

THE EXTENDED FAMILY

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December 2017

Steve's Slant

Earlier this week, the Christian writer and activist John Pavlovitz posted an image on his Twitter feed that made me laugh out loud. It was a photo of a purple baseball cap. The inscription on the front of the cap read: Make Advent Great Again. (So, technically, MAGA.)

I was so taken with this image, and this idea, that I posted it myself on my Facebook page, noting that this was my goal for the next four Sundays, to Make Advent Great Again.

It wasn't long before the comments started to roll in. Stephen Keener, whose father, Bob, loved Advent more than all the other liturgical seasons, posted: "Dad would like this."

Robyn's Aunt Carol, a devout Catholic, got right to the point: "Love it."

But one comment from Diana Sanderson stood out, and gave me pause. "Again? Advent is and always has been great."

I love that thought. For as long as followers of Jesus have intentionally prepared to celebrate his birth, as long as faithful people (and skeptical people, too, for that matter) have spent time pondering what it means for God to take on human form and dwell among us, Advent has indeed been great.

And yet I also believe the greatness of this season is more complicated than that. Part of it may be a simple matter of punctuation. Make Advent Great. *Again*.

But part of it is the knowledge that, for any number of reasons, the four weeks before Christmas can be, and often are, very difficult, I suspect more so than many of us would care to admit. And maybe this year more than ever.

Maybe you are facing the prospect of preparing for your first Christmas in ten or twenty or thirty years without your beloved spouse. You fear that *O Come, O Come Emmanuel* will sound very different without your wife singing it beside you.

You worry that your family tradition of decorating the Christmas tree on the first Sunday of Advent will feel hollow without your husband at hand to help festoon the branches with lights and place the star atop the tree.

Or maybe for the first time ever, you're dreading your traditional family gathering at your parents' house with your three siblings. Because even though you are a close and loving bunch, you know and they know that you all voted differently last November. You know and they know that you all still feel very differently about the direction in which our country is headed. You know and they know that there's just no way around it: all of this will come up before your mom is done cooking the Christmas goose.

So maybe this year Advent feels different for you. Harder. Less about preparing for the birth of the Savior and more about surviving a holiday season that will almost certainly be even more stressful than it ordinarily is.

(Continued on page 5)



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December Birthdays!

Hythe Hamilton Dec. 5
Jon Hettrick Dec. 12
Emily Pulsifer Dec. 15
Liz Lesesne Dec. 17
Joanne Lincoln Dec. 30
Derron Daugherty Dec. 31

Doug Orr Dec. 9
Darrell Spencer Dec. 14
Barbara Witherspoon Dec. 15
Andy Daugherty Dec. 30
Sandy Brauer Dec. 31



The Warren Wilson Book Group The Warren Wilson Book group will meet at noon in the Fellowship Hall on Dec. 14th. Helen Bell will lead the discussion of "Storied Life of A.J. Fikry" by Gabreilla Zevin. In Jan. we will do our traditional "Share Your Favorite Book." We usually compile quite a list of interesting reading. Bring a sandwich on Dec. 14th and snacks will be provided. (Submitted by Sandy Brauer)



The Spiritual Nurture Group has formed and welcomes everyone to join in. This group meets once a month to reflect on Scripture, engage in spiritual practices, and share prayer concerns. Contact Bill Heck for date and time.

Fair Trade coffee, tea, chocolate and olive oil orders will be delivered on Sunday, December 3rd. Thanks, Anne Dale



Personnel Reviews

As we were charged in Steve's sermon on Reformation Sunday, "How can we make it better?" Now is your opportunity to provide constructive feedback on Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church staff to the Personnel Task Force. Members of the committee, Diana Sanderson, Joyce Ackerman and Milt Butterworth, will be randomly calling WWPC members to obtain a compilation of your thoughts that will be part of individual reviews for Steve Runholt, Vivian Hare, Donna Eagle Joslin and Nan Woodard. WWPC members may also email comments directly to Diana at dsanderson@warren-wilson.edu The deadline for receiving this information is Friday, **December 8**, and all information provided to this team will be confidential. (Submitted by Joyce Ackerman)

Save the date...28th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Prayer Breakfast
Saturday, February 10, 2018, 8:00-11:00 am at Camp Dorothy Walls

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

Dec. 1, The Hanging of the Greens, 2:00 in the Chapel

**Dec. 1, Christmas Pizza Party, Christmas crafts, all ages
5:00 pm in Ransom Fellowship Hall**

Dec. 3, Commissioning of Rev. Grace Boyer, during the service

Dec. 10, Wassail, following the service in RFH

Dec. 13, Cookies and Carols, 7:00 pm in Ransom Fellowship Hall

Dec. 17, Christmas Pageant, Chapel, during the 11:00 service

Dec. 24, Morning Service at 11:00 am (no Sunday school)

Dec. 24, Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols, 9:00 pm



December 1, at 2:00 pm

Hanging of the Greens:

Bring your greens, clippers, gloves and join the fun at 2:30 on Friday, December 2 in the Chapel! We'll decorate the Sanctuary, Narthex and Ransom Fellowship Hall for the Advent season.



December 1, at 5:00 pm

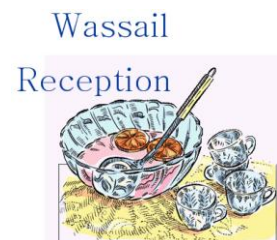
Christmas pizza/craft party! Come join the fun as we make miniature Christmas trees, ornaments and more. All ages are welcome.



