

This Week at Union Church

Sun. Dec. 20	9:30 am Christian Education for all ages 10:30 am Morning Worship 7:00 pm Longnight Service, Cowan Chapel
Mon. Dec. 21	7:00 pm AA Bottom Line Big Book Study, Dialog Center
Tues. Dec. 22	7:00 pm Boy Scouts
Weds. Dec. 23	No Wednesday Nite Live tonight
Thurs. Dec. 24	5:30 pm Candlelit Christmas Eve Service, sanctuary, followed by finger food supper in the Community Room—all welcome!! 11:00 pm Christmas Eve Service, Cowan Chapel
Fri. Dec. 25	Office closed—Merry Christmas!
Sun. Dec. 27	No Christian Education or Childrens Church today 10:30 am Morning Worship

Especially in our prayers ...

Each week we join millions of Christians who pray for one another through the ecumenical prayer cycle and, locally, the Berea Ministerial Association's prayer cycle. Please keep the people **Ghana and Nigeria** and our brothers and sisters at **The Holy Pentecostal Sanctuary**, in your hearts, and pray for them. Please also hold these concerns in your prayers today and throughout the week. (Prayer concerns can be submitted to the church office via phone or email).

- ◆ All who are serving or living in harm's way across the world, especially those suffering in the violence in the Middle East. We pray for the day when war shall be no more.
- ◆ **Les Kovacs** and his family as his dementia worsens
- ◆ **Dorie Hubbard's mother**, undergoing treatment for cancer
- ◆ **John Courter**
- ◆ **Nancy Jones**, at Berea Hospital, experiencing a reaction to medication
- ◆ **Shirley Dean**, recovering at home after a stay at Pattie A. Clay hospital
- ◆ **Jason Bailey, Tina Parker, and big sister Iris** welcomed new baby Opal Catherine on Dec. 15th!
- ◆ **Dianne Sykes**, whose sister has died of cancer
- ◆ Teresa Gowler's parents, **Earl and Aldine Irvin**, and the Gowler family
- ◆ **Ann Butwell**, who has had successful knee surgery, in Minneapolis. Her mom, Ruth, is there for several weeks.

Assisting in Worship

Worship leader this morning is Kevin Burke.

Announcements

About Our Advent Art: Each Sunday in Advent we will light a new candle and hang an additional banner as we prepare for the coming of the Christ Child. The color of the liturgical season also changes from green to dark blue, representing the nights of longing and waiting, and the night sky in which Christ's star appeared. The hand-wrought Advent Wreath and stand was made by member and local artisan Bob Montgomery. The Advent Banners were designed by Rev. Kent in 2006 who made them as full size paper cuts. In 2007 they were translated into fabric by Rita Barlow, Joyce Fields, Ramona Culp & Debbonnaire Kovacs.

The Banner Series complements a decades-old tapestry from the church's collection made by fabric artist Mildred Strickler. That banner, (which is hung for Christmas Eve and the weeks following) in blue, yellow, and red accents, depicts a Star of Bethlehem that dwarfs the small city under it with both its size and dynamism, unable to be contained by the borders of the banner. Each week's Advent banner has an image drawn from the traditional advent texts that is also larger than the waiting world over which it appears.

Fourth Week: “Ecce Ancilla Domine”

Inspired by Luke 1:46-56, the banner recounts the time when Mary says “Yes!” to God’s invitation. “Behold the servant of the Lord,” the teenage Mary says to the angel as she accepts the job of bearing the Christ child. In this banner, the angel Gabriel attends while the Holy Spirit in dove form hovers over the earth, and Mary on tiptoes reaches high to grasp the promise. Note that the fourth star in this banner is not hung in the sky, but rather lives in Mary’s fierce heart.

Carillon Concert at 7:30 pm Monday the 21st on the Draper Quad on campus! John Courter will play Christmas music, all are welcome, refreshments served!

To all who will: please send a holiday card to Steven Goff #142013, LLCC Dorm B-C223U, PO Box 6, LaGrange, KY, 40031. These cards must have a written (not sticker) return name & address or else he won’t get them.

Special “Longnight” Service TONIGHT, 7:00 pm in Cowan Chapel.

Rev. Kent will lead a special service of prayers for healing and remembrance. Though the holiday season is supposed to be filled with the joy and light of the birth of Jesus, for many it is the hardest time of the year. Deaths, divorce or separations, layoffs, family difficulties, and illness are ongoing realities in stark contrast to cheerful carols and to the pressure to “be happy.” For anyone remembering a loved one who has died, and anyone carrying pain this season, music and prayers for healing will be offered in a gentle, “come as you are” atmosphere: no need to be happy, or cheerful, or to get dressed up. Remembering the longest night of the year, we are reminded that each day gets a little lighter from this point on. Together, in the presence of Christ, we will bind up the brokenhearted and remember that Jesus was born in poverty, preached to the sickest and most vulnerable people, and offered healing not just for the cheerful, but for all in need of God’s special love.

All are invited to the Christmas Eve Services on Thursday, Dec. 24. At the early service, pre-service music begins at 5:15 pm, and the service itself at 5:30. If you are new to Berea, this is a service you won’t want to miss, with music, readings, carol singing and candle lighting! A finger-food supper in the Community Room follows the service. There will also be a service in **Cowan Chapel at 11:00 pm** on Christmas Eve, to welcome the Christ Child at midnight. No service Christmas Day, and we’ll gather as a church family as usual on Sunday the 27th!

New Class to begin in January! SWF: ISO a more meaningful bond with church family members, a **deeper relationship** with God, and a **better understanding** of the Bible. Seeking a few others who have similar goals and may experience similar difficulty in meeting these goals because of the busy-ness of their lives or just because they don’t know where to start. Male or female, youngish or oldish, married or single, blessed and overwhelmed by small children or child-free, Sunday school class member from way back or unfamiliar with church traditions — all are welcome.

We will be studying the Bible with help from a book by Bob Darden called Reluctant Prophets and Clueless Disciples: Introducing the Bible By Telling Its Stories. If interested in participating in and helping create a stress-free, user-friendly, enriching adult Sunday School experience, please meet me, Alvera Perman, in Union Church’s room 204 by the church office at 9:30 on Sunday mornings beginning January 10, 2010.