

St. Paul's Epistle

An Inviting Community of Christ's Disciples

Volume 34, Issue 12

December, 2011

St. Paul's United
Methodist Church

105 E. Main St.
Elida, OH 45807

419-339-3801

espcoffice@embarqmail.com

Rev. Ruth Solo

419/909-9102

Cell Phone: 419/812-3032

espcpastor@embarqmail.com



Dear Friends,

"It's the most wonderful time of the year!" sang Perry Como. And most of us agree that the Advent and Christmas season is a wonderful time of the year. We shop or make gifts for the people we love, we eat special sweet treats and foods that we don't normally have at other times in the year, we attend parties and gatherings sharing fellowship, and we have extra liturgies and readings in church. All of these ways of celebrating this time of the year make it wonderful and special.

As we go to the mall and stores, attend the parties and gatherings, eat with friends, family and co-workers, I invite you to try to seek Christ in the hustle and bustle of the season. So often we become discouraged by the rampant greed of the holidays. So, let's try to look at the secular celebrations of Advent and Christmas with sacred eyes this year.

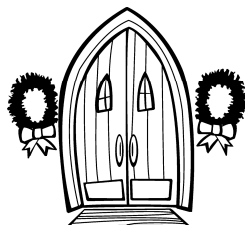
See the volunteer bell ringer by the Salvation Army bucket. See the child looking with wonder at the animated decorations in the stores. See the person on a bench get up to offer an elderly person a seat in the crowded mall. See the lines at Our Daily Bread, the stacks of food in our Five Loaves Pantry buckets pile up, and the requests for donations for various help agencies.

As you see all of the sights and sounds of the season, remember how you as a Christian are called to be the living body of Christ, generously sharing love, mercy, kindness and compassion just as Jesus did. Let the Babe be born in your heart again as we journey through this most wonderful time of the year.

See you in church as we celebrate this Advent and Christmas together.

Merry and Blessed Christmas!

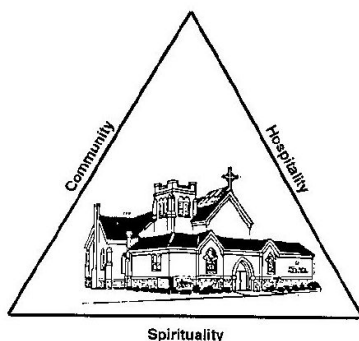
Pastor Ruth Solo



Thought for the Month:

It is Christmas in the
heart that puts
Christmas in the air.

– W.T. Ellis



Inside this issue:

Upcoming Events	2-3
The Heart of Church	4
The Business of Church	5
Faith In Action	6
Consulting the Manual	7
Encountering Mark	8
Northwest Plains	9
Remember When...	10
Connecting With...	11
The People of St. Paul's	12
December Calendar	13
Recipes	14
Kidz Korner	15
Living Our Faith	16

Tuesday December 13, 2011

At 1:00 PM.

St. Paul's UMC Fellowship Hall

Seniors' Day Out

Please bring a white elephant gift
in a grocery bag,

Come to enjoy an afternoon of
Food, Fun and Fellowship



Holiday Home Walk

Tuesday, December 13, 2011

5:30 PM Fellowship Hall
Light Supper

6:00 Home Tours Begin

- 1) Pastor Ruth Solo
- 2) Sandra Parker
- 3) Sue Theodore

Join us for an evening of fun,
food, & fellowship!

*If you have any items you would like to
donate as door prizes, please
drop them off in the
church office.*



Upcoming Events for St. Paul's

December embraces all creation
With a peace beyond all ken;
While the current year draws to completion,
Cold and snow appear again.



Poem by

Jenessa Fletcher

PASTOR'S SCHEDULE

Pastor Ruth will be available throughout the Advent and Christmas Season. Office hours will continue as posted (**9-noon and 1:30-4 pm**) except when there are pastoral care concerns or meetings. Please don't hesitate to contact Pastor Ruth on her cell phone (**419-812-3032**) when you have need.

