

# Good News!

The newsletter of the Memorial United Methodist Church of Clovis

December 2003

## **ADVENT DINNER BEGINS SEASON**

Have you signed up yet for the Advent Dinner set for this Saturday, Dec. 6 at 6 p.m.? Call the church office or sign up in the church Lobby. Signing up ensures a place for everyone at the festive tables decorated and hosted by individuals. Everyone brings a potluck dish to share for the meal which is followed by carol singing and fun for all!

## **JOIN THE JOURNEY OF MARY AND JOSEPH: LOS POSADAS!**

Bring the whole family! Continuing this Sunday evening Dec. 7 at 5:30 pm and for the next two Sunday evenings, December 14 and 21 we will journey with Mary and Joseph in search of shelter in the Mexican Christmas Tradition of "The Inns." Meet in the social hall and wear warm clothing as we will be walking a few blocks to each home. A time of refreshments and crafting follows each journey. An advent worship followed by a big Christmas Party will conclude our journey on Sunday evening Dec. 21. Our usual Sunday evening schedule will resume after Christmas.

## **A CAROLING WE WILL GO!**

Bring Christmas cheer to the residents of Sierra Villa Rest Home and Clovis Convalescent Home on Saturday Dec. 13 with Christmas carols. Meet in the social hall at 4:00 p.m., dress warmly and bring a finger food or goodies to share following. Caroling books provided. We will car pool to the nearby homes.

## **HISTORIC ACADEMY CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE Dec. 24 at 4 pm**

If you are looking for a more intimate Christmas Eve service at an hour that permits you to get home before it is too dark, join Pastor Laurence Hill at the historic Academy church located 15 minutes east on Hwy. 168. After Academy look for Madsen and turn left. The church is down the road on the right. Peg Bos will be at the organ.

## **PICTORAL DIRECTORY**

We are pleased to announce that scheduling for photos to be taken by Olin Mills Photography will begin Jan 2, 2004! The tentative dates are Jan 21 and Jan 28<sup>th</sup> from 3-9pm in the Sunday School Rooms. Please note that the directory photos are taken at no charge. If you would like to order photos for your family, there will be several options and prices available.

We are asking for you to make your appointments as soon as you know what is best for you, as time slots are limited. There will be additional information in the weekly bulletins and in the January Newsletter. If you have any questions, please contact Kayte Van De Mark.

Congregational Life . . . . .	page 3
Care Ministries . . . . .	page 3
Worship Ministry. . . . .	page 2
Christian Education . . . . .	page 5
Youth Group News. . . . .	page 6
Coach's Corner. . . . .	page 7

**FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING CHIMES  
PLAY CHRISTMAS SUNDAY Dec. 21**

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES  
AT MEMORIAL**

*Throughout all of our Christmas Eve services the Quiet Room, where worship may be heard and seen, will be open for parents with infants and toddlers who need a respite.*

**CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP FOR  
YOUNG CHILDREN Dec. 24 at 6 pm**

An interactive service celebrating the birth of Jesus for young children is scheduled for 6 pm Christmas Eve, Dec. 24 in the sanctuary. Children are invited to sit on the story quilts for this service with Pastor Denice. Wear casual clothes, pajamas are okay! Adults may sit in the pews or join us on the quilts. Blankies, teddy bears and special friends are welcome!

**CHANCEL CHOIR, "BIG" ORGAN,  
FLUTES RING IN CHRIST'S BIRTH  
Dec. 24 at 7:30 pm**

This service filled with the glorious music of Christmas featuring guest musicians Janette Erickson of the Fresno Philharmonic, Julie Constable of California State University Fresno, Musician and director Katherine Hunter with the Chancel Choir and a special time for children will conclude with our traditional singing of Silent Night and the lighting of candles.

**CHRISTMAS CAROL CANDLELIGHT  
COMMUNION AND SPECIAL MUSIC  
GRACE SERVICE Dec. 24 at 11 pm**

If you treasure the hushed, late night Christmas Eve tradition of communion, soloists and message this service is for you. The service concludes with the singing of Silent Night and the lighting of candles.

**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.



## Care Ministries

Giving Special Care to Others

### **2004 MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES**

If you feel the leading of the Holy Spirit to serve in these ministries speak with Pastor Denice or the person listed with the ministry.

