

December 3, 2008

GRAND AVENEWS

Staff

George E. Rook
Pastor

Chuck Law
Director of
Music Ministries

Austin Hayes
Director of Children,
Twens & Youth Ministries

Wanda Mayfield
Organist

Heather Sanders
Secretary

Sunday Schedule

9:00am
Sunday School*

9:45am
Fellowship

10:00am
Worship

*Child Care Provided

Contact Us

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Sympathy is extended to Betty Grabbe on the death of her mother, Elizabeth Allison. Elizabeth died Saturday, November 22 in Fayetteville and was buried Monday, November 24 in Plummerville, Arkansas. Cards may be mailed to Betty at 104 West Lakeview Drive, Springdale, AR 72764.

Grand Avenue welcomes Anna Bates as our newest member. Anna joined by transfer from another denomination on November 30.

Welcome!

Because of your generosity, \$820 was collected for "Nothing But Nets," which will buy 82 mosquito nets for families in sub-Saharan Africa to keep them protected up to four years.

\$80 was collected for College Care Packages and \$40 was collected for the UM Student Day offering. Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who helped with the Cluster Charge Conference at Grand Avenue on November 23!



The 52nd Annual Stuttgart Christmas Parade sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce is Tuesday, December 9 at 7pm. The 2008 theme is "Christmas Around the World." Anyone able to help build the Christmas Float is encouraged to meet at Jacobs Company, 9:30am on Saturday Morning. Contact Agnes Jackson for more information.

Urgent: Currently we have no full time nursery attendants. Please . . . please encourage individuals to submit their resumes to the Church Office. . . quickly. Thank you!

Rehearsals for the Youth Christmas Pageant are at 4:30pm (Bells 5pm). Recording are available from Mr. Chuck Law at the Church Office.

A Gentle Reminder: If you unlock doors, turn on lights, open the coke machine and adjust thermostats, PLEASE be sure to LOCK the doors when you leave, TURN OFF the lights, CLOSE the coke machine and RETURN the thermostats to their original setting. If you are the last member of a group leaving the church and you notice lights left on, etc..., PLEASE take care of these things for your group. THANK YOU!

METHODIST FAMILY HEALTH / METHODIST CHILDREN'S HOME
CHRISTMAS SPECIAL OFFERING 2008
DECEMBER 7 AND DECEMBER 14

Many years ago at the Methodist Children's Home, families would bring a child into their home for a week during Christmas. They would share meals with this child, their kids would play with this child and presents were bought for this child.

We are no longer able to "take children into our homes" as we used to, but you can still help them out by taking them into your heart by making a gift to the Methodist Children's Home through Methodist Family Health. These 300 children are being cared for on a daily basis as part of our family and an additional 500 are cared for through our outpatient and school-based programs. At Methodist Family Health, we ensure these children are cared for entirely: mind, body and spirit.

This program is an extra special ministry of the Arkansas Conference and is heavily dependent on the annual Christmas Special Offering. Since the Methodist Children's Home does not receive income from apportionments, this is the time that United Methodists are asked to support this wonderful work with our precious children.

Instead of making your check to Grand Avenue, please make your check to "UNITED METHODIST CHILDREN'S HOME". Thank you!

A PRAYER FOR THE CURRENT FINANCIAL SITUATION

Lord God, we live in disturbing days:

Across the world,
prices rise,
debts increase,
banks collapse,
jobs are taken away,
and fragile security is under threat.

Loving God, meet us in our fear and hear our prayers:
be a tower of strength amidst the shifting sands,
and a light in the darkness;
help us receive your gift of peace,
and fix our hearts where true joys are to be found,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Church of England - 2008 - via "The Evangelist" St. Marks
Episcopal Cathedral in Shreveport, Louisiana

KIDZ KAMP USA

Kidz Kamp USA is a camp that will be held at Bear Creek Camp for 4th-6th graders in the Lower Delta of Arkansas who have never been to camp. These children are children who come from economically deprived situations. There is no cost to the families for the camp.