St. Paul's Epistle

is published by St. Paul's
United Methodist Church

Subscription Rate: NONE

Editor:	Judy Chaffins
Secretary:	Gail Fessler
Secretary:	Jone Lane
Organist:	Linda Holman
Pianist:	Lois Cook
Youth Director:	Corinne Piper
Custodian:	Dave Decker



Greetings from the Staff

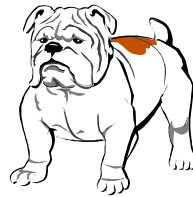


Newsletter
deadline:
the **16th**
of each month



**Congratulations
Elida High School
Football Team
Division III Regional Champs!**

**We are proud of
Reggie McAdams,
member of the 2011 team,
who was named Division III
Northwest district offensive player of
the year!**



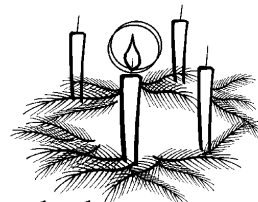
**Coins at Communion
December 4, 2011
will benefit the
Lima Salvation Army
Help to make the holidays a little
brighter for those less fortunate.**



Upcoming Events for St. Paul's

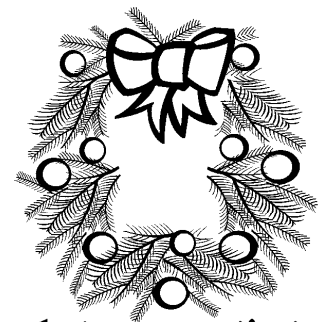
**December 4, 2011
Second Sunday of Advent
"Christmas at the Table"**

**December 11, 2011
Third Sunday of Advent
"Christmas at the Holiday Party"**



Holiday Worship

**December 18, 2011
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Christmas Cantata**



Christmas Offering



Cantata

**DECEMBER 18, 2011
10:00 AM Worship**

**"Down From His
Glory"**

**Dress Rehearsal:
Saturday, December 17
9:30— 11:30 AM**

**December 24, 2011
Christmas Eve Candle light Service
10:30 PM
"Christmas at the Manger"**

**December 25, 2011
Christmas Day
"Humble Beginnings"**

**Our Christmas offering this
year will be divided between
the Allentown-Elida-Gomer
Ministerial Association and
the Elida Area Community
Center.**

The Heart of Church

**To St. Paul's Bell Choir,
Nancy and Linda,**

Thank you so much for your wonderful music you provided for our worship service on November 20th. We appreciate your dedication and hard work making our worship services special. We appreciate all of you! Blessings.

St. Paul's Congregation



Special Thanks

**To St. Paul's Chancel Choir,
Judy and Lois,**

Thank you very much for your beautiful music you have provided for our worship services since September. You have made our worship services very meaningful and special. We appreciate your dedication and hard work. Blessings to all of you!

St. Paul's Congregation



Christmas gift suggestions:

To your enemy, forgiveness.
To an opponent, tolerance.
To a friend, your heart.
To a customer, service.
To all, charity.
To every child, a good example.
To yourself, respect.

— Oren Arnold

Committee Chairs	For 2012
PPR Chair	Dwain Metzger
Trustees Chair	TBA
Finance Chair	Marty White
Physical Plant Chair	Ron Steiner
Treasurer	Jenessa Fletcher
Education Chair	Jan Wyant
Administrative Council Chair	Scott Fessler
Worship	Ruth Solo
Nurture	Linda Holman
Missions	Tim Piper

The Business of Church

CONSECRATION SUNDAY OCTOBER 30TH

During the month of October, St. Paul's Church heard messages from Pastor Ruth on a study series, *"Enough - Discovering Joy Through Simplicity and Generosity"* by Adam Hamilton. **Bill McKinney** and **Lavonne Segovia** each gave short talks about how God has worked in their lives to help them maintain balanced household budgets through simplicity.

