

First United Methodist Church Commerce, Texas



Volume 21, Issue 1

January 2023 Newsletter

Notes from Pastor Cheryl

STAR WORDS



No, not "Star Wars!" Star words! January is the month we are coming off Christmas celebrations, but we still want to remember Epiphany, traditionally the celebration of the magi finding the baby Jesus after following the star. They also brought their gifts. We are also seeking Jesus, trusting God can/does use many signs (or stars) to guide us closer to the Divine presence.

You are invited to take a star from the Gathering Area for the first few weeks of January. On each of the stars is a word. I invite you to trust the word that selects you.

For last year's words belong to last year's language and next year's words await an other voice. (t s eliot)

The most common prayer practice for many people involves speaking to God as opposed to silence or listening to God speak to us. Star words invite a new prayer rhythm of reflection that can be a powerful new way to connect to God. By not looking at or sorting through the words, we practice the spiritual task of receiving. We trust that God is present, and we let go of our desire to control.

So choose a Star Word during the first few weeks of January. I will be anxious to hear how your word fits your situation!

I expect great things in 2023 for our church! Happy New Year!

Pastor Cheryl



Confirmation Class

**BEGINING SUNDAY, JANUARY 15
AT 11:15 – 12:15 (AFTER WORSHIP AND GATHERING TIME)**

When persons who were baptized as infants or younger children are ready to profess their Christian faith, they participate in a series of lessons in which they learn what it means to be a full member of the church. This process is called Confirmation. These classes will lead up to a Confirmation worship service, possibly on or around Easter (April 9). It is the first public affirmation of the grace of God in baptism and the acknowledgment of that grace by faith.

A small group of confirmands were left hanging by the pandemic now going on three years ago. These classes are for them and any other 5th grader (12-13 years old) and up who would like to participate. The students will study and discuss with the pastor and their peers all the elements of the Christian story – creation, sin, and redemption, as well as repentance of sin, the saving grace of God, new life in Christ, and becoming an instrument of God's purpose in the world. On their Confirmation Day in April they will voice the baptismal vows as a witness to faith, "remembering their baptism," and they will profess their personal experience of the Christian faith.

If you are an adult and would like to participate in a Confirmation class to learn more about the Christian faith in general and specifically the Wesleyan Methodist version, let Pastor Cheryl know and it's possible we can offer the class at a different time for adults, and also the classes could combine sometimes for special events and projects.

2022 MARKETPLACE FOR MISSIONS WAS MERRY!



The Merry Marketplace and Lunch, held on December 3rd, raised \$3,500 for general missions, the Prayer Shawl Ministry, the FUMC Youth, and designated missions through alternative gift-

giving! The Merry Marketplace Committee extends its appreciation and gratitude to the generous donors, amazing bakers, talented crafters, dedicated volunteers, and merry shoppers who made this a successful event in support of vital ministries.

In addition to the in-person event, thank you also for your support of the Online Auction! Thanks go to many local businesses who donated fabulous items and all the bidders. The online auction raised \$938!



ANGEL TREE 2022 A SUCCESS!

FUMC Commerce helped to brighten many children's Christmas this year. The Angel Tree program, coordinated by Tricia Dempsey, served 13 families, which included gifts for 31 children. Many thanks to those who purchased gifts and baked cookies to make the holiday just a little bit sweeter for these families. We truly appreciate Tricia's work, and she is looking forward to coordinating the Angel Tree program again next year.



SAFETY WORKSHOP IN GREENVILLE OPEN TO ALL INTERESTED

This workshop will be at Wesley UMC in Greenville on January 21st. Risk management, security, insurance, and law enforcement officials will lead this workshop to help churches prepare for worst-case scenarios. Let us know in the church office if you would like to register.



UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

January 4-Bridgeport Camp registration opens for Summer 2023

January 5-Serve team meeting at 10:30am, followed by *First Thursday Luncheon* at noon

January 9-Prayer Shawl meeting at 9:30am

January 10-Trustees at 6:30

January 11-Grow team meeting at 6pm

January 12-Connect team meeting at 6pm

January 15-Confirmation class at 11:15

January 19-Collaborative team meeting at 6pm

January 21-Safety Workshop, Wesley UMC Greenville.

