



# PARADE STREET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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*James A. Cannistraci, Pastor*

## PASTOR JIM'S THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS - DECEMBER 2016

Dear Friends,

It hardly seems possible Christmas will be here so soon! Then, just a week later it will be the beginning of a new year! As I've been drinking my morning coffee the past few weeks I've been thinking about the question, "am I ready for Christmas?" How about you, are you ready for Christmas?

**"Am I ready for Christmas?"** Thinking about being ready for Christmas *I realize the real question is: "What does it mean to be ready for Christmas?"* Surely it isn't about buying presents (I never pick the right thing!) Surely it isn't about baking enough cookies (I decided it doesn't matter how many cookies you bake, there will never be enough.... because everybody just love to eat them... and none of us can never eat just one!) Surely it isn't about getting the house cleaned up for guests (I realize I have this habit of leaving notes and papers in every room of the house that I walk into... and then things always look cluttered!)

So... "what does it mean to be ready for Christmas?" I've decided being ready for Christmas means I really "clean up" the most important part of my home... my life! It means I try to get rid of the clutter (my bad habits... all of the things I allow to get in the way of taking time to thank God for His love and the blessings of friends, family, food, health and home.) It means I try to get rid of the dirt (the sin.... the anger.... the fear... the pride... the unwillingness to take a risk to do what is right). Most of all, it means that I try to create some large open spaces in my life and heart so I use more time, energy and resources to serve God and live life in a more Christ like way.

**So, how about you... "are you ready for Christmas?"** Are you ready to receive the gift of the wonderful news of the birth of a little baby who was born to save your life and my life? Are you ready to enjoy more time with friends and family. To share more of your time, energy and resources to care for God's people who need love and care? Are you ready to forgive and love and be forgiven?

My prayer for each of us is that we truly get ready for Christmas by opening our hearts and spirits to receive the joy of Christmas this year! I'm looking forward to seeing you this Christmas season.

Blessings,

Pastor Jim



Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.

**The people of the United Methodist Church**