

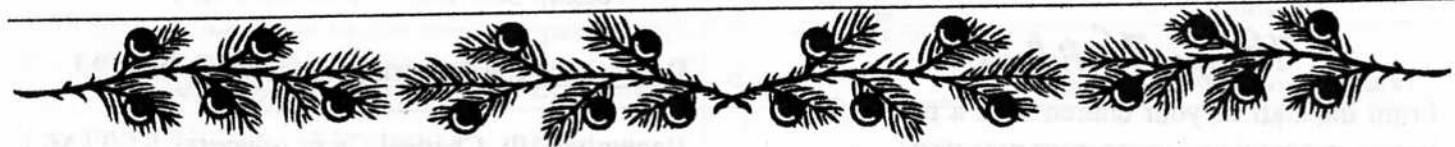


The KEY

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The United Methodist Church of Cranbury
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From the pastor's desk...

I can't believe that Christmas is almost here! I remember as a young boy that it seemed like Christmas would never come around, but now its here, gone, and here again.

I was walking with a friend of mine the other day and he asked me THE QUESTION. "Ron, what do you want for Christmas?" For some reason I hate that question. I know he was fishing around for ideas so that he can purchase me a gift. Knowing this I responded by saying, "I would like a million dollars." He started laughing and then asked again "No, Ron, seriously what would you like for Christmas?" You mean a million dollars is asking for too much? I responded by saying, "I would like for there to be World Peace!" I would also like for everyone in the world to have shelter and food. Is this also asking for too much?

I could tell my friend was getting frustrated because he wasn't successful in retrieving ideas for a Christmas gift.

The older I get I realize there isn't anything I need, only wants. The older I get I realize Christmas isn't about me. It's about God loving us so much that God in all of God's humility revealed himself in human flesh by being born in a manger,

and he was named "Emmanuel" which means "God with us."

Traditionally we call Christmas the birthday of Jesus. I simply could have said to my friend it's not my birthday! I know that this is the time of the year that we can express how much we love each other by exchanging gifts, but let us also think about gifts we can give to others who have real needs in these difficult times.

As we fight the crowds and look for the perfect gifts for our loved ones, may we also reflect what gift we can bring to the world to make it a better place for everyone.

It's so easy for us to name all that's wrong with the world and to curse the darkness; but this year and every year after, let's think about how we can change a life that will transform the world.

What I want for Christmas is that everyone will have a Merry Christmas this year! Is that asking for too much?

Merry Christmas,

Pastor Ron

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Previous versions of *The Key* are available online: <http://www.cranburyumc.org/thekey.html>

Prayer List

Please remember our members and friends in prayer.

The Red Bird Mission	Thelma Alm
Martin Collins	Peg Harris
Ruth Hemlin	Noah Larkin
Raul Martinez	Kay Milo
Eileen Mortimer	Steve Pierce
Kathy Roman	Joyce Schanck
Olga Shen	Barbara Smatusek
Chris Stahl	Bette Thielman
Marcella Woodward	

To add or remove a name from our Prayer list, please contact the church office at (609) 395-1737.

Happy Holidays...

From the staff of your church with a prayer for a happy, peaceful and prosperous new year!

Ben Dager, pastor

Larry Kottalkamp, organist/choir director

Florence Kottalkamp, asst. choir director

Cheryl Kramer, office manager

Andy Van Sichen, custodian

Mitten Trees

Don't forget to pick up mittens, hats, scarves, and toys for children so they can be displayed on the Christmas trees before they are distributed locally.

KIDS' Club

Mark your calendar for December's KIDS' Club, Thursday, December 17, from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. KIDS' Club is for kids in K-5th grade. We will be making ornaments, playing games, eating and just having a good time. Hope to see you there. Remember to save Christmas wrapping paper for our big SNOWFALL in January. We might need it to stuff our snowman and, of course, our big snow blast.

