

First United Methodist Church Commerce

Volume 13, Issue 1

January 2015



*Candlelight
Christmas Eve
Service
Wednesday, Dec. 24
7:00pm
in the Sanctuary*



Holiday Schedule

Merry Christmas!

The church office will be closed Wednesday, Dec. 24 through Friday, Dec. 26 for Christmas. We will be open Dec. 29 and 30 during our regular business hours.

~

Happy New Year!

The church office will be closed Wednesday, Dec. 31 through Friday, January 2 for New Year's.



The Pastor's Bible Study

Starting January 13, 2015, Dr. Neal will lead "The Pastor's Bible Study," a weekly study dealing with a book of the Bible beginning with Luke & Acts.

Daytime Group: Tuesday afternoons 1-2:30pm

Nighttime Group: Tuesday evenings 7-8:30pm



To watch or listen to Dr. Neal's sermons on the internet, go to: www.revneal.org
www.youtube.com/revneal
www.facebook.com/RevNealVideo

WCM Winter Mission 2014

December 28 - January 3, 2015

An incredible week of work, hospitality, service, transformation, food, and faith, building homes and meeting families on the outskirts of Juarez, Mexico!



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“Prepared and Cross-Checked” by Dr. Gregory S. Neal

A couple of years ago I was flying to Chicago to teach a class at one of our United Methodist Seminaries and experienced the luxury of being upgraded into first class. This put me up near the front of the aircraft, close enough to be able to follow the operational prater of the flight attendants. Just after the gate agent had closed the plane’s door, the senior flight attendant announced: “forward cabin and galley doors prepared and cross-checked!” Almost immediately thereafter another flight attendant echoed over the plane’s com-system: “tail galley door prepared and cross-checked!”

I chuckled and, making the sign of the cross, I said: “Passenger, prepared and cross-checked!” The flight attendant who would be doing the seatbelt-buckle and oxygen mask routine saw me do this and began laughing. Similarly, the passenger seated in the window seat to my right saw me do it, grinned, crossed himself as well, and then repeated my words. Suddenly, I heard other passengers do it to my left and behind me. Indeed, the words “Passenger, prepared and cross-checked” echoed down the rows of the plane, accompanied by laughter and a sudden lessening of tensions. I grinned and winked at the flight attendant and her own smile became as wide as her face.

“Passenger, prepared and cross-checked!” That should be our approach to living, my brothers and sisters! We’re called to prepare for this life, and for the next, by checking ourselves with the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord. Apart from Jesus – apart from the love of God which Christ exemplified for us in his life, death, and resurrection – we cannot possibly be “prepared” for this life, or for the next. Our calling, as Christians, is to continually check ourselves with and into the love of God; we’re called to turn to and depend upon the gracious self-sacrifice of our Lord and Savior, who died for us that we might never fear sin and death. Rather than relying on ourselves, and our own strength and abilities, the cross challenges us to turn to the means of grace and depend upon Jesus and all that he is and has done for us. In other words, every element in our lives is supposed to be “cross-checked.”

Since my arrival at First Commerce several people have asked me why I have made the sign of the cross at various points in our worship services. For the most part, people have not been bothered or upset by this practice, but they have been curious as to why I, a United Methodist, do it. To put this simply, I make the sign of the cross at the following points in worship, and for the following reasons:

- When presiding at the Table of the Lord I will make the sign of the cross over the elements as I pray: “Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine.” Making the sign of the cross at this point in the Great Thanksgiving is an ancient practice in the Church, reminding us that it is through partaking of the consecrated elements of bread and wine that we receive the Real Presence of Jesus and the spiritual benefits of his death upon the cross.
- In the Confession of Sin and Pardon, I’ll make the sign of the cross at the invocation of the name of Jesus as I pray: “Almighty God have mercy upon you, forgive all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ...” Here, the reminder is that we are forgiven only through of the grace of Jesus, which comes to us from his atoning sacrifice upon the cross for our sins.
- In the benediction, at the close of the service, I’ll make the sign of the cross when I invoke the Holy Trinity: “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” This is one of the most ancient practices of the Church: when the Trinity is affirmed, the sign of the cross is appropriate because it reminds us that the Father’s love, in and through Jesus, was manifested on the cross and then conveyed to us through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

I also make the sign of the cross at various times in my own personal spirituality: I try not to be conspicuous, but neither am I self-conscious about doing it. For instance, I usually cross myself before and after receiving Communion. I also cross myself at the beginning and at the end of my private, personal prayers as a reminder that Jesus is always with me, wherever I may go. I will also make three signs of the cross with my right thumb -- on my forehead, over my lips, and over my heart -- prior to hearing the Gospel read in church.

