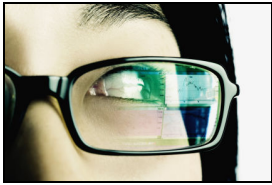


GOOD NEWS

The Newsletter of Clovis Memorial United Methodist Church December 2009 Ph: 299-4615

"The Mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

QUICK LOOK



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ADVENT DINNER SATURDAY, DEC. 5: It's coming up quick! Our annual Advent Dinner -the first Saturday of December is almost here, December 5 at 6 p.m. If you plan on coming to this delightful holiday potluck, sign up in the lobby of the church (sign up on round table) so we will have seats for everyone. If you want to decorate and be the Host/ess for a table please list that too. Table ware is festive and ranges from paper goods to folks fine china—whatever strikes your imagination and doesn't have to be upscale! We'll sing carols, hear a Christmas story and THE Christmas story and welcome in the season.

CHRISTMAS CANTATA SUN. DEC.13 - COMBINED SERVICES 10:30 A.M. Our musicians and worship leaders will bring us the message of Christmas in song with the cantata *Candles and Carol, A Service of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love* on Sunday, December 13 at 10:30. We will combine our morning services for this Sunday and extend an invitation to the Hmong speakers to join with us. Invite your friends and family.

LIVE NATIVITY SUN. EVE. DEC. 20, 6-8 P.M. WITH ANIMALS! Our Christmas Card to the community, our first annual live nativity is Sunday evening, Dec. 20, from 6 – 8 p.m. Spread the word! This will be a park and walk by event of tableaus of the Christmas story beginning with warm cider or hot chocolate at our hospitality booth, an opportunity to have a photo taken with a grandchild, shepherd or angel or king and a lamb. Yes, there will be real animals—and angels and shepherds, and kings and of course baby Jesus and his mom and dad. Carolers will guide folks through and lead in singing Christmas carols.

LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE DEC. 21 7:00 P.M. The longest night of the year, the Winter Solstice, December 21, falls on a Monday this year. That evening at 7 p.m. in the sanctuary we will have a lovely, quiet, meditative and inspiring service. If you are experiencing loss, stress, or would simply appreciate an opportunity to quietly reflect on the meaning of the season, this may be a true gift of Christmas. Bring a friend. Refreshments will be served after the service.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES AT MEMORIAL AND ACADEMY DEC. 24TH

Academy Christmas Eve 4 p.m. This is a lovely, old fashioned candlelight Christmas eve service of lessons and carols and candle lighting at the end. The church is located 10 -15 minutes east of Clovis. Take 168 out past Academy Ave. and go left on Madsen—church on left. Bring a flashlight for return to cars.

Memorial Family Christmas Eve Service 7 p.m. This will be a more informal and festive service designed with children in mind. The message will be child and family focused and participatory.

Candlelight and Christmas Carol Communion at Memorial, 11 p.m. with special music with the Chancel Choir and candle lighting as we sing Silent Night to herald the birth of our Savior.

TAKING ACTION

A MESSAGE FROM OUR STEWARDSHIP CO-CHAIR:

Have you ever wondered why people are reluctant to volunteer to serve on a committee or ministry? What holds them back when you know they have the talent needed for a certain committee? Sometimes the approach used to get new members is "join if you want to, but it takes more time than you would want to spend." Former president Franklin Delano Roosevelt, a great leader, created a solution when he insisted upon a term limit for the Presidency. If one person spends too long in charge, sometimes they take "ownership" of the position to the point that others feel they are really not wanted. To say that we need new blood has a hidden binder: "be sure the blood is the right type". Some committees have members that never seem to show up for scheduled or called meetings. These absentee members have a hard time serving. Transportation, time of meeting and other factors should all be considered; perhaps the absentee just wants to be off of the committee and is fearful of being called a shirker. Sometimes we have heard members say "I have served so long and no one else wants to help, so I just stay to get the job done." Church stewardship is about carrying on with the Lord's work. It is a way to share our talents with others within our congregation. We, as members of the congregation are all members of Memorial United Methodist Church Stewardship Team here in Clovis, CA. Our Coach Pastor Denice Leslie is raring to go. The team managers commonly referred to as committee and ministry chairs have all facets of our mission spelled out – now it is up to us to make this a winning year. If you have a reason or view why we can't or won't revive and win please let me know. I'll try to make it work. – John T.