1. Partners In Evangelism(PIE): This is our welcome ministry with worship visitors. PIE members rotate Sundays checking the attendance registration and green cards for guests and then making a door step call to deliver a sweet bread and packet of information about our congregation. Research shows that visitors who receive a call after worship are 80% more likely to return to worship. Leader: Max Cannon.

2. Family Ministry : Work with our Family Life Coordinator, Michelle Hernandez in meeting the needs of our young couples and families with young children. Leader: Michelle Hernandez.



### **HMONG LANGUAGE CHURCH SCHOOL AND WORSHIP EVERY SUNDAY**

Hmong Language Church School is scheduled every Sunday at 2:30 p.m. in the church school wing followed by worship at 3:30 p.m. in the church. Refreshments and a time of fellowship follows the service. For more information speak with Hmong Language Associate Pastor Kham Dy Yang at 299-4615.

### **THURSDAY POTLUCK, PRAYER AND HOTENANY A WELL-KEPT SECRET!**

But the secret is getting out! If you enjoy great potluck fare (in abundance!), fellowship and prayer, join us every Thursday evening at 6:30 p.m. in the social hall. Judy Gross brings her keyboard and plays old gospel tunes for us and we conclude the evening with prayer for our community and our world. Table settings provided so just drop by the deli or store or make up a dish and come for a heartwarming time.

Until Christmas Pastor Denice will provide cookie dough and cookie cutters for kids (and kids at heart) in the kitchen to roll, cut, decorate and bake for dessert.

### **JOY IN THE MORNING Dec. 28**

Our monthly Sunday morning all church potluck, Joy in the Morning is held after worship in the social hall. Bring something to share. Beverage and place settings provided. Good food! Good fellowship!

### **CAN'T GET ENOUGH CAROL SINGING?**

Every Sunday in Advent our gathering songs in worship will be Advent and Christmas Carols.

### **YOUNG MARRIEDS FELLOWSHIP GROUP COMING**

Young married couples please mark your calendar for Wednesday evening, January 7 at 7:00 p.m. in the social hall. If only one of you has that date free please come. Childcare provided. The purpose of the evening will be to get acquainted and consider your needs here at church. A letter is going out. If you know of a couple you want included please call the church office at 299-4615.

## **THRIFT SHOP NEWS** by Bev Daly

We did \$900 at the November opening. We contributed \$2000 to apportionment in October. We are grateful to those who came forward to help us temporarily. We still need more help. Anne Iseli is still recovering from hip surgery, and Sharee Woxell is facing shoulder surgery. Our next work day is Dec 2. Our next open days are Dec 5 & 6. Our board meets Dec 12. December work days are not yet scheduled. We open again Jan. 2 & 3, with store-wide 1/2 price sale. Come and find a bargain.

## **UMW NEWS**

Board Meeting – December 16, 2-4 pm, in the Social Hall. Christmas Tea. Installation of Officers. Guest – Janet Maliksi.

Red Bird Circle – December 10 at 9:30 am.  
Margaret Nicholl's home

Wesley Circle – December 18 at 2 pm,  
Christmas Party, Mary Lou Hall's home

## **SPIRITUAL GROWTH GROUP OPEN TO NEW PARTICIPANTS**

The Witness Spiritual Life Small Group invites you to join them for their new group study, "Attitude Is Your Paint Brush," beginning Sunday evening, January 4 at Janette Erickson's home (call office for address). If you are interested or would like more information, speak with Janette or Laurie Hill. The group is planning a Potluck Party between Christmas and New Year's. Everyone interested is welcome. Watch bulletin for Party date, or speak to Laurie Hill.

## **SCRAPBOOKING NIGHT**

Get out your pictures and share some memories. Join the scrapbooking group on the third Friday of the month in the Fellowship Hall. The fun starts at 6:00 and child care is provided.



This year's Christmas Offering will go to THE BISHOPS INITIATIVE ON CHILDREN AND POVERTY. The funds will be used to help reshape the church's response to the crisis among children and the impoverished, aid the church in responding to the crisis, and proclaim the gospel of God's redeeming reconciling and transforming grace in Jesus Christ. It is also hoped that each church will become A CHURCH FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN which means we will become a "child-friendly and hospitable church." In the words of the Bishops statement: "The Initiative is communicating and living the gospel of Jesus Christ with all children and intentionally reaching out to the impoverished as recipients means of God's grace."

## **ANNUAL CHARGE CONFERENCE MEETING DECEMBER 8**

Our annual meeting will be held Monday evening, December 8, at 7 p.m. in the Sanctuary. We will approved nominations, our appointed pastors compensation packages and hear other reports. Our District Superintendent Vickie Armor-Healy will be present. Please call the church if you need transportation.

