

The Parish Visitor

January, 2017



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THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME

by Rev. Mark

In February of 2002, Joanne and I were set to lead a trip to the Holy Land. Then...911 happened. What seemed like the chance of a lifetime suddenly seemed like a very bad idea. The trip was cancelled and the opportunity never arose again. Until now! In January of 2018, we will again get the chance to lead a trip to the Holy Land. And WHAT a trip it will be- it will focus on following the path of Jesus' life, from Bethlehem all the way to the Garden Tomb.

We will fly out of St. Louis on Jan. 8, 2018, landing in Tel Aviv on the 9th. That night, we will stay in a hotel in Bethlehem. On the 10th, we will explore one of the most exciting archeological digs in Israel- the Herodion, the palace fortress and final resting place of Herod the Great. Then it's on to Bethlehem, where we will visit the cave where Jesus was born, the Church of the Nativity and the Shepherds' Field, where angels first proclaimed the Good News.

On the 11th, we will visit Tel Megiddo (the Biblical site of Armageddon), Sephoris (the cosmopolitan Roman capital of Galilee), Nazareth (Jesus' boyhood home) before remembering wedding vows at the Franciscan Wedding Chapel in Cana (the site of Jesus' first miracle). On the 12th, we will visit the Valley of the Doves, Magdala, Capernaum and the traditional site of the feeding of the 5,000 before having worship on a boat on the Sea of Galilee. We will spend the night in Galilee.

On the 13th, it's on to Northern Israel- Tel Dan, Caesarea Philippi, Golan Heights and the Mount of Beatitudes before remembering our baptism at the Jordan River. On the 14th, we will tour Beit Shean, Qumran (where the Dead Sea scrolls were found) and the Mount of Olives before going on the Palm Sunday Walk, ending in the Garden of Gethsemane. On the 15th, it's into Jerusalem to see the Emek Tzurim (the Temple Sifting Project), the Gihon Spring, Hezekiah's Tunnel, the Pool of Siloam and the Southern Steps of the Temple. We will end the day with a visit to Mt. Zion and stand in the Upper Room.

On the 16th, it's on to morning prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane and the Kidron Valley before walking the Via Dolorosa (the path Jesus walked to the cross). We will also visit the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and take Communion at the Garden Tomb, where the Resurrection happened. On the 17th, we fly back into St. Louis.

Bethlehem. Nazareth. Jerusalem. The Upper Room. The Garden of Gethsemane. The Garden Tomb. Renewing wedding vows in Cana of Galilee. Worship on the Sea of Galilee. Remembering baptisms at the Jordan River. Communion at the Garden Tomb. It's hard to even wrap your head around. To say that Joanne and I are excited about this trip is a GROSS understatement! And the possibility of taking this trip with our church family makes it that much better!

There will be an informational meeting for anybody interested on Sunday, January 15 at 2PM. If you have ANY interest in being a part of this trip, please plan on

SPECIAL DATES:

- January 1 Communion & Food Pantry Sunday
- January 5 Caring Hearts Food Prep 9AM
- January 9 Finance Meeting 6PM
- January 9 Trustees Meeting 7PM
- January 10 Mission Meeting 6:30PM
- January 15 Holy Land Trip Informational Meeting 2PM
- January 15 Administrative Council Meeting 7:15PM
- January 16 Office Closed for Martin Luther King Holiday
- January 16 UM Men 6PM
- January 19 Caring Hearts Food Prep 1PM
- January 20 Parish Visitor Deadline 8AM
- January 22 CIA Luncheon 11:30AM
- January 23 PPRC Meeting 6:30PM
- January 23 Relay for Life Meeting 6:30PM
- January 27 Safety Team Meeting 7PM

PASTOR'S NEW AND CURRENT BIBLE STUDIES

The Trinity: Practically Speaking

WHAT: Rev. Mark's new Tuesday morning Bible Study

WHEN: Tuesdays @ 9AM, starting on January 10th

WHERE: In the Fellowship Cafe'

WHY: Three Gods, or One, or Three-in-One? Since the word Trinity does not appear in the Bible, many people wonder whether the doctrine is anything more than an intellectual puzzle created by theologians. This book takes readers on a guided tour of the logic leading to understanding God as a Trinity. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the Bible (and in Christian experience) are all vital to the reality of salvation. All three save. A robust understanding of the Trinity fosters a more full and transformed Christian life.