The sign of the cross is a matter of personal faith and practice; while an important part of Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Anglican spirituality, it is not exclusive to these traditions. If drawn by the Holy Spirit, I believe that Christians from any tradition should own the sign of the cross for themselves. If you feel comfortable making the sign of the cross in the midst of worship (or at other times), you should feel free to do so. Please, don’t allow statements like “Methodists don’t do that” to cause you to pause or not follow through; if you feel like you want or need to do so, cross yourself.

And remember, no matter what you do in your personal spiritual life, always be “prepared and cross-checked” with Jesus before leaving Earth.

Finance Committee Update

As the end of the 2014 nears, here are a few important updates:

- As of November, our year-to-date operating results essentially break even, which is the best position we have been in at this time of the year for some time. If all remaining 2014 pledges are fulfilled and additional giving occurs in the month of December as in previous years, we will have positive 2014 operating results! This is much welcome news as we continue to build church operations for the future.
- The Finance Committee and Administrative Council unanimously approved a 2015 operating budget of \$359,200, which represents a \$10,400 increase over 2014 expenses. The increase is primarily personnel related (higher employee benefit costs and funding changes of existing part-time staff). The 2015 budget also allows for \$10,800 of capital reserve additions (for maintenance / replacement needs) primarily due to debt service savings from the retirement of the Family Ministry Center debt in 2014.
- The congregation and Little Ark have raised over \$28,000 for a church minibus in 2014. Thanks to the additional funds provided by our local FUMC Foundation, the minibus is fully funded, ordered, and delivery is expected in February 2015.

Thank you for fulfilling your remaining 2014 pledges and your generous support of our church!

Finance Committee



The year 2014 was a busy and fruitful year for our church thanks to the diligence and conscientious work of the lay leadership coupled with the support of the congregation and the staff.

The Connect, Grow and Serve committees worked consistently

and successfully to fulfill the call of our missions. The Finance Committee, SPPRC, Trustees, and Foundation worked jointly and effectively for the third year to balance the budgets and still address the many pressing programmatic needs within available funds.

Increased attendance, giving, and participation support the church's unwavering commitment to serving God's presence in our lives and throughout our community. I want to thank the 2014 Leadership Team for their dedication and service and welcome the 2015 Administrative Council as we serve our God in this place.

Wishing all a Happy and Rewarding New Year...
Gene

Worship

Sunday, January 4
Epiphany Sunday

Sunday, January 11
Baptism of the Lord Sunday

Sunday, January 18

Sunday, January 25

8:45am ~ Chapel
11:00am ~ Sanctuary

Midweek Eucharist
Wednesdays
@ 5:30pm ~ Chapel

Committee Chairs

Ad Council Chair:

Gene Lockhart
(903) 886-3498

Lay Leader:

John Heatherly
(903) 886-7070

SPPRC Chair:

Wes Underwood
(903) 886-1503

Trustees Chair:

Jim Brown
(903) 886-7439

Finance Chair:

Gil Naizer
(903) 886-1961

FUMC Foundation

President:

Anne Mills
(903) 886-6792

Connect Team Chair:

Melinda Reid
(903) 886-7623

Grow Team Chair:

TBD

Serve Team Chair:

Angela Roberts
(903) 886-2142

Lay Member:

Carole Walker
(903) 886-4450

UMW President:

Mary Lou Heatherly
(903) 886-8381

The First United Methodist Newsletter is the official publication of FUMC Commerce. The newsletter is published at the end of the month. Inputs may be submitted to the Church office to Bonnie Smith, Communications Specialist, at communications@fumccommerce.org, or call the office at 903-886-3220. Questions may be addressed to the Church office.

