



# Good News!

Early Edition

The newsletter of the Memorial United Methodist Church of Clovis  
December 2004

## 2004 CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Our 2004 Christmas offering is designated for the Nutrition Program at HART Academy for needed food service equipment. An envelope for your use will be enclosed in the annual Christmas letter or you may simply mark your donation "Christmas Offering" and mail to the church.

## A CAROLING WE SHALL GO! FRIDAY DECEMBER 10

This year we will be caroling on a Friday evening, December 10. We will gather at 6 p.m. at the church and carpool. Please bring a finger food or goodie to share when we all return to the church.

## CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES FOR DECEMBER 24

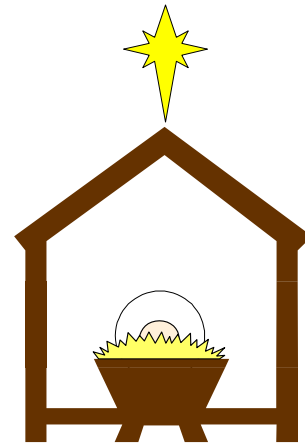
Once again we will have three Christmas Eve services to choose from this year. The Academy church Christmas Eve Service will be at 4:00 p.m. There will be two services here at Memorial: 7:00 p.m. will feature Janet Erickson, first flute of the Fresno Symphony Orchestra and our chime choir, The Fellowship of the Ring and conclude with the lighting of candles. The 11:00 p.m. service will feature our Chancel Choir and include a Christmas Carol Communion, concluding with the lighting of candles.

## TRADITIONAL LESSONS AND CAROLS SUNDAY DECEMBER 26

Our service on Sunday morning December 26 will be a traditional lessons and carols service with a homily on the Incarnation.

## ADVENT HOME WORSHIP FOLDERS AVAILABLE

Please pick up a copy of an Advent Home Worship folder in the lobby at the refreshment table if you have not done so already. This devotional was written by the laity of St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Sacramento.



Worship Ministry	.....page 2
Care Ministries	.....page 4
Congregational Life	.....page 5
Christian Education	.....page 6
Coach's Corner	.....page 7

## Worship Ministry

News from the teams that support the Sunday worship services.

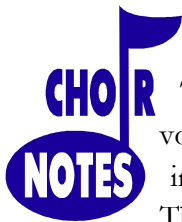
*"Make a joyful noise to the LORD...  
Serve the Lord with gladness!" (Psalm 100)*



## Music Notes

### FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

Our Chime Choir, Fellowship of the Ring, has rehearsal every Sunday at 4:00. All are invited to come. For more information, see Janette Erickson or Sue DeFranco.



### SING UNTO THE LORD!

The choir is always welcoming new voices. All who would like to sing are invited to join us in rehearsals on Thursdays at 7:30 p.m.

### COFFEE HOUR NEWS-HELP!

Our Coffee Hour fellowship has become an important part of Sunday morning. It is a joy to spend time together after worship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Thanks to the faithful assistance of people like Georgia Holman, Erick and Lynn Seay, Pat Frey, Don and Evelyn Haulman, Dee Karr and the United Methodist Women, Rick and Sharon Hutchinson, and others who have provided treats or help, our fellowship time continues. We could use 8-12 individuals, families, or groups to help on a rotating Sunday, as little as once a quarter. I am happy to continue to do the purchasing of supplies and put on the pots of coffee whenever I am there on Sundays, but could use assistance with set up, serving, and clean up. Look for a signup sheet on the Coffee Hour table or see Sue DeFranco if you have questions or would like to volunteer.

### SUNDAY WORSHIP

Have you ever stopped to think about what is involved in a Sunday Worship? Most of us think of a few things, the Sermon, music and maybe the ushers. But every Sunday there are a lot of very busy bees attempting to prepare for our little over an hour worship service.

We have greeters, ushers, projectionist, sound, musicians, choir, readers, flowers, and candles, candle lighters, banners, coffee hour set up, communion, and occasionally we have a baptism - before we even get to the Sermon. Sometimes we have a guest speaker.

