

GOOD NEWS!

From *Grace*



Pastor's Corner

December 15, 2009

Stella Thornhope was struggling with her first Christmas alone. Her husband had died just a few months prior with cancer. Now, several days before Christmas, she was almost snowed in by a brutal weather system. She felt terribly alone, so much so she decided she was not going to decorate for Christmas.



Late that afternoon the doorbell rang, and there was a delivery boy with a box. He said, "Mrs. Thornhope, would you sign here?" She invited him to step inside and closed the door to get away from the cold. She signed the paper and said, "What's in the box?" The young man laughed and opened up the flap, inside was a little puppy, a golden Labrador Retriever. The delivery boy picked up the squirming pup and explained, "This is for you, Ma'am. He's six weeks old, completely housebroken." The young puppy began to wiggle in happiness at being released from captivity.

"Who sent this?" Mrs. Thornhope asked. The young man set the animal down and handed her an envelope and said, "It's all explained here in this envelope, Ma'am. The dog was bought last July while its mother was still pregnant. It was meant to be a Christmas gift to you." The young man then handed her a book, *How to Care for Your Labrador Retriever*. In desperation she again asked, "Who sent me this puppy?" As the young man turned to leave, he said, "Your husband, Ma'am. Merry Christmas."

She opened up the letter from her husband. He had written it three weeks before he died and left it with the kennel owners to be delivered with the puppy as his last Christmas gift to her. The letter was full of love and encouragement and admonishments to be strong. He vowed that he was waiting for the day when she would join him. He had sent her this young animal to keep her company until then.

She wiped away the tears, put the letter down, and then remembering the puppy at her feet, picked up that golden furry ball and held it to her neck. Suddenly Stella felt the most amazing sensation of peace washing over her. Her heart felt a joy and a wonder greater than the grief and loneliness. "Little fella," she said to the dog, "It's just you and me. But you know what? There's a box down in the basement I'll bet you'd like. It's got a little Christmas tree in it and some decorations and some lights that are going to impress you. And there's a manger scene down there. Let's go get it."

God has a way of sending a signal of light to remind us life is stronger than death. Light is more powerful than darkness. God is more powerful than Satan. Good will overcome evil. "*The people walking in darkness have seen a great light,*" the prophet said. "*On those living in the land of the shadow of death, a light has dawned*" (Matthew 4:16). There are times, in the events of the world and in the events of our own personal lives, that we feel that the light of the world will be snuffed out. But the Christmas story affirms that whatever happens, the light still shines.

In Christ,

Bro Barry



Our Deepest Sympathies.....

to the family of Morgan Kelley. She is the daughter of Mike and Jan Kelley and sister of Shannon.

To the family of Juliet Neese. She is the mother of Michelle Lester, mother-in-law of Charles and grandmother of Emily and Josh.

To the family of Alma Durham. She is the grandmother of Joel Durham, Laurie Durham and great-grandmother of Emma.

We pray for comfort in their sorrow; memories to warm them; and solace in His promise.....tho they be dead, yet shall they live.



Office Hours for Christmas and New Year's

The Church Office will be open through Christmas Eve and on Monday, December 28th. We will be closed Christmas Day and from Tuesday, December 29th until Monday, January 4th.



Your Chance to Serve

Children's Church:

December 20: Russell Clarkson

December 27: Ronnie & Michelle Prince

First Time Visitor Team:

December 20: Dr. Barry Scott

December 27: Lisa Hall

**A Report on Your Financials
Through December 13, 2009**

General Budget

Requested budget needs to date	\$563,616.50
Income to date	\$521,357.10
Expenses to date	\$483,504.52



\$5000 has been paid on our conference apportionments. We paid in full the apportionment for Lambuth and Lakeshore.

Update on Pledges for 2010

Our goal for 2010 is \$425,522

As of Tuesday, December 15, we have received:

35 pledges totaling \$324,164

18 pledged 10% or more over last year

1 increased their pledge slightly

8 remained the same as 2009; including the amount they had pledged to the building

3 pledged only their budget pledge from 2009; did not include building pledge amount

3 new pledges totaling \$18,900

2 decreased by \$2,800

Sunday, December 20

There will be two fantastic opportunities this Sunday for the Spirit of Christmas to fall upon you.

Join us at 10 a.m. for the Children's Christmas Program. Our children and Middle School Youth will lead our morning worship service.



