



# THE TOWERS

201 S. Main St., West Milton, Ohio 45383

December 2020



A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR

*Do Not Be Afraid*

**Luke 2:10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.**

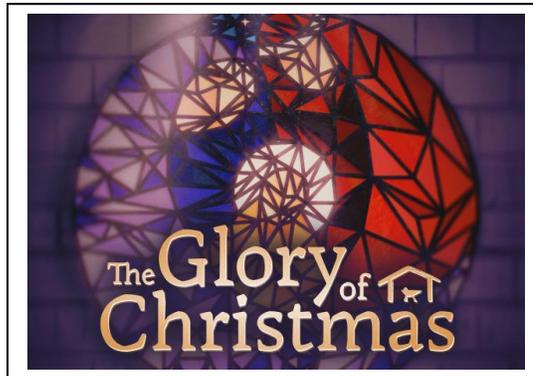
Some of you heard me speak around this passage back in July, and will again on Christmas Eve. In this season I am giving myself a bit of hazard relief (golf term!), for I believe this part of the Christmas message may bear repeating, particularly as *this* season endures.

Throughout the accounts of Christ's birth, we see the message of "Do Not Be Afraid" given to Joseph, to Mary, and to the Shepherds. From the Old Testament through the Good News and the New Testament, the message "Do not be afraid" is repeated over and over and over again. Some online encouraging memes report there are 365 such admonitions in Scripture (there may be just a few less or more, I don't have the focus to count them all ☺). 2020 may require every sing one of them. I think by and large there are very few in the Hoffman family who are "afraid" of the pandemic in particular. Many are fine knowing their heavenly home awaits, however the manner of entrance. That being said, many of us are concerned for how getting sick could impact others if we were to inadvertently spread the virus to them. At the the least they could be inconvenienced, but then all the options for the worst-case scenarios come into play. This is where I reside, I admit. I am around a variety of people for multiple events, from weddings to funerals to our worship services and other casual events, and I do not want to be the reason the disease comes to the home of someone who is at more risk than I.

The Christmas Story includes exhortations to Not Be Afraid as well as actions of prudence. Despite these persons told this message of fearlessness, there are also actions of caution recorded, from the magi going home in a different way to avoid Herod, to Joseph taking his wife and newborn Christ child and moving to Egypt until Herod had died (actions prescribed by the same source as the "fear not"). Just because they were not in fear did not mean they purposely went where the danger was. To connect it to my firefighter experiences, I was relatively fearless while in a burning building, but once my chief determined it structurally was losing stability, I did not stay in the building, despite my lack of fear. I am convinced that we can live without fear and also be prudent and cautious...our way of living out doing all the good we can, to all the people we can, in all

the ways we can, as long as ever we can.

In March I "set my jaw" that we were going to have our normal services broadcast at our normal times. Early on I had read that having routines stay similar to the usual was helpful for our mental and emotional health. Being stubborn has served me well most of my adult life, but I admit as this continues I am aware of a mental tiredness trying to settle in. Recently I too needed to have a COVID test, and I found my mind racing through contingency plans for the church or my family if the virus truly "came home." By now a number of our Hoffman family and relatives have already struggled with the virus, with varying degrees of discomfort and severity. At this point the congregation has been spared deaths directly caused by COVID-19. Having said that, I am certain the virus has caused other harm, possibly even through the distancing that helps keep us safe.



I want to encourage you to look ahead with me to a time when we can again fully gather together in worship and fellowship again. We are designed to be in fellowship, after all. As we strive to make creative new holiday plans instead of merely "making do," I want to encourage us all once more with the words from Galatians 6:9, "*Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.*" Keep doing good, my siblings in Christ, and include your family and yourselves as recipients of the good. Of course we need eyes open for those in need of care in our community, but also be watchful for what you and your loved ones need, too. This could be a long winter, and we cannot help others if we do not care for our own needs along the way.

This year during Advent we will share a worship series called "The Glory of Christmas." It is produced by "The Skit Guys," and focusses on characters around the manger, with video illustrations that allow us to smile while also making a point. I've made no secret of my belief that humor serves as "shock absorbers" for the challenges of life, and as this journey through COVID continues, I feel we need all the shock absorbers we can get. Lord willing, I am hopeful we can share additional smiles in our shared worship journey along the way. While looking ahead to celebrate anew the arrival of Immanuel, God With Us, I am,

In His Service and yours,

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# Board Meeting Highlights

## Devotions

Devotions were led by Julia who shared a “mantra” verse Isaiah 26:3 “You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in Him”.

## Meeting Attendees

Dick Martens, Katie Poling, Carol Storer, David Jay, Julia Circle, Jill Circle, John Ankerman,(zoom) Kim Dohrman (zoom) and Pastor Robbie Scott

## Pastor’s Report

The Pastor’s report was given for September. The average attendance for both services combined was 105. The Towers report breaks down the services by service time, both online and in person.

