

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - DECEMBER 01, 2008

Several years ago a teacher assigned to visit children in a large city hospital received a routine call requesting that she visit a particular child. She took the boy's name and room number and was told by the teacher on the other end of the line, "We're studying nouns and adverbs in his class now. I'd be grateful if you could help him with his homework so he doesn't fall behind the others." It wasn't until the visiting teacher got outside the boy's room that she realized it was located in the hospital's burn unit. No one had prepared her to find a young boy horribly burned and in great pain. She felt that she couldn't just turn and walk out, so she awkwardly stammered, "I'm the hospital teacher, and your teacher sent me to help you with nouns and adverbs."

The next morning a nurse on the burn unit asked her, "What did you do to that boy?" Before she could finish a profusion of apologies, the nurse interrupted her: "You don't understand. We've been very worried about him, but ever since you were here yesterday, his whole attitude has changed. He's fighting back, responding to treatment. It's as though he's decided to live."

The boy later explained that he had completely given up hope until he saw that teacher. It all changed when he came to a simple realization. With joyful tears he expressed it this way, "They wouldn't send a teacher to work on nouns and adverbs with a dying boy, would they?" [From Illustrations Unlimited, edited by James S. Hewett]

Advent is a season of hope. It is a season of anticipation. The Old Testament lectionary texts often come from the books of the prophets, and those texts often express an expectation. The prophets are looking for something to come, and oftentimes that which the prophets anticipate is something good. The prophets talk a lot about God restoring Israel, and God renewing right worship and righteous living in Israel. The prophets look forward in hope to a better time. They look forward to the time of God's salvation.

That's what Advent is all about. Advent is about anticipation. It is about hope.

We anticipate God's salvation coming in Jesus, the infant born in Bethlehem. And we sing of that hope. We find our spirits renewed as we think about the birth of Jesus. Christmas means hope, and Advent is that season in which we look forward in anticipation to that hope.

The Prologue to the Gospel of John expresses the Advent hope in this way. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5). Darkness cannot overcome light. Rather light always shatters the darkness. Light "cuts holes in the darkness."

That is our hope. God's light has come into the world in Jesus, born in Bethlehem as a tiny baby, and God's light is still coming into the world. For you see, God's light can shine in the hearts of any and every human being through Jesus, including ours. That's what we look forward to. That is our hope.

In Advent we look forward with anticipation to the hope of God's light shining into and through our darkness through Christ Jesus the Lord. Just something to think about.

Until next time, **Bro. Jim**

"A NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM" UPDATE

A "Night in Bethlehem" is fast approaching-only two weeks away. Letters and flyers have gone out and our guests are making reservations to attend. December 6 and 7, in the CLC, the town of Bethlehem will come alive, with market shops, the inn and the stable. First UMC has done a wonderful job in volunteering and pulling together the set, costumes, and crafts. If you would like to make a donation to offset the cost, please mark Bethlehem on your check and place it in the offering plate. God Bless First UMC for your outreach efforts.

CELL PHONE RECYCLING

The Youth will be collecting Cell Phones until the end of the year. Bring your old cell phones to church and the youth will recycle the phones, (and earn a little cash in the process AND help the environment!) We are collecting only phones, no cords, no chargers, **ONLY PHONES.**

WEDNESDAY NIGHT CHILDCARE

The SPRC has received a suggestion that childcare on Wednesday night might enable more people to be involved in Wednesday night activities, particularly Choir practice and Bible study. We need to know your opinion on that, especially those who have children. We also need to know if we have adults who would be willing to provide childcare, maybe on a rotating basis, should we decide it good to provide it. If you have an opinion on either subject, we invite you to speak with either Alecia or Bro. Jim.

A NOTE FROM THE STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

2009 Official Appointment - The Staff-Parish Relations Committee is at the time of year when the official appointment requests are being made regarding our current pastor. The SPRC would appreciate any comments or suggestions concerning keeping our current pastor by **December 14th**. Please feel free to contact Chris Thigpen-SPRC Chairman.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

UMW Executive Committee meeting on December 9th at 4:15 p.m.

Finance Committee meeting on December 9th at 7:00 p.m.

Administrative Board meeting on December 9th at 7:30 p.m.

Staff-Parish Committee meeting on December 14th, between the early service and Sunday school.

NEW CHURCH COOKBOOKS AVAILABLE

If you are looking for a great (and reasonable) Christmas gift or gifts for someone, you may want to pick up a copy of the new First United Methodist Church cookbook. The cookbook, which sells for \$8.00, is filled with wonderful recipes from appetizers to main dishes to desserts. There are also sections on side dishes, breads and rolls, cookies and candy, and even a this & that section. Cookbooks may be purchased in the church office Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. until noon, and 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m.

