



## His Unfailing Presence

Another year I enter  
Its history unknown;  
Oh, how my feet would tremble  
To tread its paths alone!  
But I have heard a whisper,  
I know I shall be blest;  
"My presence shall go with thee,  
And I will give thee rest."

What will the New Year bring me?  
I may not, must not know;  
Will it be love and rapture,  
Or loneliness and woe?  
Hush! Hush! I hear His whisper;  
I surely shall be blest;  
"My presence shall go with thee,  
And I will give thee rest."  
--Unknown Author

## URGENT JOY



A friend told me that, at the birth of his child, adrenaline set in. He was surprised by the energy and focus he had. Even after hours of supporting his wife through labor when the baby arrived the last thing he could do was sleep. He wanted to hold him, change him, do as much around the house as he could. He urgently wanted to do anything that he could to be a good father and good husband.

I don't know how common this phenomena is, this rush of focus and adrenaline that comes with the birth of a child. But it's something I have experienced this week. Don't get me wrong I'm tired. Labor lasted a long time and there were aspects to it and delays that we couldn't have anticipated. It was exhausting (much more so for Tamsin and Theodore). But as we begin to establish what truly amounts to a new life as a family, I find myself

drawing from reserves of energy and focus that I didn't know I had. My desire to be a good dad and a good husband and to bask in the joy of this wonderful time is way stronger than my desire for sleep. I suspect that there will come a time when I'll need to crash, but it hasn't happened yet. Right now all I want to do is help with Theo, and help around the house, and cherish this time, and I want to do it all with an urgency that I don't remember ever before feeling.

Theodore's birth has given me energy and focus. Undoubtedly some of it comes from a sense of responsibility to care for him and Tamsin, but I think more of it stems (or better yet erupts) from the joy of these moments, the joy of receiving the wonderful gift of life. It's joy that is quite literally changing my life. Tamsin and I celebrated the gift of new life this Christmas morning in a very particular and tangible way. But I wonder if the joy we all receive at Christmas, the joy of Christ, the joy of incarnation, isn't something that might inspire, embolden and enliven us all to find energy we didn't know we had to share God's love with the world. Maybe the joy we all received at the birth of Christ might erupt into an urgency to embody God's grace and goodness in ways we never knew we could.

Grace and Peace  
Pastor Peter



## Arbor Christmas

Who can forget the joy of Christmas at Arbor? The children were delightful as they reenacted Christ's birth. Our live sheep (Fabio and Matthew) were priceless.

Who can forget Sarah and Jeremy's Ave Maria or Hannah's solo?

And then, we had the birth of a special little boy on Christmas morning.

We have been blessed!

## PARISH CONCERNS

Nancy (May) McDuff is recovering at home following knee surgery. She asks for prayers and support following the death of her husband Steve and this surgery.

The family of Linnea Tornqvist has notified us that Linnea passed away in November. Many of you met Linnea over the last year or so when she came to our church, usually accompanied by an aide or her son. She loved to share her Swedish roots and language with those who shared this background. She loved to worship God with song and scripture. She will be missed.

Condolences can be sent to the Tornqvist Family at  
313 Cheyenne Trail  
Madison, WI 53705

## CENTERING PRAYER WORKSHOP

Ken Lund has invited interested Arbor friends to a Centering Prayer Workshop at Christ Presbyterian Church on January 9 from 8:30 AM-2:00 PM. This workshop will focus on the "why" of Centering Prayer as well as ways to be attentive to and experience God's presence and action within. Centering Prayer Topics include Prayer as Relationship, a Method of Centering Prayer, Thoughts and Centering Prayer, Fruits of Centering Prayer and Extending the Benefits into Daily Life. The workshop will continue in 4 weekly sessions (January 14, 21, 28 and February 4 at 6:30 PM).

If you are interested or want more information, please see Ken Lund



# ANNUAL MEETING



## Hear Ye, Hear Ye Arbor Covenant Church Annual Meeting Sunday, January 24, 2016 at 5:00 pm

I don't know what comes to your mind when you think of an annual meeting. Tedium? Paper work? If you are young enough, a time to get some good food at the potluck and then play while the adults do their thing. We'll arrange for child care, if you plan to attend with children. Maybe I can even hold Theodore for a while.

While all of the above may be true, it's also a time for congregational reflection on the past year, as well as sharing and course setting for the new year. Expenditures and revenue targets are recommended for congregational review and will be adopted by the congregation (with changes, as agreed upon). I can assure you that the Leadership Team takes the budget very seriously. If something needs to be changed during the year, we'll be back to the congregation.

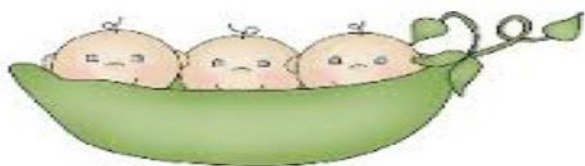
There are a few special items for us to prayerfully ponder as we seek the Spirit's leading.