SEND ONE UP! I have recently joined a prayer cell and my goal was to further understand a person's relationship with God. That is a rather tall order. I thought we'd have to get into a new language or something, but at the last gathering we hit upon something I could handle and we can all understand. Many in the room admitted that they send short silent prayers throughout the day when they are thinking about someone or something that needs prayer. An example for me (I'm getting brave here) is that I pray for Asima every time I think about her. I ask that she be given what she needs to go on with her life. These are many prayers in a day and I am not specific that she get a job because I do not like to boss God around. He knows what she needs and I need to remain in petition for her. This is so simple and exciting. I hope others get inspired or realize how many times they do the same thing. Thanks be to God!! - Gloria McClanahan

STEWARDSHIP 2010 "WRAP" OK, I'm resorting to my marketing lingo...it's a wrap! The official 2010 Stewardship Campaign is over, and now comes the follow-up, asking for

everyone to please, please, get your estimates of giving in. Why are we so intent on getting these estimates in? You've heard this before, "could you do a family budget if you didn't know what income you'd have in the next year?" Well, either way, the church has to budget, and if we don't have estimates from you, we have to estimate for you. Even if you plan not to give next year, we need to know that too! This next year our spending will be "front-loaded" and heaviest about Easter, as our focus is Evangelism: Church Growth. We will be reporting over the next few weeks how we are doing versus what we think will be the overall need for 2010, to accomplish our goal. Thanks to everyone for your support, and as always, your generosity! -Asima

Congregational Life

"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." Mt. 18:30

THRIFT SHOP NEWS NOVEMBER 2009: We had another great week end for November. Our receipts totaled just over \$1500. What a blessing! We are getting close to the end of the year so this really lifted our spirits. But, again, we couldn't have done it without you. Thank you so much for all the donations. The volunteers worked almost every Tuesday in November. It was a very heavy month for donations. We thank you and give thanks and praise to God for all the wonderful and faithful volunteers who so tirelessly give their time. Keep up the good work with donations and we'll keep putting them out for our clients. - Submitted by Pat Frey

THE SPECIAL FRIENDS met November 12th, sharing the MUMC mission statement. Following prayer and reading Psalm 103:2, we joined in "Come Ye Thankful People, Come." The meditation came from Norman Vincent Peale's Gratitude. In First Thessalonians 5:18 we find the words, "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." In everything – things that seem hopeful or things that seem difficult – it is in the will of God that we be thankful. Lucy Elgin plans to attend the ad Board meeting when the Special Friends Policy appears for approval, to explain the Grandfather Clause. October was an especially active month for visiting our special friends. We made 34 visits, send 15 cards, made 45 calls and John send 3 books and 3 pamphlets to grieving friends. Closing thoughts: If you practice thanksgiving, joy and satisfaction will be engendered in your life and will contribute to the happiness of all those who touch your life. Our next meeting will be Dec. 10th at 3:30 pm. Blessings, Lorraine.

CONGRATULATIONS TO EVERYONE FOR A SUPER BOUTIQUE HOLIDAY SALE. The total sales for the 3 days was \$6337.87 without deducting sales tax. We were able to pay our commitment to Carol Partridge, missionary in Mace-

donia \$2500 for 1 year, and the balance of the World Service portion of our church's apportionment of \$3366.50 for a total of \$5866.50. The quilt went to Linda Anderson, the afghan went to Jodi Booze, the Wall Hanging to Kathy Bremmer and the Doll/Waderobe to Irene Smith. Because of your help and donations this was one of our best years. God Bless everyone, the Boutique Group. -Submitted by Barbara Nielsen.

UMW NEWS:

- December 8: Wesley Circle Christmas Party at 1pm. Hosted by Evelyn Haulman 1943 Rialto Ct. 291-6814. Bring a \$5 gift to exchange.

- December 15: Christmas 'Souper Lunch' 10am in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a memory of a Christmas past to share.

