

The Witness

Volume 10, Issue 26

December 17, 2009



Christmas Eve Service - 6:00 P.M. - Candlelight Service

Communion will be served by intinction and by traditional method.

First Sunday After Christmas Day - December 27th

No Sunday school

10:00 - One Worship Service



*From the Clergy and Staff
Of
First United Methodist Church*



Jesus' Birthday Celebration

December 20th during Sunday School (9:45) at the Mattie St. house. All adult classes are also invited to join the children and youth's celebration.

Church Office Holidays

The church office will be closed the following days in celebration of Christmas: **Thursday, December 24th; Friday, December 25th; Monday, December 28th.** New Year holidays will be **Thursday, December 31, 2009 and Friday, January 1, 2010.**

Administrative Council Meeting

The FUMC Administrative Council will meet **Monday, December 21st at 6:30 p.m.** at the home of Richard and Lyn Easley, 635 Whiteoak Dr.

Nursery for this meeting/Christmas gathering will be provided at the Mattie Street house.



Special Gifts

The following special gifts have been made to First United Methodist Church:

In Memory of:

- **Marilyn Lobell** by George & Nolia Davis; George & Marlene Milton; Margarine Smith
- **Nathan Crawford** by Margarine Smith
- **Fred Smith** by Margarine Smith
- **Gaye Wainwright** by Margarine Smith
- **J. S. Jackson** by Minnie Allen
- **Steve Thompson** by Reggie & Sylvia Arnold
- **Jimmy Tripp** by Reggie & Sylvia Arnold
- **Ray Davis** by Mrs. Jenny Davis
- **Danny Cameron** by Bobby & Donna Welch
- **Brent Bencaz** by Bobby & Donna Welch

In Honor of:

- **Joyce Annison** by Jackie Strickland
- **Wally Waldrep** by Bobby & Donna Welch
- **Tee's Electric** by Lela Alexander
- **Annison-Bitter Heating & AC** by Lela Alexander
- **Chancel Choir, Bell choir, Children's Choir, and instrumentalists** by Diane Boso

Local Missions Update

Emergency Food Pantry

Our Food Pantry has been very busy all during 2009. We are grateful to everyone who has participated by volunteering their time or by donating food or money to help provide essential items to those in need. In November, the Food Pantry helped 77 families (270 individuals) and provided 19 Bibles. **Our projected total for 2009 is 875 families (3,035 individuals) and 237 Bibles.** These totals show a continued increase in number of families helped, as indicated by the following figures:

- During 2008, 623 families (2,116 individuals) were helped;
- During 2007, 555 families (1,863 individuals) were helped; and
- During 2006, 486 families (1,582 individuals) were helped.

Community Relief

During 2009 FUMC has spent **\$113,730.62** to help **204 people** through its **Community Relief** program. This includes helping needy individuals with shelter, utilities, gas transportation, water bills, and prescriptions.

Staff Love Offering

This year we would again like to honor the entire staff of FUMC for their commitment to serving this church throughout the year. The SPR Committee will be accepting monetary gifts for the annual Staff Love Offering. If you want to make a contribution, please mark your gift "Staff Love Offering" and place it in the collection plate or give it to any SPR member.

Undecorating the Church

On Monday, January 4, 2010 beginning at 9:00 a.m. we will remove the seasonal decorations from the sanctuary. Everyone is invited to help!!

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

Words are inadequate to thank each of you for your generous donations and to those who so graciously bought gifts for our Christmas Needy Children. We were able to give bicycles, clothes and toys to sixty-one children, and each of you helped make this Christmas a truly memorable one for these needy families. Our grateful appreciation to you, and may you have happy, blessed holidays.

Joyce and Jeannette



GIFT-WRAP FOR HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

Habitat will be wrapping gifts at Barnes & Noble Bookstore, 2590 Citiplace Ct. as a fundraiser on Friday and Saturday: Dec. 18 and 19 from 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. If you **don't want to wrap gifts and want to help Habitat** – go to Barnes & Noble off I-10 at the College exit, right on Corporate and right on Citiplace. **Volunteer** gift-wrap helpers are still needed at some time slots. If you can help during any of this time period (even 1 hour), email Erin <erin@habitatbrla.org>

90 SECONDS FROM YOU = \$1 for HABITAT

Kohler (sinks, faucets, toilets, bathtubs) will donate \$1 to Habitat International for each person that completes the Kohler water conservation survey at <www.SaveWaterAmerica.com> The survey only takes about 90 seconds to complete. Please consider taking the survey and asking friends to take it as well.

HABITAT CHRISTMAS WISH-LIST

Habitat needs a few items to help fulfill our mission: End Poverty Housing. If you would like to donate items to Habitat for Christmas Wish-List, contact Erin erin@habitatbrla.org. Thanks for your support!

New Paint Brushes	Tape Measures
6 ft. Ladders	Extension Cords (100 ft)
Nail Guns	Skill Saws
Roto Hammer	Digital Camera
Scanner	Punch Bowl
White Rectangular Tablecloths	



Plans for construction of our new buildings have now gone out to contractors. Bid opening is set for January 4, 2010.

We give thanks to God with . . .

Our Prayers:

Members in Nursing Homes: Connie Brown; Stella Jones; Fay Kling; Keith Hotchkiss

Members in Hospital: BR General/BB – Bob Opperman

Other Concerns:

Loretta Schultz	Hilda Neal	Shirley Callender
Josephine Schultz	George Smith	John Blackman
Barney Thompson	Bill Benton	Tommy Hazleton
Ben Johnson	Shirley Hammons	Dottie Doggette

Joe Melilli, grandfather of Erin Sandefur
 Stephen Hackett, former Chancel Choir director
 Melvin Myers, brain tumor, friend of Robbie Lamm
 Hazel Creamer, cancer, Shirley Callender's sister-in-law
 Gabe Hilliard, Hodgkins Lymphoma, son of Jeff & Jeanie Hilliard
 Bonnie Bishop, Bob Blum's sister
 Murphy Prejean, surgery, friend of Greg Doggette
 Debbie Smith, back surgery, sister of Sylvia Arnold
 Jackie Moore, friend of Dottie Doggette
 Sue Rupert, Shannon Arnold's grandmother
 Charles Gibson, hip surgery, Sue Fairchild's dad

Our Sympathy:

Our sympathy is expressed to **Joyce and Don Prestridge** at the death of her brother-in-law and his uncle, **Quincey Prestridge**.

Our Presence:

	<u>Sunday School</u>	<u>Worship</u>
12/13/09	47	346
	* * *	

A Record of Our Faithfulness – December 13, 2009

Operating Account	
2008 YTD	\$406,479.99
2009 YTD	\$408,247.43
Building Fund Contributions	
Received 2009 year-to-date	\$250,798.87
Total funds available for construction	\$2,419,843.99

"Grow One Step" Update

So far, we have received 114 pledge cards totaling \$367,107. This is an increase of 14 percent over last year. Pledge cards are available on the tables in the church narthex and may be placed in the offering plate or returned to the church office.

OF SPECIAL INTEREST

If you are over age 70 ½, the Federal government still permits you to give up to \$100,000 from your IRA to charity without tax through December 31, 2009. You may benefit from this law for tax-smart giving if you:

- 1) Do not itemize but still make gifts to your church;
- 2) Are required to take an unneeded IRA distribution (RMD); or
- 3) Wish to make a special gift but your major assets are in your IRA.

Contact Linda McDaniel in the church office (665-8995) if you have questions or wish to benefit from tax-smart giving.