

THE ENCOURAGER

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF HUDSON CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Wish Lists

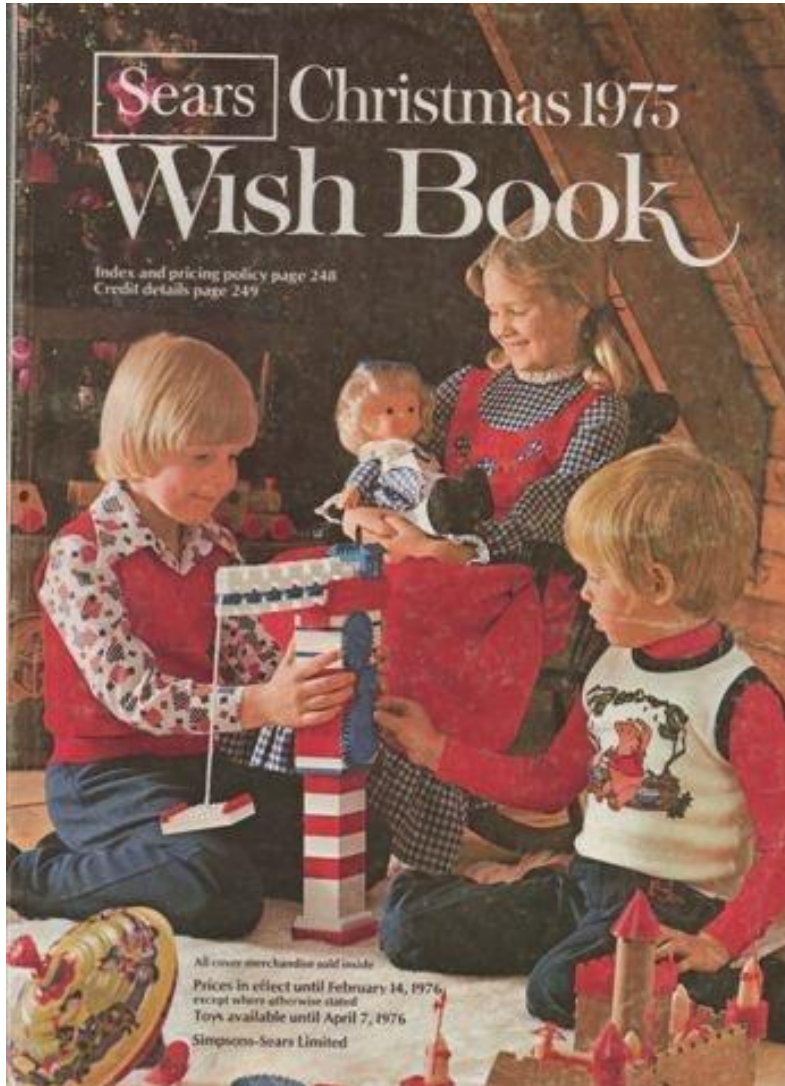


Photo courtesy Kelly Epperson.com

I can remember the annual arrival of the Sears Wish Book. I spent countless hours poring over its pages, circling all of the wonderful toys I wanted for Christmas. Page after page of every kind of toy imaginable. And the longer I looked at it, the more intensely I desired what was on those pages!

As weeks drew nearer to Christmas and the boxes started to fill up under the tree, there was all the curiosity and anticipation, and careful shaking and weighing, hoping that the top items on my list were contained within. As much as my parents and church would try to shift my focus, for me, the focus of Christmas was getting what I wanted off of that list.

Shopping has changed. There are no more thick catalogs being shipped to every home filled with pages of things to want. Sears is closing. Maybe for good. But the lists are going strong. Jamie and I have started to receive links to all the Amazon lists of our extended family. We even have lists for ourselves to share with them. I resisted making a list for a while, but eventually there was no other way to get past the pestering of family who wanted to know what they should get me.