## TOM BANDY WORKSHOP

The District-wide workshop featuring Tom Bandy was an overwhelming success. There were initially 156 signed up so we set up for 175. The final count was well over 200. Although the presentation by Tom was well received, there were areas of concern raised by participants. If you weren't there, it might be difficult to understand but I'll attempt to simplify it. Tom spoke to the necessity of embedding a new methodology that would change the way in which members recognized, approached, and implemented ministries they might feel called to. Another area had to do with committees.

Since I had the task of chauffeuring Tom while he was here, I was afforded the unique opportunity to question him, at some length, regarding these concerns. It appears these are areas that consistently need further addressing. Whenever he is asked to return to put on another workshop, these are the ones most requested. Part of the confusion was due to the condensed nature of the presentation. This discouraged in-depth discussions although I personally thought Tom's responses to questions pertaining to these areas made it clear for me.

The methodology he was advocating was one in which ministries were generated and implemented at the lay level by individuals or groups and not directed by clergy or committees. In order to insure integrity and accountability, a lengthy process of instructing and equipping is required. This process can take up to a year or more and, as Tom stated in one of his examples, in some cases, it might never happen. Once in place, the process becomes an integral part of the assimilation of new members. Members then have a full understanding of the guidelines and structure in which they are required to operate in any ministry they should choose to accept as their calling.

As for the committees, some thought he was advocating the death of all committees. In

reality, he was offering a change in the way we identify the need for a committee and the way in which it is staffed. In simplest form, only those who saw it as a calling would be involved. Committees would function as teams who actually do ministry rather than supervise or manage ministry. There would be no nominations and/or coercion. If a committee didn't get a sufficient response, then it would be allowed to die. This same criterion would be applied to any ministries that were having difficulty staying afloat. Part of the apprehension this caused may have come from our current experiences. We know how painful and difficult it can be to find people willing to become involved whether it be administrative committees or ministries.

However, we need to revisit the very essence of the process he's advocating. The embedding of a new sense of why we are followers of Christ and how that is reflected in the way we conduct our lives not only in the church but also in the community. Only when there has been an awakening of, and a rededication to, our evangelical responsibilities as Christians will the concepts that were offered at the workshop have any possibility of success.

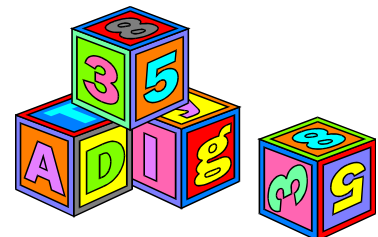
*Max S. Cannon*

### 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."*

#### CHILD CARE NEEDED?

If you need childcare for any meeting, event or program, please contact our Childcare Coordinator and Supervisor, Dorrie Osback. Please give at least a week advance notice.



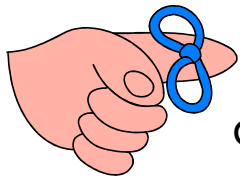


# Sunday School

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

Our Sunday School starts at 8:45 with music then we go to out classes and learn different things about the Bible.

## Youth Group News



### DECEMBER YOUTH CALENDAR

- Saturday 12/06/03 8 am - 11 am Youth Poverello House Work Day
- Sunday 12/07/03 5:30 - 7:30 pm "Las Posadas" Advent Event
- Sunday 12/13/03 1:00 - 3:30 pm Christmas Shopping Trip
- Sunday 12/14/03 5:30 - 7:30 pm "Las Posadas" Advent Event
- Sunday 12/21/03 5:30 - 7:30 pm "Las Posadas" Advent Service
- Sunday 12/28/03 No Youth Group Meeting

### TAKE A TRIP!

You are invited to take a trip every Sunday night during Advent, back to Bethlehem the night Jesus was born. Instead of our regular Sunday night meetings, the youth group will participate in the all-church "Las Posadas" Advent Event. "Las Posadas" is a Mexican tradition that happens the week before Christmas, during which Mary and Joseph search the town for a place to stay. They are rejected at home after home, until someone finally recognizes who they are and welcomes them in with songs, prayer, good food, and a piñata.

Starting November 30 and ending December 21, we will join our church family each Sunday at 5:30 pm, and walk with Mary and Joseph on their journey for shelter. See you then!

