



GOOD NEWS

The Newsletter of Clovis Memorial United
Methodist Church February 2008

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SUPER BOWL SUNDAY PARTY, Sunday, Feb. 3 Pick your team, bring your lawn chair if you want more comfort, and a munchie or beverages to share, and a board game or puzzle or your knitting etc. to our annual Super Bowl Party, 2 p.m. – 8 p.m. Sunday afternoon, February 3, 2008 sponsored by our Parents Time Out group. Is there a touch football game prior to the Big Game again this year?? The game will be projected on the big Social Hall wall screen.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE, Feb. 6 Prepare for the season that takes us from ashes to fire as we enter Lent, the events of Holy Week, and Easter.

INTERFAITH SCHOLARS WEEKEND Feb. 8 & 10

The registration form is enclosed for the Interfaith Scholars Weekend. This is a wonderful opportunity to hear three quality scholars, experts in their field share with us the beliefs about the End Times of the world's three major religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam. The dates are Friday February 8 and Saturday February 9. See brochure for details.

SOUP EXTRAVAGANZA FEB 10: Join us after worship on Feb 10 for a soup sampling feast hosted by the Grams! Prices are \$7/per person or \$20/per family. If you have any questions, give Barbara Grams a call!

HEALTHY HEART POTLUCK SUNDAY FEBRUARY 24, 2008: 'Tis February again – the month of Valentine's Day, important Presidential birthdays (and other important people). February has also been designated as Heart Awareness month, and also as Go Red month for.... Heart disease is the number one killer in America for both men and women! And folks this is not just for older people! Kids have high cholesterol, bad eating habits, diabetes and weight difficulties which all contribute to unhealthy cardiovascular systems—so lets affirm and model for our children that scripture teaches us our bodies are God's temple and good creation of which we are called to be good stewards. This disease is preventable, so come to the potluck and get the update on Heart Disease. Prepare a heart healthy dish (there is a cookbook in the Narthex) and come prepared for a fun time! Our Parish Nurses, Lucy Elgin and Bonnie Harkins will once again bring us fun, facts and surprises! There will be prizes! We will meet immediately after worship on the 24th. For further information, contact Lucy Elgin at or call the church office.

BRIGHT IDEAS: Given the importance of good communications, we're always looking for ways to improve the process. At our last Admin Support Team meeting, Mac Magargee brought up the idea of placing a suggestion box in the Narthex so that the congregation would have an opportunity to offer ideas that might help in the mission of the church. Several pros and cons were discussed but the general consensus was that it was an excellent idea. Since the primary purpose is to offer ways in which we can better serve our community and each other, we decided that rather than just label it "Suggestion Box" we thought "Bright Ideas" would convey a better image as to what we want to accomplish. In order to insure your privacy, envelopes will be provided so you can place your idea in it and seal it before dropping it in the box. Unless you have a comment regarding the staff, you will not be required to sign your note unless you so choose. The box will be secured with a lock and will be opened prior to the Admin Support Team meeting each month. The envelopes will be opened and will either be considered by the team or forwarded to SPRC. We hope this will be well received and afford us another avenue to better serve the congregation.

GREEN TEAM SUGGESTS BYOB: BYOB traditionally stands for bring your own bottle, but the "B" can also stand for "bag." The Natural Resources Defense Council estimates that America consumes 30 billion plastic bags and 10 billion paper ones each year. This equates to 12 million barrels of oil and 14 million trees. In addition, producing all these bags uses valuable energy resources and contributes pollution to our air and water. When they are discarded, both types of bags take up valuable space in landfills, and because of the compacted nature of disposal sites, neither decomposes readily. Even when plastic breaks down into pieces too small to see, it is still a toxic chemical in the environment. In addition, plastic bags that don't make it to the landfill become hazardous to animals and marine life that eat them. Bags have become so ubiquitous that they are even found in Antarctica. Reusing bags is one way people can help. Bringing your own bag to the store is getting easier than it was 30-some odd years ago when I started doing it. Baggers are more likely to let you use your own bags now. The most economical way to save on bags is to bring those you already have and use them over and over again, but many stores now are happy to sell you bags with their own logos on them for you to carry everywhere. Local Methodist churches are getting into this game. Wesley UMC is ordering bags with the church logo which will not only promote the idea of bringing your own bag, but will put the Methodist name before the public each time you shop. We should have some of these bags soon. Measures such as these are small when an individual participates, but they add up as more and more people become involved.
---- Diane Zastovnik, Green Team member

COMING FULLY ALIVE! Seminar, Feb. 29- March 1 - Coming Fully Alive! Is a series of four interactive seminars for senior adults coming to Memorial Friday, February 29 beginning at 12 noon and 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Saturday, March 1, 2008. A potluck dinner will be held on Friday evening hosted by the Thursday Night Diners and the Older Adult Ministry Team. For the potluck on Friday, please bring a covered dish or a deli dish. We have lots of refrigeration and can reheat as necessary. The seminar topics will be presented in this order: **Finding Meaning in Life-Living life to the fullest** **Being Fully Alive (Mind, Body, Spirit)-self-care** **Aging as a Spiritual Journey-Finding hope** **Uplifting Power of Humor-** Looking at the positives. This series is sponsored by the Buelah Foundation for Senior Ministry of the United Methodist Women and is being brought to us by Senior New Ways developer, director and UM Deacon Judith Pruess-Mellow. The registration fee of 9.00 covers lunch on Saturday provided by the UMW to raise funds for missions. In addition a love offering will be taken to cover mileage for the instructors who are coming from Palo Alto. For more information or to register please call 299-4615 or use the registration form below. The registration deadline is Monday, February 25, 2008. Be sure to invite your friends and neighbors!

