

# The Parish Visitor

## December, 2014



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### O COME, O COME EMMANUEL

By Rev. Mark

November 30th is an important day in the Christian year- the beginning of Advent. Advent (from the Latin words *advenire*- "to come to" and *adventus* - "to arrive") is the period of hopeful waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. It begins on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday before Christmas (the Sunday nearest November 30), and ends on Christmas Eve. The primary color of Advent is purple- the color of repentance and fasting as well as the color of royalty. Advent is an opportunity for Christians everywhere to consider the wonder and awe of our Creator choosing to come into the world as a helpless child- a child who would save us.

What will Christmas be for you this year? I pray that you are able to make positive, lasting memories with loved ones. I pray that you are filled with the joy of the season. But most of all, I pray that you will encounter Jesus Christ in a way you have yet to experience. We read the Hallmark greeting cards that say "Jesus is the reason for the season", and we nod, smile, and go on about our day. But, despite their knack for syrupy language, the greeting card industry got this one right. Jesus IS the reason for the season.

Rampant consumerism doesn't bring us any closer to God; focusing on the coming of the Messiah in Bethlehem does. The reason Jesus came into the world ("Word made flesh") was to reveal God's grace. Have you experienced that grace this season? This month, come to church- Sunday morning, Sunday evening, Christmas Eve- and experience the reason for Christmas. May God bless you and those dear to you this Advent season!

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### JANUARY- A SEASON OF PRAYER AND FASTING

A great thing will happen in January! On Sunday, January 4<sup>th</sup>, the sermon focus will be on the power of prayer and fasting. We will talk about what fasting IS and "bust some of the myths" of what fasting ISN'T. Then we will begin a 2-week period of prayer and fasting. Everybody in the church will be encouraged to participate as God leads you.

That time of prayer and fasting will be brought to a close in a powerful way. From 5PM, Friday January 16<sup>th</sup> through 5PM Saturday, January 17<sup>th</sup>, we will host our 3rd annual 24-Hour Prayer Vigil. You will be given the opportunity to sign up to lead and/or attend one or more hours of prayer. The hours will rotate back and forth between the sanctuary and the chapel. Communion will be available each hour.

Then, on Sunday, January 18<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate Dedication Sunday. Late this month, each household will receive a packet about committing our time, talent and tithes to God. And on Dedication Sunday, at all three services, we will all have the opportunity to bring our Dedication Card to the front and place it on the altar. Please keep this powerful and important time in the life of our congregation in your prayers!

#### SPECIAL DATES:

- December 1 Finance Meeting 6PM
- December 1 Trustees Meeting 7PM
- December 3 Caring Hearts Food Prep 9AM
- December 4 UMW Executive Meeting 4:15PM
- December 5 Electric Light Parade & Live Nativity 5:30PM
- December 7 Communion & Food Pantry Collection Sunday
- December 7 Children's Christmas Program 10:15AM
- December 9 Miriam Circle 6PM
- December 14 Chancel Choir Cantata, 8AM, 10:15AM, 6PM
- December 14 UM Men Soup Luncheon 11:30AM
- December 15 UMM Meeting 6PM
- December 17 Caring Hearts Food Prep 1PM
- December 18 Naomi Wesleyan Circle 11:30AM
- December 21 All-Church Caroling 2PM
- December 21 Administrative Council 7:15PM
- December 24 Office Closed
- December 24 Christmas Eve Services 7 & 11PM
- December 25 Merry Christmas! Office Closed
- December 31 Office Closed

## CURRENT SERMON SERIES

by Rev. Mark

On Sunday, November 30, we began our Sunday morning Advent sermon series- The IMDb Cast of Characters. Taking a page from the website IMDb, which provides information about actors and movies, we will look at some of the “featured players” in the Christmas story- their “past roles”, how they got where they are and what lies ahead for them. The weeks of the series look like this:

- **Sunday, November 30- “No Room!”** (Luke 2:6-7)  
Vinnie Innkeeper is cast as “the bad guy”.
- **Sunday, December 7 (8AM only, Children’s Christmas Pageant at 10:15AM)**  
**“No Room?”** (Matthew 1:18-25)  
Joseph A. Carpenter takes on the most challenging role of his career.
- **Sunday, December 21- “No Room.”** (Luke 2:8-18)  
T. Smelly Shepherd and his buddies are cast as extras but steal the scene.