All these and many more things happen on any Sunday morning before we even get started. We have many crews that are dedicated to their ministry and we are grateful for their service.

Roger Grams is the Sunday Worship Coordinator. When questions arise or a problem needs to be resolved, Roger will assist you with your problem. Wayne Golden and Eric Seay assist him with this ministry

If you would like to be a part of this ministry, please contact the Grams. We always have room for additional help.



## **DID YOU KNOW...? OUR COFFEE HOUR IS "FAIR TRADE"**

Did you know that our fellowship time after worship features Fair Trade coffee and tea? Coffee is the second largest U.S. import after oil and we are the largest consumer of the beverage in the world. Few Americans know that many small coffee farmers are paid an amount for the beans they toil so hard to grow that is less than the cost of production. Many of these farmers are forced into a cycle of poverty and debt.

For a coffee or tea importer to become Fair Trade certified, they must meet certain criteria. These include agreeing to pay a fair minimum price to the grower for beans or leaves, encouraging and helping to provide healthy and safe working conditions for laborers, assuring that child labor laws are not being abused, buying from producers who engage in environmentally sustainable practices, etc. By purchasing Fair Trade Certified products, we show our support for an equitable partnership between marketers in North America and growers in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean.

Your contribution to the basket on the Coffee Hour table helps support our effort to extend our faith walk into the world. We now have Fair Trade coffee and tea products available to purchase for home use or gift giving. The small profit we will make off of these products will go to an Advance Special mission project. We got these items from the Equal Exchange United Methodist Committee on Relief Coffee Project.

For more information see Sue DeFranco, Jean Hill, or Diane Zastovnik.

*May God bless our desire to live by His words: "I want you to share your bread with the hungry, open your home to the homeless poor, remove the yoke of injustice, let the oppressed go." -Isaiah 58*

## **CROP WALK TREMENDOUS SUCCESS!!**

What a fantastic day we had here in Clovis on October 24<sup>th</sup> when we hosted the CROP Walk for the Hungry. On that day approximately 400 walkers from 36 different faith walks and organizations came together and raised over \$28,000 (a new record for the Fresno area Walk!) for those in need in our community and the world. This was an increase of over 200 walkers and \$10,000 in giving from last year's walk. Our walkers from MUMC raised nearly \$2,000 which more than doubled our total from last year. The weather was cool, but the spirit of cooperation and brotherhood warmed our hearts as we walked to raise money and awareness about the tragedy of hunger.

What a tremendous effort was put forth by so many from our church to make all these people feel welcome. Just some of those special people: Pauline Middleton, Pat McGinnis, Judy Gross-registration, Howard and Mary Vollman and Don and Evelyn Haulman-welcome and water tables, Ron and the entire Zastovnik family-sound, Denice Leslie-words of welcome and general, all-around encouragement, Laura Williams-after the walk cleanup, Roger Grams-snacks, Mariama Mathai-recruitment, Connie Alfaro and our wonderful Youth Group-anything I asked them to do, walkers, sponsors, and all of you in our congregation who so graciously put up with the inconvenience of 400 people descending on our church on a Sunday afternoon. Many of our guest walkers let us know how much they enjoyed the route in Clovis and the warm welcome they received from our church and from the people of Clovis. Thank you all so much!!

## **ENDOWMENT FUND**

We all have loved ones we wish to honor and remember. One way to do so is to make a gift in the name of that person to our church's Permanent Endowment Fund. If you would like to learn more about how to memorialize a loved one through our Permanent Endowment fund, please speak with Rick Hutchinson or John Tallmadge.

