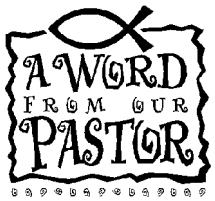


THE MESSENGER

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
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DECEMBER, 2018



Merry Christmas

Simple words and probably overused, but I hope that the love of Christ may fill your heart and life this season. The holidays can be a very difficult time for many, many people. I don't acknowledge the sadness of the season as often as I should because I don't want to start people thinking that way if they haven't already. I don't know how God felt that first Christmas that Jesus was gone from heaven. Did God adjust during the 9 months or was God filled with joy that soon the world would know how very much our Creator loved us? In my mind, there must always be mixed emotions at Christmas. We are reminded of our childhood, anticipation and gifts hoped for or received. In the same thought we are reminded of family lost, or childhood left behind.

My solution, as I remember the past, is to give thanks for all that is past and rejoice for all that lies ahead. I can acknowledge my loss and at the same time rejoice for the time we had together. I have not lost a spouse, a child or a sibling and I know that those losses often color the survivor's lives forevermore. I wish I knew words of comfort adequate to heal the loss, but I don't. I know that loss is amplified by the holidays, but I also believe that God's love for us is not diminished by our heartbreak. We may feel abandoned, but God is with us in our heartbreak. I can't imagine the level of love that it took for God to let Jesus come to earth to live and die for us, but I sure am thankful for that love. It is why I continue to celebrate and encourage those simple, wonderful words, Merry Christmas. No matter the hurdles, Christmas is a reminder of the love with which you are loved.

Blessings,

Don



Church-wide Christmas
Lunch and Cookie Exchange

The children will host a Christmas Lunch (replacing the annual Christmas Dinner for this year) after the 11:00 a.m. service on Sunday, December 16 in the Fellowship Hall. The meat, rolls and drinks will be provided. Please bring a side dish according to the 1st letter of your last name:

A through N - Vegetable/Casserole
O through Z - Dessert

They will also host a cookie exchange that day. If you would like to participate, please bring 2 dozen of your favorite cookies to the Fellowship Hall. They can be placed in the stage area when you arrive. Cookies will be ready to take home after lunch.

As we end the year, we are on track to have a positive balance and hopeful to have a carry over to start 2019. A very special gift was received for our Conference Apportionments and we have now paid 77%. Thank you to everyone who returned their Commitment Cards. You can still turn yours into the Church Office if you did not make Commitment Sunday. The Finance Committee is very grateful for your continued support of our church's finances.



The Choir will be presenting their Christmas Cantata during the 8:30 and 11:00 a.m. worship services on Sunday, December 16.



CHRISTMAS CAROLING AND PARTY: You are invited to go caroling with the choir on Friday, December 21. They will begin gathering at the church around 5:30 p.m. and leave at 5:45 p.m. If you have any questions or if you know of anyone that needs us to sing to them, please call Gail Minor at 467-0560. If you can't go caroling, but would like to attend the party, please bring a covered dish and join them at 7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.



- 1st - David Straight
- 2nd - Gil Culbreth
- 3rd - Judy Mix, Pat Watkins
- 4th - Nicolas Suarez
- 5th - Kim Mucherino
- 6th - Anne Young
- 7th - Sandy Watford, M/M Larry White
- 8th - Coleen Clark
- 10th - George Cooper
- 12th - Dana Straight, Preston Hall
- 14th - Janet McKinley
- 15th - Darrell Enfinger
- 17th - Jennifer Gagliano
- 18th - Earl Williamson
- 21st - M/M Bennett Yeilding
- 22nd - Eleanor Milke, Georgia Gerren
- 23rd - George Clement
- 26th - M/M Jack Wolff, M/M Joe Ostavitz
- 28th - Rita Rucks, Willard Suits
- 29th - Jim Barnhart
- 30th - Dave Buddenhagen, Kathryn VanBeek, Joe Suarez
- 31st - Peggy Lampi

The United Methodist Men thank everyone who supported the Chicken Dinner in November. It was very successful with approximately \$2,300 profit. The November meeting with spouses was well attended and everyone really enjoyed Sharon Suits' dive program. Beautiful pictures of God's creation! Officers for 2019 were reelected: Dowling Watford, President; Richard Kersey, Vice President; Bennett Yeilding, Treasurer; and Ed Thornton, Secretary. The United Methodist Men will not meet in December, so the next meeting will be January 21.



_____ If your birthday or anniversary is incorrect or has been omitted, please call the Church Office.



Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Services will be held at 5:00 and 7:00 p.m.

The Christmas card exchange box is located in the Fellowship Hall on the table near the coffee. Please sort your outgoing cards alphabetically when placing them in the box. **EVERYONE** please check the box for cards addressed to you and your family. Any cards not claimed by Sunday, January 6 will be donated to a charitable organization.



The children's Sunday School and Kid's Club will have a Christmas party on Monday, December 10th from 5:30-7:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Each child who would like to participate in the gift exchange can bring a gift valued at \$5.00 or less. We could use some extra hands from willing adults that evening, as the children will be making cookies and crafts to take home to their families. If you would like to help, please come that evening at 5:00 p.m. Be prepared to be blessed by these wonderful kids and be a blessing to them!