Our evening Advent sermon series is Christmas By the Numbers. There are LOTS of numbers associated with the Christmas season- we will “unpack” a couple of them to see what is underneath! The weeks of the series look like this:

- **Sunday, November 30-** The Hanging of the Greens
- **Sunday, December 7- 25** (Luke 2:1-3)  
Why is Christmas celebrated on December 25th?
- **Sunday, December 14-** Choir Christmas Cantata
- **Sunday, December 21- 12** (Luke 2:4-5)  
Why ARE there 12 Days of Christmas?

Join me as often as you can as we prepare our hearts and minds for the power, majesty and mystery of Christmas!

A HUGE thank you to all who prepared food, donated money, made items, provided Nativities, set up or cleaned up areas and served at the Follow the Star Holiday Bazaar. We connected others to Jesus Christ while bringing in monies for local missions! A complete summary of the Bazaar activities will be reported in the January Parish Visitor.

*Nicole and Ruth*



### Special Observances in December

Bet you didn’t know that December is Hi Neighbor Month! What about Read a New Book Month? Safe Toy Month? Write to a Friend Month? Bingo Month? In addition, here are some special days in December: The 1st- Eat a Red Apple Day, the 2nd- National Fritters Day, the 3rd- Roof over Your Head Day, the 4th- Wear Brown Shoes Day, the 5th- Bathtub Party Day, the 6th- Put on your own Shoes Day, the 7th- Pearl Harbor Day, the 8th- Brownie Day, the 9th- Pastry Day, the 10th- Human Rights Day, the 11th- Noodle Ring Day, the 12th- Ding-a-Ling Day, the 13th- Violin Day, the 14th- Bouillabaisse Day, the 15th- Lemon Cupcake Day, the 16th- Go Caroling Day (see accompanying article), the 17th- Maple Syrup Day, the 18th- Bake Cookies Day, the 19th- Look for an Evergreen Day, the 20th- Chocolate Covered Anything Day, the 21st- Look on the Bright Side Day, the 22nd- Date Nut Bread Day, the 23rd- Festivus (for the rest of us!) Day, the 24th- Egg Nog Day, the 25th- The Birthday of Christ, the 26th- Boxing Day, the 27th- Make Cut-Out Snowflakes Day, the 28th- Card Playing Day, the 29th- Pepper Pot Day, the 30st- National Bicarbonate of Soda Day, the 31st- New Year's Eve (see accompanying article).

## WEDNESDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER

Wednesday Night Fellowship has had a WONDERFUL “semester”. Over the Wednesday evenings this fall, we have averaged around 90-100 people a week at dinner! That is amazing! And the food has been great! Our new Children’s Ministry- FUEL- has gone well. Both the Youth and Adult Bible Studies have been well received and well attended. The Bell Choir and Chancel Choir both continue to fill the building with beautiful music on Wednesday evenings as they practice.

There will be a special “Holiday Schedule” for Wednesday Night Fellowship during December. It will be offered on Wednesday the 3rd, Wednesday the 10th and Wednesday the 17th. We will then take a few weeks off for Christmas. Regular Wednesday Night programming will start back up on Wednesday, January 7th. Don’t forget- the evening begins with dinner at 5:15PM, with **FUEL-** for kids Pre-School through 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, Youth Bible study for grades 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> and Adult Bible Study all beginning at 6PM. The nursery is also available.



## WOMEN OF FAITH 2014

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.” James 1:22. This Scripture sums up our church’s goal- “We exist to connect people with Jesus Christ”. We are a church that is willing to step out in faith to make this connection. Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.” Luke 18:27. Thank you, Church!

In hindsight, because of our internet service, a successful simulcast should have been impossible. We thank God that it was all about HIM and sharing HIS word of revival to others that made it a success. We truly thank everyone who stepped out of their comfort zone and prayed and planned, keeping the faith that this was truly a call on hearts to share God’s message in a way that had helped them connect to Jesus Christ in a special way. And connecting others was accomplished! Thank you Women of Faith Team!