## Care Ministries

Giving Special Care to Others

### **ADVENT WARM TREE**

The blessed season of Advent has come and again we are filled with expectation and hope. But for some the bright lights and festive decorations only serve to increase their feelings of helplessness and despair. Help us to continue our tradition of helping the homeless men, women, and children served by the Fresno Rescue Mission by bringing gifts that will provide warmth: blankets, jackets, socks, hats, etc. and/or small toys, children's books, toiletries, and devotional materials. Please wrap your gift and tag it with information that will help those who distribute the gift get it to the right person (size, gender, adult or child, etc.) Bring your gift to the church by the morning of Sunday, December 19<sup>th</sup>. For more information, see Sue DeFranco.

### **MARY ELIZABETH INN**

For 90 years Mary Elizabeth Inn has offered a place for battered women and now are opening their doors to homeless women. We need to help make this Christmas a joyful one. This is one of our Mission Outreach groups.

If possible, join U.M.W. in making this possible. Such items as robes, slippers, hat & scarf sets, purses, mirror & comb sets, personal goodies, & gift certificates from Target are needed. We will collect by December 14, 2004 and deliver to Kae Lewis, the director, on December 17, 2004. You may bring your gift to the December UMW meeting, or give to Dee Carr.

### **CARE CARDS**

Extra Care Cards are available in the pews or in the church office.

### **SPECIAL FRIENDS TEAM REPORT FROM OCTOBER & NOVEMBER 2004 MEETINGS**

Composite report: We gathered in the Lose Library: Lorraine May, Pauline Middleton, Minnie Eller, Evelyn Haulman, Pastor Denice Leslie, new member Margie Magargee, Max Cannon, Pat Frey, Dee Carr and the Coordinator.

We added a new name to the Special Friends list. Laurie reported on the newly re-baptized Good Grief Group started by him at Denice's suggestion. Two recent widowers and two widows are attending. New members are still invited for a few weeks.

We reported on at least 35 visits, 21 telephone calls and 47 cards and notes sent, not counting those of Pastor Denice. We prayed for our special friends and many with pain, surgery, tests, cancer and grief.

We thank those who have sent in their Care Cards for us to use in case of a medical emergency at the church. We want the missing ones. If you need another card, get one from your pew rack or from the church office.

Next meeting: Tuesday, Dec. 14

At New Time (December only): 12:30 pm in the Lose Library (Just before UMW Tea at 2 pm). Visitors welcome!

Laurence Hill, Coordinator



### **THURSDAY NIGHT POTLUCK**

Thursday night Pot Luck Schedule for December:

December 2nd, 9th

December 16 will be our Special Christmas Dinner Potluck. We will have door prizes, special games and entertainment. All are invited. If you have any questions, contact Barbara or Roger Grams..

### **THRIFT SHOP NEWS** by Janet Bonzo

I would like to thank all the people who have given donations to the Mission Thrift Shop during this past year and also to all the volunteers who have given their time to help out. The most appreciated gift you can give your church is your time. Volunteering can be fun!!! Days open for 2005:

Jan. 7 and 8	July 1 and 2
Feb. 4 and 5	Aug 5 and 6
Mar. 4 and 5	Sept 2 and 3
Apr. 1 and 2	Oct. 7 and 8
May 6 and 7	Nov. 4 and 5
June 3 and 4	Dec. 2 and 3

Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

### **UNITED METHODIST WOMEN**

Regular meeting – December 14, 2 to 4 pm in the Social Hall. Christmas Tea. Installation of Officers. Our 2004 Honoree is Kay Andrews. Come and say “Hello!”

Red Bird Circle – December 8, 9:30 a.m. At the home of Margaret Nicholls, 557 W. Beverly, Clovis.

Wesley Circle – December 8 (Time and place to be announced.)

### **WHERE YOUR DONATIONS HAVE GONE**

Two years ago we had a fundraising drive for new computer equipment for the church. Your donations for that cause have gone a long way and are still going! The major purchase with your donations was a server. All of the church’s data is safely stored on the server and can be accessed from any computer in the office. Security is enhanced with the server since it controls all logons to all church computers. With the remote access capability of the server, our church secretary, Cheryl, has the capability of working from home when necessary and she has done that. Your donations purchased two computers both now being used heavily by Contributions Secretary Diane and volunteer helpers. We were also able to get high speed DSL internet service which has been a critical benefit for keeping computers updated and for e-mail and web access. We still have two more computers due for replacement which will happen soon. More donations for those are not necessary! You did it two years ago and the funds were managed so there would be enough for these two computers. There is enough! Thank you for your donations two years ago for this project!