YOUTH TO SPONSOR TRIVIA NIGHT

The youth are sponsoring a Trivia Night (general knowledge) and silent auction to benefit the summer mission project, on Sunday February 15, 2009. More details to come in January. What the youth need right now, is Sunday school classes or individuals to donate baskets or items for the silent auction. To donate or for more information, contact Alecia at the church office, or email her at youth911AThotmail.com.

A NOTE OF THANKS

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for being there for us. Your prayers, get well wishes, cards and calls have

been received with only love and prayers for you also.

Love, **Clifton & Anita**

NEWS FROM AMATITAN

This past week we received news that Sara Granera of Amatitan and our partnership church, The Fountain of Life Church, would graduate from the university in Leon, Nicaragua, on Sunday, November 23, 2008 at 4 PM. We celebrate Sara's graduation. Because of your continued support of the Nicaraguan Education Scholarships, many wonderful things, including Sara's graduation, are happening in the community.

In January 2009, we will be hearing more of the news from Amatitan as Beverly Duke shares her findings from her trip there in October. Please watch for the scheduled time of her presentation and share in the joy of these marvelous blessings for the people of Amatitan. Thank you for your continued interest and support that, with God's leading has made these blessings possible. God bless you all.

ADVENT READERS FOR ADVENT SEASON

We will need Advent readers for both services during the Advent season. Please call the church office or let Bro. Jim know if you are willing to do a reading.

CONFIRMATION CLASSES

In the early part of next year, we will offer a Confirmation Class, if there is enough interest. The class will be for 6th grade and up. If your child is interested, please contact Alecia or the church office.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT STUDY

Our Wednesday night study, beginning January 21st, will be "Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations" by Bishop Robert Schnase. The study will include a devotional book that each participant will need to read daily. We would encourage as many adults as possible to join in this study on Wednesday nights, and we need to know who might be interested so we know the number of books to order. Please let us know at the church office if you plan to participate in the study.

LOAVES AND FISHES MINISTRY

For those who currently aren't working in the daytime and would like to participate in one of the most active ministries at First UMC, you might consider volunteering in the Loaves and Fishes ministry. The food pantry is open two days a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. Two volunteers work on those days. Due to the economy, we are seeing more and more people in the community who need help. We also give donated coats away. The food pantry is so busy some days that three people are needed to work. If you feel you could donate some time to the pantry, please contact Jerry Gibbs or the church office. Your help is much appreciated.

REMEMBER AMATITAN IN YOUR CHRISTMAS GIVING

Please remember to include the children of Amatitan in your Christmas giving. Because of the gifts last year more than 150 students were able to attend school. The gift of an education is the one thing they will always have and the only way to help them break the cycle of poverty in which they were born. This is truly one gift that you can give that is truly appreciated, keeps on giving, and won't be returned.

WITH ONE ANOTHER

David Robertson
Freddie Mae Jackson
Oscar and Agnes McCarter
Bill Evans
Edythe Edwards
Robert White
Elmer Hackney
Scottie McMackin
Rev. Clifton Johnston

Ruby Lopp
T. J. Moore
David Shaw
Meredith Nordin
Norman Marston
Evelyn Gallaher
Cathy Skinner
Daniel & Leslie Hunt
Shelia Moore
El James
Scott Dean
Willodean Grinnell
Martha Looney
Elmer Cooke
Dave Hancock

...We extend our love and sympathy to Kaye Allen and her family on the loss of her aunt Mrs. Ivene Hammond this past week.

...We extend our love and sympathy to Cinde Lucas and her family on the loss of her mother, Eloise Ware, this past week.

SPRING MISSION TRIP

Anyone who is interested in a Spring mission trip to the Henderson Settlement is asked to contact Jerry Gibbs (*****) or Alecia Fischer (762-3696).

CHURCH NEWSLETTER

The weekly church newsletter is also available online at the church website:

<http://lawrenceburgfumc.com>.

LOST AND FOUND

A leather glove (black, lined, right hand) was found at the church on Sunday. The brand name on the tag is Merona-size XL. If you are missing a glove, please contact the church office at 762-3696.

I Will Be Loyal

To The United Methodist Church And

Support It With: My Presence:

Sunday, November 30, 2008

8:15 a.m. Worship Attendance.....40

Sunday school Attendance.....74

10:30 a.m. Worship Attendance.....98

My Service: Sunday, Dec. 7, 2008

Acolytes: Alexis Fann & Maggie McKnight

Nursery Helper: Mary Ann Clayton

Loaves and Fishes: Tues. & Thurs.

Tues. Dec. 09: Loulie Brown & Gracie Henson

Thurs. Dec. 11: Joan Cochran & Pam Shaffer

LOAVES & FISHES MINISTRY UPDATE

In the month of Nov., the Food Pantry served 138 families and 361 individuals; many coats were also given away. Add to this note.

...We are always in need of more volunteers in the Loaves and Fishes Ministry. If you would like to help, please contact the church office.

...The Loaves and Fishes Ministry is giving away donated coats as fast as we get them.