NEWS AND NOTES



UMW NEWS:

- Feb 4: Board Meeting 9am in the Lose Library.
- Feb 13: Red Bird Circle 9:30 am in the Lose Library.
- Feb. 19: Regular meeting at 10 am in the Social Hall. Program: Melva Cousins "Trip to Russia".
- Feb. 27: Wesley Circle 1pm in the Social Hall.

SPECIAL FRIENDS: Tuesday January 8th, the Special Friends group met in the Lose Library at 1:30 pm. Attending were John Tallmudge, Dee Carr, Pastor Denice Leslie, Max Cannon, Janet Bonzo, Pat Frey, Evelyn Haulman, and Lorraine May. We gathered with the reading of the MUMC mission statement, followed by prayer. The Bible reading was from Matthew 5:14-16, "You are the light of the world." We sang Jim Strathdee's "I am the Light of the World". Worship continued with a reading of "The Little Star" by Rev. Richard Blanchard (Biblical reference: Matthew 2:1-12). During the time of personal sharing, we discovered that God had sent many shining stars to us during the Christmas season, making us feel truly blessed. We reported on our special friends, making 12 visits, 39 phone calls and sending 57 cards and 3 letters. Closing Words came from Daily Guideposts' writer Mary Lou Carney, "Christmas is not over. It's never really over – not as long as one good deed, one kind thought, one grateful remembrance still lives in my heart. Like the wise men, I have found what I was seeking: a love too grand to be contained in a single season, a light that breaks through even January gloom. Light of my life! Let me shine for you in this New Year." May this be a message for each of you. Visit us at our next meeting Tuesday, February 12th at 1:30pm in the Lose Library

Blessings, Lorraine May

CD'S OF SUNDAY SERVICES AVAILABLE: There are CD's of the service available in the Narthex for anyone who would like to use them. Pat Frey has donated a CD player that can be brought to anyone interested in hearing the CD's of the services each week. When you have finished with the CD and player, we will collect them and bring them to others interested in using them. Please call Lorraine May for this service.

THRIFT SHOP NEWS

We were open for business for the first time in 2008 on the 4th and 5th. As you know it was a cold blustery and rainy week end. Still, we didn't do too badly. Preliminary count for the two days is \$834. We do seem to have some faithful clientele.

Other than the weather we had a fairly uneventful week end. We did have the opportunity to share God's love in a couple of instances and we did that.

Keep us in your prayers as we begin another year of ministry. And keep us in mind for all of your clean gently used donations. But remember, no computer monitors, printers, etc. We have just gotten rid of the last ones and we don't really want to do that again. Thank you for understanding. Again, thank you for all you do for us.

- Submitted by Pat Frey

Adminstration and Stewardship

RENOVATION TEAM REPORT: The team met in December to review financial standings. The monthly obligations on the loan to Church Extension Society have been met and there is more than \$3,000 remaining at the end of this year. We are making great progress at paying off the four year loan. All pledges are for that four year period, one year of which is nearly complete. Your pledges are more than appreciated as are your additional gifts directed to the Renovation Fund. A project in the near future is creating a permanent safe way to replace the light bulbs focused on the chancel area in the sanctuary. Do not hesitate to support the renovation fund as other projects are coming; for example, appropriating additional storage and mini blind replacements. Another possibility is updating remainder fluorescent fixtures in the narthex and office. Again, thank you for your support.

EAT PIE!!

By now you have received your Quarterly Giving Statement and the letter inviting us all to accept the challenge of retiring the debt on the Social Hall. The amount we owe is almost exactly the same as the size of our new 2008 budget deficit. We are short \$24,000.

The challenge is to divide and conquer this bugger—turn it into a positive and a victory for us as a congregation. We pay out over 2200 a month on this debt. It will be paid off in March of '09. But our need for that money is now.

Ila Davidson began this project by baking and selling pies Sunday after Sunday until galvanized by her persevering stewardship the congregation took the bull by the horns and found a way to make it happen. It involved sacrifice, leadership and steady stewardship over the years to make the dream of this facility come true and to pay down the debt. Now we are faced with the challenge of a bare bones general budget which we can actually make work for us if we rise to this challenge.

There is no fat in our budget. There is nothing left to cut. We cannot cut insurance, salaries or energy which are all at minimal levels now. Eliminating this debt would not only retire the debt and make up the deficit in our current budget, it will give us room to expand our mission and ministry at a critical time in our efforts to reach out to new people and grow our church.

