

The Messenger ❄️ ❄️ January 2012

A MONTH OF SUNDAYS

As we begin the calendar year we observe the winsome festivals of Epiphany (January 6, celebrated January 1 this year) and the Baptism of Jesus (January 8). Then we sojourn in "ordinary time" until Ash Wednesday, February 22 this year. Of course, the light returns in the natural world as we endure the cold of winter time.

January 1 is New Year's Day. Lord's Supper. Key passage – Matthew 2:1-12 (Epiphany gospel lection).

January 8 marks the festival of The Baptism of Christ. Key passage – Mark 1:4-11.

January 15: Key passage – Psalm 139. Monday, January 16 is Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (church office closed).

January 22 is Ecumenical Sunday on the UCC calendar. Key passage – Mark 1:14-20.

January 29 is Health and Human Service Sunday on the UCC calendar. Key passage – Mark 1:21-28.

PRAYER CONCERNS

By God's grace none of us, to my knowledge, has experienced serious illness or hospitalization in the last month. Please pray for those who live with chronic illness or who are homebound due to reduced mobility.



There are several opportunities for Hospitality Ministry at Mizpah. One of the most obvious and we all count on is to serve fellowship. There is a sign up in the lower level outside the Fellowship Hall. Choose one date. Choose one date each month. Choose one date each quarter. It is easy! If you have any questions or need help, contact

Tom Nelson for complete instruction and he is always willing to help you get started on the Sunday you choose.

I'VE BEEN THINKING ... about 2012.

My crystal ball is notoriously cloudy. Still, as we approach a new year, it's fun – and perhaps salutary – to look ahead. Here are some of my predictions for 2012.

For our church: We at Mizpah will bid final farewell to and receive new members in roughly equal numbers. Our talented staff and faithful members will continue to step forward with creativity and energy as my retirement draws closer. We will take time to fully appreciate how close we have grown in the last 15 years, in Christ's love.

For Hopkins: We will continue to lead the way in the areas of public safety and redevelopment of properties in transition. We will continue to grow together as a community which experiences richness in diversity. Our new City Council members will bring a fresh perspective that will result in a more vigorous business climate.

For our state: We will continue to struggle with the bitter partisanship that has too often characterized state government. We will postpone once again hard conversations about just what we can reasonably expect in terms of public services. We will survive the bitter fight over the "marriage amendment," but hurt feelings will remain. We will continue to struggle largely in vain with the decline in public education. We will continue to age (exactly twelve months each!). The quality and quantity of private service options available to older adults will continue to expand. More people will return to work as the Great Recession slowly eases.

For our nation: The quadrennial election will generate more heat than light. Both presidential candidates will rush to the middle, despite rhetorical nods to their respective radical "bases." We will continue to age and again postpone the hard discussions that ineluctable fact should engender. We will continue the same "culture wars" that have plagued us in recent decades. We will remain mired in a war in Afghanistan, the point of which is unclear to many of us. We will finally recognize – hopefully before it's too late – the grave danger to world peace posed by Iran. We will continue to vacillate on the issue of human-caused climate change.

For the world: China will continue its rise to preeminence in commerce. Europe will stabilize its financial outlook. Africa will continue to emerge from decades of – at best – inept leadership. The Arab world will remain caught between the desire for modernization and traditionalism. Global climate change will result in a series of significant imbalances. The desire for personal freedom will clash with authoritarian rule, everywhere.

In science: We will move decisively closer to a cure – yes, a cure – for Alzheimer's Dementia. Research into the causes of disease, particularly on the molecular level, will lead to greater opportunity to avoid both cancer and heart disease. We will move toward greater understanding of the universe at the smallest and largest scales, including elucidation of "dark matter," "dark energy," and rare sub-atomic particles.

In sports: The Twins will again finish last in the American League Central, but their farm system will slowly improve under Terry Ryan. The construction of the new Vikings Stadium on the Minneapolis Farmer's Market site will be announced. The Wild will make the playoffs and advance one round. The Timberwolves will win 30+ games and double last year's average attendance. The Lynx will repeat.

Pastor Steve

Epiphany Everyday

The watching and waiting now have passed.
How is it with me?

The cradled gift is here at last.
How is it with me?