When this event was taken to our Council for approval, one of the main concerns, after the internet service, was the timing of this event. Our church is involved in many ministries and one of the biggest of the year is our Christmas Bazaar. We did not want to distract from its success. There are only so many hands to work and prepare for this huge event and to become a burden of sorts was not an option.

God gave us the vision to bring His Body together in prayer to cover the simulcast. Not only were women of our church connected, but asking others from the Body of Christ to be in prayer for this event strengthens us all! The unstoppable prayer kept our eyes on Jesus and brought Him Glory with the strengthened hearts and spirits of all that attended. We saw first-hand: “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6.

When we had NO internet coming into the church, Doug Huston used his cell phone to bring in the simulcast! “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.” James 1:5. Thank you Doug, we praise Jesus for your seeking of wisdom.

At the end of the simulcast, we also opened the altar for prayer and many came seeking His face, His mercy and His grace. Comments from guests were overwhelmingly gracious, loving and kind. There was praise for our church opening the doors to all for this event, thanks for knowing that the Holy Spirit was moving throughout the simulcast, and thanks for the hospitality of our church (men and women) that was shown to all. Also, many stated they hoped they would be invited back for the next Women of Faith event.

The team would like to say “Thank you” to all the men who came along side. They served in many ways, from giving directions in the parking lot to opening doors, serving lunch and handling the technology, truly showing themselves as men of God. Like Rev. Mark’s sermons about the redwoods, we are all intertwined together to make our mission possible: “We exist to connect people with Jesus Christ”. God Bless our mission & thank you to all!

## NURSING HOME CHRISTMAS GIFTS

Every year the Churches of Mercer County unite to donate small gifts to the residents of Aledo's two nursing homes. They try to give each resident at least one gift. This year is no exception.

I received notice from "Church Women United" that the following items would be greatly appreciated:

- Lap Blankets
- Diabetic socks
- Purse-pack or cubed tissues
- Jewelry
- Stamps and stationery
- Candy, regular or sugar-free
- Slipper socks with grips
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Deodorant



All gifts should be UNWRAPPED. Please, no powder or open-backed slippers. Bring your donations to the church office or get them to me by Wed., Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>. Thank you in advance for making Christmas just a little brighter for our nursing home residents.

*Mary Flint*



## CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Have you felt God tugging at you, urging you to take a leap of faith and become a larger part of something bigger than yourself? Have you been considering joining the church, but just haven't taken the plunge! There is no time like the present! Contact Rev. Mark (582-2169, [revmark@myaledoumc.com](mailto:revmark@myaledoumc.com)) and set up a time to visit with him. This 30-minute meeting will allow you to get to know each other better. At the end of the meeting, you'll decide which Sunday you would like to join the church...and the rest, as they say, is history! Pray about it- are you ready to take the plunge?

## HOLLY DAYS/FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS PARADE

Surely you have attended Aledo's Holly Days and the Festival of Lights Parade that kick off the holiday season in town? Well...now you have a chance to be IN it! On Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, we will be participating in two separate yet connected ministries associated with the event.

From 5PM-7PM, we will feature a live Nativity uptown. Complete with costumed actors representing the characters from the first Christmas, a group of carolers singing Christmas songs and...hopefully...some live animals, this is a GREAT way for us to reach out to the community.

At 5:30PM, we will also be hosting an entry in the parade. Our church bus will be decorated with lights. Up to 14 people are invited to ride on the bus and wave at those in attendance!

If you would like to be a part of either of these fun activities, contact the church office or watch for sign-up sheets in worship to get your name on the list! Let them know if you want to be in the Nativity... or the bus!

THE  
CHRISTMAS TREE  
I KNOW WHO I AM

I am God's child. ([John 1:12](#))

I am Christ's friend. (John 15:15)

I am united with the Lord. (1 Cor. 6:17)

I am bought with a price. (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

I am a saint (set apart for God). (Eph. 1:1)

I am a personal witness of Christ. (Acts 1:8)

I am the salt & light of the earth. (Matt. 5:13-14)

I am a member of the body of Christ. (1 Cor. 12:27)

I am free forever from condemnation. (Rom. 8: 1-2)

I am a citizen of Heaven. I am significant. (Phil. 3:20)

I am free from any charge against me. (Rom. 8:31 -34)

I am a minister of reconciliation for God. (2 Cor. 5:17-21)

I have access to God through the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 2:18)

I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms. (Eph. 2:6)

I cannot be separated from the love of God. (Rom. 8:35-39)

I am established, anointed, sealed by God. (2 Cor. 1:21- 22)

I am assured all things work together for good. (Rom. 8: 28)

I have been chosen & appointed to bear fruit. (John 15:16)

I belong to God

And that is who **He** says I am. How about you?

