

## **MISSION OF THE MONTH-PASTOR'S BENEVOLENCE FUND**



The Pastor's Benevolence Fund has been designated as the January Mission of the Month by the Serve Team. The last several years have been "challenging," to say the least. Imagine yourself faced with a crisis that is beyond your means to resolve. This fund enables our pastor to respond quickly to such situations within our congregation, as well as for individuals coming to our church for assistance, including our Blessings Table neighbors. It has been used for gas, to pay for prescriptions, doctor's appointments, utility payments, and an assortment of other things. Once checks are cosigned by two FUMC board members, they can go directly to providers who can help to relieve one source of stress for those in need.

Remember, we ARE our neighbors' keepers, as demonstrated by the Biblical Good Samaritan. When you drop dollars in the collection plate during January, or a check with Pastor's Fund on the memo line, or an online donation, you help to make sure the fund remains healthy so that the pastor can say "Yes" to a request and make someone's day easier.

### **EXCITING YOUTH NEWS**



December brought great accomplishments for the life of the youth of our church. We entered a float in the Christmas parade for the first time in almost ten years. It was a great time, and our float was filled with smiling and laughing youth and children. We even brought home a trophy awarded to the float with the Best Theme. The Youth also hosted our Annual Parents Night Out fundraiser. It was great fun, and we can't wait for next year. On Sunday, December 17th we held the youth-led Christmas service. Everyone did a wonderful job, and we hope to continue this tradition in years to come.



The youth (grades 6-12) will be attending an escape room January 3rd from 5-8pm. Please contact Jamie Bourcy at 903-243-3038 if you know someone who is interested in attending. Thank you again for everyone's unending support. I see great things coming for our youth and children's programs in the coming year.

### **MUSIC & MORE NEWS**

The M&M Choir performed at last Sunday's worship service, bringing in two new families with young children who have visited the church and voiced an interest in attending FUMC-Commerce. This is wonderful news for the church and was one reason that forming the Children's M&M choir was such an important project.

Ashlyn and Abbie Harper staff the nursery and teach Sunday School each week, never having the option to attend the worship service. If anyone is interested in volunteering to help in either area (even once a month or once per six weeks would help), please contact Ashlyn at 903-434-6417.





## Notes From Pastor Cheryl

Joy to the world! The Lord is come!

Every week of Advent, I leave worship feeling like I've really been to church! How about you? A friend in seminary used to say, "I'm not going to let anything steal my joy." When I remember that, I know that joy is a choice and I'm choosing to live every day in the joy rooted in the Good News that Christ is born and God is with us!

Speaking of Good News, traditionally we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord on a Sunday in January. One of our M&M Choir families has a new baby they would like to present for baptism! So January 14 if you know anyone who is on the fence or wanting to get a baby baptized or anyone of any age who has not been baptized before, this is the Sunday to get on board!

Call the church office and let us know of your desire to be baptized. I'll contact you to discuss it with you personally, but here are the basic facts:

United Methodists only baptize once. We have a wonderful ritual called "Remember Your Baptism" for those of us already baptized. Now, if you can't remember your baptism because it happened when you were very young, think of it as "Remember that you are baptized." We will baptize new members and "Remember that we are baptized" on Sunday, January 14.

Baptism is a sign of God's prevenient grace, the grace that comes before we even know we need it. That's why we baptize infants. Baptism initiates us into the Body of Christ. The church community renews the covenant to nurture this person, no matter what their age, on their journey of faith.

That's why Christian education and spiritual formation is so important – a good strong children's and youth program are necessary to a healthy church. Which leads me to this question: Is God calling you to help with children's ministry, whether in Sunday School once in a while, children's choir, other activities with young people? We need committed faithful disciples to dedicate some time and talents to our educational ministry for all ages (nursery, children, youth, adults). Contact Ashlyn Woods to volunteer to help one Sunday a month or when you can in children's programs.

"The Lord has done/is doing/will do great things for everyone," especially those who really need it. Let's keep our eyes open and our hearts tuned to see where God is working among us and keep the hope, peace, joy, love, and light of Christ shining in the world.



