

OUR SAVIOUR'S UCC

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THE MESSENGER

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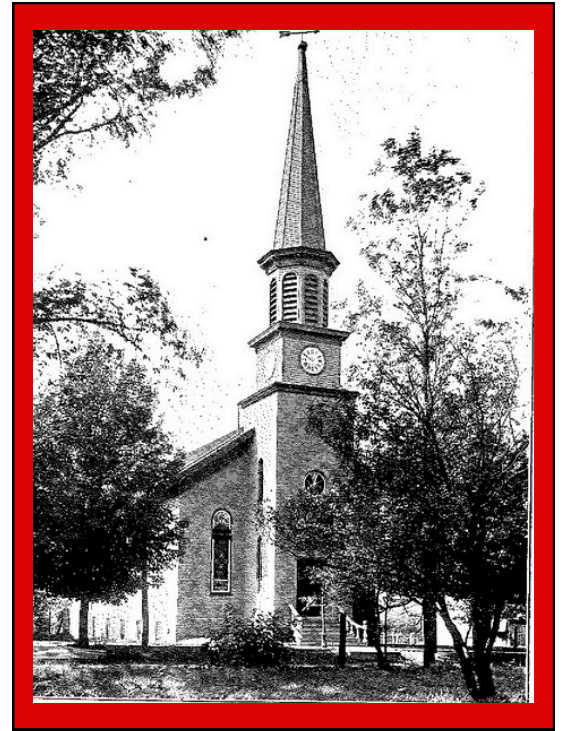


December

Welcome to The Messenger

Published by Our Saviour's UCC since 1924

- Page 1 From the Pastor's Desk**
- Page 2 Committee News**
- Page 3 More Committee News**
- Page 4 Ministries, Projects, and News**
- Page 5-6 More Ministries, Projects, and News**
- Page 7 From Our Parish Nurse**
- Page 8 December Duties Schedule**
- Page 9 December Calendar**
- Page 10 The Table Cloth - a true story**



Join us for Worship In-Person, Virtually, or by Radio!

Worship Services are Thursday at 6:30 pm in the Chapel and Sunday at 9:00 am in the Sanctuary. Both services are Livestreamed to Facebook, YouTube, and our website. On Sunday at 10:50 am you can also tune in to 1600AM WRPN to listen to the radio broadcast of the 9:00 am worship service.

For those who worship through our online opportunities, if you live in the greater Ripon area and would like Rev. Mundell to come by in person to visit and bring you communion, please call our church office at 920-748-2544 to set up an appointment. He is very happy to do that for you!

Deadline for the January 2026 Edition of The Messenger:

Events to be included on the calendar, committee updates, articles, etc. should be submitted to the office by **December 20th** via email to the Church office, osuccripon1@gmail.com, or you may drop your information in the office, or submit it using the the QR code at the right and filling out the short form that is automatically sent directly to the office email. Thank you.

QR Code



Our Saviour's United Church of Christ
343 Scott Street, Ripon, WI 54971 | 920.748.2544
www.OurSavioursUCCRipon.com



<https://bit.ly/OSUCCFacebook>



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From the Pastor's Desk



I came across a quote from Rabbi Jonathan Sacks in his book, "To Heal A Fractured World: The Ethics of Responsibility" and it reframed my understanding of Advent and Christmas.

"In Judaism, faith is not acceptance but protest, against the world that is, in the name of the world that is not yet but ought to be. Faith lies not in the answer but the question-and the greater the human being, the more intense the question. The bible is not metaphysical opium but its opposite. Its aim is not to transport the believer to a private heaven. Instead, its impassioned sustained desire is to bring heaven down to earth. Until we have done this, there is work still to do. (Pg. 27)."

I believe as Christians our faith is this same protest. We are called to proclaim the kingdom of God through Jesus' death and resurrection and to bear witness to it as it is coming into being. We are to resist the ways we turn everything we construct away from God and seek to live a human justice informed by God's justice. The Christmas stories in the gospels are not meant to be read sentimentally but as lived stories of God working in contradiction to how we chose to order our world without God.

The story of Jesus being born in the wrong way to the wrong people in the wrong place while being under threat of violence and death illustrates our Christian protest to how we have built our world without God. The Christian church year starts with the hope of a king, then moves to the birth of the king followed by the authorizing of the king's ministry, to the king being a minister to us. We then see the king lifted up and killed, buried, and resurrected. Jesus then ascends, gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to transform our lives toward Jesus' life and we end the year celebrating the King's return and the kingdom we yearn to see coming in full here on earth.