Was every wish of mine fulfilled,
all anxious longings mercifully stilled?
How is it with me?

Three strangers come
-their names we know-
bringing charity with royal flair.
Their journey and deliverance bear
More than fragrant herbs and gold.
True constancy their gifts bestow.
How is it with me?

(for Cathy) Marcia Gardner

LADIES, LADIES

ICA Birthday Bag Project - cake mix, frosting, candles, small gift for girl or boy - Pat Prudlo is the contact person.

We met on December 13th to discuss present and future projects. Very pleased with the Bake Sale success - approximately \$700.00 - thanks to all that participated and donated. Again, money will go toward new carpeting in the Fellowship Hall and entry to the Hall.

The next 'Soup and Sandwich' on January 3 - 11:00 A. M. - 1:00 P.M. - offers Split Pea Soup, Ham Sandwich, Coffee and Cookie - \$5.00 for adults \$2.50 youth. Thanks to ALL the faithful patrons who support this VERY enjoyable 'food and friendship' event!!

February 25, Trivia Twist

This year we will be combining parts of the annual progressive dinner with a trivia night at Mizpah. This adults-only event will be February 25, 2012. There will be an entrance fee, teams will be assigned by draw, half the entrance fee will go to prizes and half will begin to fund Mizpah's 125th Anniversary celebration in 2013. Each participant will be asked to bring a food dish to share (appetizer, soup/chili/stew, or dessert). There will be appetizer, a round of trivia, soup, another round of trivia, dessert, another round of trivia, clean up, and then the first and second place teams will be announced.

Volunteers who aren't interested in the trivia portion are welcome to help set up, serve, tally, etc. Contact Sue Scully.

Good advice...

1. Pray.

2. Smile at perfect strangers.

Don't wait for people to smile. Show them how. Let your guard down. Talk to someone you don't know straight from your heart. Compliment them. Don't anticipate awkwardness. Just be you in that beautiful way only you know and give them the chance to smile and connect with you. The more you smile at others, the more others will smile at you. And life's a lot more pleasant when everyone around you is smiling. Read [How To Win Friends and Influence People](#).

3. Pretend today is going to be a great.

Do so, and it will be. Research shows that although we think that we act because of the way we feel, in fact, we often feel because of the way we act. A great attitude always leads to great experiences.

4. Reflect on what's good.

Appreciate all the good things in your life, no matter how small. You already have some amazing things in your life, whether you realize it or not. Most of us have incredible family members, friends, other loved ones who love us back. Learn to appreciate what a miracle that is. Most of us have good health, which is another miracle. Most of us have eyes, with which to enjoy the amazing miracles of sunsets and nature and beauty all around us. Most of us have ears, with which to enjoy music, one of the greatest miracles ever. Be grateful for each of these things, and more! Take time every day, throughout the day, to thank life for all that it has given you, to thank others for what they give you, to be grateful.

5. Use personal strengths to get things done.

Everyone possesses unique personal strengths. We all have different talents and skill sets. Emotional happiness comes naturally to those who use their strengths to get things done. The state of completion always creates a sense of achievement. If this achievement is based exclusively on your personal ability to get the job done, the psychological rewards are priceless. Read [StrengthsFinder](#).

6. Use your imagination.

Yesterday I saw a kid in the grocery store having the time of his life with nothing more than a banana and his imagination. He was pretending the banana was a rocket ship, and he was flying it all over the store. How is it that we are born knowing how to enjoy life, and yet after learning all of the wonderful things we adults learn, we somehow forget how to have fun? It's almost like we get dumber in this regard as we get older. The solution? Counteract the aging process with the full power of your imagination. You don't have to pretend bananas are rocket ships – although that would be fun – but try to imagine something that makes you smile at least once a day.

7. Create something.

Creation is a process like none other. Putting to use your innovative faculties and constructing something with your own two hands will leave you with an indescribable sense of wholeness. There really is no substitute for it. The only caveat is that it must be related to something you actually care about. If you are creating financial plans for clients all day and you hate it, then that's not going to work. But if you can find something you love, and create something

related to it, it will make all the difference in your life. If you haven't created something in a while just for the sake of creating, try it. You will not be disappointed.