"The LORD bless you and keep you;  
the LORD make His face shine upon you  
and be gracious to you;  
the LORD turn His face toward you  
and give you peace..."

Numbers 6:24-26

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM Melissa Farrell!



Melissa Farrell  
Director of Youth and  
Children's  
Ministries

**What's Coming Up, TAG:**

**2/3rds of God: JR & SR High—Nov 29th, 10am-12pm**

**Christmas Card Creation: JR & SR High—Dec 14th, 9-10am**

**Christmas Cantata: SR High—Dec 14th, 6-7pm**

**All Church Caroling: JR & SR High—Dec 21st, 1:45-3pm**



## ANNIVERSARIES DECEMBER

12/01/1973– Bill & Kris Taylor

12/02/1972– Neil & Pam Truman

12/13/1952– Wendell & Gloria Harroun

12/23/1954– Earl & Barbara Etheridge

12/28/1954– Rev & Mrs Donald Wise



## UM Women Golden Age Birthdays

12/08– Verla Thompson



United Methodist Women:

Thank you so much for the honor given me at the Golden Age Service. I was surprised but very appreciative.

*Evelyn Yerkey*

I want to thank the Methodist Women for giving me the Legend Servant Award for this year. It was a real surprise.

*Florence Louck*

## THOSE WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS



Leslie Baxter  
Joanne Beard  
Linda Biebaum  
Lucy & Tom Ceurvorst  
Joshua Cosby  
Joe D  
Mile Delaney  
Adam Douglas  
Dorothy Engstrom  
Bob Ernst  
Jenifer Franks/cancer  
Eilene Genett  
Amy Glenn  
Carolyn Hansen

Don Harmon  
Stephanie Heater  
Donna Hunt  
Juli Inman  
Scott Janson  
Jenny Johnson  
Ron Kerres  
Fran & Rod Krah  
Jeff & Karen Malson  
Kathy Melton  
Joanne Moseley  
Nadeen & Rhonda  
Bryce Rathje/6 yrs old  
Nancy Retherford

Paul Riley  
Connie Shaw  
Brent Skinner  
Connor Sutton  
Charley Thomas  
Pam Truman  
Marilyn Wagler  
Kent Weeks  
Ebola Crisis  
All in Nursing Homes  
All who are ill  
Family situations/difficulties  
Ferguson, Missouri  
Health of congregation

Mercer County Schools: Administration, Teachers, Students, Staff  
National and Local Governmental Leaders, Military, Security Officers  
FUEL, Bus Ministry, College Students, Shut Ins, the lost

## NEW/CURRENT PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDIES

### The Beatitudes: Developing Spiritual Character

**What:** Rev. Mark and Joanne's current Tuesday Bible Study

**When:** Tuesdays @ 9AM or 2PM, Oct. 28 through Dec. 16

**WHERE:** In the Fellowship Café next to the sanctuary (9AM) and the Sonrise Coffee House (2PM)

**WHY:** The beatitudes (8 "blessed are..." statements from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount+) reveal to us eight qualities that bring God's blessing: meekness and mercy, poorness in spirit and purity of heart, mourning and hunger, peacemaking and persecution. Jesus highlighted these to offer both encouragement and instruction on living distinctly as his followers in a world with values much different from God's.

### Discovering the Joy of Jesus: A Guide to Philippians

**WHAT:** Rev. Mark's current Wednesday Evening Bible Study

**WHEN:** Wednesdays @ 6PM, Oct. 29 through Dec. 17

**WHERE:** In the Fellowship Café next to the sanctuary

**WHY:** This easy-to-use study for small groups and individuals reveals the Bible's "book of joy". The apostle Paul's words in the book of Philippians share the secret of joy--a life centered in Jesus Christ. Open-ended discussion questions, Bible passages, and helpful explanations and applications will point us to the godly characteristic of joy, which is sharing in God's life--a quality that transcends happiness based on circumstances.