Our faith sets us free from sin to live the world that ought to be with Christ as king. The holy spirit, when we let the spirit do what it is here to do, guides us in becoming more Christ like so that the relationship we build shows what is to come when Christ returns. Advent, which we are now entering, helps us to begin to hope. Christmas reminds us that we hope in Jesus, God incarnate.

The Christmas stories are not about giving or receiving of gifts but rather about God coming to us in Jesus to begin fixing what we have broken and healing our own brokenness so that God can one day live and reign in our midst with us here on earth. We are honoring a King who will one day be over all.

Jesus comes to us at Christmas to begin the journey of setting us free through declaring to our that our sins are forgiven and we are loved. Let us receive our lives and give away to others as Jesus has given to us.

God's Grace is Sufficient. Rev. Dr. Kevin Mundell

Committee News

Altar Guild

The 2025 sign-up book is available on the stand outside of the church office. This sign-up is for each of the sponsorships. Altar flowers are \$50 and Organ flowers are \$30 each. Radio Broadcasts are \$50 per sponsor & \$25 per sponsor per bulletin. All checks should be made out to OSUCC, with Altar Guild written on the memo line if you are sponsoring flowers, please. We no longer maintain a separate checking account.



Our next full meeting is Sunday, January 18th after the worship service. We invite anyone that would like to join Altar Guild to attend our meetings and learn more. If you have any questions about what Altar Guild does and the team approach we use, please feel free to contact Tammy Widlake at 920-517-1192 or Caroline Retzlaff at 920-748-2367.

Called to Care Committee

If you don't have one yet, pick up a Prayer Square or ask Nurse Emily to bring some along when she visits so you can choose one for yourself! These colorful, comforting hand-knit squares are made here at OSUCC.

Nurse Emily holds a Blood Pressure Clinic in her office that is open to all OSUCC members on the first Sunday of every month after the worship service. The next clinic is December 7th at 10:00 am.

The church office is closed Thursday, December 25th, and Thursday, December 31st. Please keep an eye on the bulletins for revised nurse hours around the holidays, and you can email osuccpnripon1@gmail.com for any nurse requests.

Purple Sunday offerings were \$110.47, and a check has been sent to the Alzheimer's Association. Thank you!

In a throwback to prior years, Called to Care is offering the gift of a Christmas ornament to those who attend worship on Sunday, November 30th, the first Sunday of Advent. If you are unable to make that service, we will have a limited number of the ornaments available in the church office also.

The Blue Christmas worship service is scheduled for Thursday, December 18th, at 6:30 pm.

The next Called to Care meeting will be held January 8th, at 9:30 AM in the conference room.



Christian Education Committee

Our next committee meeting will be Monday, January 19th at 5:30 pm.

- **Adult Ed:** Sunday Adult Ed class meets from 10:30 am - 11:30 am, so do grab a coffee and treat beforehand.
- **Christian Ed Classes:** Sunday School classes meet from 10:15 am - 11:15 am.
- **Confirmation Class:** Confirmation class has begun, contact Rev. Mundell for more information.
- **Nursery:** We have a child/parent space available in the southwest corner of the West Narthex, adjacent to the back of the Sanctuary. There are restrooms nearby in the corridor leading to the Chapel that are outfitted with Koala Care changing stations for your convenience.

More Committee News

Evangelism Committee

Along with Christian Ed, we are working to set up an Enchanted Forest Tree this year as part of Ripon's Dicken's of a Christmas. The Sunday School children have been working hard to make the ornaments for the tree, so please stop by Horicon Bank from December 5th through the 7th to enjoy their tree, along with the others that will be on display!



We will be presenting the Lego Team with a check on Sunday, December 7th, during the worship service.

The current issue of *The Upper Room* is available in the East Narthex, the North Narthex, and in front of the church office. There is no charge for this wonderful publication so please do take advantage of using it. There is a large print size and a small size available.

Our next meeting will be Monday, January 19th, at 6:30 PM and we welcome new committee members!



Mission Committee

Missions Committee will meet Tuesday, January 20th, at 5:30 pm. This is a very active committee so if you are interested in joining us, we would be happy to welcome you!

Thank you to everyone that packed a shoebox this year or donated items! Missions Committee met on Tuesday, November 18th for their packing party, we were able to send 21 shoeboxes this year. Thank you all!

