

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
DECEMBER 15, 2008

The Pastor's Pen
The Reason for the Season

After World War II came to a close, many of the countries of Europe began to try to pick up the pieces and put their nation back together again. Much of Europe had been ravaged by the war, and a part of that aftermath of war was seeing orphaned, starving children wandering in the streets.

Early one chilly morning an American soldier was making his way back to the barracks in London. As he turned the corner he spotted a little lad with his nose pressed to the window of a pastry shop. Inside the cook was kneading dough for a fresh batch of doughnuts. The hungry boy stared in silence, watching every move. The soldier pulled his jeep to the curb, stopped, got out, and walked quietly over to where the little fellow was standing. Through the steamed-up window he could see the mouth-watering morsels as they were being pulled from the oven, piping hot. The boy salivated and released a slight groan as he watched the cook place them onto the glass -enclosed counter ever so carefully. The soldier's heart went out to the nameless orphan as he stood beside him.

"Son, would you like some of those?" the soldier asked. "Oh, yeah, I would," said the startled boy. The soldier went inside, bought a dozen doughnuts, put them in a bag, and walked back to where the lad was standing in the foggy cold of the London morning. He smiled, held out the bag, and said simply, "Here you are." As he turned to walk away, he felt a tug on his coat. He looked back and heard the boy ask quietly, "Mister, are you God?"

God is most often recognized when and where there is giving, and that would be quite natural. Christmas is God's gift of God's self to the world. That's what we're celebrating when we celebrate Christmas. God has given God's self to us. God has given God's self to the world.

What greater gift could we hope for? What other reason do we need to celebrate? Jesus is God's gift of himself to the world and to us. In this Christmas Season best wishes to all. Good tidings, peace, and good will among all. This is the season of recognizing God's great gift to all the world. "Joy to the world. The Lord is come." This is something for us to think about and celebrate. Until next time, Bro. Jim

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 Fischer 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.

"A NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM" BULLETIN BOARD

Be sure and check out the large bulletin board down the hall from the church office and just around the corner from Alecia's office. It is full of pictures from "A Night in Bethlehem (before, during and after). Associate pastor Alecia Fischer put up the Bethlehem display this week. The pictures are also featured on the church website.

Those who have not filled out "A Night in Bethlehem" evaluation sheet may pick one up in the church office.

CHOIR CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

This Sunday evening will be the annual Choirs Christmas program beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. Please join us as we enjoy the sounds of the season from the Chancel Choir and the Wesley Chimes. There will be a time of fellowship and finger foods in the CLC following the program.

CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNION SERVICE

There will be a "come and go" Christmas Eve Communion service from 6:00 until 8:00 p.m., in the sanctuary on December 24th.

WARMTH IN WINTER

All youth 7th-12th grades are invited to attend the Tennessee Conference annual Warmth in Winter, January 30th - February 1st in Nashville. We will be taking a group and if you are interested, please contact Alecia. Deadline to sign up is December 31, 2008. The cost is \$60.

NEW CHURCH COOKBOOKS AVAILABLE

If you are looking for a great Christmas gift there is still an opportunity for you to purchase a new church cookbook for the price of only \$8.00. The cookbooks are filled with favorite tried and true recipes from many wonderful cooks, and it would make a very attractive addition to any cookbook collection. You may contact or come by the church office if you would like to pick up one or more.

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
Shelia Moore
El James
Scott Dean
Willodean Grinnell