### The Sermon on the Mount

**WHAT:** Rev. Mark's current MEN'S Bible Study

**WHEN:** Wednesdays @ 6:30AM

**WHERE:** In the Fellowship Café next to the sanctuary

**WHY:** United Methodist founder John Wesley's desire was to present "plain truth to plain people." Editor Clare Weakley has attempted to help him do just that by updating his original 18th century commentary for the modern reader. As you read *The Sermon on the Mount*, you will see that the Beatitudes are to be the attitude of believers. This study will show you how.

**WHAT ELSE:** It is NOT too late to join.

### The Letters of John and Jude

**WHAT:** Rev. Mark's current Sunday Morning Bible Study

**WHEN:** Sundays @ 9:15AM

**WHERE:** In the Chapel next to the sanctuary

**WHY:** New Testament scholar William Barclay walks us through the letters of John and Jude. These books deal with dissenting teachings within the early Church.

**WHAT ELSE:** We would LOVE to have you join this class.

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## ALL-CHURCH CHRISTMAS CAROLING

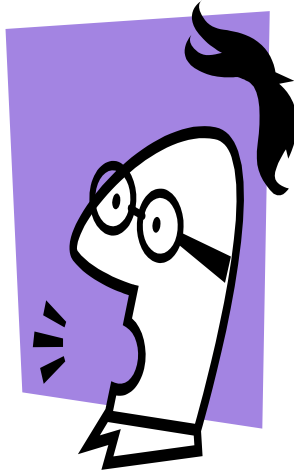
On Sunday, Dec. 21st at 2PM, we will have our annual All-Church Christmas Caroling event. Every year, we gather at the church and head out to spread a bit of Christmas cheer to folks in our church who are no longer able to make it on Sundays. We will carpool to Brookstone, the Nursing Home and Aledo Rehab. Mark your calendar and plan on being a part of this great event! This is a wonderfully simple, inexpensive way to let other people see the love of Christ through you at Christmas. Join us as we carol for Christ!



The deadline for the next  
Parish Visitor is

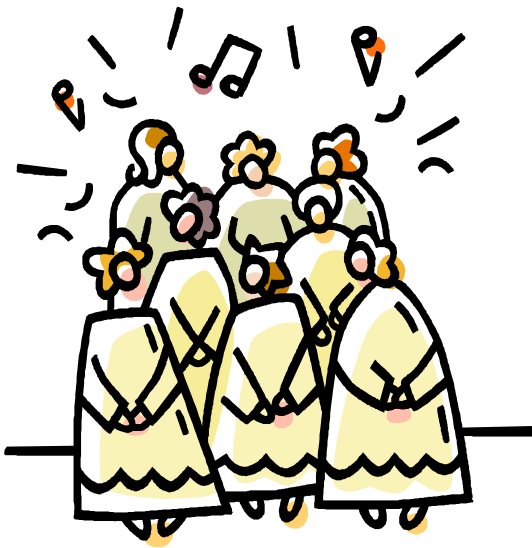
**Friday,  
December 19**  
at 8am.

Please have all  
articles  
submitted  
by this date!



## DID YOU MISS SUNDAY'S SERMON?

If you miss church on Sunday, you can STILL experience the sermon. Simply go to [www.stickwithjesus.com](http://www.stickwithjesus.com). Scroll down the main page until you find the date you missed- that day's blog will be a transcript of the sermon! If you would like to subscribe and receive a daily email link, email Rev. Mark at [revmark@stickwithjesus.com](mailto:revmark@stickwithjesus.com). Please share these links with your friends and family.



## CANTATA

### “AND ON EARTH...PEACE”

Not once, not twice but THREE times on Sunday, December 14th, our Chancel Choir will present their Christmas Cantata “And On Earth...Peace”. At 8AM, 10:15AM and 6PM, they will lift their voices as they use their gifts to sing praise to God. Here's a marvelous idea- attend one of the morning services to enjoy this beautiful cantata. Then, come back at 6PM and bring someone with you who wouldn't otherwise come. It is a safe, low-risk opportunity to invite someone to come to church with you!