WHAT ELSE: The books are...FREE!

The Gospel of Luke

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

WHEN: Wednesdays @ 6:30AM

WHERE: In the Fellowship Cafe' next to the sanctuary

WHY: With a historian's precision, Luke's Gospel shows painstaking care both in detail and in expression. Of equal distinction is the universal appeal of the Gospel. Dr. William Barclay wrote that this Gospel makes " Christ the open door for all without reserve. " In many areas that were either minimized or neglected by the other Gospel writers, Luke's account is more complete, emphasizing prayer, the dignity of women, and praise of God. Barclay's insightful comments help each of us to see the infinitude of God's love through Luke's eyes.

WHAT ELSE: The books are \$15

Matthew: A Guide to the New Daily Study Bible

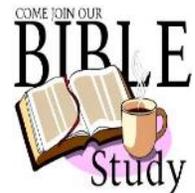
WHAT: Rev. Mark's current Wednesday evening Bible Study

WHEN: Wednesdays @ 6PM

WHERE: In the Fellowship Cafe' next to the sanctuary

WHY: Responding to the need for fresh, practical, and affordable resources for personal and group study, Westminster John Knox Press is pleased to present a new series of Gospel study guides that will supplement William Barclay's New Daily Study Bible. Each of the slim volumes will be divided into sections offering a page-long excerpt from the New Daily Study Bible followed by questions to encourage group discussion and personal reflection, and suggestions for praying and applying Scripture to our daily lives.

WHAT ELSE: The books are...FREE!



EPIPHANY

January 6th is Epiphany (Greek for "appearance or manifestation"), also known as the 12th Day of Christmas or Three Kings Day. Epiphany is a Christian feast which celebrates the revelation of God to mankind in the person of Jesus Christ. According to various traditions, it recognizes both the coming of the Wise Men to Jesus and the baptism of Jesus- both revelations of God in their own way.



NEW SERMON SERIES

by Rev. Mark

The New Testament story of the Prodigal Son is one of the best known, most scrutinized stories in the Bible. But at its heart...what is the story REALLY about? Who IS the Prodigal? And what does it have to tell us about life in 21st Century America?

In January and February, we will ask all of those questions- and many more- as we take **The Long Journey Home**. Each week, we will focus on one or two verses from the Prodigal Son story- unpacking it to see what is underneath and, more importantly, what it has to say to us. The weeks of the series look like this:

Sunday, January 8, 2017- Demanding (Luke 15:11-13)

Be careful what you ask for. (Malachi 3:10, Romans 12:2)

Sunday, January 15, 2017- Devastating (Luke 15:14-16)

Sometimes, the hole is so deep...it's hard to see the top. (Psalm 34:17-20, 2Corinthians 4:8-9)

Sunday, January 22, 2017- Longing (Luke 15:17-20a)

Repentance is a difficult task. Psalm 63:1-3, John 3:16-17)

Sunday, January 29, 2017- Confessing (Luke 15:20b-21)

Sometimes, the way up...is down. (Isaiah 53:5, 1John 1:9)

Sunday, February 5, 2017- Celebrating (Luke 15:22-24)

Reunited...and it feels so good! (Psalm 150, Philippians 4:4)

Sunday, February 12, 2017- Realizing (Luke 15:25-27)

Sometimes, the truth is hard to hear. (Proverbs 18:2, Colossians 4:6)

Sunday, February 19, 2017- Accusing (Luke 15:28-30)

Jealousy often leads to pain. (Isaiah 53:7, Jude 1:3)

Sunday, February 26, 2017- Reconciling (Luke 15:31-32)

Though the sorrow may last for the night, the joy comes in the morning!
(Psalm 34:8, Ephesians 4:32)

Come each week expecting God to show up in powerful ways!



