



Good News!

The Newsletter of the Memorial United Methodist Church of Clovis

December 2005

ADVENT DINNER FUN JUST AROUND THE CORNER SATURDAY DEC. 3

The annual Advent Dinner is a night of great food (potluck-bring your favorite holiday dish), and holiday cheer. Sign up at the round table between the entry doors for a table in the lobby of the church. You may sign up to decorate and "host" a table or you may simply sign up to be placed at a table. Pastor Newell Knudson is once again our Emcee for the evening. That's Saturday, December 3 at 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

ANNUAL CHURCH/CHARGE CONFERENCE SUNDAY DEC. 4

Meet in the church parking lot at 1:30 p.m. to carpool to Oakhurst New Community United Methodist Church. Bring a salad or some kind of salad thing (i.e. veggies and dip, roll sandwiches, macaroni salad etc.) for the potluck. Wesley UMC and Oakhurst will provide the rest. We will elect officers, review the year, set pastoral compensation and consider a recommendation for an Administrative Support Team.

REMEMBRANCE HEALING SERVICE DECEMBER 6

The Christmas Season is a time of joyous celebration, but also a time of deep and often silent heartache for those who have lost loved ones, family members or friends.

The December 6, Tuesday Service of Healing Prayer and Communion at 7 pm in the Sanctuary will be a time to remember and lift up those we miss as we receive God's comfort and assurance. Join us in remembrance and appreciation for lives lived, love received, and grief shared.

THREE CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES SATURDAY, DECEMBER. 24

You have three opportunities to celebrate Jesus' birth this year:

4 p.m. at Academy Church with Rev. John Niblick.

6 p.m. for a Christmas Eve Celebration for the whole family at Memorial with a special time for children.

11 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight and Christmas Carol Communion. At each service candles will be lit at the close of worship.

POINSETTIAS, DECEMBER 11



If you wish to purchase a Poinsettia to be placed in the Sanctuary during the Christmas holidays, forms are available in the church office, or the Sunday insert.

CHRISTMAS SUNDAY CHURCH SCHOOL PROGRAM IN WORSHIP DEC. 18

Our Sunday School does such inspiring Christmas programs we asked them to do this year's on Christmas Sunday at the 10 a.m. morning service so more of the congregation can receive the gift they give us. Mark your calendar for this special day and plan on bringing a favorite Christmas goodie or snack for after the service.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING SUNDAY EVENING DECEMBER 11

Wear warm clothes, bring a flashlight and a goody to share and meet in the Fellowship Hall Sunday, Dec. 18 at 5:30 p.m. We will carol those in our congregation and community who can use some Christmas cheer. Afterwards, we'll warm up in the fellowship hall with hot cocoa and Christmas goodies. We need someone willing to come and make the hot chocolate. See Pastor Denice.

ADVENT WARM TREE BENEFITS THE FRESNO RESCUE MISSION

The beautiful season of Advent is upon us, full of anticipation and joy. For some people, this time of the year only serves to heighten their feelings of despair. Help us bring a ray of hope to the homeless folk served by the Fresno Rescue Mission by bringing a gift for our annual Advent Warm Tree. Items to comfort men, women, and children who are cold are always welcome: jackets, sweaters, scarves, hats, gloves, etc., new or gently used only please. Small toys, children's books, toiletry items, and devotional materials are nice also. Please bring your wrapped gift(s) with a tag that gives information that will help those who will be distributing them (size, etc.) to the church by Sunday, December 18th. For more information, see Sue DeFranco.

RENOVATION TEAM REPORT

Can You Hear Me Now?

We have great news on our audio-visual project. At the November meeting of the Church Extension Society, we were loaned \$12,000 which will be paid off with the note refinancing. We were also given a \$4,000 grant!! Now our campaign for funds is complete and we await the installation of the visual portion of the project with other renovations of the sanctuary. Ron Zastovnik has the details.

Gloria McClanahan

Benches in garden near fountain

By now, the new benches are installed in the fountain area. Dee Carr researched and found them and they are delightful. One is dedicated to Evalene Eckert with previously designated funds in the Gifts and Memorials Fund and \$200 has been contributed towards the second one. They are \$370 each plus installation of \$50. We hope our church family enjoys them when we "stop and take a break" in our busy lives. Gloria McClanahan

Please Step Up and Grab the Bat

At our recent conference with Tom Bandy we talked about "control freaks". I am beginning to get an uneasy feeling and rightfully so. I am chairman of Gifts and Memorial Funds, Renovation Task Force, and Fund Raising as well as offering a class in the "Equipping Church".

