

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

DECEMBER 27, 2010

“I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord,” says Isaiah, the prophet. “I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord and the praiseworthy acts of the Lord because of all that the Lord has done for us” (Isaiah 63:7a). Isaiah is obviously looking back as do we when we come to the end of another year, and we are fast coming to the end of year 2010.

In my younger days when I listened to the radio more than I do now, I can recall hearing disc jockeys playing the hit tunes of a particular year in the last week of that year. It was a kind of looking back on the year that had just been in terms of the hit songs of that year. That, of course, was before we had radio stations dedicated completely to playing “oldies but goodies” as standard fare.

It never hurts us to look back. In fact, we need to look back every now and again. For one thing it can bring a smile to our faces to remember the good things of the previous year. Those memories can be a source of joy for us, and those memories of good things can also help to propel us into the future with hope. As things have been in the previous year so will they be, hopefully, in the coming year.

Another reason for Christians to look back is to as Isaiah says, “recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord.” Where have we seen God’s grace touching our experience in this past year? When we can recall those things, we find a sense of joy and hope and a renewed assurance of God’s presence with us. As God has been with us, so will God be with us in the future. That’s the promise of the resurrection of Jesus. That’s a part of what we call the good news of the gospel.

As I look back at year 2010 in the life of our church I find myself smiling. I believe that God has been very gracious to us in this past year. God has graced us with some new faces in our congregation, and God has graced us with some whose faith seems to have been renewed. Even though the times are difficult economically we seem to be holding our own pretty well. I wish things could be a little easier for us financially, but they are not, and still in the midst of it all God has blessed us. We can indeed recount the gracious deeds of the Lord. We are poised to celebrate the retiring of the debt on the CLC, and in retiring that debt I think we can look forward to doing some new things in the future. It’s like we are released from the old to start the new.

So yes, like Isaiah we can recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord.” And out of that we can move into the coming year with renewed expectation, vigor, and hope. Recounting those gracious deeds can help propel us forward in faith.

But there is another side to this looking back also. As I look back over 2010 in my personal life, especially the last six months of the year, what I see is not necessarily the best of times. Health issues have left me not feeling as well day by day as I would like to feel, but through it all, even when I felt pretty discouraged, I have had the assurance that the Lord is with me. And hopefully God is not finished with me yet in pastoral ministry. I say this to say that in the midst of difficult times we can still “recount the gracious deeds of the Lord,” and we can have the assurance that God is

with us. And this too adds to our hope for the future.

So as we come to the close of this year numbered 2010 I would invite each of us to “recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord” both in our own personal lives and in the life of our church. And in so doing may we find a renewed joy, hope, and enthusiasm for the future. After all in this season of the year we are celebrating God coming in Jesus who is known as Emmanuel or “God with us,” and we are moving into that part of the church year known as Epiphany which is about the manifestation of God to us and among us. So we look to the past with appreciation and joy because God has been with us, and we look to the future with hope and enthusiasm because we believe as Christians that God will be out there in front of us to meet us when we get there.

So let us in this closing week of this year “recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord.” And there I think we will find grace upon grace, and there I think we will also find hope to lead us into the new year. Just something to think about as we conclude the old year and move into the new.

Just something to think about.

Bro. Jim

A NOTE OF THANKS

I wish to thank all those who participated in the Happy Elders lunch on December 16th. It was a great success. We delivered 19 meals and 1 request for juice (due to a fluid only diet). With a special thanks to Bro. Jim for our Christmas prayer which was included in each meal.

Over the past year I have come to appreciate these wonderful senior citizens. They have told me many times how they look forward to our great generosity of wonderful food. They say they know they are not forgotten and feel loved very much from our church fellowship.

This coming year Barbara & Bruce Edwards have graciously accepted to take over the responsibility of our ‘Happy Elders’ shut-in lunches for the Age Level Ministry. I personally want to thank them and all of the volunteers that have helped over this past year. Let’s have this coming year be even better.

May God bless you all. Words cannot express our feelings of how thankful we are for be in service to our ‘Happy Elders’ senior children of God.

Joyce Holmes

NEWS FROM THE ALDERSGATE CLASS

The Aldersgate Sunday school class may be the youngest in church-in spirit. The class, made up of senior couples and singles, enjoys time together on service projects, Bible study and social outings. They recently made their annual donation to local charities, including the Shelter, A Kid’s Place, Spirit of Santa, Santa for Seniors, the Safe and Smart program and East End Kids, for a total of \$600. They have recently completed a study of two books by Dr. James Moore on Christian Living and character, and are not studying the regular Adult Bible Study series. Aldersgate welcomes anyone who does not already attend a class to join us.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

T. J. Moore - December 27

Brenda Gardner - December 28

Addison Potts - December 31

Jerry Moore - December 31

NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

A new Sunday class is forming. **Beginning this Sunday, January 2nd**, a new class for 20’s and 30’s will meet upstairs in **Room 209**. Judy Benson will be the leader. If you are interested and want more information, contact the church office at 762-3696.

WITH ONE ANOTHER

- David Robertson
- Freddie Mae Jackson
- Scottie McMackin
- Jean Cone
- Scott Dean
- George Clark
- Kelsey Gobble
- Kelsey Egly
- Justin Mitchell
- Selene Crews
- Jane Marston
- Buddy Gibbs
- Kenneth Williams
- Bea Thigpen
- Byron Shelton
- Peggy Cooke
- Laura Kitchens
- Rob Raymond
- Margie Mann
- Agnes McCarter
- Ray McCarter
- Allen Smith & Family
- Kaye Price
- Don Grimsley (home now)
- Frank Lumpkins

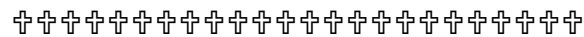
...We extend our love and sympathy to Virgil Crowder and his family. Virgil's sister (Frances Crowder Nelson) passed away on Christmas Eve. Graveside services for Mrs. Nelson were Thursday at Mimosa Cemetery.

CHRISTIANS CONNECT
JANUARY - 9, 2011

Christians Connect will meet on Sunday, January 9, 2011. The host will be announced in Sunday's bulletin. Christians Connect meets every 2nd Sunday of the month, following the 8:15 a.m. service in the Friends & Fellowship classroom. Please join us for fellowship and a snack.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH VOLUNTEERS

All Children's Church volunteers are asked to stay for a meeting with Alecia following the 10:30 a.m. service this Sunday.



**I Will Be Loyal
To The United Methodist Church And
Support It With: My Presence:
Sunday, Dec. 26, 2010**

- 8:15 a.m. Worship Attendance.....14
- Sunday school Attendance.....32
- 10:30 a.m. Worship Attendance.....51

My Service: Sunday, Jan. 02, 2011

Acolytes: Maggie McKnight & Addison Potts

Communion Helpers: Kamelia Wayne & Lucy Benson

Nursery Volunteer: Carol Beasley

Children’s Church: Layde Ezell & Penelope Kirby

Loaves and Fishes

Tues. Jan. 4: Linda Newton, Ray Price Martha Jo & Jerry Gibbs

Thur. Jan. 6: Anita Johnston, Jean Robertson, Martha Jo & Jerry Gibbs

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY NEW
YEAR!

