



Thursday 10 December 2020

Must See TV

- by Pastor Mark

I was intending to return to work and dive into an article on COVID for this week's Midweek Newsletter. Instead, I watched the 1938 version of Dickens' "A Christmas Carol" (with Reginald Owen as Scrooge) while it was broadcast on TCM. Although I prefer the 1951 rendering with Alistair Sim as the Christmas curmudgeon, it was a delight to watch the earlier version, even in glorious black and white.

In truth, I needed to get away for a short while—away from the frustrations of our day, from going out to restaurants just long enough to collect a takeout order, to masking up before entering any building that isn't my own home, to wondering what we'll do as an extended family this Christmas when we shouldn't be gathering, to trying to keep a church going while we cannot meet together and so few are using the new and available technology to connect.

Offered 90 minutes to wander around a fantasy of Victorian Britain with the indomitable Cratchets, Scrooge's perpetually cheerful nephew Fred, and old Ebenezer himself, I took that hour and a half of escape.

While I was away, the Coronavirus has kept making its rounds and I'm sure COVID-19 has continued to sicken and kill. While I was away, some people continue to militate against wearing masks and keeping a safe distance from others while others have spread the virus to friends and family out of carelessness born of familiarity. While I was away too many people have continued to be duped by conspiracy theories about rigged elections, dangerous vaccines, and plots of Byzantine complexity to control the world. While I was away our soon to be ex-president has surely continued to claim he won the election.

So, was it a worthless 90 minutes of hollow escape? Not at all. It was time well spent as Sabbath amidst the labor and stress of Tuesday, 8 December 2020. It was 90 minutes of both rest and reminder that our humanity is not defined by a microscopic virus, regardless of how we have to adapt to keep it from harming ourselves and each other. In the joy of the Cratchet's simple life and the profound transformation of Ebenezer Scrooge, Charles Dickens captured visions of humanity redeemed. And, especially with regard to Scrooge, that redemption is far more clear and understandable than our precious salvation theology, which weaves an overly complex dissertation of redemption from the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Scrooge is simply transformed into someone whose life is about hope and love.

I can return to worship and sermon preparation now, but I don't think I can approach it as an exercise in hermeneutic eloquence or theological profundity. Faith, hope, and love will be enough. Thanks be to God!

Stay Connected with Tecumseh UMC & Each Other

We can't gather face to face as a church, but we can gather in ways unavailable to us a generation ago. Here's the available ways to connect with Tecumseh UMC:

- **Website:** <http://www.tecumsehumc.org/> - our church's digital front door where you can find worship podcasts, midweek newsletters, and a variety of useful information including our calendar.
- **Worship podcasts:** Each week and available on our website (see above). Click and listen.
- **Worship podcasts by phone:** If you cannot pick up our worship podcasts from the internet you can hear them through your telephone by dialing **517-208-0087**. Each week the latest worship service will be available for the week.
- **Online Coffee Hour:** We can't gather together physically but we can still gather. Come to Online Coffee Hour on **Sundays at 11:30am** through Zoom using the access information provided each week via email. (You will need to install Zoom on your computer or smart device.)
- **Breakfast Club Online:** Start your day with fellowship and convivial conversation. Using Zoom, we gather weekdays at 8:30am. Like the Online Coffee Hour, access information for the Breakfast Club Online is emailed each week.
- **Zoom:** . . . is Skype or Facetime on steroids. It is safe and easy to learn but needs a broadband internet connection (it probably doesn't work well on a DSL line, and not at all on an old dial-up modem).
If you need help setting up and/or using Zoom, please contact Pastor Mark for assistance.
- Pastor Mark – call/text: 517-260-1315
email: <mailto:tecumsehumc@gmail.com>

Let's take advantage of the available technology.

Goodbye D. J. Martin

D. J. Martin, beloved by community, church, and family ushered in December by leaving us on the 1st to take his well-earned rest in our Lord's eternal embrace. He is and will be missed. May we all keep his family, friends, and employees in our prayers as they deal with his loss.

Although his funeral, held last Friday, was private, it was captured on video and is available on YouTube. Click https://youtu.be/Std8xRHO_6Y to view D. J.'s funeral.

Join Barb Vallieu in her Kitchen

Check out the article on our Barb Vallieu in the latest "homefront" magazine (<http://homefronttecumseh.com/>).

On Friday's – scone day – she bakes scones that she shares with neighbors.

It's not only a good article, it includes her recipe for scones. Check it out!

Be a Link in Our Prayer Chain

We need more links in our prayer chain. We have only four. We've been known as a praying church. Let's keep prayer a ministry that makes a difference, especially in these difficult times. Please call Deb Blanden (517-423-6004) or Bonnie Greene (517-423-4445) to become a link in the prayer chain.

Jams & Jellies

We still have plenty of jars of jams and jellies for purchase with the proceeds going to mission and relief efforts. Contact the church office (517-423-2523) or Bonnie Greene (517-423-4445, 517-902-5217) for more information or to purchase. The jams and jellies are on display in the classroom at the end of the hallway across from the church office and pastor's study.

Mitten Tree Donations Wanted

Even though we are not in the church, we are still hosting our annual mitten tree collection. We are collecting mittens, gloves, and winter hats for kids.

Christmas Eve

Pastor Mark is still recording music in the sanctuary to be used with the Christmas Eve podcast. We will be reprising The Schnitzel Trio and including a few vocal solos and duets (accompanied by Wilnella). Pastor Mark will introduce the oboe (purchased on the cheap last month) he is teaching himself to play. There will be lots of music interweaved with the Christmas story. If you have music you want to share, please let Pastor Mark know and we'll get you recorded.