His Birth and Our New Birth

By Oswald Chambers

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” —Matthew 1:23

His Birth in History “…that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God (Luke 1:35). Jesus Christ was born into this world, not from it. He did not emerge out of history; He came into history from the outside. Jesus Christ is not the best human being the human race can boast of—He is a Being for whom the human race can take no credit at all. He is not man becoming God, but God Incarnate— God coming into human flesh from outside it. His life is the highest and the holiest entering through the most humble of doors. Our Lord’s birth was an advent—the appearance of God in human form.

His Birth in Me “My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you…” (Galatians 4:19). Just as our Lord came into human history from outside it, He must also come into me from outside. Have I allowed my personal human life to become a “Bethlehem” for the Son of God? I cannot enter the realm of the kingdom of God unless I am born again from above by a birth totally unlike physical birth. “You must be born again” (John 3:7). This is not a command, but a fact based on the authority of God. The evidence of the new birth is that I yield myself so completely to God that “Christ is formed” in me. And once “Christ is formed” in me, His nature immediately begins to work through me.

God Evident in the Flesh This is what is made so profoundly possible for you and for me through the redemption of man by Jesus Christ.

An Opportunity To Almost Double Your Money!

How can you change your $10 donation into $19.13? Give it to the church and Indicate that you want the donation to be an extra principle payment against the mortgage.

Currently, our mortgage is about $418,000. The mortgage balloons in 2025. We anticipate that it will be refinanced. If it is refinanced at the current rate and terms, the mortgage will be paid off in 2035.

The additional ten dollars put towards the mortgage principle reduces interest by $9.13. So your $10 becomes $19.13!

Thank you to John Beatty for providing this information.

RMD: An Alternative Giving Method

Those of us age 70½ or older know that the RMD [Required Minimum Distribution] is the amount that must be withdrawn from any IRAs that we have. The good news is that if you direct the IRA trustee to make the payment directly to UMC Branford, the distribution does not show up on your tax return—no federal tax, no state tax. The donation can be your normal pledge or an extra donation, if you are so inclined. It’s quick and easy, and you pay less taxes than if you received your RMD and then wrote a check to the church.

Thank you to John Beatty for providing this information which may be an opportunity for some members of our congregation.
January Events

Tues 1/2, 6:30pm: Staff Parish Relations Committee

Sun 1/5, following service: Charge Conference

Wed 1/8, 5:30pm: Learm & Play Board

Sun 1/12, 12pm: Barbershop & Big Band Concert

Wed 1/15, 6:15pm: Prayer Meeting

Wed 1/15, 7pm: Faithful Stewards

Sat 1/18, 8am: Men’s Breakfast

Wed 1/22, 7pm: Trustees

1/27-31: L&P Soup Can Collection

Wed 1/29, 7pm: Finance Committee

Fri 1/31, 6pm: Community Dinner

WEEKLY CALENDAR

SUNDAYS:

9:30am Worship Service/Sunday School

11:30am Worship/Communion at Artis

MONDAYS:

4:30pm Sewing for God

TUESDAYS:

7-8:30pm Pastor’s Bible Study Group

7:30pm AA meeting

WEDNESDAYS:

10am Learn & Play Chapel

10:30am Prayer Shawl Ministry

11am Faith Talk at Artis

THURSDAYS:

10am Pastor’s Bible Study Group

1:30pm Worship/Communion at Guilford House (1st & 3rd Thurs. of the month)

7:30pm Al-Anon meeting

SATURDAYS:

7pm AA meeting

January Birthdays

3 Bekah Gerlach

12 Michael Luzzi

16 Bill Beagle

20 Shina Kim

24 Paul Dineen

25 Shanta Kapadia

28 Shirley Gilkerson

28 Lydia Wezenski

31 Haley Mazzucco

January Anniversaries

13 Guy & Mary Marszalek

24 Bob & Conny Umile

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Worship & Sunday School - 9:30am

(No Sunday School on 1st Sunday of the month)

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Tues thru Thurs 9:00am-2:00pm

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The 20th of every month - please send articles to Lori Cartwright at loriahlcart@gmail.com

Missed a Sunday? Unable to attend worship?

You can catch the weekly sermon video at www.umcbranford.org

“Where the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Power of the Holy Spirit converge to change hearts and lives.”
Charge Conference

Our Charge Conference will double as our Annual Meeting when we meet on January 5 immediately following worship. Our District Superintendent, Rev. Alpher Sylvester will preside.