December 3, during the service we will commission Rev. Grace Boyer

December 10, following the service It's that special time of the year--when we gather around the wassail bowl and raise a cup in celebration of the Christmas season and in fellowship with our Warren Wilson friends.

Sunday, December 10th, is the magical date. Please bring a plate of your favorite hors' d'oeuvres to share.



December 17, during the service we will have our Christmas Pageant, complete with costumes and song.



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December 24, Morning worship service at 11:00 am (no Sunday school)

December 24, Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols, 9:00 pm



Stewardship

At Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church

WE SCORED A BULL'S EYE!!! If you notice members of the Stewardship Action Team and Administration Ministry Team walking around with a bounce in their step and smiles on their faces it is because we scored a bull's eye and met our target pledging total for the 2018 Operating Fund Budget. This is the first time in ages, or at least in the last 5 years, that we have met our goal before the start of Advent. Thank you, thank you to all of you for being a part of this wonderfully generous congregation and particularly to those of you who pledged. If you pledged in 2017 and have not yet responded for 2018, we assure you that the church

needs your pledges. We need to cover continually increasing annual costs, and also need to prepare to fund the full salary for Grace Boyer, our new Associate in Ministry, in 2021 when the Waldrop funds have been used up. With your pledging, we can now finalize the budget for 2018 for approval by Session and provide salary increases for staff, operating fund support for the new music program, and restore at least some of the funds cut from Community Engagement programs this year. Have a great Christmas Season and remember to count your blessings.

Stewardship Action Team: Sally Broughton (Chair), Sandy Brauer, Elizabeth Cook, Nancy Garrison, Barbara and Larry Griswold, Mike Levi.

2018 Budget Action Team: Mike Levi (Chair), Rick Garrison, Ray Stock, Jerry Vaneman, Alisa White.

Administration Ministry Team: Mike Levi (Chair), Sally Broughton, Tom Eller, Bob Gambrell, Bill Heck, Ray Stock, Kay Stockdale, Jerry Vaneman, Alisa White.

SVCM needs your help

Share the Warmth...

Beginning December 10, 2017 we will be collecting men's warm hats, gloves, socks, and much needed underwear and long johns for the homeless shelter at the First Baptist Church in Black Mountain. Please leave these items unwrapped in the large box in the narthex. We will collect each Sunday through the 24th (all sizes needed S-2x). Thank you, from the Community Outreach Team.

Help with food...

WWPC will provide food for the homeless shelter at Black Mountain First Baptist Church the week of Dec. 31, thru January 6. Please sign-up in the Narthex if you can help provide food.

Please keep the following community mission projects in your thoughts and plans:

Veterans Restoration Quarters needs volunteers for serving/preparing lunch on December 22.

Bounty and Soul need volunteers every Thursday to sort produce. Bounty and Soul is located at 999 Old US 70 Hwy. Call 828-419-0533 for more information.

Room In The Inn will be the week of February 11-17. Watch for sign-up opportunities in January.

Steve's Slant continued...

If so, take heart. Because here's the truth: there is nothing inherently magical about Advent. If Christmas itself were just another day, a day like any other day, so, too, would be the first four weeks of December--a month just like any other month.

Which is to say that we are the ones who make Advent great. We do that by gathering to sing our favorite Advent carols, even the haunting ones, perhaps especially the haunting ones, that remind us that the world has always longed for Christ to come, just as we may be longing for his coming now.

We do that by waging hope when hope seems far off. By making peace when the way to peace is obscured by strongly felt differences. By practicing joy when it would be easier to channel our inner Scrooge and declare "Bah humbug" on it all. And, when that fourth Sunday finally comes, by letting the love that was born on Christmas night flood our souls.

Or to put all of this more simply, in my mind the perfect hat for this season would read: Make Advent Great. Again. And again. And again....



Thanks to all who participated in our First Annual Thanksgiving Celebration! It was a great success with approximately 70 people in attendance. Many students, college staff and church members enjoyed a full meal and fellowship in the hall. Special thanks goes out to Diana Sanderson and Mike Levi for helping to organize this great new event.

From Kneeling in Bethlehem by Anne Weems

*In each heart lies a Bethlehem,
an inn where we must ultimately answer
whether there is room or not.
When we are Bethlehem-bound
we experience our own advent in his.
When we are Bethlehem bound
we can no longer look the other way
conveniently not seeing stars
not hearing voices.
We can no longer excuse ourselves by busily
tending our sheep or our kingdoms.*



*This Advent let's go to Bethlehem
and see this thing that the Lord has made known to us.
In the midst of shopping sprees
let's ponder in our hearts the Gift of Gifts.
Through the tinsel
let's look for the gold of the Christmas Star.
In the excitement and confusion, in the merry chaos,
let's listen for the brush of angels' wings.
This Advent, let's go to Bethlehem
and find our kneeling places.*

(Submitted by Donna Eagle Joslin)



At Warren Wilson Presbyterian Church we are mothers and fathers, single and married, gay and straight, young and old, black and white, prosperous and poor, uncertain and sure, broken and whole. We are the many faces of humanity-yet as a community of faith, we are committed in our diversity to be one in Christ!

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The Extended Family