Plan to return at 6 p.m. to enjoy our Chancel Choir as they perform "Because of Bethlehem." Following the program, a dessert reception will take place in fellowship hall.

If you are interested in being a part of the Chancel Choir program or in helping out, please read the message below.

Important information about the Adult Christmas Program

Anyone who wishes to sing in the Chancel Choir Christmas program is invited to join them! You must attend one of the two final rehearsals so you will have music and know where to stand, or, make arrangements with Mary Ann Giampapa.

Rehearsal times:

Wednesday, December 16, 6 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary

Saturday, December 19, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m. in the choir room. (There is a wedding at Grace this day so we may even end up in the fellowship hall!)

Sunday, December 20 - Please arrive at 4:50 p.m. for the final sound check and last minute rehearsals

Women: please wear all black

Men: please wear black slacks, white shirt, black tie, black shoes. (If you prefer to wear a neck tie rather than a bow tie be sure it is black).

"What can I do to help?" you ask:

1. There are still a few spots remaining for narrative readers. If you are interested, please call Mary Ann or Debbie (in the office); or send an email to: mgiamapa@usjbruins.org

2. If you can help with the dessert reception, please call Mary Ann at 616-3652, we need you! Decorations will be ready and everything will be set up. We need some hands to make sure the coffee, water, forks and plates are restocked. Please arrive 30 mins. early and make sure everything is ready and running smoothly. **You will be able to see the entire program.**



3. Ushers are needed to hand out bulletins and make sure seating is taken care of (always expect that record breaking crowd!)

4. Singers - it is not too late. Come and join us - we will make it work. Having you sing with us is **so much more important than anything else!** This musical is open to 7th graders through 93 years of age. If you fall in that group - we will see you on Wednesday! If you can't be there Wednesday, **please** call Mary Ann so she can plan for your music and stage placement!

5. Bring your favorite dessert!



WAG ~ January 6, 2010

Wednesday's at Grace (WAG) will resume January 6th. We will be welcoming the Weathersbee Family and Carole is planning a Grace favorite ~ Mexican Night!



A lot of fun is being planned that you won't want to miss!

If you aren't on the standing reservation list, call Debbie in the church office (664.9118) for your reservation. Cost: \$7 per adult; \$4 per child 11 years of age and under with a \$25 max. per family.

Please call Debbie to volunteer to take up the money each month. It doesn't take much time and you can enjoy fellowship with members and visitors! We need to schedule someone for January 6th as soon as possible. Thanks!

Happy December Birthday!

Brenda Austin	12/3
Lauren Pitcairn	12/5
Emily Kuper	12/5
Leslie Haines	12/12
Harper Head	12/14
Scott Melton	12/18
Keith Hopper	12/20
Ted Welch	12/21
Mike Johnson	12/23
Tatum Parimore	12/23
Deborah Holmes	12/29
May Wheeler	12/30
Mike Kelley	12/31
Hope Scott	12/31

Happy January Birthday!

Cheryl Bowers	1/5
Lauren Gardner	1/7
Jackson Ashbaugh	1/10
Andrew Moore	1/13
Skylar Strube	1/13
Joy Lanoue	1/15
Samantha Strube	1/15
Lynn Woodside	1/16
Will Hall	1/17
Kara Crowther	1/17
Kevin Perry	1/19
Bill Hall	1/19
Austin Rolison	1/19
John Giampapa	1/20
Connor Simmons	1/21
Sylvia Evans	1/23
Tyler Frye	1/23
Isaac Weathersbee	1/23
Will Weathersbee	1/23
John Neblett	1/24
Terry Kuper	1/24
Jack Edwards	1/24
David Dietrich	1/29
Chris Amick	1/31

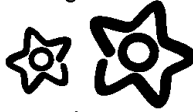
Kids Page

STAINED-GLASS STAR COOKIES

These star cookies will remind you of the star that led the Magi, or wise men, to our Lord Jesus. Enjoy these treats for yourself or give them as gifts.

