



First United Methodist Church Commerce

Volume 14, Issue 11

December 2016

The Children's Choir will perform Christmas program Sunday, Dec. 18 in the 10:50am service



*Candlelight
Christmas Eve
Service
Saturday, Dec. 24
7:00pm
in the Sanctuary*



One Service
December 25 @ 10am
Come as you are and bring friends to
sing carols and share the Christmas story!

Advent 2016 Poinsettias

Orders for poinsettias will be taken until
Monday, December 12th. You may take
them home after the December 24th
Candlelight Worship Service.



**Saturday, December 3
10am - 3pm**

**First United Methodist Church
1709 Hwy 24 in Commerce**



EAT! • ENJOY! • SHOP!

**Homemade Stew & Cornbread
\$5 Per Person • \$10 Quart Jars To Go**

Children's Choir Performs at Noon

**Baked Goods & Other Delights
Antiques & Vintage Finds
Christmas Decorations & Gifts
Alternative Gifts**



All Proceeds Go Directly To Missions In Commerce & Beyond

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“Why Was Jesus Born?”

By: Dr. Gregory S. Neal



Why was Jesus born? I mean, God could have worked the divine will by some means other than being born in human flesh. God didn't have to become one of us, live among us, and walk the dusty streets of life with us, in order to teach us about love, mercy, and grace. And, God certainly didn't have to show us the true depths of human sin and the enormity of Divine love by dying on the cross for our sins. God could have reached across the gulf that our sins generated between God and us and simply made things right without anyone having to die. God, being God, could have wiped out our sin, converted us into perfect, obedient children, and placed us all in paradise. Right? Yes, God could have done it. God didn't have to come as Jesus of Nazareth to die in our place.

While it is true that God could have achieved our redemption any way God desired the simple fact remains that God, being true to God's word and nature, saved us through a perfect, eternal sacrifice. God saved us the only way that God's own word would allow: God, personally, came to save us:

It was not by messenger or by angel, but by his presence, that God saved his children; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them. (Isaiah 53:9b)

God could have sent an angel to deliver us the message of divine love. God could have wiped out our sin from a distance without having to become one of us and die for our sins. But, God didn't. God's word and God's will required that: (1) God's very presence be essential in our salvation, and (2) our faith in God be freely given in response to God's gift of salvation. Sending an angel to give us a message of how to live, while wiping out our sin without any response on our part, would have invalidated God's word and will. Throughout scripture—and especially in God's willingness to strive with the Israelites even despite their idolatry and disobedience—it is clear that, like any mother, God wants her children to trust her. Theologically speaking, we failed to trust God in the Garden of Eden when we listened to the word of the serpent over the Word of God. And, so, Jesus was born to give us the opportunity and ability to love and trust God again.

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters, in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.” (Hebrews 2:12)

Here we find Scripture asserting that Jesus came into the midst of God's people and, by his very presence, proclaimed the name of God. Jesus' name (in Hebrew, Yeshua) means “Yahweh Saves,” and this is precisely what God planned to do through the incarnation, birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. As was said through the prophet Isaiah, God's presence saves us.

“I will put my trust in him.” (Hebrews 2:13a)

God wants us to live by faith; Jesus places his faith in the Father, trusting that God would honor God's word and, after the crucifixion, would raise him from the dead. Such faith is a confirmation and empowerment of our faith as Christians. We are enabled to have faith because of Jesus' own faith.

“Here am I and the children whom God has given me.” (ibid.)

To put this simply, Jesus stands with us before God the Father, and God the Father looks through Jesus and sees us as if we are as perfect as Jesus. God, in and through Jesus, bridges the gulf we have created between us.

Each of these three statements from the Book of Hebrews tells us why Jesus was born. Firstly, he was born to proclaim the very essence of God as the One who saves us. Secondly, he was born to empower our faith by placing his faith in God the Father. And, thirdly, he was born to die for us and stand with and for us before God the Father as our righteous savior.

God comes in Jesus of Nazareth to be our savior and to enable and empower our faith. No angel, no messenger, no unrelated entity could have ever done this. To accomplish these purposes, God needed to become one of us—God had to become human—so that God could experience death for us. In other words, Jesus was born to die.

To watch or listen to Dr. Neal's sermons online, go to:
www.revneal.org * www.youtube.com/revneal * www.facebook.com/RevNealVideo

FIX IT OR **LIST IT**

As I walk through this beautiful edifice we call First United Methodist Church, I see a building that is in need of repair and upkeep. There is wood eaten by termites that needs to be replaced and exterior doors that need repairs so they can fend off the summer heat, winter cold, and “critters!” There are ceilings that need to be repaired and painted, windows that need washing, carpet that needs replacing, plumbing and heating that needs to be repaired, and landscaping that needs attention.