### **PASTOR'S FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP REPORT**

One of the core values of this congregation is giving. As we conclude our 2004 financial stewardship drive I am once again humbled by your stewardship. It reflects your growth in faith.

Although pledges are still outstanding, as of November 22, 2004 the total pledged for 2005 is 166,482. This includes a designated pledge of 3560. Last year's pledged amount was 158,444 with a designated pledge of 3160 for apportionment giving and 1,680 for Hmong Mission.

I also want to lift up the Boutique group and the Mission Thrift Shop for their financial stewardship. Each group makes substantial contributions to our general fund making it possible for us to fulfill at least some of our apportionment responsibilities for world service, pension and other apportioned or district asking mission line items. For example, the recent Boutique has raised over 5,000.

We are blessed. Thanks to our giving we will continue to grow in faith, share the gospel, and serve Jesus Christ.



# Sunday School

## Christian Education

*"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable."*

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL 8:45 a.m.  
ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:00 & 11:15 a.m.

### CONFIRMATION CLASS

Confirmation classes will begin in mid-January. All students 7th grade and up are invited to attend. Classes will be held during Sunday School. We will have on-going lesson each week thru Easter. If you have a child interested, please contact Barbara Grams.

## Coach's Corner

This is such a lovely time of year! The last of the fall leaves are falling; the cold weather has settled in and the mountains are covered with snow. Christmas lights brighten neighborhood homes in the early darkness. Inside we are preparing for Christmas. Trees, greens and decorations are going up and Santas everywhere are hiding packages around the house.

Of course there is the usual frazzle that comes with the dazzle! Give your family and yourself some spiritual nourishment by carving out a time once a week between now and Christmas to remember why we celebrate. Find four candles and make an advent wreath. If you want to distinguish between the Christmas season and Advent then

choose three purple and one rose candle or four deep blue candles for your wreath. Then pick up an Advent home worship folders available in the lobby of the church for inspiration and reflection. Or pick up a copy of the November/December Alive Now; the focus is Advent and Christmas.

Advent is the first season of the new Christian Year. Since the Christian Year follows Jesus life and ministry, Advent is the "pregnant" season when we prepare for God's coming to us in the Christ child. The purple color reminds us of royalty and also of our need to take stock of our lives permitting us time to "clean our spiritual house." The pink candle of course reminds us of the joy of the season as we anticipate Christ's birth. Advent blue is a lovely color we also associate with Jesus' mother Mary and the solemnity and joy of the season.

Kids usually are fascinated with candlelight and love to light candles! And there is something about candlelight's soft glow that brings out the glow in we adults as well. And candle flame reminds us: Christ is the light of the world. A light no darkness can overcome. Let us be His light!

As we prepare our homes and hearts to receive the Prince of Peace let us not become so self-preoccupied that we forget the reason the world needs a Savior. This year in particular, let us remember the ravages of war around the world but most especially in Iraq. Children are suffering in unimaginable ways in Iraq after already bearing the brunt of the sanctions during Saddam's reign for lack of medical care and basic nutrition. Millions of children have died.

Family life is anything but stable in that country right now with no work, no working infrastructure and the increasing violence and destruction of homes and major cities. The majority of the population does not have enough to eat and must drink dirty water.

It is time for us to set aside our political ideologies and as Christians remind the world that we serve the Prince of Peace and work to do all we can to encourage an end of the conflict and the rebuilding of the country and its society. This is a faith issue--not just a political issue.

The best of all is that God, our Emmanuel, is with us! Let us serve him on behalf of the world he came to save.

Pastor Denice