



*Peace on earth  
will come to stay,  
When we live Christmas  
every day.*  
- Helen Steiner Rice

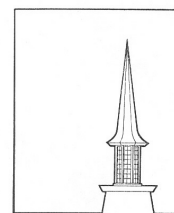
### **BIRTHDAYS**

- 1 Rebecca Ricker, Garron Bittinger
- 9 Roveen Yoder
- 11 Josh Helmick
- 12 Katrina Dolly, Richard Helmick
- 14 Kayla Helmick
- 15 Savannah Dayton
- 16 Brannon Dayton
- 18 Shirley Kurtz
- 20 Maxine Reall
- 22 Brenda Liller
- 23 Nita Netzer
- 28 Dennis Brown, Janelle Helmick,  
Paula Monnett



### **ANNIVERSARIES**

- 9 Eric & Leslie Helmick
- 21 Lawrence & Judi Brenneman
- 31 Buck & Donna Dayton



# CONNECTION

DEC 2011  
Vol. 1 No.12

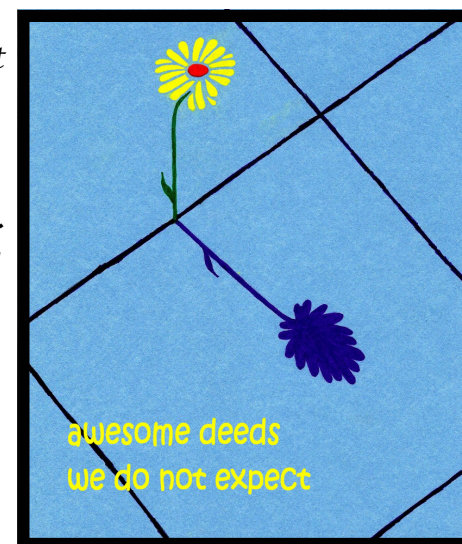
## **Pinto Mennonite Church**

**"In Christ's body we're all connected to each other..."**  
Eph 4:25 , *The Message*

### ***AWESOME DEEDS WE DO NOT EXPECT***

*For when you did  
awesome things that  
we did not expect,  
you came down,  
and the mountains  
trembled before you.  
Since ancient times  
no one has heard,  
no ear has  
perceived,  
no eye has seen any  
God besides you,  
who acts  
on behalf of those  
who wait for him.*

*Isaiah 64:3-4*



During this Advent season, we invite you to meditate on God's sure coming--but often in places we would not think to look. We invite you to ponder God's awesome deeds--but often not the ones we would expect. What we celebrate and anticipate this Advent is the unexpected manner of God's coming in Jesus, and the unexpected ways God is still coming to upend our world.

## ADVENT WORSHIP

### **Dec. 4 Changing the Landscape- John Prepares the Way Mark 1:1-8**

Repentance raises valleys, lowers hills, and challenges the ways we're accustomed to living. Are we ready for things to be different, to let God's coming alter the landscape of our lives?



Pastor Merle will be preaching each Sunday. Doris Ours will be song leader with Carla Brown accompanying. Jeff Morgan will be worship leader. Gathering music this Sunday will be by Jan Livengood and she will also play the offertory. Penny Power offering will be collected. There will be no evening service.

### **Dec. 11 Transforming our Sorrow- Light of the World John 1:6-8,19-28**

We have been promised a day when tears of sorrow will be transformed to shouts of joy. But we live in a "meantime" still marked by oppression, broken hearts, and loss of freedom. We are invited to hold fast to what is good, even while we wait for God's intervention.

One of the new praise groups will lead gathering music. Teagan will provide the offertory music. Nativity pieces will be presented to Sunday School children.

**5 pm Children's Christmas Program**  
(See article on page 3)

### **Dec 18 Reordering Our World- The Birth Foretold Luke 1:26-38, 46-55**

We serve a God who lifts the lowly, fills the hungry, and chooses an unwed teenage girl for a role of greatest honor. God's shalom overturns the world's assumptions about what matters and what doesn't. How do we begin to evince this new kingdom reordering now?

Doris Ours will lead gathering music and Teagan Powers will play the offertory.

**6 pm "The Shoe Cobbler" and soup supper**  
(See article on page 4).



"As we enter Advent, I'd like to remind the congregation that I can't stand fruitcake."

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## **SERVE IN YOUTH VENTURE THIS SUMMER**

Calling everyone ages 14-22: Are you looking for a fun and meaningful way to serve for a few weeks this summer? Youth Venture locations for 2012 include Bolivia, Botswana, France, Honduras, Alaska, California, Florida and Texas! Learn more at [Serve.mennonitemission.net](http://Serve.mennonitemission.net) or contact Jill Schmidt at [JillS@mennonitemission.net](mailto:JillS@mennonitemission.net).

