

Mount Vernon First
United Methodist Church

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The Methodist Greeter

DECEMBER 2015



"Our mission as a congregation is to strengthen our personal and group relationship with Christ and to reach out to other people."

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

-Matthew 2:1-2

You can find this edition of our newsletter on-line at www.mvfumc.org

Pastor's Corner

Pastor Dan Breznau

BIBLE READINGS FOR THE MONTH

December 6

Malachi 3:1-4
Luke 1:68-79
Philippians 1:3-11
Luke 3:1-6

December 13

Zephaniah 3:14-20
Isaiah 12:2-6
Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:7-18

December 20

Micah 5:2-5
Luke 1:47-55
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-45

December 24

Isaiah 9:2-7
Psalms 96
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-20

December 25

Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalm 98
Hebrews 1:1-4
John 1:1-14

December 27

1 Samuel 2:18-20
Psalms 148
Colossians 3:12-17
Luke 2:41-52

December 31

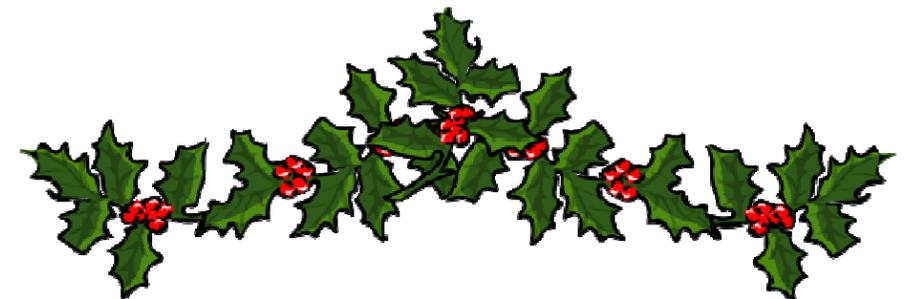
Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
Psalms 8
Revelations 21:1-6
Matthew 25:31-46

Greetings Friends:

For many, Christmas ends a day or so after December 25. Yet that is not the historical understanding of it: rather, Christmas day really only starts the season, followed by the twelve days leading up to the Epiphany or realization of who Jesus is. On Epiphany Sunday, there are two readings that we can traditionally reflect upon, one of which is the Wise Men; in the Orthodox Church it has been the baptism of our Lord. Both point to the same thing - God has come to dwell with us.

One of the things that I like to do this time of year, even though it is very cold, is continue with the tradition of blessings through the use of water. John Wesley exhorted us to remember our baptism vows early in the year, perhaps following Jesus example, so in following suit I have us remember them early in January during our worship service. In addition, I go one step further like those in the eastern churches: I visit businesses and homes of those that would like to invite God's blessing upon them for the coming year. I have done this for several years, and have to say it has been amazing to see some of the businesses blossom. Admittedly, it is no guarantee, yet the reminder that we live our lives in God's presence - at work, home and play - is worth, I believe, the extra time it takes to visit and pray together. So if this idea appeals to you, give me a call (509-670-4694) and let's set up a time for a blessing in your lives as we celebrate God's coming into our world.

Grace & Peace, Pastor Dan



FINANCIAL REPORT October 2015

	Income	Expense
Regular Account	\$26,473.00	\$22,025.88
Special Account	\$ 886.42	\$ 823.00

As you can see, we had a good month in October... Thank you! We have paid all of our bills and our Conference Apportionments to date. Thank you again for your continued support of the ministries of our church.

Advent Devotional Materials

Advent Devotional materials will be out on the table in the Narthex on Sunday, Nov. 29, the first Sunday in Advent. These materials will include our very own Advent booklet. Feel free to pick up some materials for yourself and maybe for your friends and neighbors too!

“Thank You!”

Did I tell you how excited I was when I returned from the Fort Worden retreat, came into the Narthex and saw all those yellow sticky notes on the Advent Devotional Board? It was wonderful! Great Thanks to all who wrote devotionals for our Advent Booklet! You make this project so special for our church family!! And a special “Thank You” to our young artists as well... You make this book beautiful!!

Got stocking stuffers?

The Quilters will be offering potholders/hot pads for your donation on Sunday, December 6, between services beginning about 9:30 and after the 10:30 service as supplies last. For each \$5.00 donation, you'll have your choice of a potholder sewn by one of the Quilters. These make great stocking stuffers and Hostess gifts. The money is used to purchase batting, backing, and other items for the quilts we sew for Hospice patients. Thank you for your support of our most rewarding ongoing project. We are in our 18th year and going strong!

Annual Cookie Extravaganza!!

It's that time of year... The United Methodist Women will be holding their annual Cookie Extravaganza Cookie Sale! Mark your calendar for Saturday, Dec. 5 from 10:00 a.m. to noon (or until we run out of cookies!). We are asking all of you folks that love to bake Christmas Cookies to consider making a few dozen for our cookie sale. Or join us on Thursday, Dec. 3 at 1:30 pm in the church kitchen where we will have a cookie baking party! This is our one big fundraiser for the year that funds our mission pledges. Thanks for your support!