The dates of the camp are May 31 to June 5th and we are in need of 20-25 camp counselors that are 19 years old and older. The camp will have a study program, worship, fellowship and arts & crafts.

If you would like to help or have questions please contact Rev. David Moore at Hamburg First UMC. You may call him at the church (870) 853-5417, email d_amoore@hotmail.com, or by snail mail at First United Methodist Church 202 S. Main St. Hamburg, AR 71646

**YOUTH FUNDRAISER
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6**

The youth will be raking leaves and cleaning up yards for those who wish to sign up. There will not be a charge for this but free-will offerings will be taken. The money raised will go into a fund for a future mission trip. Please sign up with the Church Office and support the youth as they prepare for future missions!

YEAR END GIFTS TO GRAND AVENUE

A number of our families make special year end gifts to Grand Avenue. These financial gifts are deeply appreciated! Please be sure your gift is postmarked or presented to the Church before January 1. To avoid the giver or Church having any trouble with the IRS, it will be helpful for all gifts reported in 2008 to be mailed or given before midnight on Wednesday, December 31 (remember the Church Office is closed on December 31). Thank you for your continuing generosity!

Advent II - December 7
Morning Worship 10am
Holy Communion



Advent III - December 14
Morning Worship 10am
Christmas Cantata



Grand Prairie Christmas Candlelight Musicale
3pm - First Christian Church

Advent IV - December 21
Morning Worship 10am



Children's Christmas Pageant 6pm in the
Sanctuary with a reception following in the FH.

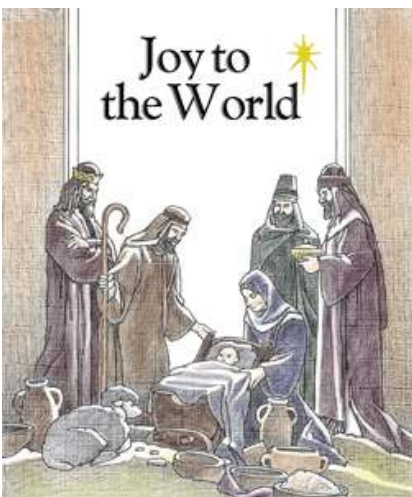
Christmas Eve - December 24
Candlelight Communion 6:30pm



The Stuttgart Christmas Parade will be Tuesday,
December 9 at 7pm.

The Church wide caroling party sponsored by the Pathfinders
Sunday School Class is Monday, December 22. The carolers
will leave the church parking lot at 6pm. The after caroling
party will be at the home of Pat and Wanda Mayfield, 2103
McCracken.

**THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED DECEMBER 24-26, 31
AND JANUARY 1.**



Advent Devotional Booklets
(regular and large print) are avail-
able in the Narthex and from the
table at the side entrance of the
sanctuary.



The November/December issue of
"The Upper Room" contains an order
of worship for home advent wreaths.
The service is printed on pages 40-
42. Copies of this publication are free
of charge and are currently available
in the sanctuary narthex, in the rack
on the back wall of the sanctuary and
in the publication rack near the side
entrance of the sanctuary.

2009 Officer Sheets are available on the table at the side en-
trance of the sanctuary. Thank you to everyone who faithfully
served in a church office during 2008 and thank you to everyone
who has volunteered or been recruited to serve in 2009!

If you have not returned your Estimate of Giving Card, you may
do so by placing it in the collection plates or by returning it to the
Church Office. A replacement form can be found on the back of
this issue of the newsletter as well. Thank you to everyone who
has responded to this important program that provides financial
support for the ministries and needs of our congregation and the
larger church!

I CORINTHIANS 13: THE CHRISTMAS VERSION

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows,
Strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls,
But do not show love to my family,
I am just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen,
Baking dozens of Christmas cookies,
Preparing gourmet meals
And arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime,
But do not show love to my family,
I am just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen,
Carol in the nursing home
And give all that I have to charity,
But do not show love to my family,
It profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels
And crocheted snowflakes,
Attend a myriad of holiday parties
And sing in the choir's cantata,
But do not focus on Christ,
I have missed the point.