## **ONE CHRISTMAS CARD**



Bring one card for the whole congregation to share, and then give the money you would've spent on individual cards and postage to go toward a specific project.

Many children write letters to Santa. Here is another alternative, written by Aaron Monnett for a school assignment.

Dear Sir:

I am Aaron and I am from the Pinto Mennonite Church. My Sunday school class and I are having a toy drive for the needy children in our area. Would you be willing to donate some toys that do not sell in your store to the Toys for Happiness?

The children will appreciate your donations. Along with the toy they will receive a Bible. The children will be happy and feel loved.

It will help you. Donating the toys for the toy drive will get rid of old toys that do not sell. You would get more room in the store for new toys.

If you will help us please call us at 301-729-2714. Thank you for helping with this project.

Sincerely,  
Aaron Monnett

### **NEW NAMES AND NEW LOOK FOR CELEBRATION**

The *Celebration* Praise Team is presenting a new look, or rather two new looks. Enough people have expressed interest in singing with *Celebration* that it was decided to form two groups instead of one. One of those groups, *New Praise*, led our Gathering Music on November 13. *New Praise* consists of Kurt and Kim Helmick, Kevin Livengood, Scott Helmick, Bree Flowers, Caitlin Flowers, Teagan Powers, Nita Netzer, and Evie Christner. This group has chosen a Saturday practice time and hopes to sing about once a month.

The second group, which is yet to be named, will lead us in gathering music on December 11. Members of this group are Carla & Denny Brown, Wayne & Roveen Yoder, Aaron Livengood, Kevin Livengood, Evie Christner, Mary Twigg, and Cathy Chapman. This group has a Monday evening practice time and also hope to lead gathering music about once a month.

Both groups would welcome new members, especially instrumentalists. Please contact one of the group members if you would like to join. On occasions when a larger group is desired, the two groups will sing together and will be called *Celebration*.

### **Christmas Day Dec 25 Celebrating the Savior Luke 2:22-40**

God showed up in our world in the least expected way, in the form of an infant. This is how God comes, what God's awesome deeds look like--a small shoot springing up and changing everything. Christ has come, and the world is being transformed. So let's celebrate!

**There will be no Sunday  
School and the Worship  
Service will begin at 10 am.**

There will be a slide presentation by Wayne Yoder with recorded music as we gather. Pastor Merle will have the message and the Pinto chorus will sing several numbers.



### ***TAKE A WALK THROUGH BETHLEHEM***

This year the Children's Christmas Program will take a fresh look at the familiar story of the birth of Jesus. Jan Livengood and Pat Liller have planned a nativity service to be presented in Larry & Pat's barn at 5 pm on December 11.

The preschoolers will have a short program, followed by the nativity presentation. The chorus will sing several songs

from the Christmas Cantata, "A King Is Given", familiar to many of you. A lighting service will conclude the service.

Dress warmly and be inspired by God's beautiful gifts of being outside and worshipping. Seating is available on straw bales and chairs and there will be accommodations for shelter and warmth if you need it. Refreshments will be served after the service. "Come and worship our newborn King."



## THE SHOE COBBLER

On December 18<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm, "The Shoe Cobbler", under the direction of Phil Dayton will be presented at the church. This Christmas story has a very meaningful and moving message for all. The basis for this play comes from Matthew 25: 35-40 where we read:



35 'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

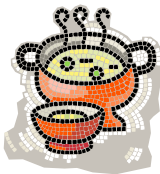
37 "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'

40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Cast members for the play include: Drew Morgan (Conrad), Diane Dayton-Green (old lady), Derek Green (beggar), Dezi Fenchum (child), Roger Knight and Caitlin Flowers (friends), Becky Ricker (reader), Dawn Dayton (flute), Aaron Livengood (guitar), Beth Livengood (lighting), Al Anderson (voice of God).

The evening's service will include singing and will be closed with a candle lighting service. Teagan Powers will provide an organ prelude.

Last year following the presentation of this play, Don Yoder was overheard expressing to Phil his appreciation for the message the play had to offer. He asked if it would be possible to repeat the play next year (2011) followed by a meal of oyster stew in the fellowship hall for everyone.



Several people came together this year to make this happen. Following the service we will have a meal of soups (including oyster stew), salads, bread and desserts in the fellowship hall.

This is a service that you will not want to miss. Invite your friends, neighbors and family to be truly blessed by this Christmas play. *Karen Morgan*

(Continued)

Pastor Merle was also anointed by Donna Mast. She used an orange-scented oil explaining that whenever Merle smelled that particular aroma, it would remind him of this anointing.

