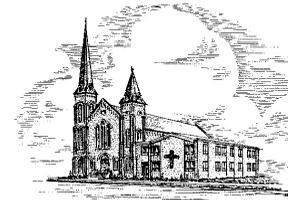


Winter Fun Word Search Game

Find the hidden words associated with winter.

S D Q G I S I P B A H N E M W O N S
 W S E U Q U T F V M I A A V H S G V
 K T Z J W S W S F Z Q G T T Q N D I
 S E Q S Z L C K I P W J Y S I A J C
 S R Y L U X J A R G B Q G I V G E E
 C W R L F M U T E V D E K C N G S R
 S C A E Y X E I P E C S K A V O T I
 D S U B E P R N L V D B M I B B A N
 E T W H F G L G A E L C I G O O K
 L S L G A L L R C Y H S T O P T C S
 S E Y I O N A A E C K S T L U U R X
 B L E E O G L K S E L S E W D Z E E
 O C M L X A L S E A R G N V N U V R
 B I T S P L L H V S J V S Y R D O A
 S C X E P E O I T S O R F K C A J O
 R I C U D C N E X J S H J K H T C R
 S I E S K R O S N O W B O A R D S S
 G B Y E A K V V D R A Z Z I L B O S
 V N Y C S N O W M O B I L E S L L S
 G B M G K Q J M S Y A D I L O H N L
 O O P C S N O W B A L L S J I A J E

BLIZZARD
 BOBSLEDS
 BOOTS
 CARNIVALS
 FIREPLACES
 FLAKES
 HATS
 HOCKEY
 HOLIDAYS
 ICEPALACE
 ICERINK
 ICICLES
 JACKFROST
 MITTENS
 OVERCOATS
 SCARVES
 SKIING
 SLEDS
 SLEIGHBELLS
 SKATING
 SNOWBALLS
 SNOWBOARDS
 SNOWMEN
 SNOWMOBILES
 TOBOGGANS
 TUQUES



Steeple Breezes

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VOLUME 217 JANUARY 2018 NO. 1

Greetings,

According to Merriam-Webster.com dictionary, epiphany can mean several things:

- (1) a usually sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something.
- (2) an intuitive grasp of reality through something (such as an event) usually simple and striking.
- (3) an illuminating discovery, realization, or disclosure.

There is a season of the church year called “Epiphany.” It a celebration of Jesus being disclosed to the Gentiles. The appearance of the Magi is seen as the event that says Jesus was for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews. Traditionally, Epiphany is celebrated on January 6 of each year.

The Magi had to have a sudden manifestation of the meaning of the birth of Jesus. It was not something that could be ascertained by just watching the events of the day or even through the study of scripture. According to the story, they were studying the stars, and one star looked different. They came to understand that it represented something very special.

Whenever someone comes to be a follower of Jesus, some form of epiphany is needed. In the midst of our daily activities, we are confronted by the message which says that “Jesus is Lord” and that we should be living according to his will. When that comes, we need to follow where God leads.

We also need to keep in mind that an epiphany is not always totally clear. Even the wise men had to rethink the meaning of their epiphany. They understood that a great king was being born. Apparently, the star guided them to Palestine. However, there they misunderstood the epiphany; they assumed that if there was a great king being born, it would be known in the capital city, Jerusalem. The result of their mistaken assumption was that they alerted Herod to the birth of the Christ, and he then slaughtered the children of Bethlehem in an attempt to secure his throne.

Why is this important? It is a reminder to us that despite how sure we are of our epiphanies, we need to remain humble, seeking God's guidance. We are never really in a place where we can know for sure we have understood the epiphanies we have.

In this season of Epiphany, I pray that you will keep your hearts and minds open to what God wants to reveal to you. Be alert and prepare to be surprised.

Pastor Ross

To the Comfort Quilts Ministry,
Thank you so much for the beautiful quilt. It gives me warmth, comfort, and encouragement every day.
Bless your ministry, Carol Wood

HANGING OF THE GREENS

Appreciation is extended to the following folks who kindly gave of their time and talents to again adorn the FBC sanctuary and Fellowship Hall with our traditional Christmas décor: Ron Bush; Cindy & Russ Cummings; Bob, Dan, Dick, Jay, Sherry, Scott, & Sue Dodge; Don Freese; Nolan & Tyler Hughey; Shirley Sayles; Al & Nancy Wagner; Mary White; Mary, Noah, & Ron Woodruff. It always brings back fond memories of past friends and members who created/donated many of the items that we still use. Special thanks to Mary and Ron Woodruff for providing Hinkley donut holes to keep the crew energized and on task, even through some challenges—like “where are the connection points for all these tree lights?!”