On **Consecration Sunday, October 30th** the members of our congregation pledged financial support to our church. Our Financial Secretary has totaled the pledges. The total pledged for **2012** is from **48 households** and the total amount pledged is **\$132,708.00** *Thank you* to everyone who pledged to continue to support the ministries and mission of **St. Paul's United Methodist Church**. If you have not yet pledged but would like to, please contact the office to obtain a pledge card. May God add His blessing to the ministry being done by **St. Paul's United Methodist Church**.

Stewardship Committee

MISSIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

2011 CHRISTMAS OFFERING DESIGNATIONS

This Christmas season, the St. Paul's offering will be divided between the **Allentown-Elida-Gomer Ministerial Association** and the **Elida Area Community Center**. Look for a letter from Pastor Ruth describing further this annual mission effort by our congregation.

Also, consistent with past practices, we will accept donations of winter hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves on our sanctuary Christmas Tree. Depending upon number of donations, we will divide these items among **The Salvation Army, Our Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, and The Samaritan House**.



Family Promise

Immanuel UMC is hosting families for Family Promise during the week of **December 18th** through **December 25th**. If you would like to prepare a meal for Family Promise week, help by volunteering to eat with and spend an evening with the families, or do other tasks, there are sign-up sheets on the hall bulletin board. Please prayerfully consider helping and sign up by **December 6th**. Thank you for considering to help with this worthwhile mission as we partner with **Immanuel UMC**.

Book of Timothy



Faith In Action

Worship Attendance:

October 30, 2011	58
November 6, 2011	89
November 13, 2011	78
November 20, 2011	86
November 27, 2011	81

Financial Giving

Weekly Need for
Unified Ministry Budget
\$3,466.00

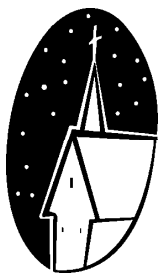


Unified Ministry Giving:		Other:
October 30, 2011	\$2,384.00	\$210.00
November 6, 2011	\$4,447.00	\$1,864.00
November 13, 2011	\$2,604.00	\$387.00
November 20, 2011	\$1,899.00	\$473.88
November 27, 2011	\$1,225.00	\$266.00

Praying Together

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

- Christina Roseth



Greeters

December 4, 2011	Tony & Shirley Shoup
December 11, 2011	Susan Nartker & Ruth Burgoon
December 18, 2011	Jerry & Becky Bean
December 24, 2011	Cindy Guess & Phyllis Trigg
December 25, 2011	Open

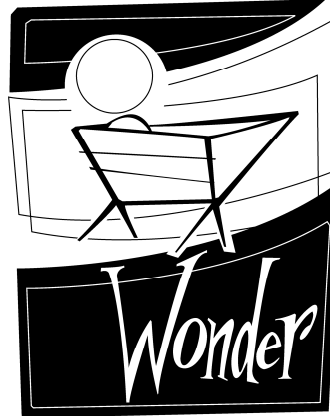
Flowers:

December 4, 2011	Dan & Margie Best
December 11, 2011	Poinsettias
December 18, 2011	Poinsettias
December 25, 2011	Poinsettias



Visit The United
Methodist Website at:
www.umw.org

Consulting the Manual



Bible Readings for

Revised Common Lectionary
Year B

Week of December 4 **Second Sunday of Advent**

Color: Purple or Blue

Old Testament:

Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13

New Testament:

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Mark 1:1-8

Week of December 11 **Third Sunday of Advent**

Color: Purple or Blue

Old Testament:

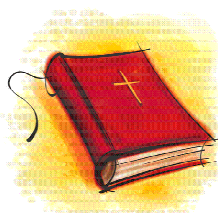
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalms 126

New Testament:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28



Week of December 18 **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Color: Purple or Blue

Old Testament:

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

New Testament:

