

THE PLEASANT HILL MESSENGER

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF PLEASANT HILL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH - DECEMBER 2016



Pastor's Note



Christmas is a special time for people who live both inside and outside the life of the community of faith. The story of God's love made real in the birth Jesus is a revolutionary event that acts as an overture of God's renewing work of transforming the world with love. Indeed, the story of Jesus' birth is important. In the introduction of their book, The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Birth, Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan write,

“The stories of Jesus's birth are the foundation of the world's most widely observed holiday...Christmas in Western culture and beyond is observed by many non-Christians...no other religious holiday is so widely commemorated by people who are outside of the tradition that originated it...Because of the importance of Christmas, how we understand the stories of Jesus's birth matters. What we think they're about – how we hear them, read them, interpret them – matters.” (vii-viii)

So, as we are now in the thick of the Advent season, remembering the first coming of Christ and preparing for the second coming of Christ, the question looms, “What are you going to do with the story of Jesus' birth that you have received?” Will you hear it again in a seasonal haze that has been brought on by over-eating, over-spending, over-extending your time, only to lose it in the chaos of the noise around that calls you to be everywhere at once, to be everything for everybody else? Will you just go through the motions of this season, showing up physically to church services, Christmas parties, work, and family life but emotionally and spiritually your real presence is off in some distant place? Or will you take time to intentionally stop in the middle of the Christmas pandemonium, and say to God, “Speak, Lord, Your servant is listening?”

Be encouraged to take the third way, the way that finds the space to practice the pause which makes room for the presence of Christ. Take time this Advent and Christmas season to have prayerful conversations with God, read the Scriptures, and allow Holy Spirit to move in and through you so that the story of Jesus' birth doesn't just stay a story. Let the story of Jesus' birth do what it was meant to do – let it change you from the deepest depths of your soul out to the farthest reaches of the world.

Joy to the world! The Lord IS come!

Happy Advent and Merry Christmas,

Rev. Adam



Outreach Ministries

“Bear one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ”

Galatians 6:2

*Thank you for giving so generously to the children of Operation Christmas Child this year! We filled 204 shoeboxes with 12 items each.

*The food you donated to families for Thanksgiving was very much appreciated!

*We ask for your help in providing a Christmas food basket for a few families this holiday season. Starting Sunday, December 4th, there will be a food list in the back of the Sanctuary if you would like to sign up to bring food for the families. Please bring those items on or before **Sunday, December 18th**.

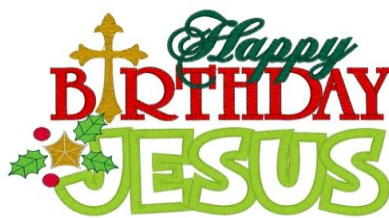
Please join us at 6:00 P.M. on **January 10th, 2017 on the second floor of the Family Life Center to talk about our Outreach goals for 2017!*

Merry Christmas!

Tina

2016 Goals –

- At least 200 gift-filled shoe boxes for Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child
- Monetary donations to Samaritan's Purse to help with the \$7/per box S&H expenses
- Food Baskets for several families in our communities during Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas
- Continuation of our church's community food pantry for those in immediate need
- Collecting of Campbell's soup bar-code labels, Tyson Project A+ labels and General Mills Boxtops for Education for The Red Bird Mission
- Collecting canned item pull tabs for The Ronald McDonald House
- Monetary donations to The Society of St. Andrews Spud Project



Birthday Party for Jesus

The Children, Youth, and Music ministries will be leading a Christmas celebration in honor of Our Lord's birth during both the 8:45 and 11:00 am services on **December 18**. Following the 11:00 am service everyone is invited to the Fellowship Hall to enjoy some refreshments during our "Birthday Party for Jesus". As gifts to our King, the church will be accepting donations of baby items (wipes, diapers, cereals etc.) to be distribute through our church's food pantry and other local pantries. Please join us as our church gratefully celebrates the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Calendar Goes on this page



United Methodist Women

United Methodist Women Morning Circle

The UMW Morning Circle will meet Tuesday, December 13 at 11:30 am at Steak by Melissa.