****The next deadline is Monday, January 19 by 9:00am****



Marketplace & Lunch Raised \$6,300

The Family Ministry Center buzzed with energy December 6th as volunteers and shoppers mingled at the Merry Marketplace and Lunch for Missions. There was a wide array of homemade sweets and treats, hand-stitched blankets and clothing, exquisite wreaths, fun Christmas decorations, alternative gifts, and more from which shoppers could select. The event raised \$6,300 for general missions, Prayer Shawl Ministry, and designated missions through alternative gift giving.



Judy Rudoff and Amy Stark offering gifts that give at the Alternative Gifts booth



Frances Sartwell greeting an early shopper...by 1 p.m., the bakery booth

Thank you to all the dedicated volunteers, generous donors and merry shoppers for making the day a success! Special thanks to Judy Anderson, Anna Blohm, Michelle Corazao, Mimi Dobbs, Kay Jensen, Jim Latham, Jim Patton, Susan Patton, Melinda Reid, Frances Sartwell, Amy Stark, U.M. ARMY mission team, Ann Underhill, and Harriet Williams for their leadership in organizing the marketplace and lunch.



Charley Lytle finds the perfect scarf



Music Director Michelle Corazao leading the youth and children's choirs, accompanied by Liam Hatcher



Faith Dickson, Cole Piper, and Conner Green ready to serve stews made by Jim Latham and Jim Patton



Vanessa Paulin and Anne Piper lending Mimi Dobbs a hand at the craft station for kids

TACKLE



HUNGER

Save the Date – February 1st at
12:00 noon
Soup Potluck Luncheon

Bring your favorite soup, stew, salad, bread or dessert to share.

Donations dropped in the soup pot will benefit food assistance programs serving our community.





Working together to care for those in need.

Hunt County Gives 2014

We extend our appreciation to Hunt County Shared Ministries - FISH for the Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets, which will help 225 Commerce families have special holiday meals this season. Volunteers from our church, The Core of Wesleyan Campus Ministry, Lions Athletics, TAMUC Honors College,

and the community came together to distribute the baskets and host the Last Saturday Breakfast in the Family Ministry Center.



Volunteers ready to load cars at Thanksgiving distribution



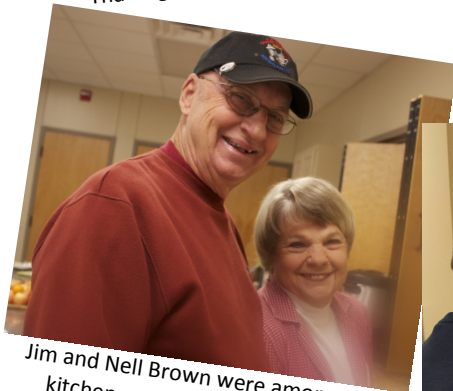
Kitchen crew making pancakes, sausage and eggs for 300 at the Thanksgiving distribution



Charlie Smith, Tricia Dempsey, Sharon Duncan, Sharon Smith, and Gayle Shumate welcomed and checked in Christmas basket recipients



Each family received a box of dry goods and produce, a dozen eggs, and a frozen turkey



Jim and Nell Brown were among the kitchen crew that prepared the December breakfast



Taylor Madle, Wendy Gruver, and Becky Coker prepping pears for Christmas distribution

Sammy Elwell served up pancakes to Jade and Ian Gibson, two of our youngest volunteers who worked outside the entire morning



MOST ESSENTIAL SCHOOL SUPPLY IS FOOD

Elementary school children on the free and reduced-price school meal program often face hunger when these meals are not available on weekends. The Food 4 Kids program of the North Texas Food Bank provides backpacks of nonperishable, kid-friendly food for them to take home on Friday afternoons.

Volunteers from FUMC-C load Food 4 Kids backpacks at A.C. Williams Elementary School Thursday mornings. Special thanks to Judy Anderson, Kim & Logan Bruister, Jan Helton, Laura Milligan, Anne Mills, Amy Stark, Ruth Ann White, and Sheryl Zelhart for serving as Food 4 Kids volunteers during the Fall semester. To help starting in January, contact Angela Roberts at 972.765.6547 or AQRoberts@hotmail.com.



