

Church Chat

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From the Pastor's Desk

Have you ever known anyone who had hope when things seems hopeless? Or someone who had peace even in the midst of one of life's storms? Or joy no matter how dark the day? Or could love even the most unlovable person? It seems almost too much to ask for someone to have hope, peace, joy, and love in today's world of terrorists and turmoil, doesn't it?

In the time of Jesus, there were terrorists and turmoil and yet he manifested hope, peace, joy, and love. These are inner qualities that he developed through his growth in grace as a human, just like He wishes and works to develop these qualities in each of us.

Each of these four qualities will be the focus of one of the Sunday's in Advent, beginning with hope. As we proceed through Advent we move from hope to peace, from peace to joy, from joy to love. And ultimately, on Christmas Eve/Day, we arrive at Christ Himself. The source of our hope, peace, joy, and love.

Who among us would prefer the alternatives to these four qualities? Many of us find the alternatives all too prevalent in our world and in our lives. Think about it, how often do you feel despair or hopelessness when you see the world today? Or is turmoil more present in your life than peace? Is misery and depression a better description of your life than joy? And when it comes to love, do you respond to others with dislike, hate, turning them into an enemy if they disagree with you? Well, as Dr. Phil would say, "How's that working for you?"

Advent and Christmas are in invitation to welcome Christ into your life and allow Him to transform your heart into a vessel of hope, peace, joy, and love. And if there is anything the world needs now is more people with the hope of Jesus, the peace of Jesus, the joy of Jesus, and the love of Jesus.

May your Christmas be filled with opportunities to receive and give all the Jesus offers – hope, peace, joy, and love.

I am so thankful and proud to be your pastor,

David

United Methodist Women

United Methodist Women will celebrate Christmas with a brunch on **December 17th at 10 AM** at the home of Becky Johnson.

All women of the church are invited! Please come join us for fellowship, and bring some **cookies** for a cookie exchange! See Becky Johnson for details. Hope to see you there!



THANK YOU to everyone who donated treasures, baked goods, and helped with the Chicken Spaghetti fundraiser and Bazaar on November 21st. Thanks to your generosity, we raised over \$2,200 to support local and global missions to enhance the lives of women, children, and youth!

Walk to Emmaus/Chrysalis

The next Crossroads Walk is a **Men's Walk to Emmaus on April 14-17, 2016**. The next **women's walk is July 21-24, 2016**. If you, or someone you know desires a deeper experience of the Christian life and community, please contact Barney or Janie Gullely or Pastor David.



Crossroads celebrates every month with a gathering of the community. If you want to know more about Emmaus, or you have been on an Emmaus walk, you are welcome to attend. Come share in fellowship on **December 18 at 6:30 PM** at **FUMC Louise** for potluck dinner and worship. Contact the Gullelys if you would like to carpool.

Announcements

DeeDee Stork—experienced a medical emergency that required hospitalization and a brief stay in the ICU in San Antonio. The church has established a fund to collect donations to help her pay her medical bills. If you would like to make a donation, please write "DeeDee" on the memo line of your check.

The **Seaside Ringers** meet at 5:30 PM each Wednesday to practice. They play the bells during worship on the third Sunday of each month.

Adult Sunday School—is reading and discussing the Gospel of John. They meet in the Parlor at 9:00 AM each Sunday morning, led by Josh Harper.

The **Coastalaires** will have their Christmas Dinner and Concert at the Bay City County Club on December 3, 4, 5, and 6. Contact Jimmy Neeley or Carl Rieck for tickets.

Hand Bells—practice at 5:30 PM each Wednesday in the Sanctuary.

Chancel Choir—practices at 6:30 PM each Wednesday in the Sanctuary. They are preparing for the Christmas Cantata that will be on Sunday, December 13 during Worship.

HELP WANTED—we are looking for people who would like to teach the Children's Sunday School Class. If we have three or four then they could rotate Sundays through the month. Also, if you would like to help start a Sunday School Class for the smaller children (2-5 years old), please contact Pastor David. We have lesson material for the class, and you don't have to do much preparation to teach the class.

Fellowship Luncheon Date Change!—please note that we will be having the Fellowship Luncheon on the **THIRD** Sunday this month, December 20. Please let Mary Jo Neeley if you can bring a meat or main dish.

Youth News

Youth Sunday School—The class is for all youth in grades 6-12 and meets in the classroom at the back of Weimer Hall at 9:00 AM.

Youth Fellowship will not meet in December.

Wesley Nurse News



Office hours: Tuesdays 9 AM-4 PM, and Thursdays 9 AM-2 PM.

Diaper Pantry—Tuesdays 1-4 PM

- Tuesday, December 1, 4 PM—Teen Support Group, Teen Center
- Thursday, December 3, 9 AM-Noon, Open Enrollment for Affordable Care Act and Screening, HUB
- Tuesday, December 15, 4 PM—Teen Support Group, Teen Center

I am collecting **smoke detectors** and **9 volt batteries** for the December Smoke Detector Drive. We need a lot of these! If you know someone who needs one, send them to me. I currently have 26 and some batteries.