Luke 1:47-55

Romans 16:25-27

Luke 1:26-38

Week of December 25

Christmas Day

Color: White or Gold

Old Testament:

Isaiah 52:7-10

Psalms 98

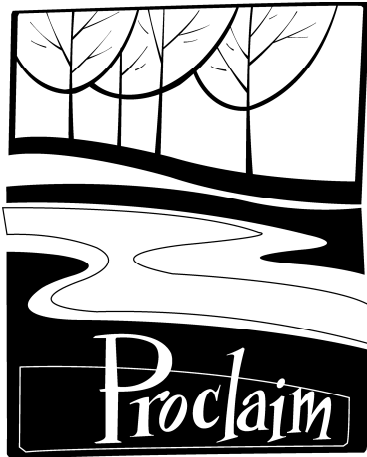
New Testament:

Hebrews 1:1-4

John 1:1-14

For more detailed information on the
Revised Common Lectionary,
please visit:
www.gbod.org

Encountering Mark



Welcome to the lectionary year of Mark! Mark is the only evangelist to call his work a "gospel." In his first theme sentence, he names the one who embodies the good news: Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Everything he writes after that is for the purpose of letting us know what those words mean.

Jesus is the only proper name in the whole batch. The other words are all titles of one kind or another, none of them unique to Jesus. While Christ is added to his name so often that some think it is his surname, it is actually a descriptor. Jesus is the anointed one, as were Saul, David, and Solomon before him. While translators have avoided the use of Christ for anyone in the Bible but Jesus, the root word *christos* means nothing more than "smeared on" or "anointed."

. . . Mark has no apparent interest in the supernatural birth narratives with which Matthew and Luke launch their gospels. For Mark, it is enough that prophecy is fulfilled in the appearance of John the Baptizer. More than that, prophecy is revived with John's

appearance. The voice of God has not been heard so clearly in Israel for 300 years. The people have had to strain to hear even the "daughter of the voice" (*bath qol*), so that the noise John makes is both startling and welcome.

His themes are repentance and forgiveness, symbolized by a ritual bath that he offers to those who wish to be counted among the awake and aware. The bath itself is not innovative - Jewish law prescribes similar purification rites that involve cleansing with water - but both John's name for it (baptism) and his context (gathering the elect) are. Those who line up for his baptism with water signify their willingness to be transformed. When the one who is more powerful than he comes to baptize with the Holy Spirit, the transformation will be complete.

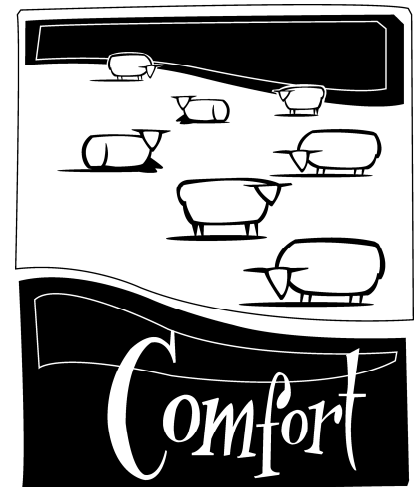
Much is made of John's eccentricity - his clothing, his diet, his wilderness address. Insofar as eccentric means "off center," his deviance is precisely the point. He does not dress as the priests in Jerusalem dress. He does not sound like they sound, nor does he commend their road to anyone. He is as far away from the temple as he can get and it is there - way out in the wilderness - that he is calling people to prepare the way of the Lord. Whatever else he and Jesus disagree about, they agree on this: that God's way is an alternative to the ways of the world, including the religious ways of the world. The more "centered" we are in the present order the less likely we are to welcome eccentrics such as John,

who renew the voice of God in the land.

In the context of Advent, John's witness is a reminder that there is nothing automatic about the coming of the Lord. Human expectation, preparation, and repentance are all part of the mix. The Lord may be perfectly able to come without these things, but the odds of our recognizing him go way down.