NEW WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY

WHAT: Experiencing Spiritual Renewal, Joanne Harris' NEW Women's Study

WHEN: Tuesdays at 2PM, beginning January 10th, 2017

WHERE: Fellowship Cafe

WHY: Every athlete, performer, and artist trains to reach his or her goals. As Christians, our goal is to be more like Jesus. Spiritual practices are the ways we train to be like Jesus. In this 12-session small group Women's Bible study, participants will look at two types of spiritual disciplines—those that are primarily active and call us to do something and those that are primarily inactive and call us to undo something. Through this study, participants will look at familiar spiritual practices like prayer, study, service, and fellowship through the lens of Scripture and find a renewed zest for life and loving God.

WHAT ELSE: Books are \$5

I am excited to be able to dig deeper into the Word and learn about these women and see how it applies to my life today. Come and join me! - Joanne

6TH ANNUAL *FOLLOW THE STAR* HOLIDAY BAZAAR FOLLOW UP REPORT

Thank you to the Holiday Bazaar committee for their dedicated service to this event, the entire church family for your support and donations, the many workers at the bazaar, all of those who prepared for and cleaned up after and everyone that attended our family-oriented, old-fashioned bazaar.

Through your efforts, we connected about 190 people to Christ as they walked through the doors, viewed our unique Nativities, visited our booths, and enjoyed our delicious meals. ***We shared our love for Jesus through our fellowship with others, which is priceless!***

We were fortunate to have a profit of \$4,500 which have been given to the following missions in our community and within our church:

Community Missions

Food Pantry:	\$750
Crisis Center:	\$750
Adonai	\$100

AUMC Missions

Network of Caring:	\$1,500
Caring Hearts Program:	\$500
Wednesday Night Fellowship	\$500
Fellowship Caf�:	\$250
Youth Programs:	\$250



The Holiday Bazaar committee has some fresh, new ideas for the 2017 Follow the Star Holiday Bazaar. We plan to have some work group projects throughout the year and would love to have more new team leaders in the coming year. We look forward to everyone's ideas and participation!

It takes a whole church family to make an event like this a success and YOU made it happen! God is Good, All the Time!!

Thank you,

Carol Brown and Ruth Dulaney

SPECIAL DAYS IN JANUARY

Where you aware that January is Eye Care Month? How about Hot Tea Month? Braille Literacy Month? Soup Month? Oatmeal Month? In addition, here are some special days in January: the 1st- New Year's Day, the 2nd- Run up the Flagpole and See if Anyone Salutes Day, the 3rd- Fruitcake Toss Day, the 4th- Trivia Day, the 5th- Bird Day, the 6th- Epiphany, the 7th- Old Rock Day, the 8th- Bubble Bath Day, the 9th- Apricot Day, the 10th- Peculiar People Day, the 11th- Step in a Puddle and Splash Your Friends Day, the 12th- Pharmacist Day, the 13th- Make Your Dream Come True Day, the 14th- Dress Up Your Pet Day, the 15th- National Hat Day, the 16th- Nothing Day, the 17th- Ditch New Year's Resolutions Day, the 18th- Winnie the Pooh Day, the 19th- Popcorn Day, the 20th- Penguin Awareness Day, the 21st- National Hugging Day, the 22nd- Blonde Brownie Day, the 23rd- Measure Your Feet Day, the 24th- Compliment Day, the 25th- Opposite Day, the 26th- Spouse's Day, the 27th- Chocolate Cake Day, the 28th- National Kazoo Day, the 29th- Puzzle Day, the 30th- Inane Answering Message Day, and the 31st- Backward Day. This month, celebrate the best, the worst, and the weirdest January has to offer!

CONFIRMATION TIME!!!