As you read this message, you may notice that the “to do” list keeps getting longer. Your Trustees can make lists and call for professional help for many of the major repairs. What I am talking about are the projects that can be done by us, the parishioners...YOU! I would like for us, the congregation, to be on a mission. Make FUMC Commerce our mission. If you see something broken and in need of repair and you have the ability to facilitate repairs (fix it), take the initiative and accomplish the task. If you don’t have the expertise to facilitate repairs, then “list it!”

I know this sounds like a program from HGTV! But, I’m serious about this. The Trustees are not the maintenance crew. These people are on the committee because they care about this church and are willing to give of their time to ensure repairs and maintenance are accomplished. They may or may not be able to do the repairs themselves. However, if they are made aware of a deficiency, they can make the repair happen.

Therefore, the “fix it or list it” list is posted near the church office where you can list tasks you think need attention that you cannot fix yourself. The Trustees can use these lists during their stated meetings to help them in scheduling repairs and ensuring tasks are completed.

I intend to bring this subject up again with the Trustees; however, I want you, the congregation, aware of the fact that you can also “get’r done!” By fixing it or listing it, you will be pleasantly surprised at how well your church building looks.

Please use the FIX IT OR LIST IT project list posted on the bulletin board near the church office. After all, we are the congregation, and we need to take care of the Lord’s house.

Sincerely,
Pat Skauge



Pastor’s Advent Bible Study
Tuesdays 1:00-2:30pm
Dr. Neal is leading a weekly class studying
Advent and birth of Jesus (12/6, 12/13, 12/20)



The leaders and youth of Boy Scout Troop 27 and FUMC Youth took on the project of replacing the broken foot pads on the chairs in the dining room. Many of the chairs had broken or missing foot pads and could have damaged the floor had they not been changed quickly. These youth completed the project quickly and efficiently. The Trustees are very thankful for their support in accomplishing this project and want to say to these youth and leaders “thank you for a job well done”!



Community Thanksgiving Dinner

On Thanksgiving Day, over 200 people came together to enjoy a free traditional turkey dinner and share the day with others. Those who attended lingered after their meal to enjoy fellowship with those they knew and those they just met.



A HUGE thank you to all who worked to make this event a success and to all who made Drop a Dollar donations to fund the meal! Total donations were **\$1516!!** Thank you to the volunteers who made soup and pie for the dinner, the ladies of Mt. Moriah Church for preparing the sweet potatoes, and Brookshire's and Sodexo for their generous contributions to the meal. Thank you, too, to all the new and veteran volunteers, who came out Thanksgiving day to make the Community dinner a success. These folks decorated tables, worked in the kitchen to prepare food, cut and plated pies, packed to-go boxes for delivery, delivered those meals, greeted guests, manned the serving line and helped wash dishes and clean up. What a joy to see faith and service in action!



ANGEL TREE

The Angels Are Coming! The Angels Are Coming!

Believe it or not, 'tis the season when angels flock to our church as part of the Prison Ministries Fellowship Angel Tree Project, a ministry that FUMC-C has supported for 17 years. If this endeavor touches your heart, you can help by:

- adopting an angel and purchase a gift on behalf of the incarcerated parent;
- baking cookies/cupcakes for our party;
- donating materials for wrapping packages: boxes, gift bags, tissue paper, wrapping paper, tape, bows;
- coming to our party and interacting with the families;
- praying for the children, their caregivers, and the incarcerated parent.

MISSION of the MONTH

Our December Mission of the Month is Proyecto Abrigo, a nonprofit, ecumenical ministry serving the poorest of the poor who live in Tierra Nueva on the outskirts of Juarez, Mexico. Since 1996, this ministry has built over 7,000 cement block homes, two churches, a medical clinic, and a vocational school. Now the first stage of an educational cooperative is under construction to provide tutoring for children, instruction for younger children with special needs, and ELS for youth and adults!

Over the years, FUMC-C and the Wesleyan Campus Ministry have sent teams to Tierra Nueva to work under the direction of a construction maestro and alongside the family who will be blessed with the new home. We are not sending a mission team this year so our drop-a-dollar giving will be given to Proyecto Abrigo to go to work where funds are needed the most.



Proyecto Abrigo also benefits from the ongoing empty prescription bottle collection. Jan Helton regularly sends these to Proyecto Abrigo and is collecting additional healthcare items to send at the end of the December. She is seeking extra toothbrushes such as those you receive at the dentist's office, vitamins (**particularly pre-natal vitamins**), pain relievers (ibuprofen, acetaminophen, children's Motrin), cold medicines, bar soap, antibiotic ointment, bandages, etc. Please place your donations by December 31 in the bin located across from the community bulletin board between the Gathering Area and the church office. To learn more about Proyecto Abrigo, visit www.proyectoabrigo.org.

