



Banner



December 2015

A Note from our Pastor, Rev. Bill Russell



Jesus said, "No man entereth unto the Father but by me". That flies in the face of all that we will hear over the coming weeks, because the world tells us that the only way we will get into the spirit of Christmas is by the money we spend. Friends, Christmas is here, real Christmas, because of God's love for his creation, us. All of the time, energy, and money that we spend for holiday trappings does not make it Christmas. It's only when we recognize what God has done for us will we be able to experience Christmas in all its joy and glory. It's a wonderful time of the year. Send your cards, buy your gifts, wear yourselves out in so many ways. Just leave room for His presence. May each of you have a holy, healthy, merry Christmas.

Fellowship Hall Decorations



As always, at this time of year, our Fellowship Hall is beautifully decorated by members of the congregation. A big thank you to everyone who helped make the room look seasonal and inviting.



Spotlight on Giving

Richard Brown shared this very moving Offertory Homily and prayer with us:

"On this first Sunday of Advent, we lit the candle of Hope. Each of us personally hope for different things....for good health, for security, for peace in a troubled world, for love and friendship. We hope that our actions and our deeds send a message to the world of our Christian faith. And we hope that the gifts we bring in this offering will give hope to those it reaches.

Our heavenly Father, we offer you these gifts and tithes with the hope that they may show our love for you and for those around the world. Strengthen our hearts through your spirit as we faithfully give so that we may be guided by you. Amen. "

Special Offerings

Our Thanksgiving special offering amounted to \$385 and this will benefit the Colleges, Universities, Seminaries and Divinity Houses affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). The offering helps underwrite the education of students attending one of the fourteen undergraduate institutions or the seven seminaries and divinity houses.

The Christmas special offering will be taken up on the 13th and 20th December. The theme is to **Believe in a Deeper Hope** that moves beyond the trappings of Christmas that we see all around us. We are encouraged to proclaim a new hope that brings Good news, Joy and Compassion for all God's people.

Editor's Christmas Message

I am often accused of getting at least one picture of myself, or of my beautiful wife Connie, into every edition of this magazine. Well to confound my critics here is a picture of the both of us. May all our readers have a Joyous, Holy and Peaceful Christmastide. May all your festive boards be overflowing but please always be mindful of the needs of others.



Editors Note

IF YOU WANT TO RECEIVE THE BANNER BY E-MAIL

CONTACT GEORGE GOODNIGHT AT 901-497-4385

or by e-mail at: wesalsdadd@hotmail.com

All contributions for the December Banner should be emailed or sent to the Editor, John Bennett, at the Church Office by November 30th. Contact details are on the back cover.

Thanksgiving Baskets



Following our service on Sunday, November 22nd, members of the Church toured the Binghampton district of Memphis, delivering Thanksgiving Baskets. Pictured are Sierra Hughes and son thankful for "Thanksgiving Basket" which, as you can see, was more a trunk full of food rather than a mere basket.

Thanksgiving Service



On Tuesday, November 24th, we enjoyed a very moving Thanksgiving service alongside our friends from the St. Francis Old Catholic Church. The Old Testament reading was given by young Erin Edmiston who put us all to shame with his delivery of a reading from the Book of Joel. Henry and Russell Lindeman, the Grandchildren of our Pastor, Bill Russell, jointly presented a poem for Thanksgiving. Pictured on the left are Russell, Henry and Erin..

What the Dickens!

Appearing live at the Theatre Memphis this Christmas Season, not one but two of our congregation in leading roles.

Our Board Chairman Mark Rutledge is cast in the role of Scrooge in the matinee performances while our music director, Amy Lindeman takes on the part of the ghost of Christmas present.

Scrooge as we all know is a miserly old skinflint and his name is synonymous with meanness and a lack of Christmas spirit. But is that the legacy that Charles Dickens meant us to remember Scrooge by? I think not.