As much as these clickable shopping lists seem to take some sincerity and thought out of the giving experience, I'll admit it makes the shopping easier. No more wandering isles trying to think of something that people will actually want. No more anxiety that the gifts are just going to be returned, or not fit, or be the wrong color, or sit on a closet shelf somewhere. You don't even have to get off your couch!

I'm not sure that any of us really even want the presents any more. It is just this fixed tradition that has defined what we do as a family when we get together over Christmas.

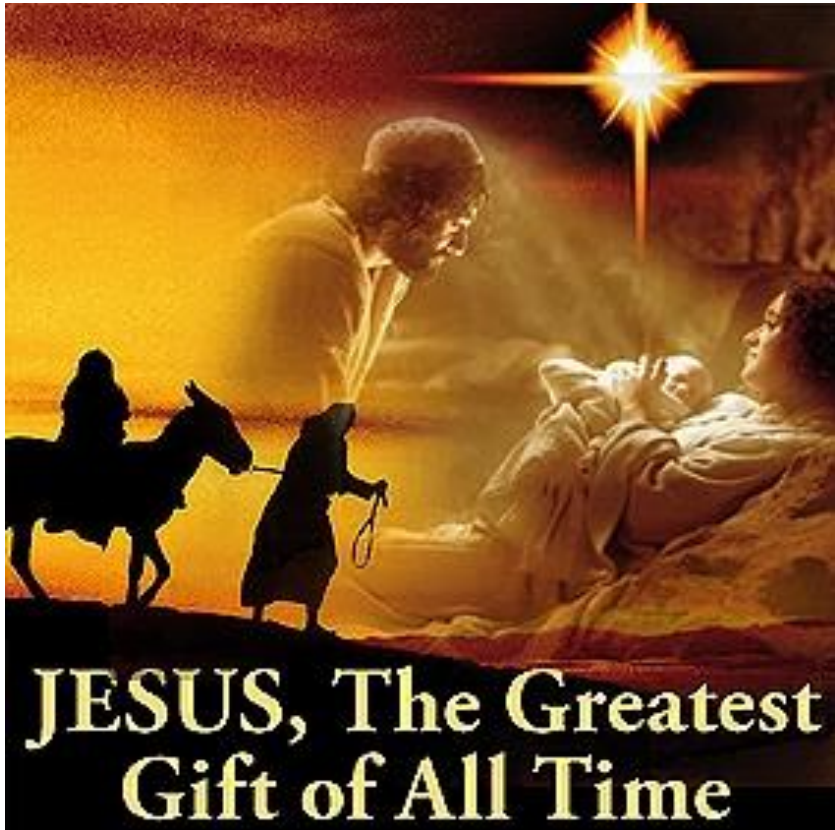


Photo courtesy Joy Magazine

Christmas is forever linked with giving. And there is a good reason for that! Long before the merchants seized the reigns of this holiday, it began with one special gift. For God so loved the world that he gave. The Son of God being born in the flesh to rescue the world from their sin wasn't on anyone's list. It was a priceless gift that we didn't know existed but couldn't live without. And it was given purely and freely from love.

God is revealed in Scripture as a Father who loves to give good gifts to his children. So it is fitting that we mark his breaking into our world by giving and receiving gifts. It makes me want to be known for giving good gifts, because my Father in Heaven is good at giving gifts. And I want people to know my Father.

The struggle to keep Christmas about Jesus and the love of God rather than about commercialism has been around for a while now. My tendency has been to be a little bah-humbug about the gift exchanging aspect of Christmas, but I see that gifts aren't the problem. What I intend to focus on this year is putting my heart into every gift given, whether it is simply bought off a list, or whether I go rogue and give something with a little more thought and a little less certainty.

I also want to give some consideration to what is on God's list. As our psalm from a couple weeks ago exclaimed, "What shall I render to the Lord, for all His benefits toward me?!"