United Methodist Women Evening Circle

The UMW Evening Circle will meet Thursday, December 8 at 7:00 pm at Steak by Melissa.

United Methodist Men

The United Methodist Men's Breakfast will be Saturday, December 10 at 8:00 am in the FLC.



December Birthdays



- Gladys Rowsey..... 1st
- Guy Brinkley 4th
- Kay Williams..... 7th
- Vanessa Lynchard 10th
- Hudson Fernandez..... 12th
- Alyssa Sparrenberger 16th
- Daniel Whitten 17th
- John Lee 19th
- Dawn Evans..... 21st
- Johnny Gibbs..... 22nd

These are the birthdays that we have on file. If you have a December birthday that isn't on the list, please call the church office so we can update our files.

Coming January 2017... ONLINE GIVING

We are pleased to announce the introduction of an electronic option for making regular offerings. Contributions can now be debited automatically from your checking or savings account or processed using your credit or debit card. Our new electronic giving program offers convenience for you and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.

If you are currently giving on a weekly basis, you will no longer need to write out 52 checks a year or prepare 52 envelopes. And, when travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services, this program will allow your weekly offerings to continue on an uninterrupted basis.

HELPS YOU:

With a convenient e-payment option to schedule regular donations or make one-time donations to specific initiatives Secure and PCI compliant

HELPS US:

To support our shared mission throughout the year with a more predictable donation stream

December Counters

- December 4** – Louise Sadler & Betty Ward
- December 11** – Mary Ruth & Richard Sadler
- December 18** – Ruth Joyner & Sue Harding
- December 25** – Sheila Morris & Tina Morris

November Stewardship

Date	Attendance	Offering
November 6.....	112	\$5,718.00
November 13.....	117	\$4,163.48
November 20.....	99	\$2,952.20
November 27.....	78	\$3,410.84
Total	406	\$16,244.52



What do the candles in our Advent wreath mean?

The Advent wreath, four candles on a wreath of evergreen, is shaped in a perfect circle to symbolize the eternity of God. In some churches, four purple candles, one for each week in Advent, are used with one larger white candle in the middle as the Christ candle. Other churches prefer three purple or blue candles with one candle being rose or pink, to represent joy.

While the Advent wreath with its four candles did bring light to churches, it was not to illuminate the interior as much as to symbolize the coming of Christ. The Advent wreath began in the time of the Protestant reformer Martin Luther.

During each Sunday of the Advent season, we focus on one of the four virtues Jesus brings us: Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. Others consider the lighting of the first candle to symbolize expectation, while the second symbolizes hope, the third joy and the fourth purity. The Christ candle is lit on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day reminding Christians that Jesus is the light of the world. The order and exact wording vary among churches, but the wreath continually reminds us of whom we are called to be as followers of Jesus.

* available at <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/what-do-the-candles-in-our-advent-wreath-mean>



What Are the Twelve Days of Christmas?

Christmas is not just one day, but a season of twelve days from sunset Christmas Eve (December 24) through Epiphany (January 6). The twelfth day of Christmas, Epiphany, commemorates the visiting of the Christ Child by the Magi (Wise Men) with their gifts of gold, incense, and myrrh. Gift giving in some cultures extends throughout the 12 days of Christmas; elsewhere, gift giving is limited to Christmas Eve or Christmas Day or January 5 or 6.

* available at <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/what-are-the-12-days-of-christmas>



Poinsettias at Christmas

There is an old Mexican legend about how Poinsettias and Christmas come together, it goes like this:

There was once a poor Mexican girl called Pepita who had no present to give the the baby Jesus at the Christmas Eve Services. As Pepita walked to the chapel, sadly, her cousin Pedro tried to cheer her up. 'Pepita', he said "I'm sure that even the smallest gift, given by someone who loves him will make Jesus Happy." Pepita didn't know what she could give, so she picked a small handful of weeds from the roadside and made them into a a small bouquet. She felt embarrassed because she could only give this small present to Jesus. As she walked through the chapel to the altar, she remembered what Pedro had said. She began to feel better, knelt down and put the bouquet at the bottom of the nativity scene. Suddenly, the bouquet of weeds burst into bright red flowers, and everyone who saw them were sure they had seen a miracle. From that day on, the bright red flowers were known as the 'Flores de Noche Buena', or 'Flowers of the Holy Night'.

