



**2009-2010  
MOPS  
Steering Team**

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## Celebrating Advent

Today, during our meeting we will making Advent wreaths so we can bring the celebration of Advent into our homes, not just at church on Sunday mornings. While I don't want to skip over the very important holiday of Thanksgiving, a day we are reminded to give thanks to God for all of our blessings and to celebrate the first Thanksgiving in Plymouth during the discovery of our nation, I do want to remind you that Advent begins this Sunday, November 29th. Advent, according to the Webster's New World Dictionary is the period including the four Sundays just before Christmas. The word Advent is derived from the Latin word *adventus* which means "coming". Celebrating Advent is a way to bring Christ

back into Christmas. The season of Advent is an opportunity for Christians to reflect on the meaning of the coming of Jesus the Christ in His first Advent. We also look forward in anticipation to the return of Christ the King in His second Advent. In this culture of Santa Claus and Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer, where "Merry Christmas" has been replaced with "Happy Holidays", Christmas trees have been replaced with holiday trees and "Christmas break" is now "Winter break" I believe we, as Christians, need to remember the real reason of the season; the birth of our Lord, Savior and Redeemer Jesus Christ. Christmas is a holiday that is set aside to bring honor to a person or event. Advent is a time period dur-

ing December where we can honor the coming and birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we do this we bring Him honor. Now, I'm not telling you to boycott Santa or Rudolph. In my home, we believe in Santa but we do not make a big deal about him. I tell my kids about Jesus and how Christmas is about Him. We read the bible in the morning starting with the story of the coming of John the Baptist, the one who paved the way for Jesus. We open up our advent calendar and read the scripture inside. I want my children to know the true meaning of Christmas. "And you will have joy and gladness and many will rejoice at his birth." Luke



## Celebrating Advent with Your Children

- Decide, with your children, to give God one special gift from each of you during advent. It can be to commit to spending time with Him each day.
- Set aside a special time to read the Christmas story in Luke 1:5-56 through 2:1-20. Talk about it as a family.
- Set up a nativity scene in your home. Tell your children the story of each piece.
- Plan a project of good will. Take part in an Angel Tree if your church offers that. Donate new toys to Toys for Tots or take your children shopping to pick out items for a needy child in another county and donate them to Operation Christmas Child.
- Have a birthday party for Jesus with cake and ice cream.
- Select 1-3 of your children's used toys, clean them up and take them to Goodwill.

## The Scroll Bookstore

- Bring in this newsletter and receive a **30% discount** on any one item.
- Located at the main entrance of First Free across from the church office.
- Open on Tuesdays during MOPS!
- Wide variety of Christian books, music, gifts, cards and kid stuff.

## A Thanksgiving Recipe from Lexi Plesic



### Pumpkin-Chocolate Cheesecake

Prep: 30 min Bake: 65min  
Chill: 30min

- 1 frozen pie crust (thawed)
- 12oz softened cream cheese
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 egg—slightly beaten
- 3/4 cup finely chopped semi-sweet chocolate (mini chocolate chips work great)
- 1-15oz can of pumpkin
- 2/3 cup packed brown sugar
- 2 tsp pumpkin pie spice
- 4 eggs—slightly beaten
- 3/4 cup half and half or light cream

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Roll out pie crusts. Flute edge high. Line pastry with double thickness of foil. Bake 8 minutes. Remove foil; bake 6 minutes more until golden. Cool on wire rack. Reduce oven temp to 375 degrees.
2. In medium mixing bowl combine softened cream cheese, 1/4 C sugar and 1 egg. Beat on low until smooth. Spread mixture in cooled pastry shell. Sprinkle with chocolate.
3. In bowl, combine pumpkin, brown sugar and spice. Stir in 4 eggs. Gradually stir in half and half. Slowly pour mixture on chocolate layer to prevent browning, cover pie edge with foil.
4. Bake 60 to 65 minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean. Re-

move foil. Cool on wire rack. Cover and refrigerate within 2 hours.

5. Enjoy and have a Happy Thanksgiving!

To see copies of past newsletters and view our speaker/topic list for this year visit our website at:

[www.firstfreewomen.org](http://www.firstfreewomen.org)

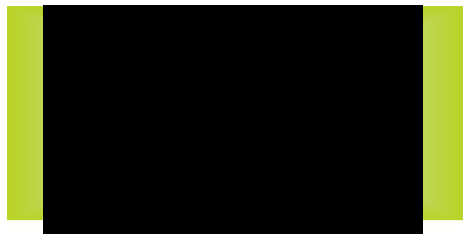
follow the MOPS link.

## Things I am Thankful for...

It's that time of year again. Time to gather with family and friends, congregate around the dinner table and stuff ourselves silly with turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, etc (insert your favorite Thanksgiving side here). We also remember what we are thankful for. I have lots to be thankful for; a sovereign God who loves me, my family, my friends, my health. But there are a few other things I am thankful for...

I am thankful to the inventor of the fork. Try eating a salad without one. I am thankful for my bed linens, even though they are rarely changed and often covered with children's sleeping bodies, sneezes and bloody noses they are made out of soft cloth and not sandpaper. I am thankful for stretch pants with elastic waist bands especially after I've eaten

Thanksgiving dinner. I am thankful that my sister is having Thanksgiving this year and I do not have to clean my house in preparation of visitors. With the bouts of sickness going on in my family the cleanliness of my house has been put on the back burner. Which reminds me, even though it has been put in retirement for a few weeks, I am thankful for my vacuum cleaner. I cannot fathom what I would do without that ingenious invention. I just might be on my hands and knees picking up the lint and dog hair that cover my floors. I am thankful for my toes, as ugly as they are, they help me stand up and keep my balance—which, for me, is not an uncommon occurrence. I am also thankful for caller ID. Remember the days when we had no idea of who was on the



other end of the phone and couldn't avoid calls from people trying to sell you things like magazine subscriptions and insurance policies? And finally, last but not least, I am thankful for all of you MOPS moms who help keep me sane and grounded. May your day be filled with turkey and trimmings and seasoned with love, friendship and laughter. God bless you all!

## Things you need to know ...

- The childcare rooms open up at 8:45am. You are welcome to come at that time, drop off your children, and join us in the meeting room for coffee and conversation before MOPS begins at 9am.
- In case of bad weather, MOPS will be cancelled if Rockford Public School District 205 is closed.
- In an effort to protect the safety of our

little ones, the childcare doors (entrance B) will be closed and locked at 9:45am. If you are later than 9:45am use entrance A.

- To keep all of our children and staff healthy please wash your children's hands with soap and water before placing them in his or her room.
- Refer to the childcare Health and Wellness Policy sheet in your folder

when your child is ill and for items to bring.

- Babies 3 months and younger are welcome during the meeting. Children older than 3 months should be in childcare.
- Please turn your cell phone ringer off or on vibrate. If you have to answer a call please leave the room quietly.
- When bringing food, you are welcome to drop it at the entrance D where someone will be waiting for you.

*The Mission of First Evangelical Free Church is to bring people into a life-changing and growing relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.*

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