Committee chairs and church officers are requested to submit their reports for the Annual Report Booklet no later than December 30; electronic files are preferred.

You are invited to bring “brunch style” foods to share as we plan to expand the coffee hour buffet to provide for our sustenance during the time of meeting.

Monday Morning Quarterbacking

Here’s an opportunity to dig deeper into the Sunday Sermon. Pastor Kent shares additional insight into the scriptures and the participants are encouraged to ask questions and share reflections on the material which was preached. Please consider attending on a weekly basis or occasionally as the Spirit moves. This group will resume on Monday, January 13 at 10 AM.

Study Groups

Our Tuesday and Thursday Study Groups will resume on January 2 at 10 AM and January 7 at 7 PM. Our new curriculum is titled “When Happiness Happens” by Max Lucado. Please stop by the church office to pick up your copy. A donation of $15 is requested.

In the accompanying Study Guide and DVD, bestselling author Max Lucado looks at several “one another” statements in the Bible that reveal how the happiest people on earth aren’t those who have the most but those who are willing to give the most away.

God wants to bring joy to the people of this generation, and in his Word, he has given us practical and applicable ways to quarry that joy by sharing it with others. Although the world can be a lonely and disappointing place, we can be God’s representatives to bring about a cascade of kindness! While we won’t be able to solve every problem, we can bring a few smiles to a few faces— and in this way, we might even initiate our own quiet revolution of joy.

Sessions include:
• Accept One Another
• Bear with One Another
• Serve One Another
• Forgive One Another
• Carry One Another’s Burdens
• Love One Another

Communion in the Community

Pastor Kent leads regular Worship Services with Holy Communion at Artis Senior Living and Guilford House. You are invited to join him any Sunday at 11:30am at Artis or on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month at 1:30pm at the Guilford House.

Open Hearts
Open Minds
Open Doors

“Where the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Power of the Holy Spirit converge to change hearts and lives.”

Open Hearts
Open Minds
Open Doors

FRIDAY, JAN 31 • 6pm

Come for the delicious dinner and desserts and stay for the awesome and engaging fellowship with members of the church and the community!
Happy New Year!

As I am writing this before Christmas, it's hard to believe that all of the hustle and bustle to prepare for Christmas will be over by the time you actually read this update.

January will find Learn & Play talking about winter, snow, hibernation, and healthy food/nutrition. Our Bible stories will talk about Epiphany, Psalm 51:7 (Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow), and how Daniel obeys God.

We will once again be collecting soup cans during the week of January 27-31 in preparation for the Soup-er Bowl. We will not only talk about healthy foods this week, but will also have some fun sport related games and activities in anticipation of the Big Game! Can we beat our record of over 100 cans of soup again this year? All cans collected go to the UMCB food closet.

I pray that your Christmas was full of peace and blessings that only the perfect gift giver, God our Father, can give. May we continue to praise Him in the new year for the grace that we have received, one blessing after another.

Robin Costa

Let's Do Lunch, Ladies!

Come join us for Lunch
Monday, January 20 • 12:30pm – 2pm
Weather Permitting

Twin Pines Restaurant
34 Main Street, East Haven

Sewing for God
Mondays 4:30 to 7:00 pm (except Jan. 20)

Our friends at Artis have been adding “neighbors” who are in need of quilts. Our supply of finished quilts has been exhausted.

Every Monday we will meet (weather permitting) to build up our stash of quilts. All patterns are easy to sew – or even if you would like to press, we could use your help.

All supplies are provided or you can bring your own.
As always, any questions let me know.

Rosemary
(203) 589-1620 (please leave a message)

Putting together a quilt is as simple as A,B,C,D,E!

A. Sew a top with fabrics from our cabinet (patterns also provided).
B. Layer the “A” top with batting and backing (last Monday of the month if we have top ready).
C. Quilt “B” top with simple stitching. Usually Gail and Rosemary will do this.
D. Bind “C” top to finish. We’ll teach you the machine version.
E. Sew a label on the back of the quilt.

Why not join us for an hour or two as we sew and fellowship together? All supplies are provided. Even if you don’t sew – come anyway, as we can always use someone to press!
Men’s Breakfast • Jan 18 at 8AM

All men of the church are invited to join together for a delicious breakfast and engaging conversation as we discuss “Faith Commander: Living Five Values from the Parables of Jesus”.