Special music was provided by Dennis, Carla, and Ryan Brown who sang, "Closer to You". Merle received a special surprise from his three fellow classmates in the Pastoral Ministries program in the form of a video clip affirming his gifts and providing some humorous memories.

A fellowship meal was served following the service. Special guests for the day included Merle's parents, Ken and Ida Christner, and his brother Ernie with his wife Emily, from Mongo, IN. All of Merle and Evie's children and grandchildren were also present for this special day in his life. They include: Jay, Carissa, and Gabriel Christner from Madison, WI; Rob, Elizabeth, Ben, and Luke Christner from Raleigh, NC; and Teresa, Sheldon, Aiden and Ian Rice from Bridgewater, VA.

Ordination is a high point in the life and ministry of a pastor. It is a time for great rejoicing by the congregation and wider church community. For the pastor, it is an opportunity to make a reaffirmation before God and the congregation of one's call to ministry. In calling for the ordination, the congregation and conference are commending this person to the entire church as one called and capable of Christian ministry. It is an important and special occasion for the pastor, the congregation, and the conference.



*Pinto leadership persons and credentialed pastors were invited forward for the laying on of hands and prayer of consecration. Members of the congregation were also invited to participate symbolically by extending their hands.*



## PASTOR MERLE ORDAINED

Sunday, November 27, during the morning worship service, the Pinto congregation affirmed the calling of Merle Christner to the ministry by participating in his ordination.

David Greiser, pastor or North Baltimore Mennonite Church, preached the sermon on "Jars of Clay". He emphasized that all ministers and, indeed, all Christians, have the Resurrection Power of God residing within us to provide us with the ability to do that to which God has called us. David served as the director of the Hesston College Pastoral Ministry Program during part of the time that Merle was a student there and is a friend and mentor to Merle.

Donna Mast, Allegheny Conference Minister led the portion of the service dedicated to the ordination ceremony. She explained the purpose of ordination as practiced by Mennonite Church USA and then conducted the examination question and answer portion with Pastor Merle and the congregation confirming his call to serve as pastor, priest, and teacher. She concluded with this charge. "In all that you do, you are to nourish Christ's people from the riches of his grace, and strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come." (Continued)

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*To Serve God's People*



*Donna Mast conducts the ordination ceremony*



## *Bethlehem Of Judea*

A little child,  
A shining star.  
A stable rude,  
The door ajar.  
Yet in that place,  
So crude, forlorn,  
The Hope of all  
The world was born.



"The joy of brightening other lives, bearing each others' burdens, easing other's loads and supplanting empty hearts and lives with generous gifts becomes for us the magic of Christmas." -- W. C. Jones

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIVING...

For your family, Sunday School class, or other group.

- Contribute to Pinto church's commitment to supply Christmas Dinner served at the Rescue Mission.
- MCC--Choose a gift for family and friends that helps one more child sleep in a safe shelter, one more family add to its herd or flock or one more community have safe drinking water from a nearby source. Even a small donation can make a big difference. See [mcc.org](http://mcc.org).
- Donate money, time, or materials to "Restoration of the Heart", a Christian non-profit organization in Cumberland that provides affordable housing with Christian oversight for individuals with minimum income. Presently they are providing housing for men recently released from prison who need help transitioning back into society. They are offering partnering opportunities in the form of one-time donations or monthly support. See Pastor Merle for more information or to "adopt" a project.
- Heifer Project--Choose a meaningful gift to give a loved one and help children and families around the world receive training and animal gifts that help them become self-reliant. See [heifer.org](http://heifer.org) for more information.

# Pinto Mennonite Church

Pastor Merle Christner

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# DECEMBER 2011

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Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 7am Men's Bible Studies
4 Sermon: Pastor Merle Penny Power 5:30 pm MD small group	5 6 pm Game Night 7 pm Chorus prac- tice 7:30 pm Nameless praise team prac- tice	6 6 pm Community Women's Dinner 7 pm Council	7 7 pm Bible Study	8	9	10 7am Men's Bible Studies 9:30 am Children's program practice
11 Sermon: Pastor Merle 5 pm Children's Christmas Program	12 6 pm Game Night	13	14 7 pm Bible Study	15 7 pm Elders	16	17 7am Men's Bible Studies
18 Sermon: Pastor Merle 6 pm "The Shoe Cobbler" & soup supper	19 6 pm Game Night	20	21 7 pm Bible Study	22	23	24 7am Men's Bible Studies
25 NO Sunday School 10 am Worship Sermon: Pastor Merle No evening worship	26 6 pm Game Night	27	28 No Bible Study	29	30	31 7am Men's Bible Studies