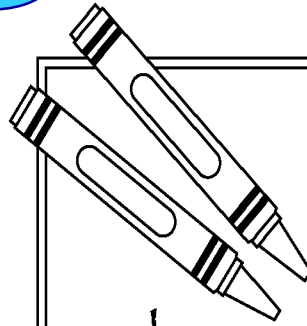
What you need:

- An adult to help
- 3 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup (2 sticks) margarine or butter, softened
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- Plastic wrap
- Hard candy such as Life Savers in assorted colors
- Zippered baggies
- Rolling pin
- 2 star cookie cutters, one much smaller than the other
- Aluminum foil



What you do:

1. Mix the flour, baking powder and salt together.
2. Cream the sugar and butter. Add the eggs and vanilla.
3. Add the flour mixture and beat until well blended.
4. Divide the dough into four equal pieces. Wrap each piece in plastic wrap and refrigerate for about 30 minutes.
5. Separate candies by color and place each color in a sealed, zippered baggie. With a rolling pin, crush candy into small pieces (not a fine powder).
6. One at a time, roll out each chilled dough piece on a well-floured surface.
7. Use the large cookie cutter to make stars, and then place them on a foil-lined cookie sheet. Then press the small star cookie cutter into each large star and remove the small piece of star-shaped dough.
8. Place some crushed candy in each star-shaped hole.
9. Bake at 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown. (The candy will melt and be translucent when cooled, like a stained-glass window.)



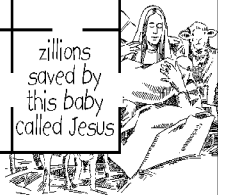
Just for **KIDS**

The Story of Jesus' Birth

Jesus' birth is recorded in three New Testament chapters: Matthew 1 and 2, and Luke 2. Follow some important words about our Savior's birth by starting at a word beginning with the letter **A** and finishing with a word starting with the letter **Z**.



angels	Bethlehem	car	dance	easel
cat	bear	child	donkey	egg
fast				
holy	glory	flocks	Earth	feathers
gap				
inn	jacket	grapes	peace	quiet
hat				
Joseph	king	Lord	only	righteous
shepherds				
kelp	loop	Mary	night	unique
tidings				
last	maze	paper	wise men	virgin
water				
open	nest	word	excitement	young
zillions saved by this baby called Jesus				



Answer: angels, Bethlehem, child, donkey, Earth, flocks, glory, inn, Joseph, king, Lord, Mary, night, only, peace, quiet, righteous, shepherds, tidings, unique, virgin, wise men, excitement, young, zillions (saved by this baby called Jesus)

Calendar of Events

Friday, December 18

Room In the Inn

Saturday, December 19

9:00 a.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Sunday, December 20

9:00 a.m. Sunday School
10:00 a.m. Worship ~
Children's Christmas Program
11:15 a.m. F.O.C.U.S.
5:00 p.m. Youth Praise Band/Open Gym
5:30 p.m. Youth supper
6:00 p.m. Youth program
6:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Christmas Program
"Because of Bethlehem"
Dessert reception following in Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, December 22

1:00 p.m. Women's Study Group

Wednesday, December 23

7:00 p.m. Choir/Praise Team Rehearsal

Thursday, December 24

5:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service
(The Church Office will be open today)

Friday, December 25

May the love
found in the manger
remain in your hearts
and may you have
a blessed and merry
Christmas!



Sunday, December 27

9:00 a.m. Sunday School.
10:00 a.m. Worship
11:15 a.m. F.O.C.U.S.

Monday, December 28

Church Office is open

Tuesday, December 29

**Church Office will be closed
the remainder of 2009**

Friday, January 1, 2010

You are wished
God's blessings
for a safe and
happy new year!



Good News from Grace United Methodist Church
is available on the website at www.graceumcjackson.org or by e-mail.
Please send your e-mail address to dcolgrove@graceumcjackson.org
if you wish to receive this publication.



A mighty message

When Charles Wesley wrote "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" in 1739, he had the angels proclaim: "Glory to the newborn King; peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!" And what did Wesley think should be the consequences of that message? "Joyful, all ye nations, rise." The Prince of Peace had come. "Light and life to all he brings." "Born that we no more may die; born to raise us from the earth, born to give us second birth. Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to the newborn King!" When Wesley wrote that hymn, England was going through a desperate, hopeless time. Unemployment, poverty, illness, alcoholism and crime were widespread. Wesley and his brother, John, believed the answer for their nation was Christ's life-changing message. Changed lives would bring a changed nation.

Wesley's Christmas song rang true: "Light and life to all he brings." Some historians have written that England didn't have a revolution (as did France) mainly because of the message the Wesley's preached and sang.