It's that time! CONFIRMATION, when young people dig into what it means to be a Christian and prepare to become full members of their church. This opportunity is for youth 7th grade and older. They will meet 7 Sunday afternoons at 1PM, starting February 12th and ending March 26th. They will meet with Rev. Mark and Melissa, learning more about what it truly means to be a Christian. There will be lots of conversation and reflection, but there will also be music videos and fun "game shows"! Then on April 2nd, they will be baptized (if they have not been), confirmed, and become full members of the church! If you have a youth who is in 7th grade or beyond, let Rev. Mark or Melissa know that you are interested in this great opportunity!!

**NEW YEAR CHALLENGE,
K4C & TAG MEMBERS--**

2017 is here, so let's think about the parts of our lives we desire to have Christ transform. I know we desire to be more like Him, and for us to become what He wants us to be, we MUST resolve to seek and glorify Him each and every day. This year, use Romans 12:2 to give you that motivation--"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will."

In His Service & Love,

Melissa Coleman

Director of Youth & Children's Ministries

ATTENTION, JR & SR HIGH!!!

Renovate is all about the heart – allowing Christ to change us from the inside out. This is a weekend discipleship retreat open to students in 6th through 12th grades, hosted at Christ Church in East Moline, for the purpose of renewing faith, opening our lives, and living out faith. It will be February 10-11th, 2017...See Melissa for more information and permission slips! It will be AMAZING!!!

OPPORTUNITY ARISES!

Our Children and Youth Programs are so much more than just classes and game times. Every Tuesday and Sunday, meals are prepared/served, and lessons are crafted to touch the hearts of every Junior and Senior High Student. WE ARE FAMILY...we look forward to every moment we have together and are grateful for any opportunity to serve. With all ages, we pray, worship, rejoice, and cry together. Like all families, we are blessed to say we are GROWING. As God expands our family, the needs for loving hands and hearts arise. We need YOU....Sunday School Teachers, Children's Church Helpers, TAG Assistants. There is a SPOT FOR YOU in this family!

THE RETURN OF WEDNESDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP!

Wednesday Night Fellowship is coming BACK from hiatus! On Wednesday, January 4th, everything starts back up! The dinners have been spectacular, the rest of the evening has been great and the fellowship has been outstanding!

The evening starts with dinner from 5:15-6PM. Then, everything else starts!! At 6PM, your choices include:

- Nursery for birth-3 years old
- FUEL for kids through 5th Grade
- Junior/Senior High Bible Study
- Rev. Mark's Bible Study class, the Gospel of Matthew (see accompanying article)
- Bell Choir
- Choir

See you on Wednesday evenings!

Thank you for the most generous contribution to the Midwest Mission Distribution Center's Endowment Fund. It is greatly appreciated. Many lives have been touched throughout the US and in developing countries around the world through shipments made from the Center. Your gift allows this work to continue. It is due to the generosity of people like you that MMDC can carry out it's mission. Thank you so much for your support!

Blessings,
Pat Wright

I want to thank the UMW for the award I received on Golden Age Sunday. I appreciate it very much, and was very honored to receive it.

Thanks again,
Katharine Jones

Thanks to everyone who has helped me at church with pushing my chair or pulling me up in it. Also, thanks for all your prayers. The feeling is back on the bottom of my feet, so they are working. It will take time to make marshmallow muscles into helpful muscles again.

Good wishes to everyone in the new year.
Erma Dobbins

Thank you all so much for all of your love, support, cards, and prayers during my recent battle with medical issues. On December 16th, I began chemotherapy for gynecological cancer through a clinical trial at Iowa City. Caring Hearts and the Christmas basket brought delicious foods.

A healthy and happy New Year to all! Your ongoing support is truly a blessing!
Bob and Mary Rillie

To Rev Mark and the carolers:

We would like to thank you all for coming to the Genesis Nursing Home under very frigid weather (-12) to sing Christmas music. The residents enjoyed the music very much, and thought you were very good. We both are residents here. We have been proud members of the Aledo Methodist Church and Monticello Methodist for over 70 years. Thanks again, and God bless you all.
Paul & Maxine Riley

The families of Clair Thompson thank you for your kind expressions of sympathy.