Let me quote from an offertory homily Mark presented two years ago:

"However, very few people remember that Ebenezer Scrooge was in the beginning of Mr. Dickens' tale a miser. But, by the end of the story Ebenezer had found redemption - he became a changed man and "kept Christmas in his heart throughout the years". Though the author doesn't speak of it directly, Scrooge's heart became "Christ-like", he began to give of himself. Isn't that the message of the season? That Christ came to give Himself to the world, that through Him, all may be saved? So, as the Advent season begins, let us remember the "reason for the season", and that, just maybe, being called a "Scrooge" is not a bad thing after all"



Clothes Closet

Many of our Ministries bring us into close contact with those in need in the community. Whether it be the distribution of food "baskets", or our Church door ministry to provide food and other necessities for the homeless. Never is this more true than when we open our free Clothes Closet. We opened the doors early on Saturday, November 21st and by later that morning had provided warm clothing, and a hot snack and drink, for over 40 people in need. Generous donors had provided us with hoodies and other winter clothing and, by the close, everyone of these items had been given out.



Board Meeting

The November Meeting of the General Board was held on November 15th, immediately after our Church service, with Mark Rutledge in the Chair.

John Bennett, as Treasurer, reported that Income from offerings and other sources amounted to \$13,499 during October. This included \$3000 from a member of the congregation as a contribution toward the ongoing improvements to the Education Building. Expenditure totaled \$11,050 leaving a surplus of \$2448. The Treasurer also presented the Budget for 2016 and this was approved by the Board and is subject to approval by the members of the Church at a congregational meeting which is due to be held after our Church service on December 20th.

The list of Board Officers for 2016 was also presented to the meeting and was approved, again subject to the approval of the Church members.

Other matters discussed included the property improvements and the various current outreach projects.

Church Door Ministry

Every day people in dire need come to our Church door seeking help. John Rainey, our Janitor, who was once homeless himself, and therefore knows their needs better than anyone, makes up bags of snacks, water, fruit juice and personal essentials to hand out. Through the generosity of the DWM, the African Violets Society, and individual Church members, snack items are purchased to fill these bags. We are also able to give out vouchers for the Memphis Union Missions which provide a hot meal and overnight accommodation for the homeless, and where the need is greatest, a MacDonald's gift card.

At this time of year we have a need for gloves, scarfs and socks to add to these bags so as to help make life on the street more bearable. In November we handed out over 30 of these snack bags.

WANTED

Cold Weather Gear



We are currently collecting gently used cold weather gear such as hats, gloves, scarves, thick socks, coats and blankets for the "Door Ministry." A box for donations is located in the Fellowship Hall.

Three Wise Men

Our Church nativity scene depicts the three wise men, or Kings, if you prefer, attending the birth of Jesus in a hay box, or manger, in a stable. They are positioned next to the shepherds and an angel. This is how nearly all nativity scenes are set up so as to join the two separate scenes of the Adoration of the Shepherds on the birth night and the later Adoration of the Magi.

However the only reference to the Wise Men appears in the Gospel of Matthew and describes their visit being at an unspecified point after Christ's birth in which an unnumbered party of unnamed "wise men" ("μῆτορες") visits him in a house ("οἰκίαν"),[8] not a stable, with only "his mother" mentioned as present.

There is no specific reference, in the Gospel, to the time that elapsed between the birth and the visit. While Christmas Day, December 25th, and the Adoration of the Magi, January 6th are only twelve days apart it is a popular assumption that they occurred in the same Winter. However some traditions believe that the visit occurred two winters later. This extended interval explains Herod's command at Matthew 2:16-18 that the Massacre of the Innocents should include boys up to two years old.

The wise men are mentioned twice shortly thereafter in verse 16, in reference to their avoidance of Herod after seeing Jesus, and what Herod had learned from their earlier meeting. The star which they followed has traditionally become known as the Star of Bethlehem.

But who were these Wise Men? The New Testament does not give the names of the Magi, however, in the Western Christian church they have been all regarded as saints and are commonly known as Melchior, a Persian, Caspar from India and Balthazar from Babylon. They are all believed to be scholars rather than kings.

The three gifts, brought by the Wise Men, are specifically detailed in the Gospel of Matthew and comprise of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Many different theories of the meaning and symbolism of the gifts have been propounded. While a gift of gold is fairly obviously explained, frankincense, and particularly myrrh, are much more obscure. The most probable explanation is that the three gifts were traditional gifts given to a king as they had a spiritual meaning: gold as a symbol of kingship on earth, frankincense (an incense) as a symbol of deity, and myrrh (an embalming oil) as a symbol of death.