Movie Night is a "Holiday Affair"

If you want to get in the Christmas spirit, join us for the 1949 classic "Holiday Affair" on December 18, at 7:30 PM. This movie stars Janet Leigh and Robert Mitchum.

Calendar of Events for December 2009

December 1: Bible Study, 7:30 PM

December 3: Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:30 PM

December 5: Christmas Shoppe,
10:00 AM-1:00 PM

December 6: Sunday School, 9:00 AM
Sunday School program, 10:15 AM
Worship Services, 9:00 & 11:00 AM

December 9: Administrative Council, 7:30 PM

December 10: Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:30 PM

December 11: Deadline for November newsletter

December 13:
Worship Service w/Children's Choir, 9:00 AM
Worship Service, 11:00 AM

December 15: Bible Study, 7:30 PM

December 16: Women's Circle, 12:00 noon

December 17: KIDS' Club, 5:00-7:00 PM
Chancel Choir rehearsal, 7:30 PM

December 18: Movie Night featuring
"Holiday Affair," 7:30 PM

December 19: Sewing Group, 10:00AM-3:00 PM
Open House at parsonage, 6:00-9:00 PM

December 20: Sunday School, 9:00 AM
Worship Services, 9:00 & 11:00 AM

December 24: Christmas Eve Services,
7:30 & 11:00 PM

December 25: Church office closed

December 27: No Sunday School
Worship Service, 10:00 AM

December 30 & 31: Church office closed

Order Your Poinsettias

You may honor loved ones while giving glory to God by placing a poinsettia in the sanctuary this Christmas. If you want to order a plant, please give \$7.50 and the following information to the church office by Monday, December 7.

I would like to place _____ poinsettia plant(s) in the church

in memory of _____

in honor of _____

as a gift of gratitude to _____

Name _____ Phone _____ Amount _____

Will pick up after the 11:00 Christmas Eve Service. _____ Please distribute poinsettia(s)

Christmas Shoppe

Saturday, December 5, from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM is the date and time for our 13th annual Christmas Shoppe for kids only. This is a wonderful place for kids to shop and get gifts for anyone on their list, including their pets. The gifts are homemade and/or handcrafted for just about everyone on a list. While the kids are shopping, there will be a coffee shop and a bake sale for those who bring the children to shop. Free gift-wrapping is available for the children so that they can keep their shopping a secret. There will be elves to help the children with their shopping. Mark this important date on your calendar and tell everyone you know about this wonderful adventure.

If your child cannot come on the selected date and times, let Gerry McClure know. She will try to select a time for all the children who cannot make it on December 5. The shoppe will be open so that adults can buy on Sunday, December 6, after the Sunday School program and after the second service. Hope to see you there.

Christmas Open House

Please join us for dessert on Saturday, December 19, 6:00-9:00 PM at the parsonage located at 15 Ryan Road, Cranbury. Looking forward to seeing everyone! *Pastor Ron & Nancy*

2nd Annual Souper Bowl is coming!

The Men's Club is going to do it again! It's going to be another opportunity to complement those Super Bowl Sunday gatherings with delicious homemade chili, hickory BBQ beef, and Gerry's special multi-bean soup. This event proved to be a popular fundraiser last year for the Men's club, and we again look forward to providing the same delightful menu.

If this sounds good to you, it's time to tell your friends and family to anticipate this event and plan to get those orders in early.

Look for more details in the Sunday bulletins in January and follow-up messages in the January and February "Keys" for the order forms. You will be able to place your orders ahead of time and have them delivered or picked up on Saturday, February 6, or Sunday, February 7, (Super Bowl Sunday) following the worship service.

Another event already on the Men's Club calendar for the new year:

Princeton Women's Hockey outing

Saturday, February 20

Princeton vs. Yale

Admission: FREE!!

Watch for news about more fun and fellowship events sponsored by the Men's Club. And join the men for their regular meetings on the 4th Sunday of each month at 10:00 (between services) and help make these fellowship events even better with your ideas and support.