My passion is working on the Renovation and Design Task Force. We are in on the design phase now which simplified means planning. We will have "openings" for those who wish to serve in an advisory capacity at this stage and later we will have many "openings" for various tasks.

I really do not need to be chairman of Gifts and Memorials and Fund Raising. I open the door and invite companions like maybe you who care who can get in on these functions and help run them in capacities that reflect

your gifts and interests. We have a lot of talent and knowledge in this congregation. I am intentional that the new organization be enjoyable and enriching.

I don't want to burn out or have people think I'm controlling this action. Call me if you are interested in any of these areas. This is our church. We cannot just float in on Sunday and turn away until next Sunday. Our new organization will help keep us from boring meetings that are scheduled "just because". Our new church organization will simplify administrative functions so task forces may possibly operate on two or three workshops a year and proceed to get the job done instead of draggy old monthly meetings.

With much love and hope,
Gloria McClanahan

Congregational Life

*News of the church life and the groups that meet for fellowship and support.
"For where two or three are gathered in my name,
I am there among them." Matthew 18:30*

BOUTIQUE NEWS

Sales at the Boutique this year were \$5,500. There were 300 fewer quilt tickets sold. The contributions to the country Store were down considerably. The craft sales and lunch sales were comparable to the previous year. Kudos to Pat Frey and her crew. Lunch was marvelous.

Thank you to all who brought craft items and food. Thank you to all who pitched in and helped on the open days. Thank you to strong men, Max Cannon and Howard Vollman, for setting up the tables.

We have already started to work on Boutique 2006, and have plans for a bigger and better year.

The Boutique Group

WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB

The Women's Book Club will meet December 20th at 7 pm at Susan Lowrey's home. The book for December is and the Shofar Blew by Francine Rivers, a novel available in paperback.

THRIFT SHOP NEWS

The Thrift shop had a productive weekend on the 4th and 5th of November. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped make that happen. We are finding that we are getting a lot of old timers and some new customers. We think advertising with flyers on doors in the nearby neighborhood and on cars in parking lots has helped bring more people in. Perhaps you might like to come by and find a special treasure. We have lots of neat items in addition to some really nice clothing or knock around pants or shoes. Who knows, you might just find something you've been looking for. We really could use more help on our work days. If you have a spare hour or two and could sort, rearrange, dust, price or pull old merchandise, we can use you! Give Pat Frey or Margie Magargee a call or just come on in. The pay is lousy, but the benefits are great! We have lots of fun and many close friendships have been formed through volunteering.

Thanks for all the donations. If you are cleaning kitchen cabinets or anticipating new "stuff" for Christmas, bring the used "stuff". We can use any kind of kitchen item right now, but will take other "stuff" too. Again, thanks for thinking of us.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN'S NEWS

Board meeting, Dec. 5, 9 am, Library.
 Regular meeting, Dec. 13 – Christmas Tea, 2 to 4 pm. Installation of Officers.
 Red Bird Circle, Dec. 14, 9:30 am. Home of Margaret Nicholls, Clovis
 Wesley Circle, Dec. 7, 1 pm. Home of Evelyn Haulman.

UMM BREAKFAST MEETING

December 3, 2005

United Methodist Men will meet on December 3rd. We will be looking at the coming year and where we want to go with our ministry. We haven't decided on who is cooking yet but we're trying to either get Jon for a Mexican Breakfast or Howard for pancakes and sausage. Our presenter will be our pastor, Denice, who will address the streamlining of our church management with emphasis on small group formation. Open minds, open doors, and open hearts aren't

restricted to just Methodists so bring a friend and come and enjoy great fellowship.

Care Ministries

Giving Special Care to Others

SPECIAL FRIENDS

Many of the Special Friends regular members were out of town or ill for our meeting November 18th. However, 28 cards and notes, 18 phone visits and 12 home visits were reported.

With thanksgiving in mind, we reminded ourselves of the true riches with which each of us is blessed daily. We pray God's caring love will shine through as we reach out to others.