There is no Biblical reference to the fate of the Wise Men but traditional history has it that they converted to Christianity. This would not be surprising as they were the first to acknowledge his role as a king. Tradition also asserts that they were martyred for the faith, and that their bodies were first venerated at Constantinople and later, in 355, the remains were transferred to Milan. Later, by order of Frederick I, Holy Roman Emperor (Barbarossa) the relics there were transferred to Cologne Cathedral, housed in the Shrine of the Three Kings, and are venerated there today.

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Calendar

6 10:00am 1:00pm Usual Sunday School, Service and Fellowship 10:00am 12:00pm St Francis Old Catholics (Choir Room) 2:00pm 3:30pm Aikido (Gym) 5:30pm 8:00pm City Church (Church) 7:00pm 9:00pm ACOA (Walker Hall)	7 7:00pm 8:30pm Aikido (Gym)	8 12:00pm 1:30pm CCC SLAA (Walker Hall) 7:00pm 8:30pm Aikido (Gym)	9 6:00pm 9:00pm Aikido (Gym) 6:30pm 8:00pm Dinner (Fellowship Hall) 7:00pm 8:30pm ACOA (Walker Hall)	10 11:00am 12:30pm Bible Study (Parlor) 7:00pm 8:00pm Grace St Luke's Soccer (Gym)	11 6:00pm 7:30pm Aikido (Gym)	12 9:30am 11:00am Grace St. Luke's Soccer (Gym) 2:30pm 4:30pm Aikido (Gym)
13 10:00am 1:00pm Usual Sunday School, Service and Fellowship 10:00am 12:00pm St Francis Old Catholics (Choir Room) 2:00pm 3:30pm Aikido (Gym) 5:30pm 8:00pm City Church (Church) 7:00pm 9:00pm ACOA (Walker Hall)	14 7:00pm 8:30pm Aikido (Gym)	15 12:00pm 1:30pm CCC SLAA (Walker Hall) 7:00pm 8:30pm Aikido (Gym)	16 6:00pm 9:00pm Aikido (Gym) 6:30pm 8:00pm Dinner and Bible Study led by David Julian (Fellowship Hall) 7:00pm 8:30pm ACOA (Walker Hall)	17 11:00am 12:30pm Bible Study (Parlor) 6:30pm 8:30pm Elders, Deacons and Board 7:00pm 8:00pm Grace St Luke's Soccer (Gym)	18 6:00pm 7:30pm Aikido (Gym)	19 9:30am 11:00am Grace St. Luke's Soccer (Gym) 11:00am 3:00pm African Violet's Society 2:30pm 4:30pm Aikido (Gym)
20 10:00am 1:00pm Usual Sunday School, Service and Fellowship 10:00am 12:00pm St Francis Old Catholics (Choir Room) 2:00pm 3:30pm Aikido (Gym) 5:30pm 8:00pm City Church (Church) 7:00pm 9:00pm ACOA (Walker Hall)	21 9:00am 4:30pm Grace St. Luke's (Gymnasium) 7:00pm 8:30pm Aikido (Gym)	22 9:00am 4:30pm Grace St. Luke's (Gymnasium) 12:00pm 1:30pm CCC SLAA (Walker Hall) 7:00pm 8:30pm Aikido (Gym)	23 9:00am 4:30pm Grace St. Luke's (Gymnasium) 6:00pm 9:00pm Aikido (Gym) 6:30pm 8:00pm Dinner (Fellowship Hall) 7:00pm 8:30pm ACOA (Walker Hall)	24 11:00am 12:30pm Bible Study (Parlor) 3:30pm 5:00pm Grace St Luke's (Gymnasium) 5:00pm 6:30pm Christmas Eve Service (Church) 7:00pm 8:00pm Grace St Luke's Soccer (Gym)	25	26 9:30am 11:00am Grace St. Luke's Soccer (Gym) 2:30pm 4:30pm Aikido (Gym)
27 10:00am 1:00pm Usual Sunday School, Service and Fellowship 10:00am 12:00pm St Francis Old Catholics (Choir Room) 2:00pm 3:30pm Aikido (Gym) 3:00pm 6:00pm Ministers Open House (Ministers home) 5:30pm 8:00pm City Church (Church) 7:00pm 9:00pm ACOA Fellowship (Walker Hall)	28 3:30pm 5:00pm Grace St Luke's (Gymnasium) 7:00pm 8:30pm Aikido (Gym)	29 12:00pm 1:30pm CCC SLAA (Walker Hall) 3:30pm 5:00pm Grace St Luke's (Gymnasium) 7:00pm 8:30pm Aikido (Gym)	30 3:30pm 5:00pm Grace St Luke's (Gymnasium) 6:00pm 9:00pm Aikido (Gym) 6:30pm 8:00pm Dinner (Fellowship Hall) 7:00pm 8:30pm ACOA (Walker Hall)	31 11:00am 12:30pm Bible Study (Parlor) 3:30pm 5:00pm Grace St Luke's (Gymnasium) 7:00pm 8:00pm Grace St Luke's Soccer (Gym)	Jan 1, 16	2