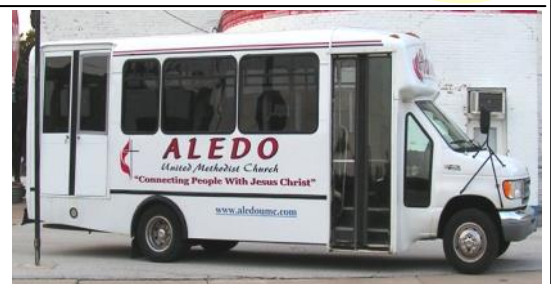
## WORSHIP TECH OPPORTUNITIES

Do you like electronics? Then your church needs YOU! We need people to help operate the sound system and computer during Sunday morning worship services. What do you need in order to run these things? The list is LONG- a willingness to serve, and...that would be about it! The systems, designed specifically for churches, are quite simple to operate. (Don't let all the knobs and switches intimidate you!) The great part about this ministry is that it happens during worship, when you're in church anyway! Do you feel God calling you to step up and help? Talk to Rev. Mark or Ruth Dulaney.



## ALEDO UMC BUS MINISTRY

We'd love to come pick you up and bring you to any of our services. Just make arrangements with **Greg Cobert** in advance by calling (309) 737-5621 and we'll put you on our “Pick Up” list.





## ADVENT WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Advent, the time of waiting that leads to Christmas Day, officially begins on Sunday, November 30th this year. There are two different Christmas sermon series that will be offered: **The IMDb Cast of Characters** at both morning services and **Christmas By the Numbers** at the evening Point service. (see accompanying article) Here are all of the special opportunities that will be offered during Advent:

### Sunday, November 30: The 1st Sunday in Advent

We will light the first **Advent Candle** - the Candle of Hope- at the 2 morning services.

8AM Worship

10:15AM Worship

4PM- The Hanging of the Greens

### Friday, December 5: Holly Days and the Electric Light Parade

5PM- Live Nativity uptown.

5:30PM- Participating in the Parade

### Sunday, December 7: The 2nd Sunday in Advent

We will light the second **Advent Candle** - the Candle of Peace- at all 3 services.

8AM Worship

10:15AM Worship- Children's Christmas Program (see accompanying article)

6PM Worship

### Sunday, December 14: The 3rd Sunday in Advent

We will light the third **Advent Candle** - the Candle of Joy- at all 3 services.

8AM, 10:15 AM and 6PM- Choir Cantata

11:30AM United Methodist Men's Soup Luncheon

### Sunday, December 21: The 4th Sunday in Advent

We will light the fourth **Advent Candle** - the Candle of Love- at all 3 services.

8AM Worship

10:15AM Worship

2PM- All-Church Christmas Caroling

6PM Worship

### Wednesday, December 24: Christmas Eve

We will celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ with 2 very special Candlelight Services.

At 7PM, we will light the Christ candle and sing LOTS of great Christmas carols!

At 11PM, BOTH the Chancel and Bell Choirs will share their marvelous gifts with us. In addition, we will light the Christ candle and sing LOTS of great Christmas carols!

Both Christmas Eve services will be built around a message of faith and revelation- **Tiny**

**Tots With their Eyes All Aglow** (Luke 2:1-14) There is an overarching wonder and joy

that is highlighted at Christmas. Both services will end with a candlelight singing of

"Silent Night". Christmas Eve is truly a night that changed the world. Please take an hour out of your holiday schedule to join your church family in celebrating the arrival of a baby in a manger who offers us grace, hope, peace, and love!

Come to worship throughout Advent expecting God to show up in powerful ways and touch your life!



## UNITED METHODIST MEN'S SOUP LUNCHEON

On Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 11:30AM, the United Methodist Men are hosting their annual Soup Luncheon. A WIDE variety of soups will be offered- you are welcome to try more than one! Please come for the Christmas Cantata that morning (at EITHER morning service) and then stay for great soups and great fellowship! What a GREAT way to get into the holiday spirit!