Merry Christmas!

*The staff at Mount Vernon First United Methodist Church would like to
Wish you a very Blessed Christmas!*

*We hope that you will join us on
Dec. 24th at 4:30 p.m. for our Family Friendly Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship
Service*

Pastor Dan, Lori, Sue R., Maria, Sue E., Judith, Diane, Geoff & Sue F.

Our Giving Tree

Sunday, December 6, our Giving Tree will appear in the Narthex. On it will be cards each showing the gender and age of a needy, local child. If you would like to brighten Christmas for one of these children take a card and purchase an appropriate gift. Wrap your present and return it to the tree by noon on Sunday, December 20 with the card attached.

No time to shop? You can still spread the Christmas spirit to the less fortunate. Just place a donation in the offering plate any Sunday through December 20 and mark it "Giving Tree". The Outreach Committee will use those funds to provide holiday meals for the families of these boys and girls. The Skagit Valley Herald Christmas Fund is supplying us the information on these families.

For more information, contact Maria Breznau or Carolyn Gregg (360) 424 7453



Family Promise

Dec 6 we will again welcome homeless families with children to our church. Our guests, who work daily on job skills, finding work, and locating a rental home at the Family Promise Day Center, will sleep and eat breakfast and dinner in our building for a week. Volunteers from Celebration Lutheran Church in Anacortes and St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Sedro-Woolley will again help with responsibilities. This will be our third week of hosting. Our next opportunity will be in March.

Our new local chapter of Family Promise, a nationwide organization has placed 7 families in permanent housing in as many months. We think it's working!

Want to help? You can spend the night, lay out breakfast, cook dinner, teach a craft or donate to the church and mark your gift for "Family Promise". Contact Carolyn Gregg cgregg@valleyint.com or 424-7453



Faith in Action

November was the month of our Operation Christmas Child project. The namesake organization delivers shoeboxes filled with toys, toiletries, and school supplies to children in need all over the world, along with the message of Christ. Although we only worked on this project for four weeks, there was a great response! Through generous donations of time, items for the boxes, and shipping money, we put together thirty-five boxes for children from two to fourteen years old.

The project was kicked off with a box-wrapping party, at which six women gathered and worked very hard at learning the complicated process of wrapping shoeboxes with attached lids. They did very well – when the boxes were delivered, the intake personnel commented on how lovely they looked.

The packing party was held on Sunday, the 15th of November; several congregation members, as well as mothers and children involved in Hispanic Ministries, enthusiastically filled all of the boxes in just half an hour. Thank you to all who were involved in this project!

Wesleyan Circle

The ladies from Wesleyan will be meeting on Wednesday, December 9 at 1 p.m. They will gather together at the Garden Café at Skagit Gardens. For more information contact Donna Perez at 428-5903.



Christmas Extravaganza!

Join us on Sunday, Dec. 13 for a day of celebrating! Our Sunday School children and youth will be sharing the story of Jesus' birth during our 10:30 am worship. We will follow worship with a soup luncheon and all sorts of fun!! This is an event for families, singles, young and old. We will have something for everyone... gingerbread house building (supplies provided, but if you want to bring extra candy or have a "theme" for your house, feel free to bring your own candies), we will be card making with Sue Erickson, crafting, and the children will have the opportunity to make a present for their families. Any questions, please see Lori Flores. We will have a sign-up in the Narthex so that we have enough gingerbread kits. Hope to see you there!!

I am also looking for some additional help with this event... we could use 2 more crockpots of soup to serve to folks after church, additional help with crafts for folks of all ages, and help with clean-up. If you are able to help in one of these ways, please let me know. Thanks!



Skagit Valley UM Youth

Hey all you 6th through 12th graders... if you don't get enough partying in during our Christmas Extravaganza (see article above)... we will have more Christmas celebrations happening on Dec. 13. The Anacortes youth from our Skagit Group have invited us to join them at Anacortes UMC from 4 pm to 6 pm for a Christmas Party. We will plan on carpooling from our church at 3:30 pm that day. Questions? See Lori Flores.



United Methodist Women's Annual Christmas Tea

All women of the church are invited to join together on Wednesday, Dec. 16 at 1:30 pm in the Fireside Room for our annual Christmas Tea. We will have a short program, some carol singing, and of course delicious cookies and tea! We hope that you will join us!



Choir Candlelight Service

Please mark your calendars and plan to receive the gift of the annual Chancel Choir Candlelight Service at 4:00 PM on Sunday, December 20th in the church sanctuary. The service ends with glorious candlelight as we sing together "Silent Night". A reception will follow in Sprague Hall. Please invite your neighbors to share with you in this blessed experience.

