



# First United Methodist Church

## Commerce

### Christmas edition



VOLUME 9 NUMBER 21 DECEMBER 21, 2011

**Candlelight Service**  
**December 24, 2011**

*Christmas Eve  
Worship*

*Service at 7:00pm*



**Remember those  
who may not have  
a meal on**

**Christmas Day**

*Please consider  
sharing a portion of  
your Christmas meal  
with the Meal-on-  
Wheels clients.*

*If you need  
additional informa-  
tion, please call the  
church office.*



**One Worship  
Service**

**December 25, 2011  
& January 1, 2012**

*Come as you are and  
bring the family!  
Service at 10:00am*



### **A Christmas Card From God**

My Dear Friend:

I thought I would take this time to write to you, since it is a significant season of preparation and celebration. I like to be a part of your celebrations, even though I have to send my words through messengers.

Yes – I like to be a part of your celebrations, as well as your lean and hard times. And it seems that there have been more of those lately. I've noticed that you've faced some challenges – job issues, financial issues, health issues. I've noticed that you sometimes struggle to make ends meet, and that you feel you don't have enough time to do all the tasks that you feel are important.

Just remember that I take care of little birds and flowers – they don't worry about where their next meal will come from, or how they look, because they know I'll always provide for them. And I'll do the same for you, just as I always have.

Please know that I am especially aware of your hard times – more aware of them than you'll ever know. You see, I created you. I not only know your name, but I know how many hairs you have on your head. That sounds like a cliché, but it's really true. I know every bit of code carried on your DNA, and I know what makes you unique and special.

I really delight in what makes you *you* – all your quirks, idiosyncrasies and ways of living and doing. I never get tired of you. I do sometimes think that you get tired of me, though. Excuse me for sounding a bit pitiful, but it seems that you must get tired of me from time to time. Why else would you go so long sometimes without touching base with me?

Or maybe it's not that you're tired of me, but rather that you don't know what to do with this whole messenger thing – you know, the fact that I have to use the voice of others to speak what I want spoken. True – sometimes those messengers say things I would never dream of saying. They hurt you and other people, all the while attributing their words to me. Yes – I know about them. And sometimes it makes me just want to be silent – especially when I see you go chasing after their empty words, thinking that what they're saying is true.

But don't mistake my sometime silence for lack of love. I think my silence can sometimes get your attention. And when that happens, I thrill to hear you calling me, wondering where I am. It's just such times as that – when you're wondering if I even care, or if I even exist – that my divine heart warms to your search. I find myself repeating words I've said for millennia: "I am here. I am with you. I will never leave you. I have wonderful plans for you."

But, as so often happens, even that simple message gets garbled in the translation, and I sometimes fall silent again.

Which is why I'm sending you this Christmas card. I'm trying once again to get the message to you that my love for you will never fail, and that I am continually working toward making everything – *everything* – right.

Forgive me for stating the obvious – but that's what you're preparing for this season, isn't it? The coming of my presence in a little baby who will give his life trying to make my love plain beyond doubt?

If you ever wonder what it is I'm trying to say, look at him – he got it right. What he had to say about me, and how he acted toward other people are the clearest signals I can send to let you know what my intentions and feelings are for you – endless love, compassion, healing, abundance.

Please don't ever forget this – even if it seems I've been quiet for awhile.

*Continued on the top of the next page...*

I can offer you a few suggestions, too, for remembering the message when the words seem faint. When you feel the squeeze of a hand from someone you love, remember that I am present. When you hear music that breaks your heart, remember that my voice is present in that music. When you see someone in distress and offer them compassion, remember that you are offering *me* compassion as well. When you see something beautiful in my creation that takes your breath away, know that I created that beauty for my and your delight. When you spend a little time with those scripture-words that were written long ago – so long ago that they seem distant and archaic – know that my presence will bring them to life for you again, and make those words real.

I know you are busy with your preparations, and that things aren't rosy all the time. But in the midst of all that, my friend – don't ever, ever forget, that I love you always. And don't hesitate to touch base with me – I always love hearing from you.

Merry Christmas. I offer my deep peace and presence to you –  
Love, *Your God*

*The staff at the First United Methodist Church extend our warmest wishes to you and your family for a blessed and peaceful Christmas and a very Happy New Year.*

**PRAYER LIST**

Newly Added

Riley Saulters Margaret Floyd  
Andy Martin



Continued Prayers for Church Family

Gene Casselberry Clay Yeager  
Sally Grove Judy Rudoff  
Luann Huffman Julie Wadlow  
Otha Spencer Jan Vowell  
Gary Kibler Robert Seay



Continued Prayers Family & Friends

Cheree Walker Bill Heitholt  
Olivia Holmes Jason Davis  
Louella McIntyre Sondra Feduccia  
Kay Webber Judy Greenwood  
George O'Kelley  
Jan Chapman (District Office)  
Nell Hughes (Zelda Fisher's niece)  
Becca Smith (Mike Smith's mother)  
Amy Cryon (Williams' family friend)  
Sally Rowe (Michael Rowe's daughter)  
Rose Ohsiek (Debby Heitholt's mother)  
William Durand (Eileen Faulkenberry's father)  
Norma Howser (Sarah Northam's grandmother)  
Laura Cole (Helen Cole's daughter-in-law & Judy Anderson's sister-in-law)



**Scripture Readings for the Week:**

Sunday, Dec 25	John 1:1-14
Monday, Dec 26	Isaiah 61:10-62:3
Tuesday, Dec 27	Psalms 148
Wednesday, Dec 28	Galatians 4:4-7
Thursday, Dec 29	Luke 2:22-40
Friday, Dec 30	Revelations 21:1-6a
Saturday, Dec 31	Matthew 25:31-46

**Remembering those serving in our military.**

Jason Timmons-seriously injured  
2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division  
Chief Robert Starkey-Wanda Beane's brother and Tom Starkey's son  
Chief Terry Starkey-Wanda Beane's brother and Tom Starkey's son  
Christopher Kendrick-Navy (Helen Rowe's friend)  
Jim Hunsicker (Afghanistan)-Carolyn Miller's brother  
Travis Miller-Lena Faulkner's great-grandson  
Alex Dech (Afghanistan)-Pastor Ron Dech's son  
Captain Daniel Robnett-Clyde and Wanda Robnett's grandson  
Nathan Grove  
Sgt. Stephen Smith & Denise Smith  
Col. Peter Bailey  
Lt. Col. Richard Bailey  
Lt. Col. Keith Williams  
Keith L. Boone-former Associate Pastor  
Lt. Dan Barton  
Kris Yoder-son-in-law of John & Rebecca Sneed  
Staff Sgt. Geoff Abbe & Sgt. Eric Abbe-cousins of Ladonna & Chris Patterson  
Garrett Johnson



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**Senior Pastor – Rev. Valarie Englert**

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