Robbie has difficulty getting an accurate number for attendance, as Facebook analytics are not useful with actual numbers of service watchers. He is still working through the best technology set up for both services, being mindful of several needs of our congregation. Joann is preparing reports and paperwork for the Charge Conference. Becky planned a “Family Fun” night Oct 30 and “Trunk-or-Treat” Oct 31. Due to COVID, Bulldog Bags food is being delivered, stored and packed at the church. Joseph is leading Ignite youth with Middle and High School on alternating weeks. Meetings have been held outside, more discussion and planning will take place prior to any indoor meetings. The river baptism went well for Kat. Robbie will be presiding over 2 Charge Conferences: 10/20 and 11/15. He will have one or two more to schedule. There has been a good response to directory pictures. Robbie has a plan for more picture memories to be included in the directory. There will be an app feature for use by the congregation. Charge Conference 11/19 at 7:30, Rev Jon Ferguson presiding elder for our Church Conference.

## Finance

The finance report for September was reviewed and accepted . We are considering changing banks due to no local branches of Fifth Third. September giving was low, comparatively. There is an \$8000 increase in endowment fund due to a market adjustment. “Invitation to pledge” letter went out to the congregation with 32 pledge cards being received. This represents 59% of revenue for this year from pledged donations. A new “2021 Proposed Budget” was available for review. Weekly need has only gone up 0.6%. If we can maintain our current course, we will have a year similar to last year. Total budget increase is very small.

## Nominations

No report

## Staff Parish Relations

Safe Sanctuary policy was reviewed. December 13<sup>th</sup> deadline for contributions to Staff Gifts.

## Trustee Update

Discussed hail guards for the new air conditioning units, looking into a nylon mesh to protect. Stair landing in basement is in process, carpet and rail to come. The boiler is outdated. Recent repair this week was \$2100. Trustees are investigating high efficiency boiler replacement for next year The Stained Glass Window restoration Project breakdown was reviewed and approved for publication in the Towers. Kinnison Memorial tree, painting the garage and hail guards are outstanding projects.

At the time of publication, the intention is to continue in person worship, but obviously these are times when we should be attentive and cautious. Of course we know that if we do not feel well we should not be in public gatherings, but also try to be aware if you feel you have been around someone who puts you at risk of carrying the virus elsewhere. Safe distancing and masks through the entire service are strongly recommended. We continue to offer DVD recordings of the 9:00am service and are mailing those as requested. –rs

Date	11/1/20	11/8/20	11/15/20
General Offering	4878.00	5044.00	3243.00
Weekly Budget Need	4824.00	4824.00	4824.00
Mission Offering	110.00	240.00	180.00
Maintenance Fund	310.00	285.00	110.00
Building Fund & Memorials	350.00	6965.00	268.00
Online & Physical Attendance			
9 a.m. Service at church	22	23	8
* Remote viewing	43	40	49
11:15 a.m. Service at church	25	26	10
* Remote viewing	25	14	29
Total Attendance	115	103	96

\* 'remote viewing' is only recorded for those signing in during the live broadcast, and does not include those who watch from the links after the live broadcast is over. This estimate does not include all who are watching.

## Happy Birthday & Happy Anniversary December 2020

2<sup>nd</sup> - Robbie & Bridget Scott (20 yrs)  
 5<sup>th</sup> - Marc & Robin Maeder (16 yrs)  
 6<sup>th</sup> - Allyson Burns  
 8<sup>th</sup> - John Hennemyre  
 9<sup>th</sup> - Wendy Black  
 10<sup>th</sup> - Carol Carter  
 11<sup>th</sup> - Anita Ankerman  
     Candy Curry  
 13<sup>th</sup> - Lisa Wright  
 15<sup>th</sup> - Andy Mitchell  
 16<sup>th</sup> - Avery Bryson  
 17<sup>th</sup> - Paul Crow  
 18<sup>th</sup> - Matthew Garrett  
 19<sup>th</sup> - Bob & Joyce Herron (66 yrs)



20<sup>th</sup> - John & Anita Ankerman (40 yrs)  
     Valerie McKay  
     Cheryl Owen  
 21<sup>st</sup> - Dawn Jay  
 24<sup>th</sup> - Dick & Dixie Porter (65 yrs)  
 25<sup>th</sup> - Cody Dohrman  
 26<sup>th</sup> - Beth Thoele  
     Phil & Karen McFadden (50 yrs)  
 27<sup>th</sup> - Fred Brown  
     Aaron Mitchell  
 30<sup>th</sup> - Bob Herron  
     Tom Wolf  
     Ed & Tina Mathews (15 yrs)  
 31<sup>st</sup> - Gary Barga

The 2021 flower calendar is on the bulletin board at the back of the sanctuary.  
 Remember to sign up for your special Sundays. The cost is \$20 per Sunday.