Blanket Sunday - you donated \$418 for this cause, thank you! The funds have been sent off to Church World Services.

If you are interested in donating to the Ripon Christmas Fund this year, we will be collecting donations on Sunday, December 21st. If you aren't familiar with the Fund does, please contact Amy Borgardt.

We'd like thank everyone who so generously donated for the Ripon Community Food Pantry's Family Holiday Meal Program! We received \$1,850 (37 meals) for Thanksgiving and \$200 (4 meals) already for Christmas! Our Church Council decided at their last meeting to donate \$2,000 to the program as well. The pantry is thrilled beyond words and immensely grateful to everyone who is helping this program meet the needs of families in our community.

Mark your calendars for the 2025 Missions Holiday Bake Sale, scheduled for December 14th, which is also the date of the Children's Pageant this year! We'll have a sign up sheet in the East Narthex for anyone who would like to help provide delicious baked goods for the sale. Thank you, and if you could have them here in the East Narthex by 10 am on December 13th that would be greatly appreciated!

Worship Committee

Our search for a new Choir Director is ongoing and we have a post on Facebook that you can share. If you hear of someone who may be interested, please contact Barb Stracy at 920-229-1183.



There is a special meeting of the Worship Committee on Monday, December 22nd at 4:00 PM to prep candles for the Christmas Eve services. The next regular committee meeting is January 19th, at 4:00 PM.

Ministries, Projects, and News

Matthew 25: Ministries Pill Bottle Collection

7,633 Pill Bottles in 2025!

Thank you for all your donations! We are so grateful for the steady donation of pill bottles of every type and size. Let's keep them multiplying in the closet like bunnies!

We are also grateful to several ladies here at OSUCC who volunteer their time to sort and pack the shipping boxes that we send out. Thank you, and you know who you are!

OSUCC is one of the last collection points in the area so this project is very important for helping keep the bottles out of landfills. We send them to Matthew 25: Ministries in Blue Ash, OH who ships the bottles to developing countries who need assistance in the improvement of available medical care and supplies.



Please continue dropping off pill bottles (with prescription labels removed) to the church office. If the office is closed, feel free to leave them in the brown plastic basket located on the table in the North Entrance vestibule. Thank you so much!

Pop Tabs for Ronald McDonald House

58,182 Pop Tabs in 2025!



Tabs can come from a variety of cans such as pet food, beverage cans, soup cans, tuna cans, etc. We appreciate all of those who have already donated their tabs, or are still working on their collection jar at home! We understand that even friends of friends have begun collecting and donating too, how exciting! Thank you all so very much!

The tabs collected are sent to Ronald McDonald House, who recycles them and uses the proceeds to help fund the general operations expense of the House--keeping it open to serve even more families. It's a win-win situation!

Prayer Chain Ministry

In our Prayers: Jim Badtke, Sharri Dailey, Tara Koller, Emily McGuire, Bonnie Mundell, Ron Prellwitz, Mark Sabel, Barb Schultz, Joe Wrzinski, and 16 Unspoken.

Feel free to add yourself or a loved one to our prayer chain ministry by contacting Caroline Retzlaff at 920-748-2367.



Quotes for December

"The story of Christmas is the story of God's relentless love for us."-- *Max Lucado*

"The good news of great joy changed the course of every silent night to come."-- *Alicia Bruxvoort*

More Ministries, Projects, and News

Turkey Dinner News from Buck and Nancy

On October 25th, OSUCC served it's 23rd Fall Turkey Dinner, the single largest fund raiser for the General Fund that our church has. We served a total of 525 meals, including the delivery orders, the pick up orders, those who dined in the Fellowship Hall, and our volunteers. There were, of course, leftovers but we are happy to say all of those found good homes and were well received.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who donated food items and cash donations, who helped with all of the food preparation over a period of days, those who cooked, those who drove the delivery meals, those who handled the pickup meal line, those who served meals and bussed tables in Fellowship Hall, those who helped pack the pickup and delivery meals, those who cleaned up the kitchen/dishes/tables and just about anything else that didn't get out of the way fast enough, and those who helped in so many other ways. You all were truly amazing!

This year we were able to present \$1,000 each to Ripon Area Food Pantry and to Ripon Community Food Pantry. This is money well spent as these two food pantries have both seen an increase in the number of people here in our community needing food assistance during this time of uncertainty over funding for the SNAP program.