- Shall we prepay a sizable part of our existing mortgage (currently about \$65,000)? We have cash reserves, and prepaying part of the mortgage would reduce our monthly payments to National Covenant Properties.
- Funding to expand and improve the Arbor website in the early part of 2016. A position description is being drafted.
- Some investment in new water and cost saving plumbing appliances. As they say it's the right thing to do as part of our stewardship of God's creation, and it will help us avoid higher water bills when the toilets fail to seal properly.
- How did our many and varied conversations on human sexuality impact us, and how might we respond in our work and missions?

I hope as many of you as can attend. If there are other items that you'd like to have discussed, please see any member of the Leadership Team. And don't forget to pick a copy of the proposed budget in early January and look it over. The potluck begins at 5 pm. The Annual Meeting starts at 6 pm.

Peace,  
Mark Hanson  
Chair, Leadership Team

## BABY SHOWER #3



Arbor has been blessed by quite the baby boom in the last few months. First there was Will Woofter in November and then Theodore Morris on Christmas Day.

And next we have a little girl who will arrive some time around the end of February. Her parents are Michelle (Pecotte) and Daniel Stachowiak. Michelle's aunt, Deb Levin, is hosting a baby shower for Michelle. Daniel, and their baby girl.



Everyone (men and women) is invited to the shower on January 23 at Deb Levin's home. We will begin with a light lunch at 11:30 a.m. Michelle is registered at Amazon and Babies-R-Us.

Deb Levin's home  
702 Westward Drive  
Verona Wi 53593  
608-332-0325

Directions to Deb's home: Take Verona Road toward Dodgeville. Take exit 76 (Verona Rd/Epic Lane). Turn left on Westridge - it is the 1st available left turn. Take a right at 2nd road which is Westward. House is on the left at the bottom of the hill on the corner. It is a tan ranch style home.

## MAKE A NEW YEARS RESOLUTION TO JOIN A STUDY GROUP

New Year's Resolutions – Arbor has two weekly study groups that welcome your participation. On Thursday evenings, a group meets at 7 PM at the home of Dan and Deb Meyer. On Sunday morning a group meets from 9:15-10:15 AM before worship at church.

**Thursday evening Small Group Study** – The group will begin to study I John and then move on to II and III John when they are ready. Newcomers are welcome!! (note: change to Wednesday January 6 – not the 7<sup>th</sup>. One week only)

**Sunday Morning Small Group Study** - On This date, December 31st 1862, the first Watch Night Services were celebrated in historical "Black" churches and communities. The first "Watch Night" also known as "Freedom's Eve" still brings many Americans of African descent together at this time every year to celebrate. The celebration takes place in churches where many of its member's ancestors were held enslaved. Services begins anywhere from 7 PM To 10 PM with praise and worship and ends at midnight with the entrance of the New Year. Some people come to church first, before going out to celebrate, for others, church is the only New Year's Eve event. *(The Watch Night service can be traced back to gatherings also known as "Freedom's Eve." On that night, Black slaves and free blacks came together in churches and private homes all across the nation awaiting news that the Emancipation Proclamation actually had become law. At the stroke of midnight, it was January 1, 1863; all slaves in the Confederate States were declared legally free. When the news was received, there were prayers, shouts and songs of joy as many people fell to their knees and thanked God.)* The African American Desk Reference Schomburg Center for research in Black Culture The Secular Seasons promotes many secular celebrations, holidays, and events some are celebrated in churches though out the country. Many of these are inclusive events that everyone can enjoy, whatever their religion or beliefs. Some are designed specifically for fun with friends and families gathering, others with prayers and thanksgiving. Recently there have been instances where clergy in mainline denominations questioned the propriety of linking religious services with secular church traditions such as St. Lucia Day, Harvest Fest, Thanksgiving, Halloween, May Day, Watch Night (Freedom's Eve) and Kwanzaa and many others.

The pros and cons of these and other celebrations will be discussed in Sunday Morning Small Group beginning on January 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:15.



## ARBOR BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP



Please plan to join us for the second Arbor Book Group meeting. We will be discussing Harper Lee's two books – *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set a Watchman*. *To Kill a Mockingbird* was probably required reading for you in school (regardless of your age) *Go Set a Watchman* is Harper Lee's newly discovered prequel (or first draft) to the classic. *Go Set a Watchman* tackles the racism of the 1950's from the vantage point of Scout, as an adult woman. It has been controversial since its discovery. Gunnard Swanson has agreed to facilitate the discussion. Gunnard has taught *To Kill a Mockingbird* countless times and is eager to discuss both books.

Jan and Chuck Gietzel have once again graciously agreed to let us meet at their condo in Central Madison. The meeting will take place January 27(Wednesday) at 7 p.m. at 360 W. Washington Avenue, Unit 402.

All are welcome – please consider joining with Arbor friends in discussing these important books. You may also invite friends!!

## HUMAN SEXUALITY FORUMS

For the last 5 months, Arbor Covenant has engaged in a series of discussion forums centering on the issues of Human Sexuality. These forums have coincided with decisions in the Evangelical Covenant Church denomination. Many people have taken advantage of the opportunity to explore both the issue and the controversies in today's church.

In January we will be concluding these discussions – On January 10 after church, Pastor Peter will offer a discussion forum that will “wrap up the loose ends” and perhaps raise questions that people still want to discuss.