8. Help someone else for a couple minutes.

In life, you get what you put in. When you make a positive impact in someone else's life, you also make a positive impact in your own life. The more you help others, the more they will want to help you. Love and kindness begets love and kindness. And so on and so forth.

9. Share your lunch break with a close friend.

Get out of the office, away from your work and spend 30 to 40 minutes eating and socializing with someone you care about. You'll find that your mind will naturally start to unwind and you'll begin to feel a bit more like yourself again.

10. Get rid of one thing a day.

We have so much clutter surrounding us at any given moment (at the office, in our cars, in our homes) and we've become so accustomed to it that we no longer notice how it affects us. If you start cleaning up some of that external clutter, a lot of internal clutter will disappear as well. Choose one needless item each and every day and get rid of it. It's that simple. It might be difficult at first, so expect some resistance. But after some time you will begin to learn to let go of your packrat tendencies, and your mind will thank you for your efforts.

11. Meditate.

Meditation is the art of focusing 100% of your attention in one area. The practice comes with a myriad of well-publicized health benefits including increased concentration, decreased anxiety, and a general feeling of happiness. On a general level, meditation helps you slow down, accept the moment you are in and achieve a higher sense of presence. If you use meditation as a form of relaxation, it really doesn't take long for you to start feeling the positive effects. Read [Real Happiness: The Power of Meditation](#).

12. Avoid negativity and negative people.

Don't belittle yourself and don't put up with people who try to belittle you. You are as capable as you believe you are. There will always be obstacles, but if you think positive thoughts and seek solutions, you can accomplish what others say is impossible.

13. Enjoy the moment.

This moment is your life. Enjoy it. Whatever you're doing, regardless of the circumstances, pay attention and appreciate it. Reading, writing, talking with a co-worker, taking a shower, walking up stairs, eating, washing dishes, sweeping, etc. These small moments make up a huge portion of your life. They can be enjoyed if you open your eyes and ears, and pay attention to what you're doing. Happiness is found with steady awareness.

This article was co-written by [Marc](#) and [Fred Tracy](#). Fred Tracy runs a [personal development](#) website where he shares his insights and quirky stories. All of his information is distilled into articles with the sole purpose of teaching you, the reader, [how to build character](#) and achieve the life of your dreams.

❄️ January 2012 ❄️

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 New Year's Day	2 office closed	3 9 Fix it	4 10 Bible Study	5	6	7 Intergroup
10 Worship		SOUP lunch				
		11-1		Loaves & Fishes		
		Council 7	Choir 7			
8 9 Coffee w/Steve	9	10 9 Fix it	11 10 Bible Study	12	13	14 Intergroup
10 Worship Church School			Mizpah Fellowship 12			
Fellowship				Replay IKE		
Confirmation			Choir 7			
15 9 Coffee w/Steve	16 M L King Day	17 9 Fix it	18 10 Bible Study	19	20	21 Intergroup
10 Worship Church School	office closed					Gathering 9
Fellowship				Replay IKE		Set up for taste
	Combo Boards 7		Choir 7			
22 9 Coffee w/Steve	23	24 9 Fix it	25 10 Bible Study	26	27	28 Intergroup
10 Worship Church School						
TASTE OF		Stewardship	Family Night 6-7:30	Replay IKE		
MIZPAH		MCS 6-10	Choir 7			
29 9 Coffee w/Steve	30	31 9 Fix it				
10 Worship Church School						
Fellowship						
		MCS 6-10				

January Birthdays

2 Betty Jacobson, Chris Stone **3** Kathy Hoy **7** Marcia Gardner **8** Bob Lerner

10 Mary Brandenburger, Nancy Ringold, Sara Mittelstaedt, Jan Blackstad **11** Karen Jensen, Bob Jensen **12** Dottie Jung

13 Meridel Hedblom **16** Stacey Carlson, Tom Williams III **18** Don Hagen, Mary Alexander, Marc Pettygrove, Brad Ferguson

20 Betsy Ferguson **21** Ronald Jacobsen **22** Jim Strom, Al Fiene **23** Kathi Wilkerson **25** Alice Kelley, Elise Hales

27 Keith Conway **28** Dolly Fraser, Sam Beatty, Garrett Pearson **29** Marge Carstens, Mark Kusche