East District Laity Training Day

January 24, 2015
9:00am-12:00 Noon
Sulphur Springs FUMC



9:00am - 9:30am— Coffee & Fellowship-Fellowship Hall
9:30am-10:45am—Plenary Session: "Healthy Conflict in Churches" Rev. Anna Hosemann-Butler
10:45am -11:00am—Break
11:00am-12:00pm—Breakout Workshops (Pastors & Laity)

<p>"Finding a Leadership Structure that Works" Rev. Kathy McLean-Davis- Trenton FUMC How small membership churches can re-format their leadership structure.</p>	<p>"How to Navigate Through SPRC Waters" Dr. Vic Casad-East District Superintendent This session will prepare SPRC Chairs for the upcoming ap- pointment season as well as a follow-up on conducting <u>Marks of</u> <u>Fruitfulness</u> conversations with clergy.</p>
<p>"How to Lead for Community Transformation" Rev. Becky Walker- Center for Leadership Development How local churches can organize and ener- gize members to create exciting ministries to impact their neighborhood.</p>	<p>"Making the Most from a Year of Reading Luke/ Acts" A panel discussion with: Dr. Chuck Aaron- Terrell FUMC Dr. Greg Neal-Commerce FUMC Rev. Dyan Dietz-Bonham FUMC How to best take advantage of Bishop McKee's challenge to read through Luke and Acts in 2015.</p>



VBS will be here before you know it!

Save the date: June 15-19, 2015

9:00am-12:00pm

Wish List:

- 1) Big cardboard boxes
- 2) Orange Traffic Cones (any size)
- 3) Landscape fabric (black)
- 4) White Duct Tape
- 5) Pool Noodles
- 6) Balloons

Jesus said, "Breakfast is ready." John 21:12 (MSG)



Last Saturday Breakfast Community Gathering

Free Breakfast

- Pancakes
- Sausage
- Fresh Fruit
- Orange Juice
- Coffee



Sponsored by
First United Methodist Church
and the Wesleyan Campus Ministry

Saturday,
January 31, 2015
9:00-10:00 a.m.

Wesleyan Campus Ministry Building
1504 Lee Street, Commerce



Luigi's Italian Cafe has offered to support our community by donating 10% of dining receipts on the third Sunday of each month to our church. If you take your bulletin after church 1/18, Luigi's will staple it to your ticket. They will tally our receipts and send a check directly to our church. Help support our church by eating some good food!



UMW will meet **Tuesday, January 20** at 10:00am. Our January project is: Nursing Home Bingo Prizes, sugar free cookies, 6 oz drinks, peanut butter crackers, lotions, shampoos (small).

All women are invited to join us!

UMW is still collecting Box Tops for Education and Labels for Education.



In memory of...

Pat Talley

By: Harriet Williams

Bob Mills

By: Elaine Eklund

In honor of...

Carolyn & Gene Lockhart

By: Jan W. Adams



Attendance

	<u>Early</u>	<u>5:30</u>	<u>Late</u>	<u>SS</u>
Nov 26		10		
Nov 30	36	—	107	72
Dec 3		9		
Dec 7	27	—	147	70
Dec 10		7		
Dec 14	27	—	74	49
Dec 17		3		
Dec 21	32	—	126	72



**Financial Information
General Operating Fund**

as of November 30, 2014 Year-to-Date

Income:	\$ 35,866	\$353,862
Expenses:	\$ <u>29,362</u>	\$ <u>353,272</u>
	\$ 6,504	\$ 590

Reading the Bible Daily



As you seek to grow closer to God through daily prayer and Bible study, you may have your own favorite daily readings. If not, you will find Scriptures for each day listed below. We hope you'll read daily and ask yourself: "How will I be different today because of what I just read?" Some other questions you might ask are: What does this text say about who God is?" "What does this text say about who I am/who we are as human beings?" "What does this text say about our relationship with God?" You may want to reflect on paper with a journal or note pad. We hope this will become a part of your daily prayer time.