Thank you for the birthday wishes, and the UMW for the Christmas basket.
Verla Thompson

To my church family,
The food basket was a nice surprise and much appreciated.
The Kisling Family

Thank you so much for the Christmas wishes and gifts! I so appreciate them! It is so great to work for my Church family. I have the best job in the world!

Debbie Swank

The Churches of Mercer County Food Pantry would like to thank your church and congregation for all of your support in 2016; money, food items, and volunteers at the Food Pantry. It was all very much appreciated. May God bless you all!!

Dear United Methodist Church,

Thank you very much for donating to the Nursing Home Christmas Gift project. The staff and residents of both nursing homes greatly appreciate being remembered during this Christmas season. I appreciate that your donations helped make this another successful year. Thanks again!

Merry Christmas!
Cathy Griswold
First Baptist Church

Thank you for the nice plate of cookies and fruit. It was very appreciated. God Bless and Merry Christmas!

Tommy Greer

Many thanks to AUMC for the wonderful assortment of Christmas goodies. Also, thank you to Ruth for the delivery.

Bonnie Ricketts

I already knew how awesome our church family is. Thanks so much for our care package. Thank you isn't enough, but that is all I can think of. Blessings upon each and every one of you.

Love and hugs,
Charley & Connie Thomas



Thank you so much for the care package. It was so very thoughtful!

Love,
Jules & Mags

Dear Church family,

Thank you so much for the food. A special "thank you" to JeAnne Balmer for delivering it. We had the turkey soup that day. Very good!!

Thanks again. We appreciate it.
Curtis & Diane Richardson



JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

01/03/1998– Blair & Sara Blaser
 01/13/2005– John & Beverly Carlin
 01/18/1953– John & Frances Blick
 01/30/1988– Randy & Jennifer Mattson



UM Women Golden Age Birthdays

01/01– Jeannine Kenney
 01/10– Gloria Morgan
 01/16– Beverly Norton
 01/18– Ethel Greer
 01/27– Dee Dellitt



The deadline for the next
 Parish Visitor is
Friday, January 20th at 8am.
 Please have all articles submitted
 by this date!

THOSE WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS

Aley/infection
 Hank & Betty Allan
 Grant Anderson
 Kent Brown
 John & Bev Carlin
 Dawn Chapel
 Devan/homeless
 Jin Droste
 Erma Dobbins
 Adam Douglas
 Lindsey Ekblad
 Chris Engstrom
 Ron Engstrom
 Paul Engwall
 Sandi & Brooke Fausett
 Sonja Fell
 Feruz & family in Etheopia
 Lyn & Don Franks
 Carol Freeman
 Richard & Pat G.
 Jeff & Katrina Gerber &
 family/lost home in fire
 Ted Granquist/cancer
 Will & Bailey Greene
 Renae Haines
 Rev Mark and family
 Michael Harris

Pam Heath
 Brian Hofer
 Kathy Keller/health
 Beverly Haney
 Dalon Helm
 Keaton Helm
 Sarah & Kaleb Hiscocks
 Parker Hopkins
 Annie Inman
 Isaiah
 Julie
 Kimberly & Donny
 Aubrey King/cancer
 Megan Kleuer
 Allison Kuk
 Tiffanee Lloyd
 Austin M
 Michael Maynard
 Landon McIntosh
 Jim & Amy McWhorter
 Mick Miller
 Monica & Robert
 Tom Nees/cancer
 Bonnie Peterson
 Bill Pollock/recovery
 Bryce Rathje
 Renee Rethman/heart surgery

Dylan Reid
 Mary Rillie/health
 Ashley Schmidt
 Mildred Shoemaker family
 Nick Staves/leukemia
 Alexander T.
 Patrick Talbot
 Irvin Tharp/heart
 Kenny Tharp
 Marvin Tharp
 Annie Thirtyacre
 Clair Thompson family
 Alena Thomas/lupus
 Pam Truman/platelets
 Marilyn Wagler
 Alice Wainright
 Kathy Zimmerman
 Shut-ins/Nursing Home Resi-
 dents
 Military & families
 All ill/in hospitals
 Our nation & world
 AUMC members & families
 Mental health
 The homeless
 Unity for our country

Mercer County Schools
 Administration, Teachers, Students
 and Staff
 National and Local Governmental
 Leaders



Hello Church Family,

It was my pleasure to mail out \$100.00 in gift cards to the Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House, East St. Louis, along with a note of appreciation for all they do for the many in need in that area.

