



The Crossroads

CHRONICLE

Crossroads United Methodist Church



December 2024

Christopher Dazey, Editor

Inside This Month

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| The Case For Advent | Page 2 |
| Advent & Christmas | Page 4 |
| Get Involved | Page 5 |
| Birthdays and News | Page 6 |



cantonforallpeople.org

330-455-0153

The Case for Advent

By Christopher Dazey

It was decades ago now that the idea of a 'war on Christmas' began to spread throughout American discourse with wild abandon. Never mind that Christmas has been and continues to be the most popular holiday ever celebrated in America, Europe and much of the rest of the world. And never mind that Christians themselves have been waging various internecine wars about Christmas for centuries.

Go back in your personal time machine to one era and place in history, and you'll find that some Christians thought Christmas was too Catholic and refused to have anything to do with it. Pick another time and place to visit, and you'll find that many Christians thought Christmas was too Protestant and scorned its wild, secular popularity. In some places in the world, public celebrations of Christmas were banned, while in others Christmas was declared an official government holiday for everyone, whether Christian or not. There are entire groups of Christians who have never celebrated Christmas, while there are entire profitable retail stores dedicated to selling nothing but tacky Christmas tchotchkes, even in July, to many people who only celebrate a secular Christmas.

But lost in all of this is the poor, often-forgotten season of Advent. I have never heard of anyone declaring war on Advent, but I have witnessed Christian churches eager to jump on the holiday music bandwagon by singing Christmas carols on the first Sunday of Advent. 'We hear Christmas music in the mall in November, why can't we hear it in church in December?' people ask.

It's a fair question.

Advent is akin to Lent, though far less somber, in the sense that both seasons are about preparing for something. Lent is a preparation for Easter, and Advent is a preparation for Christmas. While most Americans have internalized the idea of Lent, if only that it is a time they will have to give something up, most Americans I meet have no use for Advent, and have never even heard the word outside of the candy-filled Advent calendar.

For most people, the most preparation they get for Christmas is Thanksgiving. After that, it's Black Friday, and then the Christmas season of endless things to do begins in earnest. The kids in school have their pageants, plays and concerts; the cities have their tree-lighting ceremonies; choirs and symphonies, bands and singers and musicians of all kinds play mostly the same music over and over; people have parties in their homes; workplaces have their staff parties and gift exchanges; people travel and visit friends and family and generally keep their lives absurdly busy for the first 24 days of December. And did I mention the shopping? And the traffic? And the wrapping? And the baking? And the...

Then Christmas day finally comes, and everyone is exhausted. Merry Christmas, indeed.

My suggestion for dealing with the exhaustion and even the depression that we visit upon ourselves every December is the same advice Nancy Reagan once gave in a different context - just say no. You don't need to go to every social gathering, every Christmas-themed event that is planned every year. Pick one or two events a week (outside of Sunday worship) and say no to the others. Those same events will come around again next year, so this year do certain things and then next year do different things.

Here at Crossroads, as you will see in this newsletter, we are offering several low-stress, quiet options to celebrate a peaceful Advent in service to others. Our oatmeal ministry needs both men's crew socks and women's socks, as well as individually wrapped candy for their annual gift bags. If you're already shopping, add those to your list. The Canton For All People Shorb Market will host a Christmas Shop for local parents, and there will be an Amazon wishlist of toys that you can donate from without having to fight for a parking space at the store.

But most important to me at this time of year is to always remember that Christmas *begins* on December 25, not on any day in November, and that you can't get to Christmas without going through Advent first.

And Advent has a lot going for it. There is a lot of wonderful imagery about light in Advent - God being the 'creator of the stars of night,' or Christ being the light of the world, shining in the darkness of human despair. Advent is all about hope for the future, the coming of salvation, the people walking in darkness seeing that great light. Advent reminds us to focus on the wonder and the mystery found in the quiet, nighttime birth of a helpless, hungry child to homeless, wandering migrants, an unlikely turn of events that would somehow inspire shepherds, sages, peasants, lepers, tax collectors and kings alike.

Here at Crossroads, we are going to start the season of Advent off on December 1 with a special Advent organ vespers service. This service will feature readings and poems interspersed with contemplative seasonal organ music. Both the readings and the music will focus on the quietness of Advent, the mystery of the occasion of Christmas that people have been celebrating (or not!) for thousands of years.

Join us December 1, both in the morning for our regular 10:00 am worship service, and again in the afternoon at 4:00 pm. And invite your friends - everyone is welcome.

ADVENT ORGAN VESPERS

A Contemplative Beginning for Advent and Christmas

Sunday, December 1, 2024 - 4:00 pm

Featuring meditative & seasonal organ music

by JS BACH, GERALD NEAR, MARCEL DUPRE and OTHERS

With Scripture & other seasonal readings

by MAYA ANGELOU, GEORGE HERBERT, MADELINE L'ENGLE
and OTHERS

Christopher Dazey, Organist
The 79-Rank Aeolian-Skinner Organ

120 Cleveland Ave SW
Canton, OH 44702



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS

2024

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Poinsettias are now available for \$10

Order forms are located in the rear of the sanctuary

Forms must be received by Wednesday, December 18 for publication in the Christmas Eve Bulletin

**Call the church office at 330-455-0153
or email christopher@crossroads120.org
if you are unable to fill out a form in person**

HANGING OF THE GREENS

Saturday, November 30 - 8:00 am

Everyone in the church is invited to help!