## THE NEW CHURCH WEBSITE!

Have you looked at your church's website lately? If not...you should! It's changed. And it is not just a little different- it is **COMPLETELY** different! A complete overhaul has brought the church website from "good" to "really good". There are still some aspects of the new website that need to be "tweaked", but it is a great improvement! Hop on over to [www.myaledoumc.com](http://www.myaledoumc.com) and see what's going on! Not only can you see the "basics" about your church- you can find the most current church calendar. In addition, the 2-minute "call to worship" videos that start our 8AM service every week are available. Also, the monthly newsletter AND the weekly bulletin (complete with the current version of the Prayer List) can be found on our website. Stop by and check it out!

[www.myaledoumc.com](http://www.myaledoumc.com)

## THE NURSERY

Have you ever wondered why churches need good, safe, well-staffed nursery programs? Well, wonder no more! The reason churches need strong nursery programs is that, for folks with young children, the nursery is often **THE** most important part of the church. If there is a good nursery, they can comfortably leave their kids in capable hands and attend a worship service. If, however, they find a nursery that is poorly or under-staffed with folks who seem unfriendly and stressed, they A. won't leave their kids, and B. won't come back! Your church truly believes that children are **NOT** simply the future of the church- they are very much an active, important part of its **PRESENT**!

## CALL-EM-ALL

Did you know that your church has a notification service named Call-Em-All? We use it to notify church members, both through automated phone calls and/or text messages, of a variety of things. Do **YOU** get texts and/or phone calls from Call-Em-All? If not, would you **LIKE** to? Whether you are a committee member, a member of a group like United Methodist Men or Women or you would like to receive all-church news or prayer requests, Call-Em-All can help keep you informed. If you are not currently receiving Call-Em-All notifications or would like to receive more of them, simply call the office. We can help!

## YOUNG ADULT/COUPLES GROUP GATHERING!

by Rev. Mark

Last month, I wrote about the fact that the Young Adult/Couples Ministry would have their next get-together...dinner and a Christmas ministry event...on Dec. 5th. That **WAS** the plan...until we were invited to provide a live Nativity for the community that evening! So, on Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup> at 5PM, I am asking the Young Adult/Couples Group to be a part of that event. You can be **IN** the live Nativity. You can be a part of the carolers that will join the live Nativity. Or you can ride on the bus in the Electric Light Parade. Any way you slice it, you will A. have a **GREAT** time and B. help your church reach out to the community and better connect people to Jesus Christ! Please mark your calendar and plan on joining me that evening! Nursery will be provided.



## CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

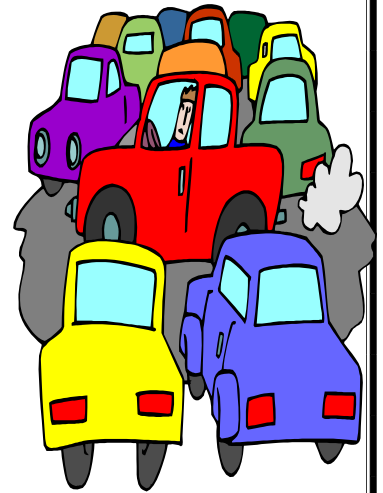
On Sunday, December 7th at the **10:15AM worship service**, the children of our congregation will present their annual Christmas Program. Featuring costumed shepherds, wise men, animals and the Holy Family, this program will be interactive- the congregation will "sing through" the presentation as we lift up the classic carols of the season. Plan on having **YOUR** child or grandchild at the church at 9AM that day to participate. Also, plan on coming **AND** bringing someone with you to experience this wonderful event!

## PARKING

By now, you've probably noticed that the parking area on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street just outside the Church Office has been re-painted. The goals that the Trustees have for that area are:

1. to offer two spots (all the way to the west) that are reserved for vehicles that have lifts which need extra space to load and unload
2. to offer a few parking spots that are designated for people who need to park as close as possible.

The nine spots in that stretch that are to the east ARE marked (on the pavement) as "handicapped" spots. They are, however, not "legal" handicapped spots, due to space requirements. Therefore, what the Trustees ask is that, if you HAVE a handicapped parking designation for your vehicle OR you simply need to park that close...please park there! On the other hand, if you are able/comfortable to park across the street and walk over, then please save the other spots for folks who need them! Parking is CERTAINLY a problem here at AUMC- and what a GREAT problem to have!