The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are sometimes thought as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to Jesus. The red colored leaves symbolize the blood of Christ. The white leaves represent his purity.

* available at <http://www.whychristmas.com/customs/poinsettia.shtml>



Christmas Poinsettias



In Memory of:

<i>Barbara Boatwright</i>	<i>Mark & Dawn Evans</i>
<i>Patrick Brady</i>	<i>Melda Brady</i>
<i>Elizabeth Brinkley</i>	<i>Willie Stone</i>
<i>Liz Brinkley</i>	<i>Guy Brinkley, Jr.</i>
<i>Joe Bynum</i>	<i>Scott & Carina Moore</i>
<i>James Clements</i>	<i>Darrell & Rachel Clements</i>
<i>Charles C. Cobb</i>	<i>Shirley Cobb</i>
<i>Frank Taylor Cox, Jr.</i>	<i>Frank & Catherine Cox</i>
<i>Lena Crook</i>	<i>Ronnie & Margaret Crook</i>
<i>Christopher DeLille</i>	<i>Betty Evans</i>
<i>Christopher DeLille</i>	<i>Jim, Susan, & Hannah DeLille</i>
<i>Glen & Dottie DeLille</i>	<i>Jim, Susan, & Hannah DeLille</i>
<i>Nick Delva</i>	<i>Ann Rogers</i>
<i>Relmon & Sadie Dill</i>	<i>Bob & Denise Yates</i>
<i>Claude G Evans</i>	<i>Betty Evans</i>
<i>Claude Evans</i>	<i>Jim, Susan, & Hannah DeLille</i>
<i>Michael Evans</i>	<i>Betty Evans</i>
<i>Charles & Sally Eveleth</i>	<i>Joe & Candace Garcia</i>
<i>Manuel Garcia</i>	<i>Joe & Candace Garcia</i>
<i>Herbert & Mamie Harrell</i>	<i>Bill & Bettye Harrell</i>
<i>Ben & Evelyn Hughes</i>	<i>Bill & Bettye Harrell</i>
<i>Gary Hughes</i>	<i>Bill & Bettye Harrell</i>
<i>Bettye Jenkins</i>	<i>Richard & Louise Sadler</i>
<i>Mark V. Langston</i>	<i>Susan Langston & Anna MacDonald</i>
<i>Cynthia Liming</i>	<i>Jeanne Liming</i>
<i>Bonnie Logan</i>	<i>Darrell & Rachel Clements</i>
<i>Eral Logan</i>	<i>Darrell & Rachel Clements</i>
<i>Edna Lumm</i>	<i>Ann Rogers</i>
<i>Scott Michael MacDonald</i>	<i>Anna MacDonald</i>
<i>Paul T. Maners</i>	<i>Scott & Carina Moore</i>
<i>Maryellen McCarthy</i>	<i>Joe & Candace Garcia</i>
<i>Dorothy "Mama Dot" McKinney</i>	<i>Mark & Dawn Evans</i>
<i>Dot McKinney</i>	<i>Betty Evans</i>
<i>Mama Dot McKinney</i>	<i>Jim, Susan, & Hannah DeLille</i>
<i>Harold T. McKinney</i>	<i>Mark & Dawn Evans</i>
<i>Roger Dennis McKinney</i>	<i>Mark & Dawn Evans</i>
<i>Carol Lynn Morse</i>	<i>Frank & Catherine Cox</i>
<i>Doris Mullis</i>	<i>Jim & Susie Mullis</i>
<i>Vera Quinn</i>	<i>Ronnie & Margaret Crook</i>

In Memory of (continued)