Fellowship Schedule

WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER & SUNDAY FELLOWSHIP SCHEDULE

DATE	DAY	EVENT	TIME / LOCATION	PREPARED BY
12.02.15	Wednesday	Wednesday Night Dinner	Fellowship Hall	Daphne and Richard Brown
12.06.15	Sunday	Fellowship Hour	Fellowship Hall	St. Francis Old Catholic Church
12.09.15	Wednesday	Wednesday Night Dinner	Fellowship Hall	Carol and Floyd Scarberry
12.13.15	Sunday	DWM Potluck Luncheon	Fellowship Hall	DWM
12.16.15	Wednesday	Christmas Dinner	Fellowship Hall	Debra and George Goodnight
12.20.15	Sunday	Fellowship Hour	Fellowship Hall	Mark Rutledge
12.23.15	Wednesday	NO WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER	X X X	X X X
12.27.15	Sunday	Fellowship Hour	Fellowship Hall	Connie and John Bennett
12.30.15	Wednesday	NO WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER	X X X	X X X

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This Month at Central

Wednesday 2nd

6:30pm Wednesday Night Dinner and Bible Study

Meal prepared by: Daphne and Richard Brown

Thursday 3rd

11:30 am Lunchtime Bible Study

Sunday 6th 2nd Sunday of Advent

9:45 am Bible Class

10:45 am Worship Service

Service Leader: Debra Goodnight

Loaf: Daphne Brown

Cup: Kathy Young

Refreshments: St. Francis Old Catholic Church

Wednesday 9th

6:30pm Wednesday Night Dinner and Bible Study

Meal prepared by: Carol and Floyd Scarberry

Thursday 10th

11:30 am Lunchtime Bible Study

Sunday 13th 3rd Sunday of Advent

9:45 am Bible Class

10:45 am Worship Service

Service Leader: John Bennett

Loaf: John Johnson

Cup: Mark Rutledge

Refreshments: DWM Luncheon

Wednesday 16th

6:30pm Christmas Dinner and Program

Meal prepared by: Debra and George Goodnight

Thursday 17th

11:30 am Lunchtime Bible Study

Sunday 20th 4th Sunday of Advent

9:45 am Bible Class

10:45 am Worship Service

Service Leader: George Goodnight

Loaf: Carol Scarberry

Cup: John Johnson

Refreshments: Mark Rutledge

Wednesday 23rd

No Dinner or Program

Thursday 24th

5:00pm Christmas Eve Service

Sunday 27th

9:45 am Bible Class

10:45 am Worship Service

Service Leader: Shula Shaw

Loaf: Kathy Young

Cup: Daphne Brown

Refreshments:

Wednesday 30th

No Dinner or Program

Church Calendar for December

25th

Christmas Day

27th

Bill Russell's Open
House

Birthdays

7th

Daphne Brown

12th

Pat Hammond

26th

Amy Lindeman

29th

Wynanda Noordemeer



And finally Sarah Jane
Smith raises a glass and
wishes you all a Happy,
Holy and Safe Christmas