### IT'S SANTA TIME!

Our youth group has once again been asked to play "Santa" for three families with children attending our neighborhood elementary school, Sierra Vista (Pollasky & Barstow). On Saturday, December 13, we will meet at KMart on Shaw (across from Sierra Vista Mall) at 1 pm. Please bring \$5.00 (or more!) to contribute to the gifts. We will finish up at Starbuck's across the street for hot cocoa, etc., before we end the fun at 3:30 pm. Permission slips will be available in the youth newsletter and in the church narthex. Any questions, please contact Youth Worker Connie Alfaro.

# Coach's Corner

Christmas time is such a special time of the year! Spiritually it is time for us to reflect on God choosing to come to us in another person like ourselves! We call this amazing wonder the Incarnation. Incarnation means "becoming flesh."

Jesus made God real for us in his flesh and blood. And now it is our turn. We are called to make Jesus real for the world through our lives of service as his disciples. We are called to put flesh on his body by each of us being a part of his church, his body alive in the world today.

Bodies have many parts and as scripture teaches us, "no one part of the body is of greater or lesser importance than any other part. Every part is made by God for a special purpose. You are made for a special purpose.

The Spirit plants within each of us a call to use our spiritual gifts for ministry. We use these God given gifts in the ministry God calls us to. We discover our call to ministry by being attentive to our heartbursts, those feelings of passionate longing, deep desire or strong conviction that call out to us.

When we listen and answer we do God's will.

On Sunday, November 16 in my sermon on the Priesthood of All Believers: HEARTBURSTS! Four people shared how their heartfelt passion has led them to be in ministry. Unable to share due to the overwhelming feeling of the moment, Jean Hill later told me her Heartburst for mission first came to her in high school. She knew she wanted to be a teacher and she wanted to serve on an American Indian Reservation. Because her teacher credential program encouraged students to try out teaching a particular grade level prior to receiving the credential, Jean went to work and -- you guessed it! Met Laurie -- her husband! Her call to mission took a different road through service in the church and the United Methodist Women.

When I shared Jean's story with Diane Zastovnik, guess what! Yes, Diane shared with me her heartburst for mission came to her as a young college student: to serve American Indians through the VISTA program. She had completed the 33-page application when along came Ron and she too has served in mission through her local church-- today with the Hmong community!

Listen to your HEARTBURSTS! They are the heartbeat of Jesus in you!

Merry Christmas to everyone and may the New Year be full of unforeseen possibilities, the living out of dreams and new opportunities!

In hope and faith,  
Pastor Denice Leslie



## A LETTER FROM PASTOR KNUDSON

To the members of my church family:

Eleanor and I blew our entertainment budget to see and hear Andrea Bocelli. I could write paragraphs about his magnificent voice, the beautiful tones of Maria Martinez, and the glorious accompaniment of the Fresno Philharmonic. However, the news media have already done that. The setting was reasonably comfortable – I didn't think I could sit still for two hours, but I did. From any place in the arena, one could see clearly (though distantly) what was happening on stage.

Most of all, I marveled at the sound system. The music was clear, static free, with full range of tone and volume. It surrounded and enveloped the audience and literally took possession of one's soul. Somewhere, a camera caught the images of the performers (including flautist Janette Erickson, a member of our church) and projected them on a screen at the rear of the stage. I noted that no performer had to turn on his or her microphone, not did anyone on the stage have to ask, "Am I coming through." Everything in the sound system seemed to function perfectly.

A few days later, I attended worship in my church. We are bedeviled by a sound system straight out of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, microphones that are not always reliable, a projection system that works, thanks to those who operate it, but with drawbacks.

The point I would make is that people, especially of younger generations, are used to going to events that employ top-grade, state-of-the-art equipment. Coming to church, they note the contrast and wonder if maybe the message we preach and the values we profess are as antiquated as the equipment we use to put them across. I have no wish to see the worship of God become an entertainment event. Our church is not competing with Save mart Arena. I would not want to replace our choir with a chorus of Italian tenors nor our organ and organist with the Fresno Philharmonic and its conductor. But surely, what's good enough for Bocelli and Elton John out to be good enough for God.

I appreciate our sound technicians and projectionists, who do well with the equipment they have. I would simply like to see the tolls bought, paid for, installed, and put in their hands, in order to make God's message come through loud and clear. Surely, in our effort to make the bread of life available God deserves the best we can offer.

Sincerely,  
Newell Knudson