ADVENT ORGAN VESPERS

Sunday, December 1 - 4:00 pm

A quiet, prayerful candlelight Advent vespers service featuring Advent scripture, poems and other readings interspersed with contemplative organ music
With Christopher Dazey at the organ



NEIGHBORHOOD CHRISTMAS SHOP

Saturday, December 14

Community Christmas shop for 44703 residents
*Toys (ages 2 - 14) and volunteers needed!
See Pastor Don to find out how you can help!*

CHRISTMAS EVE

Tuesday, December 24

Our traditional candlelight service at 5:00 pm
Featuring the Camarada Brass with our Christmas festival choir and organ
Music begins at 4:30 pm

Help Spread Christmas Cheer

Oatmeal Ministry Gift Bag

We need socks and candy for our Christmas gift bags
*Men's crew socks and women's socks are needed - candy should be individually wrapped
Please have your donations in by December 15!*

GET INVOLVED AT CROSSROADS

*There are many ways to volunteer your time
and serve the community
here at Crossroads United Methodist Church*

Give of Your Time

The Shorb Market & Connection Center

Contact: Carrie Maletich - carrie@cantonforallpeople.org

The Village Ministry

Contact: Erin Ackerman - emallon@kent.edu

The Sunday Morning Oatmeal Ministry

Contact: Paul Toalston - toalstonfamily@hotmail.com

The Church Decorating Committee

Contact: Stephanie Bradford - stephbradford@aol.com

Gibbs Elementary Food Ministry

Contact: Pastor Don Ackerman - don@crossroads120.org



Worship Leadership

Be a Liturgist

Contact: Ron Leonard - rl0032015@yahoo.com

Sing in the Crossroads Choir

Contact: Beth Polen - beth@crossroads120.org

Play in the Crossroads Handbell Choir

Contact: Karen Zotta - omafunfone@neo.rr.com

Be an Usher

Contact: Pastor Don Ackerman - don@crossroads120.org



Happy Birthday

We Celebrate Our
(Other) December Birthdays

12/9
Nancy Stewart

12/10
Ed Fashbaugh, John Drumm,
Julie Smith, Hannah Detchon

12/11
Charles Monat

12/14
Thomas Syler

12/18
Claudia Selby

12/19
Larry Smith, Michelle Evans

12/20
Jean Keating

12/21
Ruth Rice

12/22
Nancy Newhouse,
Nancy Pierson, Wilbur Klotz

12/28
Karen Zotta, Steve Shoop

12/29
Marie Nordstrom

12/30
Jim Kennedy, Christopher Sible

Something For Everyone

We offer these regular
spiritual and social gatherings
outside of worship

Men's Prayer Breakfast

Every Wednesday at 9 AM
Wesley Hall

Each week, we offer our men's prayer breakfast in Wesley Hall. All men are always invited to this long-standing Crossroads tradition. You don't have to be a member of Crossroads to come, and we encourage you to invite your friends. We also offer dedicated parking spaces on Cleveland Ave, so there's no reason not to join us!

Women of Faith Circle

The First Tuesday of the Month
at 1 PM

Denny's on West Tusc
January 7, 2025

The Women of Faith Circle meets at Denny's on the first Tuesday of the month (not in December, see you in January!) and is currently discussing the topic of Carrying Our Faith Forward. Contact Nancymae Scheurer (nbshymn@yahoo.com) for more information.

Publications News

Our Weekly Email Newsletter

If you are not already on our weekly email news list, send an email with your name to Christopher Dazey at

christopher@crossroads120.org

We send out an email update on the latest events and happenings at the church every Friday, so don't miss it!

Our Social Media Presence

We publish videos and news updates on our Facebook and YouTube pages every week

You do not need to be registered or have an account at either site to see our public-facing information, so just point your browser to

facebook.com/CantonCrossroads
youtube.com/@CantonCrossroads

on your phone or computer

Submit Your News

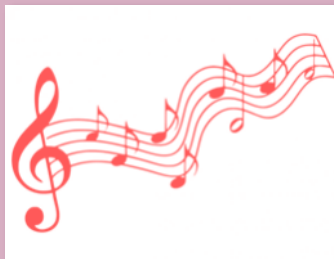
If you have a news item for our Sunday bulletin, newsletter, email newsletter or Facebook page, please email it to Christopher Dazey at

christopher@crossroads120.org

New Sermon Series *A Thrill of Hope*

Beginning Sunday, December 1
10:00 am Worship Service
A weekly series about the beloved
Christmas Carol, O Holy Night

A Chorus for a Cause & Harmony Ringers



Concerts

*Our faithful choir members
Karen Zotta and Paula Neff
will be a part of
A Chorus for a Cause
and Harmony Ringers
concerts this month*

Visit
achorusforacause.org
&
harmonyringersofoh.org

for the dates and times

Crossroads United Methodist Church
120 Cleveland Ave SW
Canton, OH 44702



Our Crossroads Staff

The Reverend Don Ackerman
Pastor
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Beth Polen
Director of Music Ministries
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Christopher Dazey
Organist, Pianist & Carillonneur
Video Producer
Director of Publications
christopher@crossroads120.org

Lilly Brunoni
Custodial Engineer
lilly@cantonforallpeople.org

Worship Every Sunday
In Our Historic Sanctuary
10:00 am

Crossroads Online
facebook.com/CantonCrossroads
youtube.com/@CantonCrossroads
cantonforallpeople.org

Contact the Church Office
330-455-0153
office@crossroads120.org