Once again there were great memories made as we all worked together for the benefit of our church and community, although you do know the saying "what happens in the kitchen, stays in the kitchen"! A special shout out goes to Sophie Moldenhauer, our Intern from Berlin, Germany, who showed great dedication for helping in whatever manner was needed. We hope this was a good experience for you and we very much enjoyed having you be a part of the team!



A Note of Appreciation

Buck and Nancy would like to thank everyone for the appreciation shown to us since we announced that we were stepping away as chairpersons for the Turkey Dinner. To everything, there is a season. Our hearts and souls still want to say "Yes we can!", but our bodies say "Oh no we can't." It was a tough decision to make, but it was time to listen to our bodies.

We would like to thank our church, church family, and the community for all your support throughout the years. We believe most of you realize that there is a great deal of "behind the scenes" work to putting the Turkey Dinner event on, and we are happy to share our knowledge from lessons learned over the years with anyone who would like to take it on next year. It's a worthy cause for many reasons!

More Ministries, Projects, and News

The Ripon Free Community Meals



Our November Chili Dinner went over well even though the temperatures outside were on the mild side. Including those who dined in, our volunteers, and leftover take-outs we served 130 meals again. Thank you to all who volunteered and helped in so many ways!

For our December 2nd meal we'll be serving a delicious "Sunday meal" of Roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, carrots, caramel apple salad, dinner rolls, and of course some amazing desserts provided by our very talented bakers here at OSUCC. Don't be late to the table because even Santa is going to attend, well, if Rudolph doesn't kick up too much of a fuss about an early run!

These Sharing Table Free Community Meals are open to everyone in the community and all are welcome. Please help spread the word in the community so we can reach those new to the community or those who may not be aware of this valuable ministry being offered by five of our churches here in Ripon.

In December we celebrate the completion of two full years providing the Sharing Table Free Community Meals to our community as part of the five participating churches in this mission. During this time we have seen the attendance numbers climb and expect that will continue. This mission has been rewarding on so many levels and has become an important fixture for our community members, not only for the food, but for the fellowship. Thank you to all who have supported this mission over the last two years and help keep it going strong!

Here at OSUCC, the meal mission is supported through grants from Websters Foundation and the UCC Conference, as well as free will donations at the meals. Nancy Henning has been successfully applying for the grants, and recently received news that we have been awarded another one from the UCC Conference for 2026. Well done and thank you, Nancy, for the hard work and follow-up needed to be successful with grant processes.

Women's Wild Winter Weekend 2026

Calling all "Wild Women" for a wonderful weekend away! WWWW will include time for personal sabbath, singing, crafts, group activities and fellowship time. Pamper yourself in our Comfort Corner, enjoy the Silent Auction, our fabulous Saturday night banquet (complete with a chocolate fountain bar), wonderful worship and, of course, plenty of time to enjoy the quiet but wild beauty of Moon Beach in winter. This year's theme is "Trust".

WWWW is Friday, February 20 through Sunday, February 22nd, with an option to go up Thursday, February 19th for an additional fee. Don't forget that OSUCC offers scholarships to all of our members that covers the cost of this camp!

We highly recommend that you call 715-479-8255 to register, rather than trying to do it through the website. The website will require immediate payment. Make sure to tell the Registrar that you are a member of OSUCC when you call so that she includes your name and camp fee on the single invoice they send directly to us.

This is a great opportunity to spend quality time with the many ladies from our church who attend, as well as make new friends from other ladies attending from fellow UCC churches. Please ask Pat Gittens, Kelly Mundell, Debbie Hahn, Boni Jensen, or any of the other ladies who have gone before this if you have any questions about camp!



From Our Parish Nurse

Practice Safe Gift-Giving this Holiday Season

December is National Safe Toys and Gifts Month. As we approach the holiday season, it is important to keep toy safety in mind. Here are some tips to help choose the safest gifts for the little ones in your life.