I recently heard about a woman who got so tired of preparing for Christmas each year that she added a large closet with a door to her den. Inside the closet she set up a fully decorated artificial Christmas tree. Now, when the season arrives, she just opens the closet door. And when the season is over, she closes it again. The nice thing about entertaining John at this time of the year is that he simply will not put up with that. Before the woman knows it, he will plant an ax in that door and send wood chips flying all over the place.

- Barbara Brown Taylor,
reprinted with permission
from *Pulpit Resource*.



Northwest Plains

Fruitful Ministry Featured at Event



Want to learn about practices that make for fruitful ministry in the local church? Then the **“Fruitful Ministry Training”** is for you.

Planned for Saturday, **March 24, 2012, 9:30 am to 4:00 pm**, the event will offer breakout sessions focusing on the practices of radical hospitality, passionate worship, faith-forming relationships, risk-taking mission and service, and extravagant generosity. One of our featured speakers is **Dr. Constance Cherry**, renowned expert on creating relevant worship and author of the book *The Worship Architect*.

Laity and clergy working in any of these ministry areas are invited to mark their calendars and plan to attend this event at **Forest Park UMC, 315 S. Collins Ave., Lima, Ohio**.

Please check the District Training page at www.NWPUMC.org for further details and registration information.

“Ad-Ministry” Leaders to be Equipped

Lay and clergy leaders of administrative ministries of the local church will be equipped to fulfill their roles at an upcoming training event on the Northwest Plains District.

Administrative ministry areas of the local church include Administrative Board/Church Council, Staff/Pastor-Parish Relations Committee, Finance Committee, Trustees, and Nominations and Leadership Development Committee. These teams provide the structure in which ministry can occur and add to the ministries of the congregation.

Leaders and committee members are invited to participate in the **“Ad-Ministry Training”** event on **Saturday, January 28, 2012, 9:30 am to 3:30 pm at Trinity UMC, 413 E. Second St., Defiance, Ohio**.

Visit the District Training page at www.NWPUMC.org for more details or to register for this event.

Volunteers in Mission Work Trip

February 18 - 25, 2012

Camp Sierra Linda Monterrey, Mexico



If you are interested in lending a helping hand, please contact
Pastor Neal Whitney,
419.231.0226
nealwhitney@woh.rr.com

Spiritual Formation Retreat for Clergy and Laity

March 5-6, 2012

Maria Stein Spiritual Retreat Center, Maria Stein, Ohio

“Who We Are: Reconnecting God’s Story and Our Story”

Retreat Leader: Rev. Dr. Thomas Tumblin

Our identity begins and ends with God.

This retreat will blend presentation, conversation and time apart to create space for God’s story and our stories to speak to each other.

