

CLAIR CONNECTION

NW District <http://www.northwest.moumethodist.org/>

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Advent blessings, Friends! I'm writing on December 11. Christmas is just two weeks away! It's been my experience through the years that I turn the calendar page to December with high hopes of working smarter so I can really enjoy the season and not be "behinder" than I really want to be. But, I blink my eyes and it's already mid-December and

there is still much to do! This is when I remember our first Advent book, *Why Christmas Trees Aren't Perfect*, and give myself some grace for not getting everything done that I want to do. What is really important is spending time with the ones I love most in this world and, somehow, making a difference in the world around me. Perfection isn't all it's cracked up to be, especially when we're talking real life.

The second Advent book, *The Christmas Pea Coat*, reminded us, once again, that caring for other people is more important than stuff – even the stuff that we want so badly. We cannot know what is going on in another's life or know for sure what we would do in his or her circumstances. We all just do the best we can and make a difference as we can.

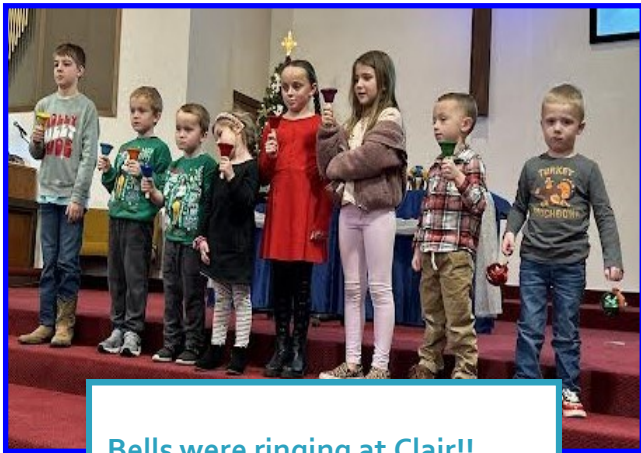
Yesterday, the children saw the similarity between *The Christmas Pea Coat* and *Josie's Gift*. Josie gave away her most special of Christmas gifts to warm a new baby taking shelter with her transient parents in Josie's family's barn on a cold December night. In doing so, Josie was blessed with a renewed spirit of love which helped her to grow closer to God and her family.

We have two more books to go before Christmas. I hope you have enjoyed the stories as much as I have enjoyed sharing them!

Next Sunday, Dec. 17, will be very special as we share special Christmas gifts during our Walk to the Manger. By now, you should have received a letter describing our December events and an envelope to place your Manger offering. This year our gifts will be divided between the Capital Campaign and furnishing Gas Cards for families to get where they need to be. United Way recommended the Gas Cards as a much needed item this year.

I look forward to seeing you two times on Christmas Eve! Sunday morning's service will find us sharing lots of Christmas carols, special music, and another great story. Then, later that day at 4 PM, we will gather again for carols, Communion and candlelight during our traditional Christmas Eve service. Continued blessings, Friends! It is an honor to be your pastor! *Gindy*

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Bells were ringing at Clair!!

Clair has adopted families and individuals for Christmas from the AFL-CIO program. Tags of needed items are available at church now. Money can be donated for food baskets also. New, wrapped items will be collected through December 17th.

Walk to the Manger With Us December 17th!

Your Christmas offering will buy gas cards for those in need and assist Clair's capital campaign

We were entertained with "It Must Be Santa" at our Fellowship Luncheon!



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Jennifer & Brendon Kinney
light the Advent candle



Starlight Group delivered gift bags of
goodies to shut-ins. Karen Jones' mother—Carolyn Bishop—passed away unexpectedly Sunday.

Candlelight Christmas Eve
Service
December 24th, 4 PM

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And All Was Going Well With the Pea Coat Story Until . . .the Owie!



Blue Christmas

The holiday season is hard for those whose hearts are hurting. You are not alone.

6:30PM DECEMBER 21ST

Ebenezer UMC 7000 SE Hwy. 169, St. Joseph, MO 64507

December 13 & 20 Advent Study 6:30 PM ([online option available—Contact Pastor Cindy](#))

NO DECEMBER MEETING—STARLIGHT

December 10th and 17th Gift Collection for adopted families and individuals

December 12 Ad Council 6 PM

December 17 WALK TO THE MANGER

December 18-22 Gifts are delivered to adopted families

December 21 Blue Christmas Service at Ebenezer 6:30 PM

December 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 4 PM