On January 20, from 6:30-8:00 PM Pastor Peter will offer another Simple Supper, where participants share a simple soup dinner and then have a final discussion together.

While this topic has been difficult to discuss at times, many feel that Arbor has always been a church where different opinions and beliefs are allowed to co-exist under the strong belief that all are welcome in God's church.

Please consider joining one of the discussions.

Lissa Turner submitted this to remind us of how much our lives have changed in the last 100 years. It is widely available online.

## THE YEAR IS 1915 – JUST ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO



- The average life expectancy for men was 47 years.
- Fuel for cars was only sold in drug stores
- Only 14% of homes had a bathtub
- Only 8% of homes had a telephone
- The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph.
- The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower.
- The average US wage in 1910 was 22 cents/hour
- The average US worker made between \$200 and \$400/year.
- A competent accountant could expect to earn \$2000/year
- A dentist could make \$2500/year
- A mechanical engineer could make about \$5000/year
- More than 95% of all births took place at home.
- 90% of all doctors had no college education. Instead, they attended so-called medical schools, many of which were condemned in the press and government as “substandard”.
- Sugar cost 4 cents/pound.
- Eggs were 14 cents for a dozen.
- Coffee was 15 cents a pound.
- Most women only washed their hair once a month. They used Borax or egg yolks for shampoo.
- Canada passed a law that prohibited poor people from entering into their country for any reason.
- The five leading causes of death were: pneumonia and influenza, tuberculosis, diarrhea, heart disease and stroke.
- The American flag had 45 stars.
- The population of Las Vegas, Nevada was only 30.
- Crossword puzzles, canned beer and iced tea had not been invented yet.
- There was neither a Mother’s Day nor a Father’s Day.
- Two out of every 10 adults could not read or write.
- Only 6% of all Americans had graduated from high school.
- Marijuana, heroin and morphine were all available over the counter at a local drugstore.
- Back then pharmacists said, “Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyance to the mind, regulates the stomach and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health!”
- 18% of households had at least one full-time servant or domestic help.
- And last, there were about 230 reported murders in the entire United States.

It is amazing how fast everything around us is changing. It is impossible to imagine what it will be like in another 100 years.



### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- January 12 JD Turner
- January 21 Amanda Goettler
- January 23 Michelle Stachowiak
- January 24 Mike Drews
- January 24 Dan Meyer
- January 31 Kristina Keillor

### JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- January 2 – Dick and Ardeth Lindgren (55 years)
- January 11 – Doug and Sheri Keillor

Pastor Peter Morris and Tamsin Ford welcomed their son Theodore Ford Morris early on Christmas morning. Theodore weighed 7 lbs. 12 oz. Blessings to this wonderful family.

### GOOD NEIGHBOR PERSONAL ESSENTIALS PANTRY ITEM OF THE MONTH



Dish Detergent (approximately 32 oz.)

If you are able to donate this item, please leave it in the box in the foyer

Thank you

### VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

	Hosts	Nursery	Children's Church	Lay Reader	Projector
<b>January 3</b>	Sue and John Pecotte	Deb Levin	Lissa Turner	Kris Brown	Susan Corrado
<b>January 10</b>	Deb and Dan Meyer	Susan Corrado	Ruth Hallblade	Ann-Britt Keillor	Michelle Stachowiak
<b>January 17</b>	Ulrika and Gunnard Swanson	Debby Meyer	Ruth Hallblade	Susan Corrado	Chuck Gietzel
<b>January 24</b>	Kris and Phil Brown	Joyce Boggess	Mark Hanson	Gunnard Swanson	Chuck Gietzel
<b>January 31</b>	Ann-Britt Keillor and Rod Johnson	Matthew Fledderjohann	Fabio Mora	Debby Meyer	Mark Hanson

# JANUARY 2016

3 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship Communion Deacon Fund	4	5	6 7 PM- Small Group at Meyers	7	8 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	9 8:30 AM- 2:00 PM Centering Prayer Workshop
10 9:15-10:15 AM Sunday Small Group 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship 11:45 AM Final Human Sexuality Forum	11	12	13	14 6:30 PM- Leadership Team	15 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	16
17 9:15-10:15 AM Sunday Small Group 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship	18	19	20 6:30-8:00 PM Final Simple Supper/Human Sexuality Forum	21 10:30 AM Community Meals @ Luke House 5:30 PM-7:30 PM Personal Essentials Pantry 7 PM- Small Group at Meyers	22 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	23 11:30 Baby Shower
24 9:15-10:15 AM Sunday Small Group 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship <b>5:00 PM- Potluck and Annual Meeting</b>	25	26	27 7:00 PM- Book discussion at Gietzel's condo	28 7 PM- Small Group at Meyers 4:30-7:30 AM- Homeless Shelter @ Grace Episcopal (Gunnard Swanson/Peter Morris)	29 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	30
31 9:15-10:15 AM Sunday Small Group 10:25 AM Gathering Music 10:30 AM Call to Worship	1	2	3	4	5 10:00 AM-1:00 PM Personal Essentials Pantry	6