Then on Dec. 2, Rick and I were able to hand deliver \$170.00 worth of gift cards to the Cunningham Children's Home in Champaign/Urbana, again with a letter of praise and appreciation for the tireless work they do in raising and educating many children of various ages. I was greeted and thanked by Ginger, and once again invited to bring a van or bus of ladies who would like to tour their facility and campus! That being said, I am putting together a plan to offer a day trip down to do just that in 2017! More information will be forth-coming once I have accomplished this goal!

Again thank you for your generosity of giving to these very worthwhile charities! Wishing all a very Blessed New Year!

Respectfully,

Kathy Newswander ~ Liaison for LBDN House and Cunningham Children's Home



THE NURSERY

Perhaps one of the best-kept secrets at AUMC is our Nursery Program. Professionally staffed and lovingly tended, our Nursery is a great place to take your children! The main focus of our nursery is simple...care. Our goal is to provide a loving environment where the youngest among us can feel comfortable and safe. At the Aledo United Methodist Church, we truly believe that the children of our congregation are NOT simply the future of the church- they are very much an active, important part of the PRESENT of the church! We strive to take good care of them while offering them a glimpse of...THE KINGDOM!

STEPPING OUT IN FAITH

by Rev. Mark

Have you noticed how busy the church is these days? Our custodians tells me that they are having an increasingly difficult time even finding opportunities to clean because there are ALWAYS folks in the building! That is a GREAT thing! And it's great because we not simply busy for the sake of being busy. Instead, we are busy connecting people to Jesus Christ. It's the yardstick by which we measure everything we do here. As the number of ministries grows, so does the need for funding. A church that averages 280 people each Sunday in worship and continues to add a great many new ministries has a higher budget than a church that doesn't do those things.

The membership vows of the United Methodist Church challenge us to support the church through our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness. And I would argue that those are ALL important...not just the "gifts" part. The church works at its best when we lift it up through our prayers, through our presence (literally being here), our gifts (both monetary and otherwise), our service (rolling up our sleeves and being about God's business) and our witness (sharing with others the difference God has made in our lives).

In late December, you should have received a packet in the mail- a letter encouraging you to pray about your financial support of the church in 2017. I would encourage you to do just that- pray about it. Ask God how He is calling you to support your church this year. Then, on Sunday, January 15 at all 3 worship services, we will all be invited to come forward and offer our commitment to God. Great things are happening at AUMC- I'm excited to see where God takes us next! Will you join me?



CONNECTION COINS FOR JANUARY

The Connection Coins (or as Rev. Mark calls them, the “thinly-veiled Pringles cans”!) are doing great things in the life of the Aledo UMC! On the 2nd Sunday of each month, during the Children’s Moment, the ushers pass around those cans. You are encouraged to drop your change in- although we WILL accept “folding money”! And that change goes toward helping fund a ministry within the church.

This month (January 10th), the Connection Coin offering will go toward another important ministry, the HyVee bread we receive each month. The bread is free, but we reimburse the driver for gas expenses. 100% of the money that is collected in the cans on the 10th of January will be used to help cover the costs of this powerful ministry. What a GREAT way to help connect people to Jesus Christ. So bring your change on January 10th!

I HAVE A DREAM

On Monday, January 16th, we celebrate the anniversary of the birth of slain civil rights leader Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. For our kids, it's a day off from school. My experience is that for many of them, that's all it is. Why DO we celebrate this man's birthday?

