

# FAITH *In Focus*



Engaging the Word...Impacting the World

Vol. 15 Issue 51

December 20, 2015

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**Candlelight Christmas Eve Services...** 2  
**Year-end Offering for Great Commission... Prayer Concerns...**  
**Michelle Gruber to Speak...**  
**2016 Offering Envelopes...**  
**Live Nativity...**

**Join the CONNECT Group...** 3  
**Wednesday Evening Activities Suspended... Limited Office Hours... It's a Girl!**

**Youth News...** 4  
**Thank You Angel Tree Volunteers... Poinsettias...**

Faith Alliance Church  
6670 Knoxville Ave.  
New Bremen, OH 45869  
419-629-3688

Website: [www.faith-alliance.org](http://www.faith-alliance.org)  
Church Staff

Tom Sager, Senior Pastor  
[tom@faith-alliance.org](mailto:tom@faith-alliance.org)  
James Lampert, Youth Pastor  
[james@faith-alliance.org](mailto:james@faith-alliance.org)  
David Wray, Missions Pastor  
[dave@faith-alliance.org](mailto:dave@faith-alliance.org)  
Gina Tangeman, Children's Director  
[gina@faith-alliance.org](mailto:gina@faith-alliance.org)  
Kristin Lampert, Pre-School Director  
[kristin@faith-alliance.org](mailto:kristin@faith-alliance.org)  
Marty Tangeman, Office Manager  
[marty@faith-alliance.org](mailto:marty@faith-alliance.org)  
Heidi Siebenaler, Care Coordinator  
[heidi@faith-alliance.org](mailto:heidi@faith-alliance.org)

## WELCOME TO FAITH!

### From Pastor Tom's Desk...

In the last two weeks, I've been asked numerous times, "Are you ready for Christmas?" By that question, most people are asking, I think, "Do you have all your Christmas shopping done?" My typical answer is, "Yes, I'm ready." I can say that because I do very little shopping for Christmas. Many years ago our siblings agreed to no longer purchase gifts for each other, and our annual gift to our kids and grandkids is a trip to Great Wolf Lodge (which we enjoyed last week).

However, I'd like to re-frame the meaning of the question, "Are you ready for Christmas?" What would it mean to apply this question to our spiritual lives? Instead of being about gifts or parties, it would be about our openness to Jesus Christ. It would challenge us to examine how seriously we take the message of the Incarnation and how desirous we are to experience Christ in a meaningful way. It seems to me that the mystery of Christmas evokes in us a sense of worship that is rivaled only by the message of Easter.

So, I'll ask again, "Are you ready for Christmas?" Are you ready for Christ to touch your life in a new way? Are you ready to surrender all resistance to God's will and submit to Christ? Are you ready to be intentional in worshipping the Lord Jesus and in reflecting on His Word? Are you ready to seek His

presence in prayer more fervently? Are you ready to share the love of Christ in word and deed with others who don't know Him?

We really don't take the message that Christ has come into the world seriously until we make it personal. Christ's coming was cosmic; his presence is personal. His coming brought truth to our world; his presence in our lives produces obedience. His coming brought hope to a struggling world; his presence enables us to face every new challenge with confidence in Him.

On a very practical note, I encourage you to consider setting aside time on Christmas Eve to worship with us, or with another body of believers if you are traveling. For me, there's something very special about pausing in the midst of our Christmas activities to remember what Christmas is really all about. An hour spent in worship might just be what it takes to help you get ready for Christmas. Because ultimately, Christmas is about opening your heart to Christ.

Philips Brooks said it beautifully in his popular Christmas carol:

O holy Child of Bethlehem,  
Descend on us, we pray.  
Cast out our sin, and enter in;  
Be born in us today.

(Continued on page 2)

## From Pastor Tom's Desk...

*Continued from page 1...*

We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell.  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord, Emmanuel.



Christmas Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Tom

## Candlelight Christmas Eve Services...

We will worship the Lord this Christmas Eve in two identical services. The first will begin at 4:00 p.m.; the second, at 9:00 p.m. Utilizing traditional carols and scripture lessons, we will celebrate the birth of Christ in a candlelight setting. Your unchurched friends and family are especially open to attending church on Christmas Eve, so why not bring someone with you!



## Year-end Offering for Great Commission Fund...

On December 20 and on Christmas Eve, you will have an opportunity to make a special gift to the Great Commission Fund. This fund provides for the living expenses of our CMA missionaries around the world. Your second-mile gift can help further the gospel in nearly 80 countries. Simply mark your gift "GCF" and place it in the offering receptacle as you enter or exit the sanctuary.

## 2016 Offering Envelopes...

New offering envelopes are in the foyer for those who are currently using them. If you aren't using envelopes but would like to start in 2016, please sign the sheet by the offering envelopes.

## Current Prayer Concerns...

- Heidi Siebenaler, recovering from gall bladder surgery
- Matt Wilker, friend of Colin and Molly Rush, farm accident
- Mary Ann Herriott, recovering from accident
- Austin Knapke, cancer
- Ted Wagner, upcoming heart surgery on Dec. 29
- Mitchell Nutt, upcoming back surgery in January
- Ben Boyle's sister, Angie, brain tumor
- Pastor Dave's sister, Shirley, recovering from surgery
- Chris Bowers, undergoing chemotherapy
- Jay Berkey, undergoing chemotherapy
- Brent Paulus, on-going illness
- Bethany Schrader, severe leg and foot pain
- Dick Miller, friend of Pastor Tom and Pam, heart problems
- Pray for our Christmas services.