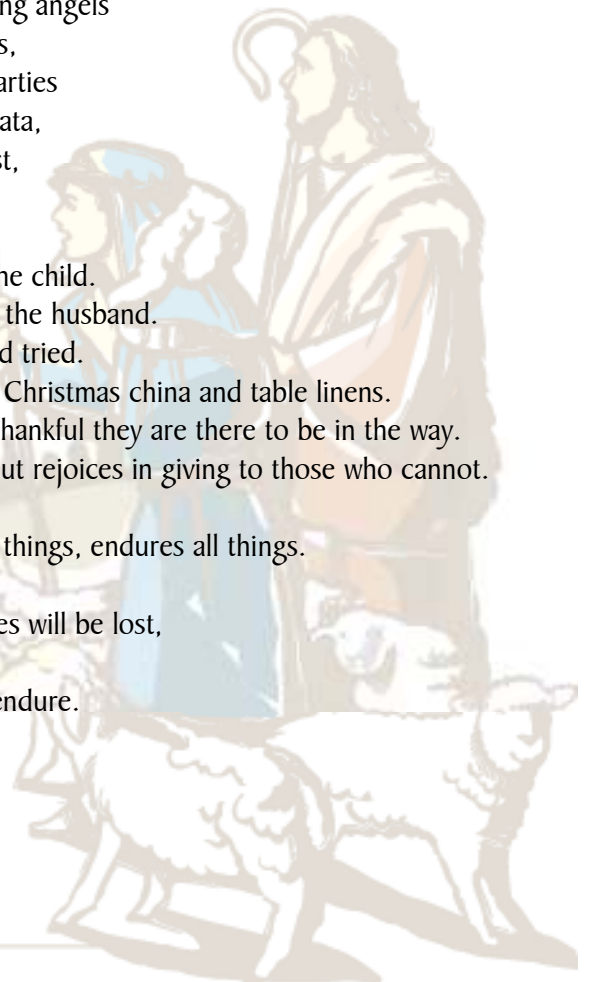
Love stops the cooking to hug the child.
Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband.
Love is kind, though harried and tried.

Love does not envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.
Love does not yell at the children to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way.
Love does not give only to those who are able to give in return, but rejoices in giving to those who cannot.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
Love never fails.

Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost,
Golf clubs will rust.
But giving the gift of love will endure.

--Source Unknown



FROM THE PASTOR

There was an interesting exchange of letters in our local newspaper back in early November. An anonymous letter to the Editor torpedoed the Stuttgart High School Booster Club (I didn't realize anonymous letters to the Editor would even be published). I was very impressed with one paragraph in the rebuttle letter provided by Babe Free, who is secretary of the SHS Booster Club. This paragraph says:

Finally, I would tell you, anonymous writer, that if you see a problem, become part of the solution. If you believe the SHS Booster is part of what you view as a "problem," become an active, vocal member. I challenge you, anonymous writer, to create change by becoming part of the solution. It's what our newly elected President would encourage. Change is good. Create that change from within, not by hiding behind an anonymous letter.

There are several phrases I would like to highlight from this paragraph: 1). "If you see a problem, become part of the solution,"; 2). "create change by becoming part of the solution,"; 3). "Create that change from within, not by hiding behind an anonymous letter." There are times when these very words need to be courageously and kindly spoken in the church because, sad to say, there are those individuals who make anonymous attacks on their local congregation while refusing to graciously work with others in their church family to identify and strive for change or improvements through their Administrative Council and established Work Areas. In fact, there are anonymous criticisms in the church that come from expressions of passive aggression or from the "games" identified by Transactional Analysis as "Chase Me" or "Now I've Got You...". TA admonishes the way to stop such "games" is by simply refusing to play; however, if you should choose to play, you are actually assuming the role known as "Kick Me" and need to be aware of what you are doing. (By the way, "Chase Me" complements passive aggression very well so that a person can be passive aggressive and play "Chase Me" at the same time).

