A Taste of What’s Inside

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Mark Your Calendar

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3 Youth Christmas Party, Dec. 16
4 Light-a-Light deadline, Dec. 20
5,6 Carols of the Bells, Dec. 20
6, 7, 8 Blue Christmas, Dec. 22
7 Christmas Eve Worship, Dec. 24
8 District Leadership Training, Jan. 10
9 College Scholarship Deadline, Jan. 4
9 Newsletter Deadline, Jan. 11

Mission Statement:
First United Methodist Church is a loving, supportive family of faith working together to share God’s love.

Contact Us
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One of the traditions of our Christmas season began in legend back several hundred years ago. It seems that there was a young peasant girl by the name of Maria, or Pepita, depending on who is telling the story. Pepita / Maria had it in her heart to honor the Baby Jesus at Christmas. In the tradition of the church in her town in what is now Southern Mexico, believers were encouraged to bring lavish gifts and lay them at the feet of the little Lord as he lay quietly before the altar of the cathedral which dominated the center of her home town.

Well, owing to her place in life, Pepita / Maria had no resources and therefore nothing even remotely of value to bring to present as a love offering fit for the King of Heaven. She considered some options and finally decided that the situation was hopeless. That is . . . until an angel of the Lord appeared to her with a solution to her dilemma. Our young heroine was instructed to gather weeds from along the side of the road and then bundle them up and bring them at a specific time, when no one would normally be in the church, and set them down in the midst of the other gifts. As she did so her little handful of common weeds were transformed into what is today known in her native Mexico as “Flor De Noche Buena.” Translated this means “The Flower of Christmas Eve.” Those who entered the sanctuary on the day following were overwhelmed and amazed.

(Please see Pastor’s Letter, page 7)
WE SHOW OUR LOVE

By Our Prayers . . .

family of Patricia Bogue, Elaine Carter, Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy McEachern, Barbara Fix, family of Linda Hunt, family of Kyle Mayfield, Kim Mullins, Robert Stracener, Betty Wallace, Loyce Williford

Remember ongoing prayers for loved ones with serious illnesses, our shut-ins, family and friends in the military service and the leaders and staff of our church and our country.

Remember to check our Web Site for up-to-the-minute prayer requests.

Prayer Ministry

Don’t worry about anything; instead pray about everything; tell God your needs, and don’t forget to thank Him for His answers. -- Philippians 4:6

Submit requests to Church’s web page:
www.gilmer-fumc.com
Or Call: Church Office – 903-843-2610
Jane Wilson – 903-725-6848

Putting Our Beliefs Into Action

Thanks to the generosity of our members, this year’s annual Holiday Food Drive was again a success. Donations were made which allowed 50 boxes at Thanksgiving and another 51 will be given at Christmas. Special thanks go to the Clothes Closet group for their generous donation. Thanks also to the children who provide special Thanksgiving and Christmas cards with creative artwork.

Steve Nye

Poinsettias for the Church

Because of the difficulty of maintaining fresh poinsettias during the entire season of Advent and Christmas, this year we will be using silk poinsettias. As in the past you may purchase a poinsettia In Memory or In Honor of loved ones. An information form will be in the bulletin.

Deadline for inclusion in the bulletin insert is Sunday, December 20th

Our Worship Service is broadcast on ETEX, Channel 999, Sunday, 6 p.m. and Monday, 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Our Deepest Sympathy to...
the family of Linda Hunt
Hello everyone!

Just a friendly reminder that the youth will have our annual MYF Christmas party Wednesday, December 16th. The party will go from 6:00-8:00 p.m. and will be held in the Christian Life Center. We usually do a gift exchange in which each individual is responsible for bringing something but this year we are just asking everyone to only bring items to donate to Newgate Mission (socks, gloves, toboggans, etc.). We are doing finger food so if you would like to pitch in and bring your favorite snack/finger food you are more than welcome to. Hope to see everyone there!

Also a reminder that the youth will not meet for MYF on Wednesday December 23rd or December 30th. MYF will resume again on Wednesday January 6th. Everyone have a safe and Merry Christmas!

Matthew

Christmas time is here! The children had a great time at the Puppet Christmas performance. I hope everyone’s Christmas is filled with love, joy and giving. The New Year is just around the corner, and I look forward to another exciting year with each of you.

Mrs. Chandra
A Christmas Tradition
LIGHT-A-LIGHT CELEBRATION

As part of our Advent celebration in preparation for Christmas, lights will be added to an undecorated, undecorated Light-a-Light tree in the sanctuary “in honor of” or “in memory of” loved ones. You can also add a “thinking of you” light or a light as a “birthday present to Jesus.” The lights will vary in price as follows:

- Gold $50
- Green $25
- Blue $10
- Red $2 (given by children under 18 only)

Your gift will be listed in the December bulletin insert. In addition, a gift notification card can be mailed if the honoree will not see our bulletin insert.

☐ Yes, I would like to light a light on the Christmas tree to celebrate Jesus’ birthday!

Note: Complete a separate designation for each light. Use additional forms, if needed.