*Red Bird Circle and Ex. Board Dark

HEALING MINISTRY MAKES A CHANGE—PRAYER BOX COMING

After several years of having an evening healing prayer service with communion, we shifted to a trial of three months in September to having the service at 12 noon on a Thursday to see if this would be a more convenient time for working people and folks who no longer drive. We have concluded that it is time for the Healing service to come to an end for the time being. However, our Healing Prayer station ministers will continue to provide intercessory prayer during communion at both services for those who wish to stop and ask for a personal word of prayer. These intercessory prayer stations are located at the back of the sanctuary to the right of the doors. You may ask for prayer for physical, emotional, relationship needs or for someone else. It was also decided to start an intercessory prayer box in to which you may drop prayer requests for intercessory prayer in addition to our lifting up joys and concerns in our service. The Prayer Box will be in the lobby of the church in December.

I'M SPENDING CHRISTMAS WITH JESUS CHRIST THIS

YEAR: I found this in the front of my Mom's daily Bible and I want to share it with you in memory of our loved ones.

— Joan Pregno

I see the countless Christmas trees around the world below, with tiny lights, like heaven's stars reflecting on the snow. The sight is so spectacular; please wipe away a tear for I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year. I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear but the sounds of music can't compare with the Christmas choir up here. I have no words to tell you the joy their voices bring; it is beyond description to hear the angels sing. I know how much you miss me; I feel your breaking heart... but through our memories so dear we're never far apart. I can't tell you of the splendor or the peace here in this place - can you just imagine Christmas with our Savior face to face? I'll ask him to light your spirit as I tell him of

your love - pray for one another as you lift your eyes above. Please let your hearts be joyful, and let you spirits sing, for I'm spending Christmas in heaven, and I'm walking with the King.

HEALTH REMINDER - to recognize symptoms of stroke remember S.T.R.: S *Ask the individual to SMILE.

T *Ask the person to TALK and SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE (Coherently) (i.e. It is sunny out today.) R *Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS. If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks, call emergency number immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

-Thanks to Gloria and Lucy for the information.

NEW CHURCH POLICIES: Two new church policies were passed by the Administrative Support Team this fall. The first policy changes our risk management policy to protect the vulnerable and elderly members of the church and also establishes guidelines for transportation to offsite church events. The second policy addresses health and safety concerns regarding animals on the church grounds. The full text of these policies is stated below. If you have any questions, please speak to John Erb or Max Cannon.

1. MUMC Policy regarding background checks and off site church events:

*Fingerprinting and background checks must be performed on all volunteers and staff involved with any activity for children under the age of 18 and for all volunteers and staff that visit or are active with the frail and vulnerable members of the congregation.

*For offsite church sponsored events, where transportation is planned and offered, drivers must be pre-designated, over 21 years of age and have 5 years of driving experience, provide proof of auto liability insurance in the amount of \$300,000 and have a valid driver's license. Each person attending the off-site event must provide emergency contact information or the church's Care card to the organizer and/or driver. All drivers are advised to call 911 in case of emergency and not transport injured passengers. For church sponsored off-site events that do not include the offer of transportation, but people spontaneously car-pool, the above requirements do not apply. Volunteer drivers for church off site events must follow California state law regarding cell phone use".

2. MUMC Animal Control Policy: No animals are to be on the grounds or inside the church buildings due to health and safety concerns. The only exception would be for a church function that specifically allows for animals i.e. Celebration of St. Francis of Assisi or a manger scene and guidelines for these events will be provided by AST prior to the event. By federal law, Service animals, while performing their duties*, are exempt. *Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that an individual with a disability cannot perform for himself or herself. Service animal is defined in Title III of the American for Disabilities Act (ADA) (28 C.F.R. §36.104)

YOUTH NEWS

YOUTH CALENDAR:

SATURDAY 12/05/09 6:00 P.M. ADVENT DINNER
SUNDAY 12/06/09 5:00 P.M. HOLY CLUB MOVIE NITE, BUNGALOW
SUNDAY 12/13/09 5:30 P.M. HOLY CLUB MEETING, BUNGALOW
FRIDAY 12/18/09 LIVE NATIVITY REHEARSAL (TBD)
SATURDAY 12/19/09 LIVE NATIVITY REHEARSAL (TBD)
SUNDAY 12/20/09 NO MEETING – LIVE NATIVITY EVENT
SATURDAY 12/26/09 8:00 A.M. POVERELLO HOUSE WORK DAY
SUNDAY 12/27/09 5:30 P.M. HOLY CLUB MEETING, BUNGALOW