**Cost: \$100 per person / \$180 per couple
(residing within Northwest Plains District)**

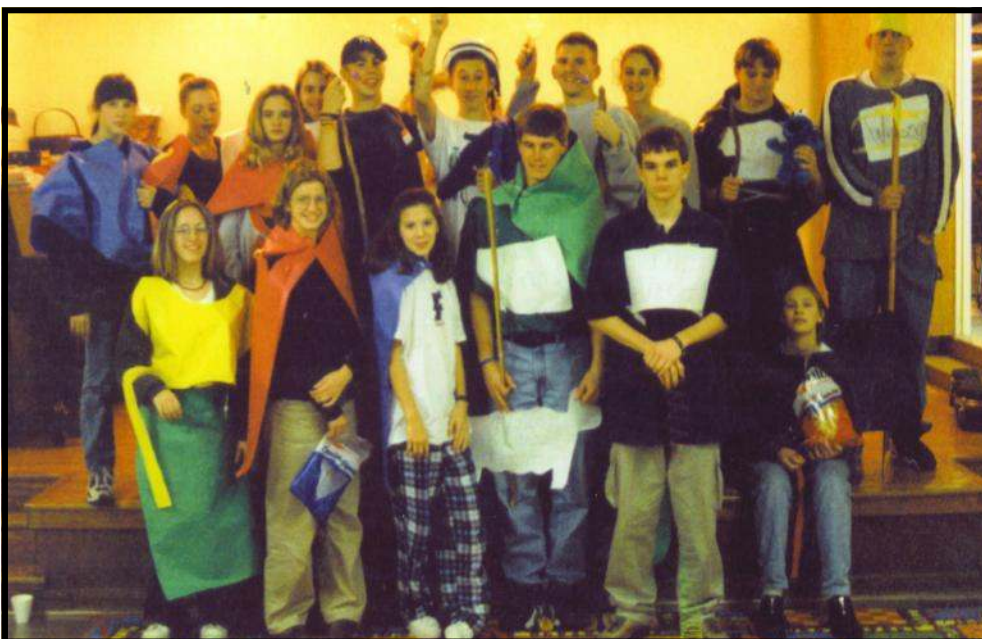
Remember When...



Children's Musical
 "It's Christmas Around
 the World"
 December, 1991
 Directors:
 Janna Thompson, Jan Wyant,
 Lois Cook



Joy Singers
 December, 1994
 Director:
 Judy Chaffins
 Pianist:
 Lois Cook



St. Paul's Youth Group
 Christmas Party, 1991
 Director: Brad Joseph



Connecting With ...



In Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to the family of **Mark "Mick" Kruse**, who passed away November 10, 2011, following a courageous battle with cancer. Pastor Ruth officiated at his memorial service on November 17, at St. Paul's UMC.

We extend our sympathy to the family of **Wilbur Hurd**, who passed away November 19, 2011, in Kindred Hospital, Lima. Wilbur and Joanna joined St. Paul's UMC in November, 2001, and Wilbur became part of the Chancel Choir. Pastor Ruth officiated at the funeral service at St. Paul's on November 23rd. Cards may reach **Joanna at 3500 W. Elm Street, Apt. 120, Elida, OH 45807.**

We extend our sympathy to **Jerry and Becky Bean**. Becky's sister, **Esther Boyer**, passed away on November 19, 2011, in Texas. Her funeral service was held on November 23rd. Cards will reach **Becky at 5075 Daisy Lane, Elida, OH 45807.**



Remember in Prayer



Recovering from Surgery or in the Hospital

Dorothy Banks
Linda Craft

Homebound Members

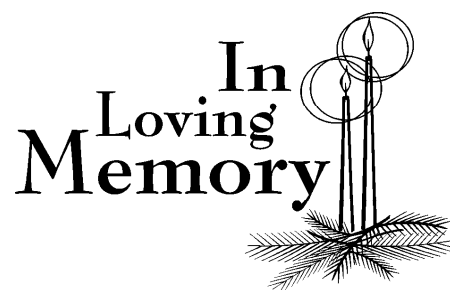
Hazel Dunn
Edna Osman
Jean Redd
Gladys Sherrick

Those in Need of Healing, Support, Strength & Encouragement

Joanna Hurd
Rodney Lee
Rick Scholfield

In the Military & Missions

Jason Stanley



Visit The United Methodist Communications website : www.umcom.org

This website offers book reviews, music reviews, and web ministry information among other relevant and interesting links.