Although he is often labeled as simply an advocate of African-American rights, Dr. King's message truly transcended any notion of merely being a spokesman for a particular group. His was NOT simply a message of race and color; his was a message of hope- grounded in strong Biblical principles. When he delivered what was arguably his most famous speech, he said, "I have a dream." His dream was NOT that we would let ethnicity separate us. His dream was NOT that people of a particular skin color would strike out against those of another color. His dream was NOT that children would learn to hate others because of their physical appearance. His dream was that ALL people could live together in peace and harmony, regardless of the color of their skin. When that glorious day happened, he said, we would be able to quote the old spiritual and exclaim, "Free at last. Free at last. Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

We are all unique and we are all different. That's NOT our weakness- it's our strength! Our diversity makes us strong. We are all children of God- made in His image. This month, take a moment and reflect on Dr. King. Tell your kids or grandkids about him. My prayer is his prayer- that one day we will live in a world where people aren't judged by the color of their skin, but the content of their heart.

JANUARY- A SEASON OF PRAYER AND FASTING

A great thing will happen in January! On Sunday, January 1st, 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 13th through 5PM Saturday, January 14th, we will host our 5th 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 15th, we will celebrate Commitment Sunday. In late December each household received a packet about committing our time, talent and tithes to God. On Commitment Sunday, at all three services, we will all have the opportunity to bring our Commitment Card and place it on the altar. Please keep this powerful and important time in the life of our congregation in your prayers!



WEDNESDAY NIGHT FELLOWSHIP MEAL PREPARATION

January 4, 2017

January 11, 2017

January 18, 2017– Tom King/chili & chicken noodle soup

January 25, 2017

There is funding, menus, recipes, and assistance available

ALL WE NEED IS YOU!

Contact Ruth Dulaney at 309-738-6151

C.I.A. (Caring Individual Adults) Luncheon Update

by Joanne Harris

CIA continues to flourish! This group is aimed at folks who often find themselves eating alone. This includes (but is NOT limited to) anyone who has lost their spouse, divorced or separated, or whose loved one is in the nursing home. **The CIA luncheon for this month will be on Sunday, January 22 at 11:30AM. Please plan to attend!**

Worship Tech Opportunities

Do you like electronics? Then your church needs YOU! We need people to help operate the sound system and/or the computer during Sunday 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.



Thank You! Thank You!

by Rev. Mark

On behalf of my family, I would like to thank everyone for the way you shared of yourselves during the Christmas season- the many cards and gifts we received were greatly appreciated. The Harris/Allan family feels truly blessed to serve God as a part of the Aledo United Methodist Church!

Need a ride to church?

Contact Greg Cobert at 309-737-5621, or the office at 309-582-2169 to make arrangements to be picked up.



“MAKE A JOYFUL NOISE” FINDING SPIRITUAL HARMONY THROUGH MUSIC

2017 IGRC UMW Spiritual Growth Retreat
February 24-25, 2017
Illio polis First UMC

During this retreat, we will begin to examine a variety of ways that music of all types can make our worship experience richer and more varied. We will begin to realize that we truly can find spiritual harmony in multiple expressions of love and faith.

So plan to join us on February 24-25, 2017 at Illio polis First UMC for a Friday evening and Saturday retreat with an opportunity for R, R, and F (Rest, Relaxation, and Fellowship). Doors will open at 5PM on February 24, and at 8AM on February 25. The program should be done by 3PM on Saturday. Your registration of \$20 (Retreat only) will also cover cost of lunch on Saturday. For more details, contact Sue Coons at suzcoons@aol.com, or phone 815-674-7861.

Reservation deadline is February 3, 2017. Full payment must accompany your registration form. Forms are available in the church office.

Bring your Bible, a hymnal, and your sense of adventure!