The Committee has been busy in preparing a new Church Profile which gives our Vision Statement and pertinent information about our church, activities, and history. This will assist the Search Committee in finding a good match between Congregation and Pastor. This must be done before we can begin the search with our Lansing Office. We are making progress, and hopefully after the first of the year, we will have the Profile prepared so we can move forward in the search process. We'll keep you informed as we move to the next step. We can use everyone's prayers to guide us along this journey.

—Nancy Wagner

CHRISTMAS BASKETS OF LOVE

This year's Christmas Basket Ministry was a great success! This year, our church family was very generous with donations to help keep this mission going. We usually give out 36 baskets each year, but due to the extra funds, we were able to bless an additional four families (thank you, Church Family).

A big thank you to all who helped put together the baskets. I would like to especially thank those who help behind the scenes to help this mission to be a success: Nicole Brown-Sample for compiling the names for those who would receive the baskets and helping me order food items from the food bank; Dan and Dick Dodge who helped pick up the other food items at Aldi's and Chelsea Milling (Jiffy Mix); and Cindy Cummings who keeps track of those who have picked up their baskets. Again, a big thank you to all of you who gave of your time and monies to keep this long-running ministry going.

—Nadine Manchester,
Christmas Basket Coordinator

HELP WANTED

We are looking for additional people to sing in the choir. You do not have to be a member of the church, but you must be able to read music, attend rehearsals, and perform at Sunday morning services. If you are interested, please see Edna Harris, Choir Director.



AN UPDATE FROM YOUR SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Search Committee has reviewed the results of the recent survey regarding the “qualities” or “specialties” we seek for our new pastor; the top 10 “qualities” or “specialties” wanted by this congregation in a settled pastor are as follows:

1. The ability to develop and maintain programs and activities for enlarging the membership and/or the church’s vision for ministry.
2. The skill to create an atmosphere in which persons feel accepted, included and cared for, and can identify with the group.
3. The ability to provide a teaching ministry that is based on theological, educational, and historical foundations.
4. A focus on the preaching ministry with time for preparation/reflection on the Word and commitment to listen for the Word’s power and its implications for individuals, the church, the community, and the world.
5. The skill to provide by word and presence an empathetic understanding of, and concern for, persons in the routine and joys, as well as, the crises and transitions of life, giving assistance where appropriate and feasible.
6. The ability to communicate a comprehensive understanding of the Bible and Christian theology in terms relevant to persons’ lives.
7. To participate actively in worship, offering feedback and suggestions for greater participation and effectiveness in the expression of praise, thanksgiving, and devotion to God.
8. The insight to identify and evaluate the needs of the community and work to meet those needs through individual and/or corporate action.
9. To provide opportunities for individuals or groups to understand and enhance the spiritual dimensions of their personal lives.
10. The 10th ranked “qualities” or “specialties” wanted by this congregation are a 4-way tie:
 - 1) Skill at resolving conflict situations with persons and groups for the sake of the church’s ministry.
 - 2) Leadership in turning vision into reality and to sustain it in the church.
 - 3) A willingness to make formal and informal connections with church members or others in their homes, at work, or in other settings.
 - 4) The ability to develop and lead a ministry with adolescents that nurtures youth toward Christian faith, commitment, and discipleship.

THE GIFTS OF THE MAGI

Matthew 2 tells us that the magi, or wise men, travelled from the East in search of the Christ child. They inquired of King Herod where they might find Him, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:2). Upon finding the baby Jesus, “they bowed down and worshiped Him. Then they opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh” (Matthew 2:11).

Gold is a precious metal and as such was a very valuable commodity. Its value could very well have financed Joseph and Mary’s trip to Egypt. The Bible does not tell us any other significance to these three gifts; however, tradition has it that there is a deeper meaning for each of the three. Gold is a symbol of divinity and is mentioned throughout the Bible. Pagan idols were often made from gold and the Ark of the Covenant was overlaid with gold (Exodus 25:10-17). The gift of gold to the Christ child was symbolic of His divinity—God in flesh.

Frankincense is a white resin or gum. It is obtained from a tree by making incisions in the bark and allowing the gum to flow out. It is highly fragrant when burned and was therefore used in worship, where it was burned as a pleasant offering to God (Exodus 30:34). Frankincense is a symbol of holiness and righteousness. The gift of frankincense to the Christ child was symbolic of His willingness to become a sacrifice, wholly giving Himself up, analogous to a burnt offering.

Myrrh was also a product of Arabia, and was obtained from a tree in the same manner as frankincense. It was a spice and was used in embalming. It was also sometimes mingled with wine to form an article of drink. Such a drink was given to our Savior when He was about to be crucified, as a stupefying potion (Mark 15:23). Matthew 27:34 refers to it as “gall.” Myrrh symbolizes bitterness, suffering, and affliction. The baby Jesus would grow to suffer greatly as a man and would pay the ultimate price when He gave His life on the cross for all who would believe in Him.



