and emotionally; the result may well leave you blinking away a few tears.” (*Seattle Times*)

The film will begin promptly at 11:30 am.

**SETTLER'S  
CHRISTMAS PARTY**  
**Saturday, December 17th**  
**At the home of Nancy Carpenter**  
(more details to follow)

## UP-LIFTING DEVOTIONALS



The congregation offers free Advent reflections for adults, Partners in Prayer Advent 2011 that is a joy-filled phrase that focuses on all of Advent—a season in which we prepare for the celebration of the birth of the Christ Child. This devotional can be found at every entrance to the Sanctuary and in the Campbell Room.

**Also . . .**

*“If you’re looking for hope, peace, joy and love this Christmas season, look to God.”* Check out the first selection in the daily devotional, Our Daily Bread for this invitation. Explore further and you will find vignettes of worship and wisdom that will warm your heart in winter.

The Dec. Jan. and Feb. issue in waiting us in the Narthex and Campbell Room baskets.

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## **BECAUSE YOU CARE** **Illness-Surgery-Hospitalization**

Sandy Jones

Clare Rosegger

Eugene Blackwell

Leslie Wanner

Scott Lemmon

Betty Klecka

James Faust

Dorothy Mathis

Radia Longworth

Colleen McKinney

Michael Steward

Dewey Hodge, Sr.

Candace Hetterle

Kathleen Hetterle

Mary Demmy

Sherena Frazier-Miller

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

10:00 a.m. **Worship Service**  
11:00 a.m. **Coffee Fellowship**  
11:30 a.m. **Education Hour**

**(Nursery & Preschool care provided)**

**STAFF**

**Minister** *Rev. Roger D. Osgood*  
**Director of Music** *Dale Hukill*  
**Office Manager** *Kese Webb*  
**Facilities Coordinator** *Mike Faust*  
**Childcare** *Rosie Scott*

**OFFICERS**

**Moderator** *Lynda Ackerman*  
**Vice Moderator** *Mike Singerman*  
**Secretary** *Grace Loudenstein*  
**Treasurer** *Neil Chase*  
**Assistant Treasurers** *Jim Donald*  
*Shirley Reading*

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**CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**



CWF will celebrate the holidays at their Christmas Potluck Luncheon on December at 12 Noon. Bring your favorite dish to share (salad, main dish or dessert.)

Jan Everett will lead the discussion from the book by Karen Armstrong, "Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life". We will also have a special guest from the Cleveland Christian Home, Rev. Jayne Ryan Kuroiwa, who will give us an update on their ministry with children. Come join us for a fun, meaningful afternoon.

***Elegant Flea Thrift Shop***

With the holidays approaching we want to stock our shelves with nice gift items. Therefore, we need your help. We need jewelry, handbags, and Christmas gift items like knick-knacks, candles, decorative boxes, holiday decorations, etc.



So think "sharing" the holiday season and bring in things that will make our shop sparkle. We need you too, so that we have volunteers to get the shop ready for the holidays and to greet our customers. All proceeds go for the work of the church and outreach.

**From All of Us . . .**

**To All of You!**

Rosie