### ANGEL TREE UPDATE

Thank you for your generosity. It was quite a success. There were thirty-two children who received

gifts this year thanks to your Angel Tree donations. Special thanks to all who baked cookies and Judy Rudoff, along with Susan Lampe and Lisa McGuyer, for helping out this year.



### PARENT'S NIGHT OUT A SUCCESS!

Our 2nd annual Parent's Night Out was a success! We had 23 children, ranging in ages 18 months to 12 years old, enjoying arts and crafts, games, and gingerbread house decorating. The youth raised around \$150 for church camp. We are so thankful for all of those who volunteered and helped us out .



## Prayer List 12-27-23

### Recent Concerns:

- ◆ All who are affected by the war in Israel
- ◆ Carlos Rickman
- ◆ Jack McDaniel
- ◆ Mike Pebbles
- ◆ Mike Smith
- ◆ Eliana Rodrigues
- ◆ Don Daffron
- ◆ Bob Clark
- ◆ Kerry Clark
- ◆ Jack Kelly, Jill Grove's father
- ◆ Vance Underhill
- ◆ Glenda Helton
- ◆ Joe Milligan
- ◆ Rob Lee
- ◆ Rita Thompson
- ◆ Suzanne Kizer Carter

### Continued Prayers (long term):

- ◆ Priscilla McFarland
- ◆ Michael Vickers, Ginny Haight's father
- ◆ Jack Gray
- ◆ Richard Stapleton, Al Stapleton's brother
- ◆ Tom Bailey
- ◆ Pete and Ann Chamberlain
- ◆ Rev. Dennis Wilkinson
- ◆ Bill Heitholt
- ◆ Janet & Jim Payne, Becky Coker's sister
- ◆ Georgia Gholston
- ◆ Manuel Harrison
- ◆ Melanie Cortea
- ◆ Judy Cortea
- ◆ Harold & Becky Coker
- ◆ Mabel and Carl Little
- ◆ Robert Seay
- ◆ Dudley Shaw (Robyn Elwell's brother-in-law)

### Austin:

- ◆ Ruby Vander Velde

### Ft. Worth:

- ◆ Mary Louise McMahan

### Legacy Oaks (Midlothian):

- ◆ Jerry Hutton

### Those serving in our military:

- ◆ Sgt. Kyle Ray Capps
- ◆ Celeste Young, Chandler Teague, and Brayden Young, great-grandchildren of Lee Riddle
- ◆ 1st Lieutenant Cameron Lehr
- ◆ Lt. Dan Barton
- ◆ Daniel Chamberlain
- ◆ Sgt. Stephen Smith & Denise Smith

## UPCOMING IMPORTANT DATES

January 3-Youth Group Escape Room trip from 5-8pm

January 4-First Thursday Luncheon at noon

January 8-Prayer Shawl meets at 9:30am

January 9-Women's Study Group meets at 5:15pm

January 9-Trustees meet at 6:30pm

January 11-Serve team meets at 10:30am

January 18-Prayer Shawl crafting meets at 9:30am

January 23-Women's Study Group meets at 5:15pm

January 25-Prayer Shawl crafting meets at 9:30am

## ONGOING WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

Tuesdays-Men's Breakfast Group meets at Texas Café Diner at 8am

Wednesdays-Little Ark Chapel at 11am

Wednesdays-Country Home Estates worship at 2pm

Wednesdays-Choir Rehearsals at 7pm.

Thursdays-M&M After School Choir (18th & 25th) from 3:45-5:30pm

## BI-WEEKLY EVENTS

Thursdays-Youth (18th) meets from 6-7pm



**Welcome new member Nan Clay!**



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](mailto:lhuffman01@cumbytel.com).

# HOLIDAY FUN at Little Ark



L to R: Mrs. Amanda and Micah on “ugly” Christmas Sweater Day; Pre-K “Candy Cane” snacks; Tiny Toddlers showing their Christmas Spirit!; Preschoolers showing off their Christmas outfits.

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

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