## Michelle Gruber to Speak...

Michelle Gruber, our partner missionary in the Tea House, will be with us on Sunday, December 27. Michelle is currently on home assignment. She will return to the Tea House next summer. Please plan to be with us as Michelle shares how the Lord has been working in this new field of evangelism.

## Live Nativity...

Thank you to everyone who helped with the Live Nativity this year. We had a record turn out with over 500 people viewing the Nativity. Those who attended were able to take time apart from the all the frenzied festivities and focus on the true meaning of Christmas. Thank you for your faithfulness each year volunteering your time to share this event with our community.

### Join the Connect Group...

The Bible can be an intimidating book. Where should you start reading, what does it mean, and how is it still important for life today? Starting January 6 we're going to address these issues. We will be working through the book of Mark. Those who attend will learn to read scripture well and will develop a strong knowledge and understanding of Mark's gospel. Each week will include a DVD session of detailed teaching and will conclude with discussion to further develop our understanding of the text.



This course will require weekly scripture reading along with a workbook. If you have been wanting to read scripture more or you desire to better understand the meaning of what is written, this group is for you. It will interest those who are only beginning to explore the Bible as well as those who have been studying scripture for years – please come join us, meet others from the church, and enjoy some quality conversation and study. Please let Pastor Trent know if you are interested; workbooks will need to be ordered soon ([trent@faith-alliance.org](mailto:trent@faith-alliance.org) or text 419-733-9441).

### Wednesday Evening Activities Suspended...

With the exception of our Wednesday evening prayer gathering, our Children's, Youth, and Adult ministries will be taking a break over the holidays. All activities, including our Wednesday Night Live meals, will resume on January 6, 2016. That evening, JOURNEY will resume with a study of the synoptic gospels. All are welcome to join us.

### Limited Office Hours...

Church office hours will be limited between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day. If you have an urgent need and are unable to reach anyone at the office, please call Pastor Tom on his cell phone: 419-953-7721.

### Financial Report

Offering December 13, 2015

General Fund: \$3,892

Local Mission: \$135

Great Commission: \$350

Youth Center Repairs: \$30

Trent Fledderjohann: \$145

Tea House: \$10; Kitchen: \$10

Cierra Otting Mission Trip: \$200

### Attendance

Week of December 13, 2015

9:00 Worship – 163

10:30 Worship – 124

Kids – 56; Adult Workers – 5

Total Worship – 348

### Wednesday Night

Kids – 49 ; Adult workers – 9

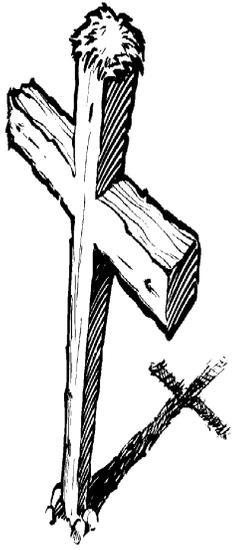
Youth Group – 42 students; 3 adults

### It's a Girl!

Congratulations to Eric and Emily Wenning, on the birth of their daughter, Louisa Alice. Louisa was born on September 25. The Wennings, who now reside in Columbus, worshiped with us last Sunday.



# RENEW



# COMING EVENTS

Sunday, December 20, 2015

### Today

- 9:00... Early Service
- 9:00... Discipleship Class
- 10:30... Late Service
- 10:30... Kids Church

- Dec. Dec. 23 & 30... No Youth Group
- Dec. 24... Christmas Eve Services  
4:00 pm & 9:00 pm
- Jan. 6... Youth Group Resumes
- Jan. 6... Pizza Sales Begin
- Jan. 9... Winter Jam



### This Week

- Thursday... Christmas Eve Services... 4 pm & 9 pm
- Friday... MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!

# MINISTRIES



## Thank You to Angel Tree Volunteers...

I want to personally thank the great group of volunteers we had this year for our Angel Tree Ministry project. From those who graciously took angels and purchased gifts, to those who spent hours delivering them to all the families in our surrounding communities, your efforts were greatly appreciated. Also, I want to give a special thanks to Kay Fenters, who did a fantastic job helping me coordinate Angel Tree this year. With everyone's help, we had the opportunity to share the love of Christ with 92 kids. Several of those who delivered packages shared the blessing of watching children's eyes light up and smiles break across their faces when they received their gifts. The parents really appreciated it too, for in some homes these are the only presents the children will receive.

May you all have a blessed Christmas,  
Elsie Ewing, Angel Tree Coordinator

## Poinsettias...



Poinsettias were placed in the sanctuary by the following people:

Donor:	In (H) Honor of (M) Memory of:
Meri Blackwell	(M) Harmony Grace Blackwell
Joe & Missy Felver	(M) John & Mary Ann Leopard (M) Arthur Vagedes (M) Carl & Margaret Felver (M) Forest & Eileen Hileman
Luan Louis	(M) Jeff Henschen
Joe & Pat Meyer	(M) Marcia Meyer (M) Elizabeth Bunse
Helen Tangeman	(H) Merry Christmas to the Faith Family
Dave & Sharon Wray	(M) Jennifer Lee Wray

*Donors may take their poinsettias home following today's services.*