COMMITMENT IS A CHOICE

I hope that each household has received their Commitment letter sent out just after Christmas and that each of you will take the time to prayerfully consider how you can help finance the 2017 budget. Our budget is higher this year and as we continue to expand the over 60 ministries of the Aledo United Methodist Church, our financial needs will grow. At Christmas time we celebrated the gift that God gave each of us, His only begotten Son, and now is a time for us to respond to that great gift. The choice is ours to respond as God's spirit leads us. We shouldn't make a commitment out of duty or obligation, but as our heart leads us. Please help your fellow believers continue to choose to give not only to sustain the ministries we already have in place but to also expand them to connect even more people to Jesus Christ.

Ron Engstrom

Chairperson of the Finance and Stewardship Committee

FUEL- OUR WEDNESDAY NIGHT CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

by Rev. Mark

Our Wednesday Night Children's ministry- **FUEL-** is off and running. And the leadership couldn't be more excited! The emphasis is built around "Hands-On Bible". The kids have fun while they learn more about the great stories of the Bible...AND how those stories impact their lives! We are SO excited about the positive impact this ministry has on our children! If you have children or grandchildren, please consider helping them be a part of this exciting new program. If you have friends or neighbors who have kids, please invite them. Let them know that they are welcome to come for dinner at 5:15PM, stay for an adult Bible study while their kids are ministered to from 6PM to 7PM and be home, working on homework and getting everybody ready for bed, by 7:15PM!

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



**WORSHIP TIMES:
Sundays 8AM,
9:15AM, & 10:30AM
Sunday School
9:15AM**

MUSIC MINISTRY

What untapped musical gifts do YOU have? Perhaps you sing or play a musical instrument? If so, perhaps God is calling you to a greater commitment in our worship services. Here is a list of the current music ministry opportunities available:

- The 9:15AM Praise Band- Forgiven- is looking for another vocalist or two
- The Vocal Choir always has room for more singers.
- The Bell Choir is looking for more ringers, including substitutes.
- Do you play the piano? We could use your gifts!

Pray about stepping out in faith. If you feel God calling you to join the music ministry of the church, talk to Rev. Mark- stop him at church, call him at the office or e-mail him at revmark@stickwithjesus.com.



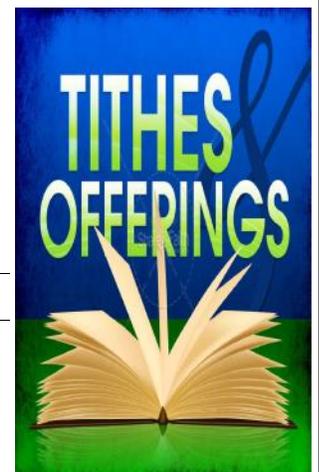
CHURCH LIBRARY

Non-Fiction Feature: The new year is a great time to try a new/different daily devotional book. Our library has several to choose from, and borrow, for men and women. "Breakfast Epiphanies: Finding Wonder in the Everyday", "Joy Breaks", and "Open the Eyes of My Heart" are just a few that are in our library. These are a great way to do devotionals at home, or on the go if need be. You can try one book for a couple of weeks, and then return it and try another one. You can use any of the book's devotions on a daily basis by following page by page, or jump around from one to the other. I hope that you all enjoy and learn from this small collection from the Church Library.

Fiction Feature: Men or women alike would enjoy getting cozy in a chair and opening a book from "The Mitford Years" series by Jan Karon. Get acquainted with the 60 year old bachelor Episcopal priest, Father Tim Cavanaugh. Meet interesting characters that attend his church and live in the mountain village of Mitford. The author has a skill of bringing us humor, along with Scripture and inspiration, in these "feel good" books. Who is Barnabas? Ever heard of Orange Marmalade Cake? You will find out in this series. Start with "At Home In Mitford" if available and you will want to read the whole set.

We will have these and some others on our feature shelf through the month of January, so check them out, and be on the look out for some improvements to the church library.

FINANCIAL MATTERS (WEEKLY NEED \$6689)



Date	12/04/2016	12/11/2016	12/18/2016	12/25/2016
Attendance	273	441	184	NA
Receipts (Toward Budget)	\$6,910.25	\$5,805.00	\$4,326.95	NA