- Inspect toys before buying them- choose toys with sturdy construction that can withstand impact without breaking. Avoid toys with sharp edges or points.
- Follow age recommendations- the recommendations provide a good guideline for the ages that can use the toys safely and enjoyably.
- Avoid choking hazards- a good rule of thumb is if a toy or a piece from a toy can fit inside a toilet paper roll, it is not appropriate for kids under age three. Also be diligent to keep older kids toys away from younger children.
- Don't buy toy jewelry that may contain lead or cadmium- both are poisonous metals that can cause serious harm to children. Also be careful with antique toys, many may contain lead based or toxic paints.
- Do not give markers or crayons unless they are labeled non-toxic
- Look for ATSM approved toys- ATSM is the American Society for Testing and Materials, check labels to see that the toy has passed a safety inspection.
- Avoid toys with cords or strings longer than 7 inches- they could pose a strangulation risk for babies. Also children under 10 should get battery operated toys, not toys that have cords and need to be plugged into an electrical outlet.
- Batteries should be hard to get to- also use caution with toys that require button batteries. A swallowed battery can lead to serious injury or death.
- Avoid toys with high powered magnets- if magnets are swallowed, they can attract each other within the body and cause serious internal injury or even death.
- Include protective gear with riding toys- when gifting roller skates, skateboards, scooters or bikes always include a helmet, wrist guards, elbow pads, and knee pads to ensure the child can ride safely. Riding toys are the leading cause of toy-related injuries in children.
- Discard wrappings and plastic packaging immediately- these are not toys and may present a choking or suffocation hazard to young children.
- Stay up to date on the latest recalls- every year dozens of toys are recalled due to safety concerns. Check the U.S. CPSC website for the latest available information on recalls.

To learn more about toy safety or to review the latest recalls please visit <https://www.cpsc.gov/Safety-Education/Safety-Education-Centers/Toys>

Emily Burk, RN, OSUCC Parish Nurse

December



Duties

Liturgist

Dec 7 Jeremy Schouten
Dec 14 Jaime Prellwitz
Dec 21 Heidi Schwanke
Dec 24 E Rick Stracy
Dec 24 L Jeremy Schouten
Dec 28 Keith Mulder

Gatekeepers

Dec 7 Pete & Kathy Schieler
Dec 14 Keith & Becky Mulder
Dec 21 Dennis & Emily Burk, Sue Wrzinski
Dec 24 E TBD
Dec 24 L TBD
Dec 28 Pat Gittens

Audio/Visual Operators

Dec 7 John Kwiatkowske/Phil Wepner
Dec 14 Kelly Mundell/Judy Lueck
Dec 18 Kelly Mundell/Phil Webner
Dec 21 John Kwiatkowske/Kelly Mundell
Dec 24 E Keith Mulder/Judy Lueck
Dec 24 L Kelly Mundell/Phil Wepner
Dec 28 Kelly Mundell/Judy Lueck

Worship Bulletins

Bulletins are mailed out on Wednesday's and are also available in the North Narthex for pickup.

Usher/Greeters

Dec 7 Team 1
Dec 14 Team 2
Dec 21 Team 3
Dec 24 E Team 4
Dec 24 L Team 5
Dec 28 Team 6

Van Drivers

Dec 7 Ricky Prellwitz
Dec 14 Rick Stracy
Dec 21 Jackie Bogucke
Dec 28 Tom Carr

Call Church Office by 12PM Thursday before the following Sunday to reserve a seat!

Altar Guild Committee

Pat Gittens, Debbie Hahn, Judy Heitmann, Julie Stellmacher, Tammy Widlake

Communion Servers

Dec 7 Buck Kwiatkowski, Ricky Prellwitz

Coffee Hour

Everyone is welcome! Come enjoy coffee, juice, and baked goods after the 9:00 AM Worship Service.

Interested in hosting coffee hour? The signup book is on the counter by the microwave in the East Narthex.

