Crèche and Cross

As many of you know, I love holidays. So much so that Christmas decorations (including the tree) go up the morning after Thanksgiving. Our whole family loves this tradition but by the time Christmas rolls around there is the feeling that it would be good to “get our house back”. Consequently, the same decorations come down the morning after Christmas (to make way for the New Year’s decorations, of course!).

One “decoration” that does not come down with the Christmas stuff is our crèche or manger-scene. That stays up through January 6th in order to honor Epiphany.

In some ways, it is something that should stay up all year in our homes and in our churches. Like the cross, it is one of the most powerful messages of the Christian faith; and it is told without words.

From the barn animals to the Wise Men to the Holy Family, the manger-scene tells the story of why we are Christians: We believe in a God who had both the humility and audacity to be born as one of us in the worst possible conditions. It is a timeless message God’s solidarity with us in times of darkness and struggle. It is a message of new life.

Not only does the scene call us to witness God in human form, it is also the culmination of the Wise Men’s searching-adventure to discover a new king. The fact that he was not born in a palace did not dissuade them from offering their gifts and paying homage—testimony to a trust we should all emulate: that God can appear in the most unexpected places.

The crèche is a poignant reminder of the universality of God’s love. Since the Wise Men were gentiles, we can be sure that no one is excluded from divine grace.

It makes sense that the simplicity of the cross (its shape, not its meaning) caused it to be the central symbol of our faith. The manger-scene, however, is filled to overflowing with the redemptive message of God in Jesus Christ: That we are accompanied, we are valued, we will not be abandoned, that light shines in the darkest of times.
22ND ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER AND PROGRAM

■ The First Congregational Church, 121 West Foster Street
■ Dinner at 5:00 p.m. (please bring a main dish or dessert to serve 4-6 people with ingredients identified)
■ Family Program from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

ANNUAL MESSENGER SUBSCRIPTION

It is time for the Annual renewal of your Messenger subscription. The subscription rate for one year is $25.00.

_____ Enclosed is $25 for my subscription to the Messenger. Please continue mailing it to me.

_____ Enclosed is $____ to help defray the cost of a subscription for someone else.

_____ Please sign me up for e-mail delivery of the Messenger at no charge and discontinue mailing it. My e-mail address(es) is/are as follows (Please print neatly):

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

If you choose to be added to the e-mail list, you will receive a notice each week when the Messenger is posted to our web site, with a link to take you to it. You will need to download Adobe Acrobat if you do not currently have it on your computer. There are links to do this on the web site as well. It only needs to be downloaded once and should continue to work each week when you open the “E-Messenger”. **NOTE: If you are already receiving the Messenger by e-mail, no action is required.**

NAME: ___________________________________ ADDRESS: __________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
SUNDAY SCHOOL:
K thru 8 will be making Souper Bowl posters in rooms 7/8. High School is invited to stay in service.

Hello friends,
The Music Search Committee would like to hear your input on the role of music in our church.

Please complete our short survey, either online (https://goo.gl/f8B1Ed) or using the paper version.

This survey is anonymous, and can be completed in as little as 5 minutes. Your input is very valuable to us as we craft an updated position description for our Music Ministry Director.

You are welcome to share this survey with any young adults in your home, and include any comments from younger children as well.

Please share your response by Sunday 1/22/17.

Thank you,
Music Hiring Committee: Ann Ahlin, Tom Foth, Betsy Garrett, Beth Grzegorzewski, Bob and Lisa Jamison, Michael Leskiw, Jaime McAllister-Grande and Rev. Dominic