FROM THE PASTOR

LESLIE'S SALT SHAKER The season of Advent is full of longings—the scriptures assigned for these weeks lift up the longings of generations of faithful folks looking for God. Longing for the fulfillment of our human desires for sorrow, despair and want to flee away. Waiting, longing, persevering, hoping, coming and coming again—these themes jumble around during advent in an unruly kind of way. But above all we look to one reliable hope in all the circumstances of life—God and God's promised future. We are longing and looking: Looking for the active participation of God in human history—looking back to where God's hand made a way where there was no way for those without a land, without a name, without a future. For who? For those in slavery. For those in exile. For those suffering in oppression. For ourselves through those whose prayers we use in our daily devotions to lift up our own longings as well as our rejoicings for God's presence and salvation in our lives in that favored prayer book of the Psalms. So to help us lift up our longings and prepare for God's coming to us in Christ via a wee infant child, we will make an Anhello Tree this Advent to use in worship as part of our Advent focus. Anhello is the Spanish word for deep longing. Our Anhello tree will hold our longings for ourselves, our loved ones and our world expressed through the question "I long for the day when.....What do you long for? Peace? An end to poverty? An end to hunger? A cure for Alheimers disease? Time in your life to appreciate those you treasure? The freeing of a loved one from an addiction? Whatever our longings they will go on our Anhello Tree in the form of fan folded Advent colored papers. Each week we will read a few and offer our silent prayers. After reading, the longings will be returned to the tree—but this time they will be fanned out. In this way our Anhello Tree will bloom from a tree of longings to a tree of hope and anticipation in God's future activity in our lives: an affirmation of the promise of scripture that God's reign is coming among us, is among us and will be among us. Maranatha! Come Lord Jesus, Come! May your Advent be a time for appreciation, taking stalk of your

life and a deeper awareness of where God is calling you to be part of the Reign of Christ. -Pastor Denice Leslie

COACH'S CORNER I have had two really excellent learning event experiences for pastors of local congregations this year. The first was the Fresno District Training Days held in October and the second was just completed before Thanksgiving in November: The Bishop's All Clergy Retreat. The presenter was the same: Doug Anderson, the Director of the Rueben Job Center for Leadership Development. Many of us use Rueben Job's wonderful devotionals, the first of which is *A Guide to Prayer for Ministers and Other Servants*. He has at least two more of these Guides out now and I highly recommend them – they are available through Upper Room or Cokesbury. You will be benefitting from all that I've learned in the months of the New Year ahead. You will be hearing about Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations. We will be looking at how churches get stuck in being Preference Driven vs. Purpose Centered. Where we get the spiritual power we need to move us forward, how to do faith sharing –and it's not about the Four Laws! How to recapture our Wesleyan roots of the whole gospel, centered in that quintessential original Wesleyan question: "How is it with your soul?" Today in contemporary language—a whole lot less poetic in my opinion but to the point: "Where have you experienced God's grace in your life today or this week or this month?" It's time to move away from primarily talking *about* God to *experiencing* God. And sharing that experience with others, living out that experience in our own lives, in the formation of our own characters and in the communal witness of service to the world—after all this is what Discipleship—following Jesus is all about. As a Church we are called to be a thriving, vital center for experiencing God's good news in Jesus Christ. Church is where we are nurtured and empowered with soul food for strong and healthy spirits. But the secret is: the focus is not inward on us—it's out there—it's outward—it's moving out with God. As Mark's gospel account of the resurrection makes it so clear to the women standing at the empty tomb and who ask the angel, "Where is he??" The man in white says, "He's not here." Duh! But it's the next line that says it so well: "He's gone before you to Galilee"—Answer: "He's out there—in the mission field. You want to be with him—go there." So in a way—a big way really—for us United Methodists it's all about going Back to the Future: recovering what we've always been known for and that worked so well: empowering every believer through watching over one another in love and service. It's called Accountable Discipleship: class meetings, small groups, spiritual growth and walking together for encouragement, support and exhortation. Nothing more Methodist than Vital Piety and Acts of Mercy and mutual small group support for this journey. Can't do it all by yourself. Our road map is in scripture. Always has been. Always will be—but not just to study it for gaining knowledge alone or for self-gratification—nope. It's all about finding what God's mission. It's all about following Jesus into Galilee. Yes, this is Christmas time and so the great journey of faith begins! Merry Christmas!! -Pastor Denice Leslie