December 2025

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 6:15 Puppet Practice	2 5:00 pm Sharing Table Community Meal OSUCC 6:30 pm Pack 3735 Den Meeting	3	4 9:00 am MBS Clinic 5:15 pm Sr Choir Practice 6:30 pm Worship Service with Communion 6:30 pm Lego Multiverse	5	6
7 9:00 am Worship Service with Communion 10:00 am Blood Pressure Clinic 10:15 Sunday School 10:30 Adult Education 6:30 pm Lego Multiverse	8 1:00 Science Club 6:15 Puppet Practice 6:30 pm Church Council Mtg	9 5:00 pm Sharing Table Community Meal Grace Lutheran 6:30 pm Pack 3735 Den Meeting	10	11 9:00 am MBS Clinic 5:15 pm Sr Choir Practice 6:30 pm Worship Service 6:30 pm Lego Multiverse	12	13 10:00 am Bake Sale items to Church please, and thank you!
14 9:00 am Worship Service - Children's Pageant 10:00 am Bake Sale! 10:15 Sunday School 10:30 Adult Education 6:30 pm Lego Multiverse	15 6:15 Puppet Practice 5:30 pm Christian Ed Mtg	16 5:00 pm Sharing Table Community Meal Immanuel UMC 6:30 pm Pack 3735 Den meeting	17	18 9:00 am MBS Clinic 5:15 pm Sr Choir Practice 6:30 pm Blue Christmas Service 6:30 pm Lego Multiverse	19	20 January Messenger Deadline
21 9:00 am Worship Service 10:15 Sunday School 10:30 Adult Education 6:30 pm Lego Multiverse	22 4:00 pm Worship Mtg and candle prep	23 5:30 pm Sharing Table Community Meal 1 st Congregational	24 Christmas Eve 4:00 pm Candlelight Worship Service 9:00 pm Candlelight Worship Service	25  Church & Office Closed	26	27
28 9:00 am Worship Service 10:15 Sunday School 10:30 Adult Education 6:30 pm Lego Multiverse	29	30 5:00 pm Sharing Table Community Meal St Catherine's of Siena	31 			

The Table Cloth - A True Story by Pastor Rob Reid

The brand new pastor and his wife, newly assigned to their first ministry, to reopen a church in suburban Brooklyn, arrived in early October excited about their opportunities. When they saw their church, it was very run down and needed much work. They set a goal to have everything done in time to have their first service on Christmas Eve.

They worked hard, repairing pews, plastering walls, painting, etc. and on Dec 18 were ahead of schedule and just about finished. On Dec 19 a terrible tempest – a driving rainstorm – hit the area and lasted for two days. On the 21st, the pastor went over to the church. His heart sank when he saw that the roof had leaked, causing a large area of plaster about 20 feet by 8 feet to fall off the front wall of the sanctuary just behind the pulpit, beginning about head high.

The pastor cleaned up the mess on the floor, and not knowing what else to do but postpone the Christmas Eve service, headed home. On the way he noticed that a local business was having a flea market type sale for charity so he stopped in. One of the items was a beautiful, handmade, ivory colored, crocheted tablecloth with exquisite work, fine colors and a Cross embroidered right in the center. It was just the right size to cover up the hole in the front wall. He bought it and headed back to the church.

By this time it had started to snow. An older woman running from the opposite direction was trying to catch the bus. She missed it. The pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus 45 minutes later.

She sat in a pew and paid no attention to the pastor while he got a ladder, hangers, etc., to put up the tablecloth as a wall tapestry. The pastor could hardly believe how beautiful it looked and it covered up the entire problem area. Then he noticed the woman walking down the center aisle. Her face was like a sheet.

“Pastor,” she asked, “where did you get that tablecloth?” The pastor explained. The woman asked him to check the lower right corner to see if the initials, EBG were crocheted into it there. They were.

These were the initials of the woman, and she had made this tablecloth 35 years before, in Austria. The woman could hardly believe it as the pastor told how he had just gotten the tablecloth.

The woman explained that before the war she and her husband were well-to-do people in Austria. When the Nazis came, she was forced to leave. Her husband was going to follow her the next week. She was captured, sent to prison and never saw her husband or her home again.

The pastor wanted to give her the tablecloth; but she made the pastor keep it for the church. The pastor insisted on driving her home, that was the least he could do. She lived on the other side of Staten Island and was only in Brooklyn for the day for a house-cleaning job.

What a wonderful service they had on Christmas Eve. The church was almost full. The music and the spirit were great. At the end of the service, the pastor and his wife greeted everyone at the door and many said that they would return.

One older man, whom the pastor recognized from the neighborhood, continued to sit in one of the pews and stare, and the pastor wondered why he wasn't leaving. The man asked him where he got the tablecloth on the front wall because it was identical to one that his wife had made years ago when they lived in Austria before the war and how could there be two tablecloths so much alike?

He told the pastor how the Nazis came, how he forced his wife to flee for her safety, and he was supposed to follow her, but he was arrested and put in a prison. He never saw his wife or his home again all the 35 years in between. The pastor asked him if he would allow him to take him for a little ride. They drove to Staten Island and to the same house where the pastor had taken the woman three days earlier.

The pastor helped the man climb the three flights of stairs to the woman's apartment, knocked on the door and there he saw the greatest Christmas reunion he could ever imagine, and was blessed with the ultimate Christmas gift.