A Morning of Thanks & Giving

On the Saturday before Thanksgiving, we were blessed to distribute food baskets to 135 local families on behalf of Hunt County Shared Ministries - FISH and provide a hearty breakfast and hospitality for the community. Volunteers came together to serve from our church family, the community, the Wesleyan Campus Ministry, Omega Phi Delta, and Smile Corner. We also had the support of Texas A&M University - Commerce, which provided a forklift and operator to unload pallets of food, and of Fix & Feed, which loaned us a pallet jack to move the pallets.



Mark your calendar for December 17 when we distribute Christmas food baskets and host another pancake breakfast. Contact Angela Roberts at 972.765.6547 to sign up to



WCM Corner by Amelia de Luna-Owsley

Saturday, November 19, twenty college students associated with the Wesleyan served a pancake breakfast to members of the community along with helping to unload and distribute thanksgiving food packages provided by F.I.S.H ministry, a county wide interdenominational ministry. Around 135 families were served. As a member of the Wesleyan, it was a wonderful opportunity to engage in fellowship and give back to the community that supports us in our ministry, especially as we wrap up another semester and begin the holiday season.



FIRST THURSDAY

First Thursday
Potluck Luncheon
December 1 @ 12pm

COMMERCE CARES RECYCLE

Sat., Dec. 3 @ 9-11am
At the intersection of
Walnut and Campbell Streets

Worship

Sunday, December 4
Sunday, December 11
Sunday, December 28
Wednesday, December 24
Christmas Eve Service
@ 7:00pm
Sunday, December 25
One Service @ 10:00am
8:45am ~ Chapel
10:50am ~ Sanctuary



Holiday Office Schedule

The church office will be closed Monday, Dec. 26 through Friday, Dec. 30 for Christmas and New Year's.



Texas A&M University-Commerce
Music Department
Organ Recital
Sunday, December 4 @ 4:00pm



The TAMUC Music Department would like to express their sincere appreciation to FUMC-Commerce for our generosity in allowing their organ students to have lessons and practice at our church.



Committee Chairs

- Ad Council Chair:**
Mike Roberts (903) 886-2142
- Vice Ad Council Chair:**
Loretta Kibler (903) 886-7776
- Lay Leader:**
Carole Walker (903) 886-4450
- SPPRC Chair:**
Wes Underwood (903) 886-1503
- Trustees Chair:**
Bill Knutson (903) 456-2487
- Finance Chair:**
Gil Naizer (903) 886-1961
- FUMC Foundation President:**
Anne Mills (903) 217-2615
- Connect Team Chair:**
Susan Patton (903) 886-4612
- Grow Team Chair:**
Craig Jensen (903) 886-8713
- Serve Team Chair:**
Amy Stark (903) 246-3177
- Lay Member:**
Carole Walker (903) 886-4450
- UMW President:**
Mary Lou Heatherly
(903) 886-8381



TAMUC Department of Music Chamber Singers Holiday Concert

Sunday, Dec. 4 @ 6:00 p.m.
First Presbyterian Church,
(1216 Monroe Street)
Join us, bring friends, and
be enveloped in the spirit of Christmas!



Adult Confirmation

Congregation-Wide Confirmation Class

Once a month during the Sunday School Hour on the dates listed below. EVERYBODY is invited to join us.
Class dates: Dec. 11, Jan. 22, Feb. 26, *Mar. 26,
*Apr. 30, *May 21 (*tentative/open to adjustment).

The First United Methodist Newsletter is the official publication of FUMC Commerce. The newsletter is published at the end of the month. Inputs may be submitted to the Church office to Bonnie Smith, Communications Specialist, at communications@fumccommerce.org, or call the office at 903-886-3220. Questions may be addressed to the Church office.

****The next deadline is Monday, December 12 by 9:00am****



UMW will meet **Tuesday, Dec. 20** at 12:00pm for our covered dish holiday luncheon and Christmas carols. Our December project is gifts and donations to church special projects.

All women are invited to join us!



UMW is still collecting Box Tops for Education and Labels for Education.

In memory of...

Glenna Siebenhausen

By: Pete & Mary Smith
Cypress Bank
Susan Lampe

MEMORIALS



Attendance

	<u>Early</u>	<u>5:30</u>	<u>Late</u>	<u>SS</u>
Oct 30	33	—	148	73
Nov 3		5		
Nov 6	29	—	95	52
Nov 13	38	—	94	68
Nov 20	25	—	91	45
Nov 27	33	—	112	59



**Financial Information
General Operating Fund**

	<u>as of October 31, 2016</u>	<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Income:	\$ 33,122	\$296,038
Expenses:	\$ 36,281	\$307,555
	-\$3,159	-\$11,517

Reading the Bible Daily



As you seek to grow closer to God through daily prayer and Bible study, you may have your own favorite daily readings. If not, you will find Scriptures for each day listed below. We hope you'll read daily and ask yourself: "How will I be different today because of what I just read?" Some other questions you might ask are: What does this text say about who God is?" "What does this text say about who I am/who we are as human beings?" "What does this text say about our relationship with God?" You may want to reflect on paper with a journal or note pad. We hope this will become a part of your daily prayer time.