Now regarding the Church, what would I say as a Pastor? I would turn to passages where Christians are urged: to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven (us)" (Eph. 4:32); "to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle and to show every courtesy to everyone" (Titus 3:2); "to encourage one another and build one another up" (1 Thess. 5:12); "to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near (Heb. 10:24, 25).

Stephen Miller, author of *Conversation: A History of a Declining Art*, believes Americans are losing their ability to converse. In an interview with "Our Sunday Visitor" published on November 30 of this year, Mr. Miller was quoted as saying: "People screaming at each other and calling each other names is not conversation; there's no politeness, no listening, or give and take...Some of that comes from the idea that we should be natural and express ourselves freely in conversation; I don't think there's anything good about being natural. Natural usually means rude. As human beings, we're often irritable, impatient and annoyed. We have to work at being polite."

So, where am I headed with all of this? I think we should open ourselves to being changed by Jesus as part of our Christmas preparations. In fact, I think we should pray the Prayer of St. Francis found at number 481 in the hymnal while turning to Paul and taking these words to heart: "If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:1-5)

~George E. Rook

MEMORIALS

In memory of Elizabeth Allison
given by
Pastor George E. Rook

In memory of Louise Nadine Modisette
given by
Patricia Jane Ferguson

In memory of Catherine Linton
given by
Wanda Phelps

In memory of Floyd Voumard
As a gift to the Sanctuary Remodeling Fund
given by Fredda Voumard

In memory of Loretta Cox
given by
Patricia Jane Ferguson

In memory of Lila Bormann
given by
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Scafidel

In memory of Marci R. Newton Berry
given by
Patricia Jane Ferguson

In memory of Audrey Helms
given by
Patricia Jane Ferguson

In memory of Margaret Barker
given by
Mrs. Phyllis R. Orlicek

GROUPS & GATHERINGS

YOUTH: The United Methodist Youth (grades 7-12) meets each Sunday at 6pm to 7pm in the second floor Youth Wing. (contact Austin Hayes 673-6317).

TWEENS: The "Tweens" group (grades 5-6) meets in their room on the 3rd floor, every Sunday at 6pm. (contact Lainie Hoskyn at 659-0089).

CHILDREN'S HANDBELLS: Grades 5-7 meet in the choir room every Sunday at 5pm. (Chuck Law 673-6317)

HANDS FOR HIM: Wednesday Music Program for Children: Grades K-6 meet at 4:30pm and Pre-K will meet at 5pm. Contact Chuck Law (673-6317) or Lainie Hoskyn (659-0089).

THE 3rd WEDNESDAY: Adults \$3 - Children \$2 - Seniors \$2 - Fun, food & fellowship every third Wednesday. Program starts at 5:30pm in the Fellowship Hall. RSVP - 673-6317

HANDBELL CHOIR: Meets every Wednesday at 6pm. (Chuck Law 673-6317).

ADULT CHOIR: Meets every Wednesday at 7pm. (Chuck Law 673-6317).

EXERSICE: Meets every Tuesday at 9:30am in the FH; and every Thursday at 10am in the FH.

Other groups meet weekly and/or monthly. Please check the calendar for meeting times and dates.

PRAYER LIST

Velma Patterson; Clio Clary; Aldora Roth; Mary Louise Hartz; Clarence South; Claudia Roebbeke; Louie McKissack; Vivian Howie; Stan Wilson; Hazel Riley; John Jackson; Joe Painter; Patsy Coose; Ray Holsted; Beth Ragan Adams; Shelby Churchwell; Tim Walton; Stacey Fink; Harriet Boyd; Janita Hoskyn; Eleanor Suttle; Sherley Black; In Iraq—Brian Reynolds & Daniel White; The family of Elizabeth Allison (especially for Betty Grabbe); The family of Steve Tranna; Cathie Jones; Sylvia Mills; Pete Shirkey; All our sick and shut-in; President George Bush; President-Elect Barack Obama; Congress and our Leaders; The Leaders of our Allies; Members of the US, UK and Coalition Armed Forces and their Families; The families of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