<i>Bill Rogers</i>	<i>Ann Rogers</i>
<i>Joe Solomito</i>	<i>Ann Rogers</i>
<i>Bonnie Brady Spiotta</i>	<i>Melda Brady</i>
<i>Aunt Nancy Stone</i>	<i>Jerry & Deborah Tucker</i>
<i>Nancy Carol Wyatt Stone</i>	<i>Willie Stone</i>
<i>Nancy Stone</i>	<i>Jim, Susan, & Hannah DeLille</i>
<i>Nancy Stone</i>	<i>Ruth Joyner</i>
<i>Momma Barbara Tucker</i>	<i>Jerry & Deborah Tucker</i>
<i>Mr. & Mrs. Jesse Vaiden</i>	<i>Jeanne Liming</i>
<i>Loren Ward</i>	<i>Betty Ward</i>
<i>Loren Ward</i>	<i>Richard & Louise Sadler</i>
<i>Louis & Helen Yates</i>	<i>Bob & Denise Yates</i>

*In Honor of:*

<i>Ann Bridgforth</i>	<i>Lucie Bridgforth</i>
<i>Norman & Pat Chapel</i>	<i>Betty Ward</i>
<i>Faye Clements</i>	<i>Darrell & Rachel Clements</i>
<i>Margaret Crook</i>	<i>Ronnie Crook</i>
<i>Jan Davis</i>	<i>Richard & Louise Sadler</i>
<i>The Bill Giles Family</i>	<i>Bob & Denise Yates</i>
<i>Mom Allie Giles</i>	<i>Jerry & Deborah Tucker</i>
<i>Rev. Adam Gordon</i>	<i>Mike & Pam Flowers</i>
<i>Revs. Adam & Amanda Gordon</i>	<i>Jeanne Liming</i>
<i>Susan Owens Langston</i>	<i>Anna MacDonald</i>
<i>Mr. & Mrs. John Magdefrau</i>	<i>Jeanne Liming</i>
<i>Cole & Lindsay Massie</i>	<i>Percy & Vanessa Lynchard</i>
<i>Jim & Susie Mullis</i>	<i>Shirley Cobb</i>
<i>PHUMC Family</i>	<i>Anna MacDonald</i>
<i>PHUMC Youth</i>	<i>Mike & Pam Flowers</i>
<i>Sissy Sanford</i>	<i>Lucie Bridgforth</i>
<i>Martha Stovall</i>	<i>Jeanne Liming</i>
<i>Betty Yates</i>	<i>Bob & Denise Yates</i>
<i>My Family</i>	<i>Guy Brinkley, Jr.</i>
<i>Our Grandchildren</i>	<i>Bob & Denise Yates</i>
<i>Our Grandchildren: Jericho, Hadley, & Albany</i>	<i>Jerry & Deborah Tucker</i>

Come Celebrate the Birth of Christ

- November 27:** 7:00 pm – Advent Bible Study (HOPE) @ the PHUMC Prayer Room
- December 3:** 6:00 pm – Youth Christmas Party at the home of Mike & Pam Flowers
- December 4:** 5:00 pm – Blue Christmas Worship: A Service of Grief & Hope During Christmastime
7:00 pm – Advent Bible Study (LOVE) @ the home of Mark & Dawn Evans
- December 10:** 6:00 pm – Church Christmas Party in the Family Life Center (All Ages Invited)
Please bring a finger food & \$1 gift for Dirty Santa game.
- December 11:** 7:00 pm – Advent Bible Study (JOY) @ the home of Joe & Candace Garcia
- December 16:** 6:00 pm – Staff Christmas Party @ FLC
- December 18:** Christmas Cantata – “Arise, Shine! For You Light Has Come”
(8:45 & 11:00 worship services)
12:00 pm – Birthday Party for Jesus in the Family Life Center
Please bring baby items & food for food pantry.
7:00 pm – Advent Bible Study (PEACE) @ the home of Sissy Sanford
- December 24:** 6:30 p.m. – Christmas Eve Worship Service
- December 25:** 10:00 a.m. – Christmas Day Worship Service



The Pleasant Hill Messenger

Pleasant Hill United Methodist Church
3787 Pleasant Hill Road
Olive Branch, MS 38654

*A FAMILY OF FAITH SEEKING TO
SHARE GOD'S LOVE WITH YOU."*

**Church E-mail Address:
phumcms@yahoo.com
phumcms.org (web site)**