Light #1: ☐ Gold  ☐ Green  ☐ Blue  ☐ Red
☐ In memory of  ☐ in honor of  ☐ thinking of you  ☐ birthday present to Jesus

Person’s name as you want it listed in the bulletin: __________________________________________
☐ Please mail a gift card to: ☐ No gift card needs to be mailed.

Name: __________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________
City, State, Zip: __________________________________________

Light #2: ☐ Gold  ☐ Green  ☐ Blue  ☐ Red
☐ In memory of  ☐ in honor of  ☐ thinking of you  ☐ birthday present to Jesus

Person’s name as you want it listed in the bulletin: __________________________________________
☐ Please mail a gift card to: ☐ No gift card needs to be mailed.

Name: __________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________
City, State, Zip: __________________________________________

Print your name as you want it printed in the bulletin and on gift card, if applicable:

__________________________________________

Amount attached: _______________________

Watch Our Tree Glow as it Grows with Gifts of Love

Deadline for inclusion in the bulletin insert is Sunday, December 20th
Family Wreath Making (left and above)

Millie and Verlon and family

Senior Friends Luncheon

Senior Friends (above), and Christmas Cantata (right)
As Christmas draws nearer our services here at FUMC, Gilmer, are continuing to point toward the wonder of the birth and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Our service for December 20, focuses upon the scripture from Luke 1: 26-38 (the story of Mary). Our sermon title is “The Right Gift at the Right Time.” The hymns for the morning will be “Hark! the Herald Angels Sing,” “People Look East” and “Joy to the World,” all from The United Methodist Hymnal. We welcome Shelbi Herndon, vocal performance graduate student at The University of Indiana, to our service. Shelbi will be singing Schubert’s “Ave Maria” for the offertory. The traditional Latin text to “Ave Maria” is taken from Luke 1: 26-38 when the angel Gabriel first appeared to Mary and proclaimed, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be called the Son of the Most High.” (NIV) The Chancel Choir will be singing “A Joyful Magnificat” by Joseph Martin featuring Lauri Woodson as soloist.

“Carols of the Bells” the evening service on December 20, will be a concert presented by Jubilation Bells, Trinity Jubilation, and Buzzy Green, soloist. Beginning at 6:00 p.m. the bells will present a program of carols and songs of Christmas followed by a reception of Gingerbread and Wassail in the Fellowship Hall.

On December 22, a “Blue Christmas” service will be held at 6:00 p.m. This service of spiritual healing focuses upon the comfort and joy of God’s grace during a season in which many are experiencing loneliness and grief. This is truly a service for all of us, church family and guests alike. This beautiful service is one which will touch hearts with the warmth of Christ’s love and inner joy of the Holy Spirit!

Our Christmas Eve service of Holy Communion and Carols of Christmas is a service for all of our church families and guests! Beginning at 6:00 p.m. all will find a true worship experience in the candle-lit warmth of the beautiful sanctuary of First United Methodist Church. Our soloist for the evening will be Cori Beasley, who will be home from The University of Alabama where she is a graduate student studying vocal performance. Cori will be singing “What Child Is This? Emmanuel!” by Meredith Ryan Taylor.

Our morning service for December 27, is focused upon scripture from Luke 2:41-52. Reverend Laster’s sermon title is “Precious Little Fellow.” Our hymns include “Sing We Now of Christmas,” “Love Came Down at Christmas,” and “Go, Tell It on the Mountain.” The Chancel Choir will be singing, “A Child, A King” by Schram and Staggers.

In this season we pray that you will find Peace and Joy in your knowledge and faith in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior! Merry Christmas!

In Christ’s love,

Lora
**Pastor’s letter**  continued from page 1

Now it doesn’t take much more than a few moments to translate that original legend into what we know today as the Poinsettia. Of course legends are as they are. But for my purpose at this writing, I will embrace that cultural interpretation at least enough to say that Christmas remains a time of amazement and miracles. For example, we still embrace the words of a variety of angels who, according to the Gospels, came to those directly involved with the good news of Jesus’ birth.

I can’t speak specifically to the creation of “The Flower of Christmas Eve” but I can say that it is one of the many signs which have come to our traditional table of the season, to aid us in remembering how special the time is. And how the sights, sounds, tastes, and smells we encounter form memories which help us move through Advent with thanksgiving and expectation.

My prayer is that we all experience a holy and blessed Advent and a most joyful Christmas day.

Regards and God Bless . . . Richard

"Friends are the family you find along the way." And that’s the way I feel about you. Thank you for joining us to celebrate my 90th birthday last Sunday.

It was a very blessed occasion. Thanks to those who helped our kids serve the meal and clean up.

With our love,

Millie and Verlon and family
Mission and Vision
2016 North District
Leadership / Training Event
Sunday, January 10 from 2 to 5 p.m.
First United Methodist Church
of Marshall, Texas

Every year our own North District, Texas Conference, United Methodist Church, provides a marvelous leadership / training event. This creative time of exploration and learning is open to anyone and everyone in the district. This year’s opportunity is titled: “Mission and Vision.” The team responsible for its planning worked to provide diverse material, to do their best to offer a variety of points of inspiration and edification.