God has made a list for us, and we would do well to spend this season poring over it, memorizing every page, until we long for it as much as he does. It is a long list, but we could take a stab at putting some of the more obvious items down here:

1. Hearts surrendered completely to Him
2. Sincere and joyful worship
3. Turning from all unrighteousness
4. Mercy, compassion, and charity towards others
5. Gentleness towards all
6. Special care for the least of these: the outcast, the prisoner, the widow, the orphan, the foreigner among us, the poor

Merry Christmas!

-Pastor Brandon Current

Tell Me The Story... Silent Night

The world's most famous Christmas song, "Silent Night," comes to us from Austria (*Österreich* in German). Called "Stille Nacht" in its **original German**, this beautiful Christmas carol is now sung and enjoyed around the world in over 140 languages.

But the familiar melody we recognize today as "Silent Night" or "Stille Nacht" is not quite the same one that Franz Gruber composed, and although the song was not truly "lost" or "forgotten" — as legend would have it — the world-famous carol did take many years to become as well known and as ubiquitous as it is today. In the intervening years Joseph Mohr is known to have written a "Stille Nacht" arrangement around 1820, and new hand-written arrangements by Franz Gruber appeared before his death — one for a full orchestra in 1845, and another for organ in 1855. By 1900 "Stille Nacht" had made its way around the entire globe.



Franz Xaver Gruber



Joseph Franz Mohr

Silent Night E. Gruber (19th c.)

Andante

A. Sax in E♭

Si - lent night, ho - ly night! All is
calm, all is bright 'Round you Vir - gin
Moth - er and Child. Ho - ly In - fant, so ten - der and
mild, Sleep in heav - en - ly peace!

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1

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On a cold Christmas Eve in 1818, pastor **Joseph Franz Mohr** (1792-1848) walked the three kilometers from his home in the Austrian village of Oberndorf bei Salzburg to visit his friend **Franz Xaver Gruber** (1787-1863) in the neighboring town of Arnsdorf bei Laufen. Mohr brought with him a poem he had written some two years earlier. He desperately needed a carol for the Christmas Eve midnight mass that was only hours away. He hoped his friend, a school teacher who also served as the church's choir master and organist, could set his poem to music. And one of the many amazing things about this carol is that Franz Gruber composed the "Stille Nacht" melody for Mohr in just a few hours on that December 24, 1818.

Recent flooding of the nearby Salzach river had put the church organ out of commission, so Gruber composed the music for guitar accompaniment. (The guitar pictured below is thought to be the one Joseph Mohr played in 1818.) A few hours after Gruber finished his composition, he and Mohr stood before the altar of the St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf to perform their own work. A local choir group backed them up as the sounds of the brand new carol broke the silence of that "Stille Nacht."

Because flooding had damaged its foundation, the St. Nicholas Church was demolished in the early 1900s. The Salzach river (which also flows through nearby Salzburg), has a tendency to flood. For this reason, the entire town of Oberndorf was relocated to a less flood-prone location upstream in the 1920s. Around the same time, a new parish church was constructed, and a small memorial chapel, the *Stille-Nacht-Gedächtniskapelle*, replaced the original Nicola-Kirche.



Historical photo of the Nicola-Kirche (St. Nicholas Church) in Oberndorf, Austria, site of the premiere performance of "Stille Nacht" in 1818. All Photos courtesy Hyde Flippo



Silent Night Chapel in Oberndorf, Austria.

For many years in the latter half of the 19th century, when the carol was beginning to become more popular, people who knew anything about "Stille Nacht" assumed the melody must have been composed by a more famous composer, possibly Beethoven, Haydn, or even Mozart. Although Gruber had made a written claim as the composer prior to his death in 1863, doubts lingered on into the 20th century. The question was officially settled only several years ago when an arrangement of "Stille Nacht" in Joseph Mohr's hand was authenticated. In the upper right-hand corner of the arrangement Mohr had written the words, "Melodie von Fr. Xav. Gruber."

