

Thoughts from Tom: Come in from the cold!

After a wonderfully prolonged fall and a warm Thanksgiving, winter is finally on its way. Ice, snow, sleet, and slush will soon be very familiar words. When the wind howls and the barren trees shiver, it is always comforting to come in from the cold to the warmth and security of our homes. Likewise, when the challenges of life cause us to shudder and shake, we need the warmth and strength that can be found when neighbors become friends, and when friends offer encouragement and support for one another.

The world is an awfully cold place. Those facing difficulties and troubles need to be surrounded by genuine friends. Solomon said in Ecclesiastes, "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work... Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 12). When we see a discouraged friend, do we add weight to their load, or do we help lighten it? We can help lift burdens off their backs by simply spending time with them, encouraging them, praying for them, and helping them in any way possible. Of course, some people rather enjoy being unhappy and burdened. Take, for example, the miserably frigid existence of Charles' Dickens' character, Ebenezer Scrooge.

External heat and cold had little influence on him. No warmth could warm, no cold could chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he; no falling snow was more intent upon its purpose; no pelting rain less open to entreaty. Foul weather didn't know where to have him. The heaviest rain and snow and hail and sleet could boast of the advantage over him in only one respect: they often "came down" handsomely, and Scrooge never did.

But after accepting of the reality of Christmas, Scrooge's ice-cold demeanor warmed considerably.

"A merry Christmas, Bob!" said Scrooge, with an earnestness that could not be mistaken, as he clapped him on the back. "A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year! I'll raise your salary, and endeavor to assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon, over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob! Make up the fires, and buy a second coal-scuttle before you dot another i, Bob Cratchit!"

Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all, and infinitely more...He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough in the good old world. Some people laughed to see the alteration in him; but his own heart laughed, and that was quite enough for him.

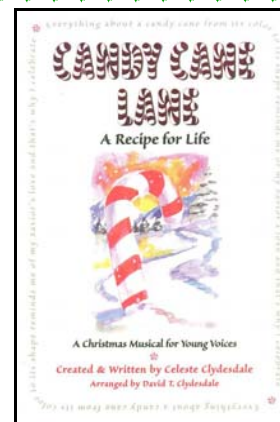
I am thankful for the many churches and agencies in the Sault who strive to provide physical warmth and comfort for struggling individuals and families. But I am more thankful for the compassion and tenderness extended by Christians to people who need to know the reality of the warmth of God's love.

Let's encourage those who are downtrodden by nurturing genuine Christian friendships. "Some companions are good for only idle talk, but a friend sticks closer than a brother" (Proverbs 18:24). Come in from the cold to the warmth of Christ!

The Northern Light

December 2011

First Church of Christ
Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan



Please sign up in the lobby if you can help provide treats for the fellowship time between services.

Children's Christmas Musical

**December 11th
8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.**

**Nursery through
High School will be
participating**

**Come and celebrate
with us!**

Operation Christmas Child boxes have been delivered!

**Area Churches donated
1032 boxes! That was up from
about 800 last year!**



**Thank you all so much for helping
to make a child smile and giving
them the opportunity to learn about
how much Jesus loves them!**

Announcements



Middle and High School Progressive Dinner and White Elephant Gift Exchange!

December 11th from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm,
meet at the church at 5:45 pm.

Sign up on facebook or see Josh for details.
Permission slips are on Josh's door.



We will be decorating the church for
Christmas on December 1st from
10 am to 12 pm. Come join us!
See Ann Peasley for details.



Middle and High School Christmas Caroling

December 4th at 6:00 pm
Meet at the church to carpool to Tendercare,
FreighterView, McKinley Manor and Long Term Care
See Josh Dowdy for details.



Parents of Nursery and Preschoolers!



If you would like your child to be in the Christmas Program, please email the church at fcoc@sault.com and let us know. Your child will be dressed as a sheep or a shepherd and will be part of the manger scene during the program. If you have any questions, please call Teresa Pietrangelo or Marie Smith.

There will be a quick practice on Saturday at 10:00 a.m.

Giving Information

November	Giving
6	\$7,542.72
13	\$4,344.44
20	\$7,345.22
27	N/A
Average	\$6,410.79

Prayer Concerns

(Please call the church office with updates)



Our country and those serving in the military
Helen Carrier—In Tendercare
Kevin Farrar—Breathing issues
Barb Farrar—Health concerns
Lee Ward (Bill's brother) - Poor health
Phyllis Synett—Rogers City Rehab
Colleen Barr Sibbald—Having chemo
Jessica (Moniz) Flood—Brain tumor reducing
Becka Alcom's Grandmother—Lymphoma
John Bryant - Cancer treatments going well
Ray Reilly—Leukemia, treatment in Ann Arbor
Lois Reilly—Recovering from 2nd hip surgery
Ted Gauthier - Severe medical problems
Marlene - Chronic lymphocytic leukemia

Dan Hewitt—Recovering from surgery
Jerry Wilson—Knee replacement recovery
Marion Passmore—Pneumonia, getting better
Grant Patton —COPD, infections, bad kidneys
Michaela Zimmerman—Medical testing
Deepmala Cook and family: Brother has hole in the heart, father has diabetes and needs kidney transplant, Dee having heart health issues
Scott Morley—8 weeks of radiation
Katie Love - 2 year old, doing well after surgery
Gary Wackler—Prostate cancer
Kurt Hewitt—Praise! Blood clot dissolved
Family of Clyde Steele—Passed away

Wednesday Evening Youth Groups

will be meeting at Wal-Mart on December 7th and 14th from 5-8:00 p.m. to ring bells for the Salvation Army. Parents are welcome!

There will be no regular youth group at the church those evenings. This is an excellent opportunity for parents and their children to help those who are less fortunate than themselves.
See Joe Hadfield for details.



Middle and High School Students! Youth Group times will be changing as of Sunday January 8th.

Middle School: 6:00-7:00 p.m.
High School: 7:15-8:15 p.m.