If you know someone with Diabetes that has no insurance and needs help with supplies, send them to me. Also, we will be starting a Diabetic Support Group next year.

Thank you,

--Leslie Machicek, Wesley Nurse

Christmas Devotional

Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, "God with us."

--Matthew 1:23

His Birth in History—"...that the Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). Jesus Christ was born into this world, not *from* it. He did not emerge out of history; He came into history from the outside. Jesus Christ is not the best human being the human race can boast of—He is a Being for whom the human race can take no credit at all. He is not man becoming God, but God Incarnate—God coming into human flesh from outside it. His life is the highest and the holiest entering through the most humble of doors. Our Lord's birth was an advent—the appearance of God in human form.

His Birth in Me—"My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you..." (Galatians 4:19). Just as our Lord came into human history from outside it, He must also come into me from outside. Have I allowed my personal human life to become a "Bethlehem" for the Son of God? I cannot enter the realm of the kingdom of God unless I am born again from above by a birth totally unlike physical birth. "You must be born again" (John 3:7). This is not a command, but a fact based on the authority of God. The evidence of the new birth is that I yield myself so completely to God that "Christ is formed" in me. And once "Christ is formed" in me, His nature immediately begins to work through me.

God Evident in the Flesh—This is what is made so profoundly possible for you and for me through the redemption of man by Jesus Christ.

--Oswald Chambers, "My Utmost for His Highest"

2015 Finance Committee Update

The Finance Committee is pleased to present the church's financial statement through October 31. Please see that we made a withdrawal of \$10,000 from Texas Methodist Foundation (the Johnson Fund) in order to pay for replacement of the parsonage air conditioning. This leaves us with a balance of \$10,205 of financial reserves for the church.

We are appealing to the church to close the gap of \$5,900 in order to meet our Apportionments obligation.

We will be making an Advent season appeal to the church. Please look at what the church does in the lives of your family and the community, and consider making an Advent contribution to the church above and beyond your normal giving.

2015		Oct	Year to Date	Year to Date Budget	2015 Budget
Income	Offerings & Memorials	\$ 10,806	\$ 122,005	\$ 126,833	\$ 152,200
	Rent	\$ 650	\$ 5,970	\$ 6,500	\$ 7,800
	Oil Well	\$ 532	\$ 1,927	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,600
	Other*	\$ 10,000	\$ 10,114	\$ 125	\$ 150
	Total	\$ 21,988	\$ 140,016	\$ 136,458	\$ 163,750
Expenses	Apportionments	\$ 360	\$ 7,049	\$ 15,924	\$ 19,109
	Pastor Salary	\$ 6,038	\$ 53,526	\$ 53,449	\$ 64,139
	Staff Salary	\$ 3,132	\$ 26,423	\$ 24,741	\$ 29,689
	Operating Expenses	\$ 12,846	\$ 46,234	\$ 34,042	\$ 40,850
	Program Expenses	\$ -	\$ 1,807	\$ 1,583	\$ 1,900
	Capital Expenses	\$ 418	\$ 7,180	\$ 6,717	\$ 8,060
	Total	\$ 22,794	\$ 142,219	\$ 136,456	\$ 163,747
Balance		\$ (806)	\$ (2,203)	\$ 3	\$ 3

*Withdrawal from Texas Methodist Foundation for parsonage air conditioning.

Interested in a Bible Study?

Walk and Talk: Walking Together in Scripture

Walk & Talk is a year-long walking Bible study and devotional that is specifically designed to be used while you walk with a friend, with a member of your congregation, or by yourself. The primary objective of Walk & Talk is to help communities incorporate healthy habits into their lives through physical movement and spiritual enrichment. Just as Jesus taught his disciples on the road, we believe that God speaks to us as we Walk & Talk.

While there are many options for using the resource, it is designed so that a group or pair of



individuals could discuss a Walk & Talk devotional once a week for a full year. Each month has a different theme and provides four devotionals on that theme. Each devotional provides a scripture passage, a short reflection, a series of discussion questions and a closing prayer.

Our Wesley Nurse, Leslie Machicek, has offered to help us get started. If you are interested in this Bible Study activity, contact Leslie at 361-571-1044, or LMachicek@mhm.org.

Small Church Initiative

See, I am doing a new thing!
--Isaiah 43:19

In January, we will begin work on the Small Church Initiative. The SCI is a program that we have entered into with the Rio Texas Conference to examine our church and help us define our strengths and weaknesses as a church. With the help of a coach, we will plan how the church can move forward to the future God is calling for us.

The Small Church Initiative is being led by the Administrative Council as the Leadership Team.

A Prayer Team is being formed which will start in December. Led by Janie Gulley, we need 3-5 people who will pray for our church and the SCI process. The Prayer Team will also lead the church in a prayer study.

During the months of January through April, we will undertake a structured self-examination of the church. We will be examining the current state of the church, the demographics of our community around us, and interviews with some members of the church and the community around us. We need your help in completing many of the study areas.