Join the Robertson men of the hit television show Duck Dynasty® as they tell stories and discuss some of the Bible’s most-loved parables. In this five-session video-based small group Bible study, we will learn about faith-based values and how to apply them to our life. The January discussion will focus on Real Obedience.

Pastor’s Office Hours and Availability

Pastor Kent will be in the office or around the church building on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 8am to 1pm (with the exception of being at Artis from 11-11:30 am on Wednesdays).

He welcomes anyone who wants to stop in and visit during those times.

If you would like to be in touch or schedule an appointment outside of those hours, Pastor Kent can be reached on his cell phone or by email: (845) 522-1233 UMCBPastor@gmail.com

SIX LITTLE STORIES WITH LOTS OF MEANINGS

1. Once all villagers decided to pray for rain. On the day of prayer, all the people gathered, but only one boy came with an umbrella. That is faith.

2. When you throw babies in the air, they laugh because they know you will catch them. That is trust.

3. Every night we go to bed without any assurance of being alive the next morning, but still we set the alarms to wake up. That is hope.

4. We plan big things for tomorrow in spite of zero knowledge of the future. That is confidence.

5. We see the world suffering, but still, we get married and have children. That is love.

6. On an old man’s shirt was written a sentence “I am not 80 years old; I am sweet 16 with 64 years of experience.” That is attitude.

Have a happy day and live your life like these six stories. Remember - Good friends are the rare jewels of life, difficult to find and impossible to replace!

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LOOKING FOR YOUR SODA CAN TABS!

Please continue to help support our friend at Ronald McDonald House. It’s an easy way to support the Ronald McDonald House New Haven so they can continue to provide their services at no charge.

It’s easy! All you need to do is remove the tab from each can before you recycle it. It’s fun! You can involve community groups and your family in supporting the cause without a lot of effort. Approximately 1,200 tabs make up a pound. Put a small jar on your counter and you will be surprised how fast is will fill up.

We welcome contributions from the list of items in the connector hall or any other appropriate items. Help us help those in need!
Your Plastic Bags Are Becoming “Plarn”!

With your generous donations of plastic bags, we were able to make “plarn,” which was then crocheted into eight mats for the homeless.

Not knowing where to donate the mats and wanting to make sure they got to the people who needed them the most, I was searching for an organization or church that did a “midnight run.”

At different times, God puts special people in your life to help you with special things. Bob acquired a new customer, and through their conversations, he found out that this gentleman is part of the Probus Club, a voluntary organization of PROfessional and BUSiness people dedicated to helping people who are intellectually and physically challenged.

The first Probus Club was formed in 1921 in New Haven. There are presently six chapters located in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Their purpose is to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities. They offer financial aid as well as activities that provide opportunities to interact in general society. Probus Clubs conduct a number of programs that assist in the normalization of the lives of these citizens. All proceeds from fund raising activities are allocated to servicing their client projects.

They were so happy to receive the mats and will distribute them to those who are in need and living on the streets. Some of the community organizations they help are Columbus House and Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen.

I want everyone to know: through projects like our free community dinner, blessing bags, and now the plarn mats, our church is doing good works in our greater community! We may be small, but we do mighty works for the Lord!

God Bless,
Diane Nerkowski

It’s time to reveal yourself and find out who your Secret Pal is! Celebrate together with a small luncheon and fellowship with each other on Sunday, January 12 at 11:30am.

Please bring a dish to share. Guests are welcome. Signup Sheet is in Connector Hall.

SECRET PAL 2020

Somebody is thinking about you...hoping you’re having a beautiful day...sending caring thoughts your way...saying a little prayer for you...and thanking God that you’re in the world!

Wouldn’t it be nice to receive a “Thinking of You” from someone you don’t know? Something that would show up out of the blue. Maybe once a month, maybe not. But someone who knows you and your likes and dislikes, is thinking about you, and will pray for you. Become a Secret Pal in 2020. Share your gifts, your friendship, your prayers and your love with someone who may need it throughout the year.

Forms are on the Connector Hall table; please submit by Jan 12 in the UMW mailbox in the office or give to Rosemary. Receive your matchup on Jan 19. This is open to ANYONE who is interested.

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