"Stille Nacht" – The Song

Around 1832, when Gruber's melody was performed by folk singers from Austria's Ziller Valley (**Zillertal**), several musical notes were altered, and the "Silent Night" melody became what we know today. But Austria's **Stille Nacht Gesellschaft** (Silent Night Society) not only works to protect the Mohr-Gruber legacy—it encourages the use of the original notes that Gruber composed.

Wednesday Night Bible Study

Prayer begins at 5:30 p.m.
Bible Study class starts as 6:00 p.m.

Bill Brown is leading a Bible study on several interesting topics this winter. Our study time together will uncover God's guidance about God's Blessings, Living with the "Thorn" in your life, the Holy Spirit, and more!

Please come see what God has to say about it in his Word!

Our mid-week Bible studies are one of our primary avenues of discipleship here at HCC. I hope you all will arrange your schedules to not miss out on this opportunity for God to shape our hearts!

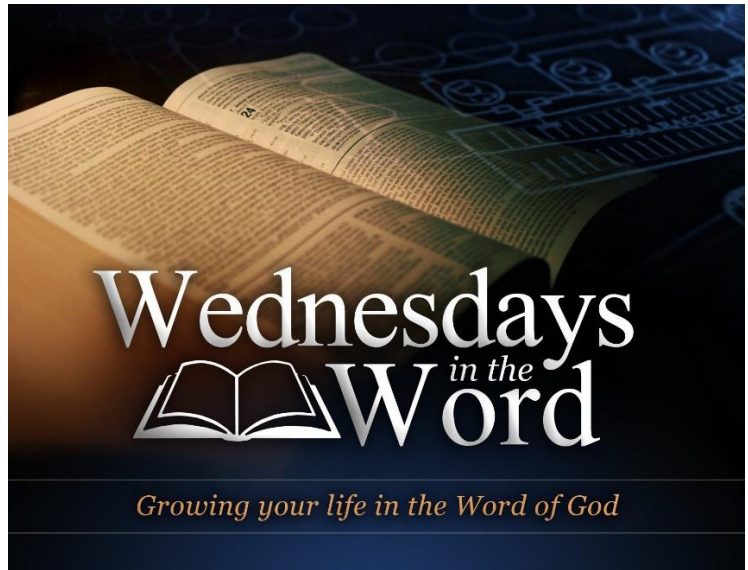


Photo courtesy of Zion.org

Prayer Coordinator Linda Kearfott

Prayer Requests

Linda Kearfott is the HCC Prayer Coordinator!

If you have a prayer request to share or an update, please speak with Linda, write your request on the prayer card in the pew pocket and place it in the offering plate, or contact her at the following number or email.

*Linda Kearfott
(309) 232-4528
linda.kearfott@yahoo.com*



Image courtesy trinitywesternuniversity

The Potter's Kids

The Potter's Kids is the fun place to be on Wednesday nights at HCC from 6-7 p.m.!

All children are welcome to join us as we study the Ten Commandments. We'll see glimpses of God in His laws, as well as very good rules to live by.



HCC Christmas Party

Join us at Nick and Ashley Richard's home on December 21 at 6:00 p.m. for the HCC Christmas Party!

407 North West Street, Hudson. Everyone is invited! There will be games and activities for adults and the kids. There will also be a white elephant gift exchange, so bring your wacky gift! Snack food and beverages will be provided!
Don't miss it!

Jason Collins' Annual Christmas Concert

Enjoy an evening of Christmas worship and celebration with Jason Collins at Hudson Christian Church!

Saturday, December 15, 6:30 p.m.

Bring a friend and come early – This is a very popular event! Punch and cookies following the concert

Christmas Events at HCC!



Photo courtesy Canon City Daily Record

Christmas Caroling – Adults and kids welcome!

Saturday, December 15, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Meet at HCC at 12:30 p.m. to carpool
 Heritage Health - Adelaide, Normal 1:00 p.m.
 Blair House, Normal 2:00 p.m.
 Welbook, Bloomington 3:00 p.m.
 Dinner at Avanti's East Empire St. 4:00 p.m.