**People to remember in prayer:**



**Hoffman Sympathies to:**

the family of Wallace Skidmore, Kelly Snider's Father, as he passed away on November 1, 2020

**At Home:** Nancy Allen, Phil Blue, Nan Guthrie, Valaria Harshbarger, Helen Keller, Kathy Kinsey, Terry & Wendy Long, Mary Maess, Dick & Eugenie Markley, Miriam Miller, and Monica Winemiller

**At Centers**

Joetta Perry, Storypoint Troy, 1840 Towne Park Drive, Rm 17, Troy, OH 45373

*Please remember all of our shut-ins with cards and prayers.*

**THANK YOU AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Grandma's Kitchen** will be preparing no meals in December. We enjoyed having a chance to provide meals to you these past three months and will let you know about plans for next year as soon as we can. It has been a pleasure to serve you.

The Hoffman Christmas Party has been canceled.

**Christmas Staff Gifts** will be presented to the staff in appreciation for all their hard work. Please be generous and mark your donation "Staff Gifts" by Dec 13<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for your contribution. Carol S. & Dan S., SPRC

**Salvation Army Bell Ringers Needed**

Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>  
at the West Milton IGA



Contact Les Trittschuh at  
(937)478-8093  
to schedule a time

**2021 Offering Envelopes** are located on the table across from the church office. Please stop by the church and pick up your envelopes.

Early January Towers' deadline of Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>  
Mailing date December 21<sup>st</sup>

**Emmaus Walks**

2021 Walks are at Sulphur Grove UMC:

Men's Walk #68 June 10-13, 2021

Women's Walk #108 July 15-18, 2021

If you interested in going on an Emmaus walk or would like more information contact Pastor Robbie

Dear family friends at Hoffman, thank you so very very much for all of your phone calls and cards for Jim and myself while we are recovering from Covid-19. Your prayers meant so very much to us both. We are so grateful for all of you! With Love, Janet & Jim Balsbaugh

Big thanks to: Ben Garrett for changing the message on the church sign; Nancy Studebaker, Joy Paulus, Dawn Jay, and Kathy Watkins for folding and labeling the newsletter; Erin Studebaker for recording the attendance; all our Trustees who take care of repairs and improvements to our church; Christy Harris for preparing the slides for the services; Multi-camera operator, Darin Wion; our praise band members: Devin Williams, Darin Wion, Josph Knostman, Logan Burns, Kyleigh Ryan, Cody Dohrman and Pastor Robbie; Valerie McKay for recording Praise Band; and to all who help with tasks big and small.

**We appreciate you all!**

I would like to thank everyone that helped make the Veterans Day program a success. Your help in working to get ready, in the program, and clean up was greatly appreciated. God bless all of you. Nancy Studebaker  
Looking forward to next year's program on Nov. 13, 2021

**Stained Glass Window  
Restoration Project**



Amount Received: \$ 7,135

Total Project Goal : \$ 109,430

*Thank You!*

### Altar Flowers

Nov 29<sup>th</sup> In memory of Lake & Dorothy Willis from Tom & Jan Weeks

Dec 6<sup>th</sup> In memory of Jim Weeks and in honor of Katie Weeks

Dec 13<sup>th</sup> In celebration of Anita Ankerman's birthday from John

Dec 20<sup>th</sup> In celebration of John & Anita Ankerman's 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Dec 27<sup>th</sup> In memory of Alma Butt from Ron

### "Jesus Calling" (daily devotional by Sarah Young)

When a future-oriented worry assails you, capture it and disarm it by suffusing the Light of God's Presence into that mental image. Say to yourself "Jesus will be with me then and there. With His help I can cope!" Then, come home to the present moment, where you can enjoy Peace in His Presence.

*Be strong and courageous.  
Do not be afraid or terrified  
because of the, for the Lord  
your God goes with you; he  
will never leave you nor  
forsake you. Det 31:6*



### Holiday Service Times

**Christmas Eve  
Candlelight Services at 7 and 10 p.m.**

**Regular Services on Dec 27<sup>th</sup> at 9 and 11:15 a.m.**

*Please note that this schedule may change*

# Merry Christmas



### SHARE A POINSETTIA

It is time to order poinsettias to decorate our sanctuary during the Christmas service. They will be displayed on Christmas Eve and can be picked up after the 10 p.m. Christmas Eve service. If you wish to share with us, please fill out the form and return it with the money, to the church by Sunday, **December 6th**. Our supplier is Stockslager's and the cost is \$8.00 each. Checks will be payable to Hoffman U. M. Church. Please mark envelope POINSETTIAS.

(Please Print Names Carefully)

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

Given By \_\_\_\_\_

Your Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

How Many

Total Price

White \_\_\_\_\_ x \$8.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

Red \_\_\_\_\_ x \$8.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

Marble \_\_\_\_\_ x \$8.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

X

Non-Profit  
 Organization  
 U. S. Postage Paid  
 Tipp City, OH  
 Permit No. 26



Return Service Requested

X



201 S Main Street  
 West Milton OH 45383

December  
 2020

**T O W E R S**  
**T H E R E**

*Place Label Here*

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**HOFFMAN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
 Worship Time: 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m.  
 Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.  
 (937) 698-4401 Website: HoffmanUMC.org  
 Pastor Robbie Scott