Daily Scripture Readings:

Thursday, Dec 1	Psalm 72:18-19
Friday, Dec 2	Romans 15:4-13
Saturday, Dec 3	Matthew 3:1-4
Sunday, Dec 4	Matthew 3:5-12
Monday, Dec 5	Isaiah 35:1-10
Tuesday, Dec 6	Matthew 11:7-11
Wednesday, Dec 7	James 5:7-10
Thursday, Dec 8	Luke 1:47-55
Friday, Dec 9	Psalm 146:5-10
Saturday, Dec 10	Matthew 11:2-6
Sunday, Dec 11	Isaiah 35:1-10
Monday, Dec 12	Matthew 1:18-20
Tuesday, Dec 13	Isaiah 7:10-16
Wednesday, Dec 14	Psalm 80:1-3
Thursday, Dec 15	Psalm 80:4-7, 17-19
Friday, Dec 16	Romans 1:1-7
Saturday, Dec 17	Romans 1:1-7
Sunday, Dec 18	Matthew 1:18-25
Monday, Dec 19	Isaiah 52:7-10
Tuesday, Dec 20	Psalm 96
Wednesday, Dec 21	Psalm 98
Thursday, Dec 22	Isaiah 9:2-7
Friday, Dec 23	Hebrews 1:1-12
Saturday, Dec 24	Luke 2:1-20
Sunday, Dec 25	John 1:1-14
Monday, Dec 26	Psalm 72:17, 10-14
Tuesday, Dec 27	Isaiah 60:1-6
Wednesday, Dec 28	Matthew 2:1-12
Thursday, Dec 29	Matthew 2:9-12
Friday, Dec 30	Ephesians 3:1-12
Saturday, Dec 31	Ephesians 3:1-12



Prayer Lists

Continued Prayers

Healing and peace for our hurting country and world
Gayle Shumate, Pat Skauge, Jean Andrews, Tom Collier, Jim Pinney (Janet Skauge's brother), Lance Thornton, Zachary Madden, Pete Smith, Jeff Helton, Steve Siebenhausen, Gladys and Jack Gray, John Walker (Nancy Doughty's brother), Cheyanne Gambrell (Ladonna & Chris Patterson's granddaughter), Jessica Lauren Coe (Diane McDowell and Susan Lampe's friend), Brad Standlee (Gene and Betty Casselberry's friend), Hugh Hanby, Charlene Stewart, Susan Andresen, Loretta Kibler, Harry Icenhower, Preston Helton (Jan & Jeff Helton's grandson), Pete Chamberlain, Jennifer Oats (Jessica Morgan's sister), Mike Coker (Harold Coker's brother), Carolyn Hofer (Becky Coker's sister), Carter James McLeroy, Gene Casselberry, Doris Kerbow, Rev. Clay Yeager, Garrett Cramer, Harold McFarland (Julia Robinson's father), Lois Cranford, Betty Morton, Robert Seay

Draughn's/Country Home Estate:

Ahtrell Dalton, Barbara Gish, Joe and Mary Louise McMahan, Edna O'Quinn, Euple Walker, and Ruth Ann White

The Haven (San Antonio): Faye Jackson

River Point (Kerrville, TX): Lucy Potts

Austin: Ruby Vander Velde

"The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective."

James 5:16

Help us hold each other in prayer by contacting the church office with new prayer concerns and updates on existing prayer requests.

If you have someone you would like to add or remove from the prayer list, please let the church office know (903-886-3220).



Remembering those serving in our military...

2nd Marine Division
Danaycurce Childress
Mike Dempsey
Col. Peter Bailey
Col. Keith Williams
Lt. Dan Barton
Sgt. Stephen Smith & Denise Smith
Josh Ham-Nadine & Clay Yeager's grandson-in-law
Tyler Craig (Afghanistan)-Brad & Vickie Boynton's son-in-law
Jim Hunsicker (Afghanistan)-Carolyn Miller's brother
Kris Yoder-John & Rebecca Sneed's son-in-law
Staff Sgt. Geoff Abbe & Sgt. Eric Abbe-Ladonna & Chris Patterson's cousins



Phone: 903-886-3220

Fax: 903-886-3240

www.fumcccommerce.org

office@fumcccommerce.org

First United Methodist Church
1709 Highway 24
Commerce, TX 75428
Senior Pastor - Dr. Gregory S. Neal

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE
NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**
Articles for the next newsletter are due
Monday, December 12 by 9:00am