Administration & Stewardship

ATTENDANCE & FINANCE STATISTICS

October 2005

Attendance Total 656 (Weekly Average 131)
 Hmong Attendance Total 133 (Weekly Average 27)

Total Attendance 789
 Total Weekly Average Attendance 158
 Total offering \$20,836
 Needed for Budget \$22,595

Special Funds:

World Communion: \$291
 Boutique: \$6357.93
 Thanksgiving: \$470
 Fair Trade Coffee sales: \$342
 Heifer Project: \$197.67
 Family Camping Grant: \$1,000
 Multimedia funds: Contributions: \$27,279
 Hmong Dinner: \$601
 District Grant: \$4,000
 Additional loan: \$12,000
 Total funds for project: \$43,880
 Pledges: \$160,893.

Youth News

Coach's Corner

Saturday 12/03/05 8 am - 12 pm Poverello House Work Day
Sunday 12/04/05 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Lord of the Rings Study (Bungalow)
Sunday 12/11/05 Caroling with the Church Family (No Meeting)
Sunday 12/18/05 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. Lord of the Rings Study (Bungalow)
Sunday 12/25/05 NO MEETING - Merry Christmas!
Sunday 01/01/05 NO MEETING - Happy New Year!

"THE LORD OF THE RINGS" MOVIE STUDY

The youth group continues its study of the "Lord of the Rings" movie trilogy during its Sunday night meetings. We watch and discuss each of the movies (we're studying "The Two Towers" currently), searching for the message of Christ hidden in the adventures of Frodo, Samwise, Aragorn, Legolas, and the Ring. All youth grades 7-12 are welcome - Bring your friends! Because of the holidays and other fun events, we will meet only on Dec. 4 and Dec. 18 at 5:30 p.m. in the Bungalow (check the weekly bulletin for changes in the schedule.) See you there!

YOUTH WORK DAY AT POVERELLO HOUSE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 3

The first Saturday of every month, our youth group volunteers at Poverello House in downtown Fresno. We help serve breakfast, make sandwiches, repack snacks, and pack the 500+ lunches that Poverello House will distribute that day. The time spent together helping other people really brings us closer together, and it lets us get a clear picture of the needs of many families in the Valley. It's also a great way to log community service hours for school. All youth grades 7-12 are invited--bring your friends! We meet at the church on that first-of-the-month Saturday morning at 8 AM, leave at 8:15 AM promptly, and return by 12 PM. If you have any questions, please contact Youth Worker Connie Alfaro.

I love this time of year! The days grow short and chill. Snow tops the mountains. The stars are like sparkling diamonds. I always need to get out away from the city lights to see the stars in December. Seeing the stars helps me understand the enormity of what we are preparing to celebrate in the birth of Jesus. The idea of the God of the universe caring enough to come to us in a human child so we may truly know God is breathtaking!

Seeing the stars puts all of my puny human obsessions into focus and affirms all of my deep desires for a world of wholeness for all God's creatures. This is why God comes to us in Emmanuel: to bring us wholeness, to bring us hope, to bring us good news—Good News! For all people! That is the angel's message.

May it warm our hearts, encourage our sagging morale about the state of the world and help us to know nothing is impossible with God.

May our hearts prepare for this wonder during the season of Advent and be merry and full of joy through the Twelve Days of Christmas. Remember to get out four candles, one for each of the Sundays in Advent. Set them in a wreath and light one each Sunday as we look forward to Jesus coming. Then on Christmas Eve add a candle in the center, the "Christ Candle." Each time you light a candle offer this prayer: "Come, Lord Jesus into our hearts this Advent season that we may embody your love for all the world." Then sing a line of your favorite Christmas carol.

Jesus is coming!

Pastor Denice Leslie & Kham Dy Yang

THANK YOU NOTE

Wayne wishes to thank everyone for the many beautiful cards, calls, and prayers that went out for healing. His back is still bothering him, but seems to be getting better each day. Shirley also wishes to thank everyone for their prayers, phone calls and many cards during my recent surgery. It is a difficult time for us right now, but because of our church family we are doing well. They put in cadaver bone in at C3, 4, 5, and 6 with some kind of metal piece to start the healing process. Am in a neck brace and can't drive for 30 days. Have C2 that is also bad, but hoping that by repairing the others that it may not need to be done at a later date. Thank you for being there for us.

The Goldens