## Operation Christmas Child Thank You



Wow....what more can be said? When the goal was stated (200 boxes), you didn't groan, you didn't wince, and you didn't roll your eyes. You simply went about doing God's work.. On November 18<sup>th</sup>, **205 shoeboxes** were packed and delivered to the collection site at the Joy Baptist Church. There, they will be joined with others to begin their journey to far-off lands bringing their message of hope, joy, and love to those who need it most this Christmas season.

Every year, the visions of children suffering in poverty and living in war-torn countries flood our television screens. Newspapers and magazines are flooded with atrocities that we find hard to believe and even more difficult to accept. However, the small toys, clothes, and hygiene items contained in these boxes will be tangible examples of God's love to the children, and their families, who receive them. It is highly unlikely that you will ever see the child who receives your box, but rest assured that God has placed it in the hands of a child who needs it the most.

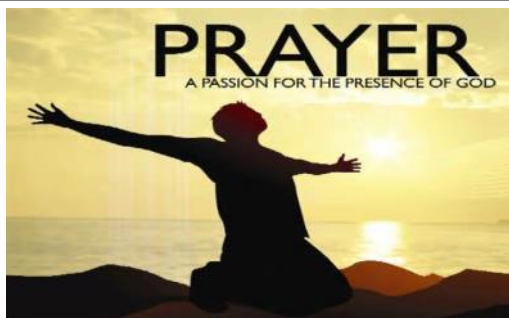
Thanks to all of you who filled boxes, donated items, and gave monetarily to help this mission. Even though the boxes have left our church and are "on their way", our job is not done. We ask that you pray that these boxes continue our greater mission....to connect people to Jesus Christ.

May all of you have a blessed Christmas and feel good that you have helped brighten the life of a child somewhere in the world this holiday season.

*With heartfelt thanks,*

*Joan Reynolds & Scott Spencer*

**PRAYER WALK  
THROUGH THE  
CHURCH EVERY  
SUNDAY MORNING  
AT 7AM.**



**WORSHIP TIMES:**  
Sundays 8AM &  
10:15AM  
Sunday School 9:15AM  
“The Point” 6PM

## AN OUTREACH IDEA

Here's a low-risk, easy way to introduce others to faith- share Rev. Mark's website with them. Described as “a daily look at life as a shaved-headed, earring-wearing, rock-drumming United Methodist minister”, [www.stickwithjesus.com](http://www.stickwithjesus.com) features a “thought for the day”, written by Rev. Mark- a new one is literally added daily! There is also a daily Bible verse AND a Prayer Request page, where you can (anonymously if you want) ask for prayer! Check it out- if you would like to subscribe and receive a daily email link, email Rev. Mark at [revmark@myaledoumc.com](mailto:revmark@myaledoumc.com) and let him know.



## WILL WE END “IN THE BLACK” OR “IN THE RED”?

by Rev. Mark

I would MUCH rather NOT write an article like this in December. I would much rather focus on nothing but the birth of Jesus. That IS, after all, THE most important part of this, or any, season. But sometimes, things just need to be done. The good news, financially, is that giving is up over this time last year. The bad news is that, if we finish this year without any change in giving, we will fall just short of our financial commitments for the year.

The Administrative Council is concerned about how we will finish this year. But I am convinced of three things- 1) worry is NOT of God and has NO positive impact, 2) this church does MORE ministry, pound per pound, than any church I have ever seen, and 3) it is impossible to outgive God. I invite you to pray about this. Will you help the Aledo United Methodist Church finish 2014 strong, meeting all of our commitments? And will you also help start 2015 off well, putting us in a financial position that will enable us to not only meet our commitments but to have a cushion that will allow us to imagine NEW ministries that will reach NEW people for Jesus Christ?

## FINANCIAL MATTERS (WEEKLY NEED \$5,768)

| Date       | 11/02      | 11/09      | 11/16      | 11/23      |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Attendance | 254        | 221        | 252        | 239        |
| Receipts   | \$7,171.25 | \$6,539.09 | \$5,193.09 | \$3,299.00 |