Daily Scripture Readings:

Thursday, Jan 1	Psalm 8 Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Friday, Jan 2	Matthew 25:31-46
Saturday, Jan 3	Psalm 148
Sunday, Jan 4	Isaiah 60:1-6
Monday, Jan 5	Genesis 1:1-5
Tuesday, Jan 6	Genesis 1:1-5
Wednesday, Jan 7	Psalm 29:1-2, 11
Thursday, Jan 8	Psalm 29
Friday, Jan 9	Acts 19:1-7
Saturday, Jan 10	Acts 19:1-7
Sunday, Jan 11	Mark 1:4-11
Monday, Jan 12	1 Samuel 3:1-9
Tuesday, Jan 13	1 Samuel 3:10-20
Wednesday, Jan 14	Psalm 139:1-6
Thursday, Jan 15	Psalm 139:13-18
Friday, Jan 16	1 Corinthians 6:12-20
Saturday, Jan 17	John 1:43-46
Sunday, Jan 18	John 1:47-51
Monday, Jan 19	Jonah 3:1-5
Tuesday, Jan 20	Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Wednesday, Jan 21	Mark 1:14-15
Thursday, Jan 22	Mark 1:16-20
Friday, Jan 23	1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Saturday, Jan 24	Psalm 62:5-12
Sunday, Jan 25	Psalm 62:5-12
Monday, Jan 26	Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Tuesday, Jan 27	Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Wednesday, Jan 28	Psalm 111
Thursday, Jan 29	1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Friday, Jan 30	1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Saturday, Jan 31	Mark 1:21-28



Prayer Lists

We pray for those who have experienced an illness...

LaVerne Raine, Betty Martin, Sammy Elwell, Lewis and Faye Jackson, Lois Cranford, James Tucker (Judy and Dennis Anderson's friend), Betty Morton, Charles Ranley (at Webb Hill), Jo Parker, Marc Jackson (Debbie and Lynn Jackson's son), Sally Grove, Sheila Thomas, Gene Fulfur (Jeanie Putman's father), Jim Hunter (Jacob Hunter's father), Audrey Ham (Nadine and Clay Yeager's great granddaughter), David Polk, Michelle Bone, Hugh Hanby, Wendel Underwood (Wes Underwood's father), Doris Kerbow, Norma McNew, Clyde Robnett, Robert Seay

Others to Remember in Prayer...

Christians in the Middle East

Draughn's/Country Home Estate: Ahtrell Dalton, Helen Dickson, Barbara Gish, Dorothy Ingram, Joe and Mary Louise McMahan, Edna O'Quinn, Lucy Potts, Pete Robinson, Ruby Vander Velde, Euple Walker, and Jean Ward

Briarcliff: Glenna Siebenhausen

Laurell's Retirement Home: Lewis and Faye Jackson

*"The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective."
James 5:16*

Help us hold each other in prayer by contacting the church office with new prayer concerns and updates on existing prayer requests.

If you have someone you would like to add or remove from the prayer list, please let the church office know (903-886-3220).



Remembering those serving in our military...

- 2nd Marine Division Sgt. Stephen Smith & Denise Smith
- Col. Peter Bailey Garrett Johnson
- Nathan Grove Lt. Col. Keith Williams
- Lt. Dan Barton
- Josh Ham-Nadine and Clay Yeager's grandson-in-law
- Lt. Col. Jeremy Quatacker-Mark and Frances Sartwell's son-in-law
- Tyler Craig (Afghanistan)-Brad and Vickie Boynton's son-in-law
- Chief Robert Starkey-Wanda Beane's brother and Tom Starkey's son
- Lt. JG. Terry Starkey-Wanda Beane's brother and Tom Starkey's son
- Jim Hunsicker (Afghanistan)-Carolyn Miller's brother
- Alex Dech (Afghanistan)-Pastor Ron Dech's son
- Captain Daniel Robnett-Clyde and Wanda Robnett's grandson
- Kris Yoder-John & Rebecca Sneed's son-in-law
- Staff Sgt. Geoff Abbe & Sgt. Eric Abbe-Ladonna & Chris Patterson's cousins



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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE
NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
Articles for the next newsletter are due
Monday, January 19 by 9:00am**

First United Methodist Church
1709 Highway 24
Commerce, TX 75428
Senior Pastor - Dr. Gregory S. Neal