Jason Collins' Christmas Concert at HCC

Saturday, December 15, 6:30 p.m.

Bring a friend and come early – this is a very popular event!
 Punch and cookies following the concert

Christmas Caroling in Hudson

Wednesday, December 19, 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Meet at HCC at 6:15 p.m. We will drive to our selected neighborhood in Hudson and then go door to door bringing Christmas cheer! We also leave gift bags to show the love of Christ and share His message. Everyone is welcome! ***This is a very fun event for the kids!*** Cookies and hot chocolate served at the church!

HCC Christmas Party at the Richards!

December 21 at 6:00 p.m. 407 North West Street, Hudson. Everyone is invited! There will be games and activities for adults and the kids. There will also be a white elephant gift exchange, so bring your wacky gift! Snack food and beverages will be provided! **Don't miss it!**

Children's Christmas Program – December 23, 9:30 a.m. worship service

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – December 24, 5:00 p.m.

Join us for a beautiful evening filled with candlelight. This meditative service remembering our Savior's birth is a wonderful way to share the real Christmas story with your family and friends.



Photo courtesy of SMC.com

Join the Adult Sunday School Class at 11:00 a.m. downstairs to discover what the Bible teaches about:

Praying For Ourselves: – Matthew 6:11b; Isaiah 38:1-3; Isaiah 38:4-6; Isaiah 38:15-17

Take your needs to God daily and trust Him to answer.

“We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to His purpose.” – Romans 8:28

- ◆ Why pray since God already knows what you need?
- ◆ When has God answered your prayer in a way that was evident is was from the Lord?
- ◆ When has answered prayer changed your perspective toward life?

Praying For Others: Go to God on behalf of Others – Matthew 6:11b; John 17:11-16; John 17:17-19; John 17:20-23

“No man can do me a truer kindness in this world than to pray for me.” – Charles Spurgeon

- ◆ In what ways do you pray for the protection of others?
- ◆ What has God used in your life to help you grow spiritually?
- ◆ Unity in the church – its positive effect in the community

A Prayer of Confession: God forgives when we come to Him in repentance – Matthew 6:12-13; Psalm 51:1-7; Psalm 51:10-12

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” – 1John 1:9

- ◆ What are the benefits of forgiving others?
- ◆ What are the benefits of confessing specific sins?
- ◆ God, create in me a clean heart...
- ◆ What role does confession play in being faithful?

A Prayer of Thanksgiving: Express gratitude and trust in the One who hears our prayers – Psalm 138:1-8

- ◆ How has God displayed love as truth in your life recently?
- ◆ How does physical or emotional fatigue affect us spiritually?
- ◆ How does a thankful spirit give you courage as you face challenges in life?
- ◆ Developing a pattern of thanking and praising God

December 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
December Birthdays Bill Koons 12/2 Nick Richard 12/20 Jon Talbert 12/21 Mike Nafzinger 12/25						1
2 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Sunday School 1st Sunday Fellowship Potluck 11:45	3	4	5 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship 5:30 p.m. Adult Prayer 6:00 p.m. Adult Bible Study Potter's Kids	6 Food Pantry Preparation Day	7	8 10:00 Food Pantry Distribution Day
9 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	10	11	12 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship No Wednesday Evening Activities	13 5:30 p.m. Deacons/Elders Meeting followed By Spiritual Focus Meeting	14	15 12:30-4:00 p.m. Caroling at the Nursing Homes/ Dinner at Avanti's 6:30 p.m. Jason Collins' Christmas Concert
16 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	17	18	19 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship 6:15 – 8:00 p.m. Caroling in Hudson	20	21 6:00 p.m. HCC Christmas Party at the Richard's	22
23 9:30 a.m. Worship Children's Christmas Presentation 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	24 5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26 10:00 a.m. Ladies' Prayer and Fellowship No Wednesday Evening Activities	27	28	29
30 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m. Coffee/Donuts 11:00 a.m. Sunday School	31					