In May, we will have a Consultation Day followed the next day by a special worship service where we will receive some recommendations for our church to follow. We will then have 30 days to accept or reject



the recommendations. If we vote to accept the recommendations, we will have 18 months of support by a coach in order to implement the recommendations.

First of all, we ask the whole church to be in prayer about this program. Please pray that we will be enlightened by looking at ourselves honestly. Then pray that the Holy Spirit will work within us to take the church in a direction that God is calling us towards.

Second, we need help in the self-evaluation phase of the study. We will be looking at many aspects of our church and our community. Pray about working on an area of the study that is not comfortable for you. God may be calling you in order for you to see your church in a different way.

If you are interested in participating in the program, please see Pastor David or Erwin Janszen, or any member of the Church Leadership.

Church Calendar for December



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| <p>2 Hand Bells in Sanctuary, 5:30 PM
Choir in Sanctuary, 6:30 PM</p> <p>3 Ladies Bible Study, Weimer Hall, 10:00 AM</p> <p>5 Palacios Area Fund Tour of Homes, 9 AM-Noon
Palacios Community Seaside Holiday</p> <p>6 Second Sunday of Advent
Scriptures: Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79; Philippians 1:3-11;
Luke 3:1-6
Sunday School, 9:00 AM; Worship, 10:00 AM</p> <p>7 Alpha Club Christmas Party, Weimer Hall, 6:00 PM
Trustees in Pastor's Office, 6:00 PM</p> <p>8 Finance Committee, Weimer Hall, 6:00 PM
Administrative Council, Weimer Hall, 7:00 PM</p> <p>9 Hand Bells in Sanctuary, 5:30 PM
Choir in Sanctuary, 6:30 PM</p> <p>10 Ladies Bible Study, Weimer Hall, 10:00 AM</p> <p>13 Third Sunday of Advent
Scriptures: Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6; Philippians
4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18
Men's Breakfast at Weimer Hall, 7:30 AM
Sunday School 9:00 AM, Worship, 10:00 AM
Choir Cantata during Worship</p> | <p>16 Hand Bells in Sanctuary, 5:30 PM
Choir in Sanctuary, 6:30 PM</p> <p>17 Ladies Bible Study, Weimer Hall, 10:00 AM
United Methodist Women Christmas Brunch, 10:00 AM,
home of Becky Johnson</p> <p>18 Crossroads Emmaus Gathering, Louise UMC, 6:30 PM</p> <p>20 Fourth Sunday of Advent
Scriptures: Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:47-55; Hebrews 10:5-10;
Luke 1:39-45
Sunday School, 9:00 AM; Worship, 10:00 AM
Fellowship Luncheon after Worship</p> <p>23 NO Hand Bells
NO chancel Choir</p> <p>24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 7:00 PM</p> <p>25 CHRISTMAS DAY—church office closed</p> <p>26- Pastor David out of town</p> <p>27</p> <p>27 First Sunday after Christmas
Scriptures: 1 Samuel 2:18-20; Psalm 148;
Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52
Sunday School, 9:00 AM; Worship, 10:00 AM</p> <p>31 NEW YEAR'S EVE
Scriptures: Ecclesiastes 3:1-13; Psalm 8;
Revelation 21:1-6a; Matthew 25:31-46</p> |
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Dates on the horizon to remember:

- January 10—Commissioning of Church Leaders for 2016 during Worship
- January 23—Coastal Bend District Ministry Workshop in Beeville
- January 31—5th Sunday Noisy Offering

Ministry Workshops Available

The Coastal Bend District is offering its **Ministry Workshops** in Beeville and Kingsville. The Beeville event is **Saturday, January 23** and the Kingsville event is **Saturday, February 6**. All members of the Administrative Council and various committees in the church are encouraged to attend one of these events. A brochure for the events has been sent to all current and incoming church leaders, and is available from Pastor David.

Celebrations in December

Birthdays:

3—Parker Dean; 8—Bob Colura; 10—Carol Singer; 12—Barbara Curtis; 16—Dean Kubecka,
Sherri Seaman; 17—Isabel Greenawalt; 19—Marvin Curtis; 22—Nellie Rockenbaugh;
30—Lennie Kunefke



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Joys and Concerns

Our sympathies go to **Mary Bari** and her family on the death of her mother, **Doris Sinclair**, on Saturday, November 14 in San Antonio.

Assisting with Worship in December

Liturgist—OPEN

Greeters—OPEN

Ushers—OPEN

CAN YOU HELP? We need volunteers to assist with Worship in December!

Newsletter Distribution

Do you know someone who needs to be on the mailing list or email distribution list to receive the newsletter? If you receive the newsletter by mail, would you consider switching to email distribution? This would let us save a few trees and a little money in postage. Please contact Janie Gulley at 361-972-3185 or janiegulley@hotmail.com to update our distribution lists.

Newsletter Articles for January

If you have an article or announcement for the January newsletter, please get the information to Janie Gulley **by December 30** at 972-3185 or janiegulley@hotmail.com.

PALACIOS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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ADDRESS