The People of St. Paul's

*Dear friends at
St. Paul's,*

*Thank you so much for
the prayers, cards and
concerns, after my
accident. On my return
from Colorado the flowers
were such a beautiful
surprise!*

Wanda Strayer



*To the people of
St. Paul's,*

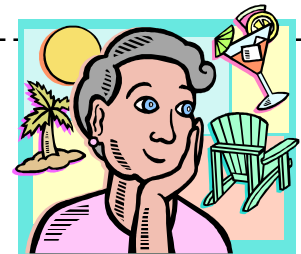
*Thank you so much for
your support for our
mission project with
Ohio University's
Habitat for Humanity.
We are very grateful.*

*Alex McAdams
and
Stacy Alexander*

*Thanks to our college
students, Stacy
Alexander, Alex
McAdams, Audrey Fox,
Tahler Sdao, and
Michele Theodore, for
participating in our UM
Student Sunday,
November 28th.
Continued success in your
chosen field.*

CONGRATULATIONS

to **Margie Best**, who is retiring December 3rd from Rural Development after 37 years! She is looking forward to more time for family, relaxing, traveling, and just about anything. Best wishes!



Prayer List Updates
Please Contact
Lavonne Segovia

Delicious Recipes from St. Paul's Great Cooks

Peanut Butter Chocolate Dessert *by Corinne Piper*

Ingredients		Instructions
20	chocolate cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies, divided	This dessert is from Taste of Home. Makes 12-16 servings.
2 Tbl.	butter, softened	
1 pkg. (8 oz.)	cream cheese, softened	Crush 16 cookies, toss with the butter. Press into an ungreased 9-inch square dish. Set aside.
1/2 cup	peanut butter	
1 1/2 cups	confectioners' sugar, divided	In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese, peanut butter and 1 cup confectioners' sugar until smooth. Fold in half of the whipped topping. Spread over crust. Sprinkle with peanut butter cups.
1 carton (16 oz.)	frozen whipped topping, thawed, divided	
15	miniature peanut butter cups, chopped	In another large bowl, beat the milk, pudding mix and remaining confectioners' sugar on low speed for 2 minutes. Let stand for 2 minutes or until soft-set. Fold in remaining whipped topping.
1 cup	cold milk	
1 pkg.	instant chocolate fudge pudding mix	Spread over peanut butter cups. Crush remaining cookies' sprinkle over the top. Cover and chill for at least 3 hours.



Holiday Sugar Cut-Outs *by Jone Lane*

Ingredients		Instructions
1 1/2 cups	confectioners sugar	Cream sugar and margarine. Mix in egg and flavorings.
1 cup	margarine	
1	egg	Stir dry ingredients together.
1 tsp.	vanilla	
2 1/2 cups	flour	Blend into sugar/margarine mixture.
1 tsp.	soda	
1 tsp.	cream of tartar	Refrigerate 2-3 hours. Roll out and cut.
		Decorate with colored sugar and frosting.