The following will be offered in one hour class sessions designed to “whet-your-appetite.”

- **Stewardship Ideas from Heartspring Foundation** . . . offered by C. J. Taylor, a pastoral member of the Texas Conference who serves as CEO of Heartspring
- **RUTH; The Lord Enabled Her** . . . a study in character offered by Melissa Crawford, a teacher and pastor of Reeves Chapel UMC
- **Tools for Dealing with Change** . . . offered by Gayla McNatt of Samaritan Counseling Services. First UMC Gilmer folk may remember Gayla because for several years she used our location for counseling work on Tuesdays
- **Puppets for Jesus** . . . offered by our own Babs Crombie along with Raymond Sorrells
- **Forever Blessed: Children’s Ministry Beyond Sunday Morning** . . . offered by Nathan Firmin, Associate Pastor, First UMC, Longview
- **The Role of the Staff Parish Committee** . . . offered by our beloved, and soon to retire, District Superintendent, Bill Taylor
- **Discipleship Ministries** . . . offered by Ricky Ricks, pastor of Greggton UMC
- **Missions Opportunities for United Methodists** . . . offered by Marty Vaughan, lay member of the Waskom United Methodist Church and part of the Texas Conference Mission ministry team
- **Creating a Local Church Safe Sanctuary Policy** . . . offered by George Kezerle, layperson from Longview

Your pastor, who happens to serve as the coordinator of this event, encourages Gilmer FUMC members and friends to attend. There is much here for Christian growth and understanding.

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On Tuesday, December 22 at 6 p.m. in our sanctuary we will again offer our Blue Christmas service.

Since Christmas can be a time for many who are in need of reassurance and comfort; grieving over the loss of a loved one, struggling with illness, or have experienced the loss of a job, this is a time to know the comfort of God as we wonder how we can get through the holidays.

There are many moments in our lives when we need comfort - tough times when we yearn for consolation. The suffering people who looked for the long-awaited Messiah were given a hope-filled image of God in the writings of Isaiah expressing a belief that no matter what happens to us, God will be there to comfort and support us. “Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people,” says our God.

If you or friends are looking for comfort, hope, wholeness, and renewal, join us for a time of quiet reflection and meaningful words and music. All shared in the good news of “God with us: Immanuel!”

Annette Breazeale

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The next newsletter will be sent on January 15th; there will not be a January 1st issue.
Flowers for …
December 6  Rob and Lora Robison
December 13  Melvin and Jo Reynolds
December 20  Sarah Greene
December 27  Fred and Jennifer Anderson

Lay Readers …
Fred and Jennifer Anderson

Greeters …
Rick and Jan Lively

The Sanctuary Flowers for…
November 29 were given by Judy Avery in memory of Will Avery.
December 6 were given by Rob and Lora Robison in honor of Bill Marshall, Organist and in honor of Annette Breazeale, Pianist.

Deadline for Newsletter Articles…
January 11, Noon

Puppets for Jesus
by Babs Crombie

All the STARS were in the sky shining their brightest. The SUGAR PLUM FAIRY, TOY SOLDIER, RUDY REINDEER, GOODIE GIFT BOX, and SANDERS the ELF who were looking for the star have all gone back to the workshop. It was an amazing night of "magical fun" and puppets and left the audience with a warm Christmas feeling inside. Santa, Mrs. Claus and his pixie elf were all wonderful and entertained the many children lined up, and checked the "Good Boys and Girls" List by his chair to make sure their names were on the list.

We want to say "Thank You" to all who attended our 13th annual Christmas puppet musical. There was wonderful attendance and we appreciate all who supported our ministry. The hot cocoa and cookie table was a huge success and I want to say "Thank You" to all who made it look so delicious and inviting to our guests.

Our "littlest puppeteers" of the night were a huge hit of the performance! "Thank You" to Jacob Fenlaw for playing the Moon, Bre Reynolds for playing the Angel, Sam Sorrells, JT Robison, and Kendall Ingram for playing the Three Wee Wise Men. You all were wonderful!

There are many people and things that all have to work together to make each performance a success. I want to say "THANK YOU" to the following: Jeff, Ray and Nick Sorrells; Mimi Ross; Adam, Ben, Joseph, and Jacob Fenlaw; Tessa Betterton; and Ceci Crombie of the puppet team. Dolly Robison, Chandra Sorrells, Lamon Geddie, and to everyone who furnished the delicious cookies. Penny Taylor, Jennifer and Fred Anderson for their magical night of fun. Marcus and Matthew Smith for their audio and technical support, and all the FUMC staff for all their assistance.

Just a reminder that the team will resume their regular meeting on January 3rd at 2:00 in the CLC. On behalf of the Puppets for Jesus team and directors, we want to wish you all a very blessed Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2016!!

Blessings,
Babs

College Scholarship applications are now available on the table outside the church office. If you have graduated from high school, are continuing your college education, and are a member of FUMC, please stop by and pick up an application. The deadline for submission is Monday, 5:00 p.m., January 4, 2016. If you have questions or need additional information, please call Carol in the church office at 903-843-2610.

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