January 23-Finance meeting at 6pm

February 10-12-2023 Midwinter Retreat for Youth, 6th-12 grades at Bridgeport.

ONGOING WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT FUMC COMMERCE

Tuesdays-Men's Breakfast Group at Omega's at 8am (changed from Mondays)

Tuesdays & Fridays-Exercise class at 10am

Wednesdays-Choir Rehearsal at 7ipm

BI-WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Every other Tuesday-Women's Study Group at 5:15pm, next meeting January 10

Prayer List 12-28-22

Recent Concerns:

- *Our world, country, & leaders*
- Tom Bailey
- Sam Elwell
- Pete and Ann Chamberlain
- Carlos Rickman (M.D. Anderson Hospital)
- Rev. Dennis Wilkinson

Continued Prayers (long term):

- The leaders and citizens of Ukraine
- Bill Heitholt
- Janet & Jim Payne, sister of Becky Coker
- Georgia Gholston
- Manuel Henderson
- Melanie Cortea
- Judy Cortea
- Preston Helton (Jan & Jeff Helton's grandson)
- Harold & Becky Coker
- Jack Gray
- Mabel and Carl Little
- Brenda Mosley Longhoffer (Lisa McGuire's friend)
- Priscilla McFarland (Julia Robinson's mother)
- Robert Seay
- Dudley Shaw (Robyn Elwell's brother-in-law)

Austin:

- Ruby Vander Velde

Harbor Chase-Southlake:

- Virginia Collier

Burleson:

- Mary Louise McMahan

Legacy Oaks (Midlothian):

- Jerry & Sandy Hutton

Oak Manor:

- Helen Cole

Those serving in our military:

- Celeste Young, (Marines) & Chandler Teague (Navy), great-grandchildren of Lee Riddle
- 2nd Lieutenant Cameron Lehr
- Lt. Dan Barton
- Daniel Chamberlain
- Sgt. Stephen Smith & Denise Smith
- Petty Officer 1st Class Patrick Stogner
- Lt. Colonel Bob Farmer

If you are interested in giving flowers for the altar, please visit with Luann Huffman before worship on Sunday or contact her at 903-366-2899 or lhuffman01@cumbytel.com.



PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY UPDATE

Prayer Shawl met on December 12th, and we missed those who couldn't come. We wish a speedy recovery to several members who are ill. Thanks to Susan P. for sharing her delicious poppy seed bread and banana nut sandwiches!

Highlights of our meeting:

- *Awaiting a report on Merry Market proceeds,
- *Get well cards signed for Mary Carolyn Dye (Sharon Duncan's mom), and Georgia Gholston,
- *Harriet & Susan L. will deliver a prayer shawl & lap blanket to Mary & Gary Hendrix (death of their son),
- *Items purchased, wrapped & turned in for our 3 angels; Prayer Shawl spent \$165 (just a little over \$50 each),
- *Plans coming soon for January informal meetings to Improve our crochet & knit skills,
- *We hope Brenda will teach us how to make her Christmas gnomes (they sold out quickly at Merry Market...a huge demand)!

I also want to thank everyone for making & donating items and/or working at the Merry Market!

Our first 2023 regular meeting will be on Jan. 9th at 9:30. Debbie will provide refreshments, and Jan will deliver hats to Hunt Regional in January.

FIRST PARENT'S NIGHT OUT WAS A SUCCESS!

FUMC youth hosted a Parent's Night Out on December 16th. Sixteen children, ranging in age from 1.5 years to 11 years old, had a great time. The younger children made a nativity ornament and played nativity Bingo. The older kids had a blast playing tag with Oliver Roberts. The event raised about \$260 that will be used to support youth activities in the upcoming year. Big thanks go to all the volunteers who made the event happen and the parents and children who participated!



Learning Fun at Little Ark!



Top : Toddler 1 collage; Pre-K on Rudolph Day!; Pre-K to “Dragons Love Tacos” performance at TAMU-C Playhouse; Tiny Tots on Rudolph Day

Bottom : Preschooler helping put together a puppet center.

In case of emergency pastoral care need,
please call or text Pastor Cheryl at 940-613-5375.

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