We can do this! Break it down and see where you fit and make a commitment: 24,000 divided by 24 or 48 or 96 givers at 1,000, 500 or 250 dollars paid out over the remainder of this year will do it!

Eat Pie! Sunday will be Palm Sunday March 16, 2008. This will be the Sunday we turn in our pledges. Then when the debt is actually paid we will celebrate with a mortgage burning at the end of the year and actually eat pie! See the Eat Pie! Commitment slip insert.

COACH'S CORNER

Dear Friends, My heart is full of hope for the future, appreciation and gladness for all of you and for the persevering and steadfast leadership of this congregation.

Jesus calls us to seek and save the lost, to be and share good news with those who know no good news. Jesus calls us to invite, mend and heal and make whole. To make disciples for Jesus. It's our reason for being and part of God's plan for each of us.

This is what the Great Commission is all about. I feel God's Spirit moving in recent events which are opening the future for us. What am I talking about? Read on:

GRANT RECIPIENTS:

After years of hard work, and effort we are the recipients of the trust and encouragement of the Fresno Mission and Church Extension Society with a grant of \$18,000 for our church growth initiative: to reach out and grow our current service with an emphasis on mature adults and to launch a new second service to reach a younger generation.

In addition to the grant the Extension Society will pay for a worship coach to consult with us to help ensure we do this to the best of our ability and make so make the most of effort. Memorial will be a "lab project" for those district churches seeking to launch a new service.

This is a tremendous opportunity for us! We are so fortunate.

AN OPEN FUTURE:

Because of your willingness to trust in God's leading and to take risks in making changes for the sake of the gospel of Jesus Christ in this place, we are now ready for this next major step into the future.

We have positioned ourselves to move forward because we have gradually transitioned into a ministry and mission system that grows disciples: a system designed to grow us spiritually as a congregation and that first and foremost cares and encourages and cheers on individuals, their hopes and dreams for ministry---a system of being and doing discipleship which grows each of us as we share the gospel.

In addition we have stepped forward and have and continue to update our beautiful church and grounds so that we are attractive and speak a visual message of pride and presence and relevance in our community. I'm trying to say we have done our best to prepare for this moment!

DENOMINATION MAKES MAJOR SHIFT

Our denomination initiated a major system change in 2004 which supports and encourages local churches to make the changes we have made. We are ahead of the game and internally organized more like other growing churches in our area.

As a consequence of this major UMC shift, more and more resources from the Board of Discipleship are coming on line now that will help us and we don't have to always reinvent the wheel!

We, as pastor and leaders covet your prayers as we appreciate your continuing support. We promise we will do our best to make the MOST of this precious gift that has been granted to us and holds so much promise for us so there will be a future for our ministry here in Clovis.

So take a hug! Give a hug! And breathe deeply and know you are loved and appreciated and God is at work through you! Pastor Denice

Leslie's Salt Shaker

It feels like we just barely left the season of Advent with its emphasis on self-examination and the conditions of the world that require a Savior and now its practically Lent! Christmas joy and Epiphany light were somewhere in between! I feel like I fast forwarded up that mountain of Transfiguration and down again with Jesus and the disciples all talking like the Chipmunks!

I realized too late—about the third Sunday into Advent --that we did not do our usual Christmas Carol singing prior to the service each Sunday! I really, really missed that. We don't get to sing these songs but once a year and Christmas goes by so fast.

There's a song in the old red song book called, "People Get Ready" many of us love to sing on the first Sunday of Advent that we haven't done since we got the Faith We Sing. NEXT year, somebody please SAY something if our memories lapse again. With the projection system it would be easy to do.

But here we are~ and we can't turn the clock back. So speaking of getting ready: Its Lent! ANOTHER season of self-examination.

Let's do our best to keep our sense of humor as we move through Lent because after all salvation is about joy and triumph. Not that we can fully appreciate Easter without Good Friday or Palm/Passion Sunday, obviously.

Think of Lent as a journey. Every journey has its rough spots requiring more of us at some points than others. Like hiking a trail in the wilderness—there are switchbacks up steep mountain sides and then there are level meadows and grassy areas and finally grand and wonderful vistas giving us a whole new perspective on ourselves, our beautiful world and our Creator.

Please watch for Lenten devotional guides and consider now what you may wish to sacrifice in your life for the five week duration of Lent that, by virtue of its absence focuses your attention on what God is doing in Christ for us.

Amazing love unknown! Amazing grace behold! The empty cross looms before us—empty now as the tomb thanks to the victorious Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and calls us to battle with the forces of light and darkness for the sake of all God's children everywhere. The victory is ours but the battle looms large. Prepare, prepare O soldier of the cross! For glee and laughter, perseverance and faithful act, stout hearts and a steady march, secure in the embrace of our Christ our Savior, transfigures, revealing God's glory over all!

As the minor cords of Create in Me a Clean Heart O God conclude it wont be long before our Alleluias "raise the strain" in Christ the Lord is Risen Today!

Pastor Denice

P.S. Many thanks to those of you who so thoughtfully made the season bright with gifts at Christmas. Great or small, each was an affirmation encouraging my heart and renewing my spirits.