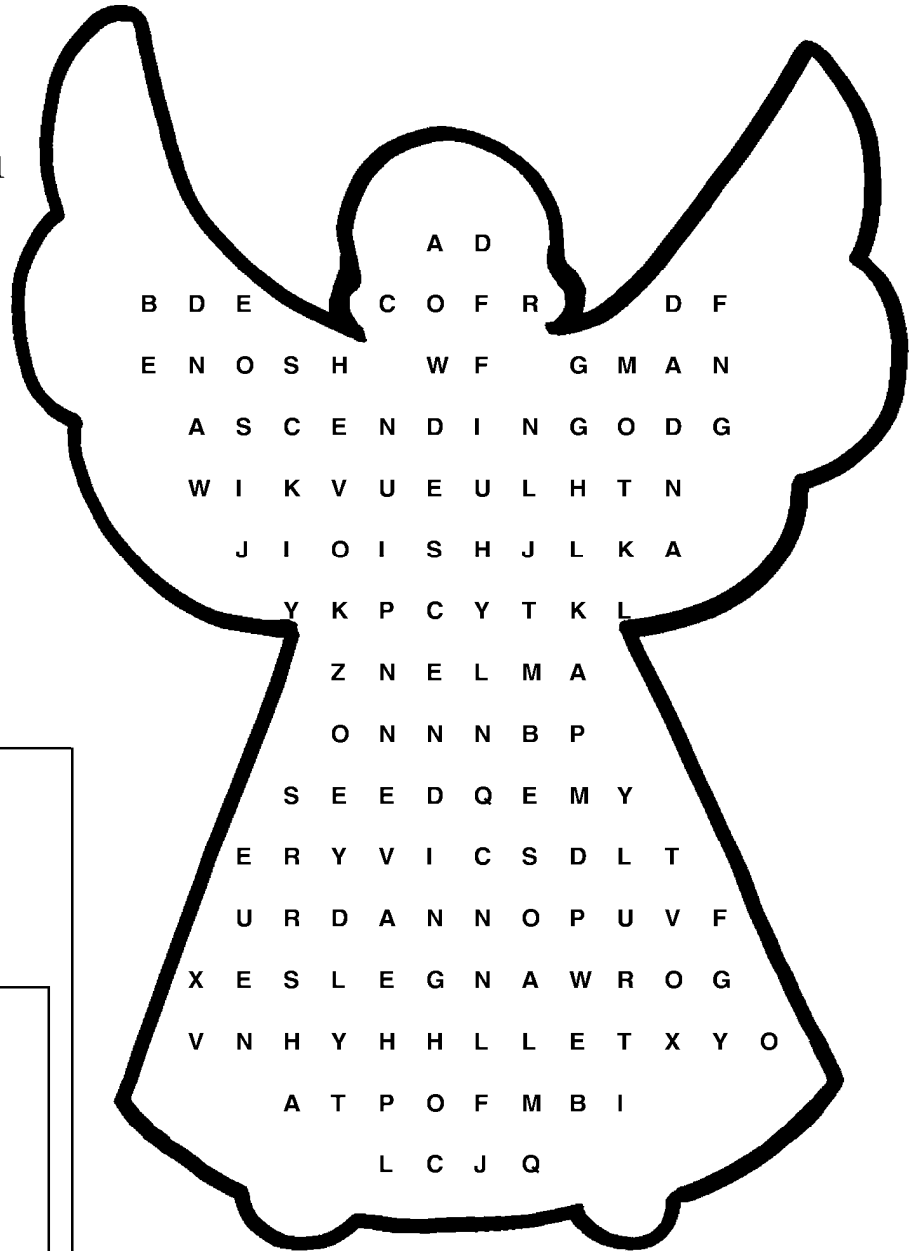


KIDZ KORNER

Word Find

Find the words from John 1:51 in the angel at right.

very	angels
truly	of
I	God
tell	ascending
you	and
you	descending
will	upon
see	the
heaven	son
opened	of
and	man
the	



Angels

Draw the rest of the angel; then color it.



How many angels are at right? _____
Color them.



St. Paul's United Methodist Church

105 E. Main St.
Elida, OH 45807

*Return Service Requested

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Elida, OH
45807
Permit No. 71

Our Web Address:
www.elidastpaulschurch.org

DECEMBER

2011



Living Our Faith

The Story of Jesus' Birth



The Christmas story is well known by many people. Even people who aren't Christian could probably make a list of details from the story. We see the story in seasonal cards and decorations. We play out the story through Christmas pageants and programs. We sing the story with the soundtracks playing in the stores and elevators.

The four Gospels—

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John - are not "eyewitness reports" of Jesus' life. No scribes or reporters were at Jesus' birth, writing down everything that happened. Instead, people heard stories about Jesus that were passed from person to person and faithfully told over and over. About 40 years after Jesus' resurrection, people began to write down the story of Jesus' life and ministry. Each Gospel tells that story from a certain point of view and each is addressed to a different community of readers - some who were mostly Jewish and knew the stories of the Hebrew Scriptures and others who did not. This is why details

in the four Gospels do not always match.

So how can we know Jesus Christ - really know him? Dr. Thomas G. Long writes: "As we read and think about the Bible's stories about Jesus we will come to understand that Jesus is not just a person who once lived and died. We will learn about his special relationship with God and with other people, and we will see that the risen Christ is with us still."

