

Thinking aloud . . .

As we were waiting for the last people to arrive for a meeting years ago at Bethany Community Services, talk turned to Thanksgiving and the approach of Christmas. “Thanksgiving is okay,” someone opined, “but Christmas is too much.”

“Too much of what? I asked.

“Too much rushing. Too much pressure. Too much spending. Too much eating. Too many parties. Too many expectations. Too many obligations.” Others helped answer my question.

“Ah,” I sighed in agreement. “What if you joined a conspiracy?” I asked, deciding to tell them what I have invited congregants here at First Congregational Church to do several times over my 20 years. “I like to invite people to **reclaim** Christmas!”

Worship Fully. Christmas is a birthday party. It starts with Jesus. It ends with Jesus. God invites us to sing “Happy Birthday” and celebrate Jesus. Whatever else you do, worship fully with passion and joy.

Spend Less. If you think I am an old Scrooge you miss the point. I like gifts. Our grandchildren love gifts. God is pleased with the giving spirit. Giving gifts is a wonderful way to celebrate God’s gift! The point is not to stop giving, but spend less. Maybe limit yourself to one gift per child. Set a spending limit now and stick to it. Give no gift that is given out of obligation. Have a name (Yankee) gift swap in your family.

Give more. Here are two gifts that are priceless, Time and Presence. Who in your family needs a regular visit? Who should you write a letter of reconciliation and love? How can you give your family the heirloom of your memoirs? What child needs a good time sledding, or on a swing? What teen needs mentor? Who needs some help cleaning the garage?

Love all. When Jesus loved, he loved in ways never imagined, the poor and the sick, the orphan and the widow. If they were forgotten and overlooked, Jesus loved them. Look around your neighborhood, your workplace, your school, our world. Who needs to be loved?

This is David Thomas thinking aloud . . . wondering if you will join the conspiracy? Check out www.adventconspiracy.org for more ideas.