



Start. End. Or Fix.



Does it surprise you that I like traditions? Little things like taking a family picture with our foster kittens before we take them back to the shelter...to big things like how we celebrate birthdays in our house. I like to know what to expect and who is going to be there.

My family put up our Christmas decorations on Friday after Thanksgiving, the timing of this tradition changed after our kids were born, but it's here to stay now. Like many of you, some of our Christmas traditions come in the form of tree ornaments that we put on year after year. I can tell you which ornaments were some of the first Tyler and I bought on our first Christmas together 16 years ago. I can point on the one from Wesley's first Christmas. A lot of these ornaments bring me some Christmas joy.

But some of the ornaments, bring just a touch of sadness. There's the hand-sewn one made from one of Grandpa's shirts. The organ-donor star with Grampy's name on it. The Harley-Davidson one that Tyler's mom gave to us before she passed.

The other one that makes me sad: the broken seashell we brought back from the Bahamas 9 years ago...why do we still keep it?!?!? Every year I look at it and wonder: do we throw it away? And every year, it gets put back in the bag just so I can wonder the same question next Thanksgiving.

Christmas can be like that: sometimes the rhythms of the season bring us immense joy in celebrating the birth of our King. Sometimes it brings us intense sadness knowing there will be an empty seat at the table from now on. And sometimes: it's just broken and we don't know what to do with it. And if you're _____ (?) enough: you get all three all in the same season.

Traditions are all about knowing what to expect. But we can't always anticipate what life brings us. But we can always expect to God show up in the midst of life. When the smile on our face can't get any bigger, He's there. When our grief is so profound, He's there. When we're not sure how to fix what's broken, He's there.

Do me a favor this holiday season? Start a tradition. Or honor the end a tradition. Or fix-up a tradition to make it better. Do whatever it takes to feel God's presence this Christmas season. Because His tradition of showing up, is something we can *always* expect.

-Pastor Ashley



GET INFORMED

Click the links for more information

- *Midweek Prayer Gathering, Nov 30*
- *Faith in Motion Dance Recital, Dec 2*



GET INVOLVED

We need you! There are many opportunities to get involved within the life of St. Joe @ Y. Our top 3 priorities for volunteers are

- Set Up: Can you plug a

- *Jingle Jam, Dec 10*
- *Youth Group, Dec 17*
- *Longest Night, Dec 21*
- *Movie PJ Party, Dec 22*
- *Christmas Eve @ Y, Dec 24, 4p*
- *Countdown to Noon, Dec 31, 11:30a*
- *Youth Crochet Club*
- *Women's Bible Study*

cord into an outlet?
Then you can help with set up! You can do it, I promise! Setting up chairs is also an easy way to start!

- **Sound:** Training is provided and it really is a quick learn!
- **Greeters:** Can you say hello? Sure you can! Be the first smiling face people see as they come into worship.

Contact Pastor Ashley to be a faithful servant!

Faithful. Fearless. Fruitful.

GET INSPIRED

SPEND *Christmas* **WITH ST. JOE @ Y**
5680 YMCA PARK DR W

JINGLE JAM	LONGEST NIGHT	CHRISTMAS MOVIE PJ PARTY	COUNTDOWN TO NOON
<u>12/10</u>	<u>12/21</u>	<u>12/22</u>	<u>12/31</u>
10a	6:30p	6p	11:30a

Christmas Eve Service | 12/24 | 4p

Have you taken one of the 1,000 postcards to give to a friend, relative, acquaintance, neighbor, or co-worker?? Make sure to pick one (or two) up and let's invite people to be part of the Christmas Season at St. Joe and St. Joe @ Y. The postcards

are double-sided with events happening at St. Joe UMC (6004 Reed Road) on one side and St. Joe @ Y (5680 YMCA Park Dr W) on the other. The Events page of the website (www.stjoemin.com/events) is also a really great way of knowing what, when and where things are happening.

The excitement is building for each and every opportunity. There are already 53 people signed up to come be part of the Christmas Movie PJ Party! It is going to be a great season of spreading hope, peace, love and joy as we celebrate Jesus' birthday!

A festive poster for St. Joe UMC Christmas Services. The title "ST. JOE UMC Christmas Services" is in red, with "6004 REED ROAD" below it. A table lists five events: Mary McDonald Concert (12/9, 5p), Christmas Cantata (12/10, 9a and 11a), Jingle Jam (12/17, 9a), Longest Night (12/21, 7p), and New Years Eve (12/31, 10a). Below the table, it says "Christmas Eve Services | 12/24 | 10a, 7p, 11p". The bottom of the poster features a collage of Christmas decorations including a gold tree, red ornaments, and wrapped gifts.

MARY MCDONALD CONCERT	CHRISTMAS CANTATA	JINGLE JAM	LONGEST NIGHT	NEW YEARS EVE
12/9	12/10	12/17	12/21	12/31
5p	9a and 11a	9a	7p	10a

Christmas Eve Services | 12/24 | 10a, 7p, 11p



Saint Joseph United Methodist Church | 6004 Reed Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46835

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