

First Connection

Vol. 45, No. 12

December 19, 2018

**First United
Methodist Church**
600 East Okmulgee Street
Muskogee, Oklahoma 74403
(918) 682-3368
www.fumcmuskogee.org
info@fumcmuskogee.org
Reverend Jack Kemper
Senior Pastor

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES

First Tuesday each month
New Days Cancer Support Group
6:15-7:15 pm

Second Tuesday each month
Prayer Shawl Ministry 1:30 pm

Second and fourth Thursday each month
Salty Seniors 1:00 pm

Third Thursday each month
Senior Adult Lunch 12:00

Monday, December 24
Candle Light Service
Traditional 7:00/Contemporary 11:00

Offices Closed
Tuesday, December 25
Tuesday, January 1

Check the calendar to see other opportunities in which you may wish to participate.

Our Mission Commitment...

To be Christ's disciples to others — within our church, our community, and around the world — and to diligently strive to make our church exciting, vital and alive.

Come Worship with Us

9:00 a.m. Contemporary Worship Service
10:00 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship Service
5:00 p.m. UMYF

This article may be helpful as we try to keep the Christmas spirit while standing in a department store line behind a person who decides to pay with pennies, or a check made out incorrectly, or they're discussing with the cashier as to whether they really want one of the \$3 items in their buggy.

I was looking up the meaning for the name Mary. Scholars indicate that the root word from which the name Mary is drawn may mean "stable-strength when facing danger." This may also give us insight into the fortitude and grit of Mother Mary who was chosen by God to bring forth the Savior of the world.

An astounding series of events and responses took place for the miracle of all miracles. What grips my heart as a parent is in imagining Mary holding her baby – what went through her mind? Next time you hold a baby imagine you are Mary. You have just gone through extraordinary unexplainable events but now your baby is in your arms.

Mary lovingly kisses her precious baby, and when she does, she kissed the face of God. Doesn't that just take your breath away? Focus in on that. When Mary held Jesus' face in her hands she was touching the face of God. And, when Mary delivered that child, that same child would some day deliver her. This was an awe-inspiring reality and I wonder if she was aware. Could she sense it...when she kissed the face of God?

In my mind I want to go to the manger, I want to sit beside Mary, I want to hold her baby, I want to kiss the face of God. What about you?

Merry Christmas,

Grace to you, Jack, from the church

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

“Remembrance Sunday” when we remember those in our church family passage in 2018 will be on Sunday, January 6, 2019. Please remind your family and friends.

Senior Adult Luncheon

Thursday - January 17 - 12:00 noon

Program
FUMC's Youth Programs

Speaker:
CINDY MATTHEWS
Youth Minister

WAY FORWARD

On February 22-24, 2019, a special called General Conference will be held in St. Louis, Mo. with the purpose of discerning the direction our church will go regarding the Human Sexuality questions we have debated over many years. We encourage every United Methodist in Oklahoma to be in prayer concerning this conference. We also have available a weekly devotion (written by Oklahoma leaders) that can supplement your prayer time. Use the following links to subscribe to that resource. Here are two of the “Way Forward” websites –

<https://www.umnews.org/en/news/court-one-church-plan-largely-constitutional#.W-GUwJd3KPZ.email> OR
<https://okumc-reg.brapp.com/28WeeksActsDevotions>

Christmas Recital Benefiting "Coins for Critters"

Dance students, both young and adult, will perform an evening of Song and Dance celebrating the Christmas Season on Thursday evening, December 20th at 6:30 pm in the FUMC Fellowship Hall. Donations will be greatly accepted to sustain the good works of the "Coins for Critters" organization.

Merry Christmas!
Bob and Isabel Cockle

YOUTH RUMMAGE SALE

All Youth Rummage sale donations may NOW be brought in to the stage area in the Activities Center. Also, PLEASE remember that the stage is not a storage room for the entire rest of the year. From March through mid-December any donated items go up to third floor. Thanks for your cooperation.

BOY'S RANCH NEW PHONE NUMBER

The old switchboard at the Ranch was recently hit by lightning, rendering the phone system inoperable. Please note the new number to call for the Methodist Boys Ranch is 405-530-2078. This is the main number to Circle of Care and is answered Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

CHURCH OFFICES CLOSED.

The church offices will be closed Tuesday, December 25 and Tuesday, January 1.

UMW MEETINGS

February 26, 2019 Pledge for Missions

Local Missions:

January-April: Meals on Wheels—Canned Goods
May-August: Ark of Faith
Refreshments for Friday Night
Coffee House

September-December: Gospel Rescue Mission

November-December: Cookson Hills
Christmas Store

TAX YEAR REMINDER

Reminder: All donations for the tax year 2018 must be in the church office by December 31, 2018. Donations received later than this date will be posted on the tax year 2019. Thank you all for your continued support of FUMC.

The Finance Committee

NEWSLETTER

Deadline is noon, Tuesday, January 22.

You may leave a message at the church or e-mail Pat Murr at pmurr53@hotmail.com Leigh Ann Matthews at leighann@fumcmuskogee.org



Another year gone by - hard to believe! We've had a great year with some pretty memorable activities - most recent.....Our kids did a fabulous job with "David's Dynasty" at First Family Christmas - WOW!!! Quite honestly, I wasn't really prepared for it...the final rehearsal was, well let's say....less than even close...it's amazing when you find out kids really did hear everything we said and paid attention to all the details after all. Thanks so much to Janie Riddle her wonderful directing and for customizing this play to meet our time, our kids and our message. It was GREAT! Thanks also to Jeanne Kemper and Jennie Kiewitt for all the help with our kids choir.

As always, I thoroughly enjoyed Sadler's production of "The Nutcracker." We always have a lot of kids participate - this year: Charlie Rosson, Haden Buie, Kaia Moore, Christion Glendening, Warner Eaton, Kensington Moore, Chanley Glendening and Gabby Green . It's a "must see" for me every year!

And....new this year, we featured our kids on a float in the Muskogee Christmas Parade. Even with the date change and some issues with the parade itself, our kids had a blast and were wonderful representatives for FUMC. Thanks so much to Lana Breedlove for all the help with the float, providing storage and a nice truck to pull it. Thanks also to Scott Matthews for driving and to Ruth Ann Clark, Hannah Henson and Lana for helping during the parade - Whew!!!!

Our children's choir annual caroling party was another great evening- we visited some of our church members with mobility restrictions and visited Brookdale Assisted Living Center and Broadway Manor. Again, this is one of my favorite activities and the kids always look forward to it.

We have a wonderful group of kids - I feel very fortunate to be able to spend time with them and help them grow in their faith journey. I look forward to 2019! Merry Christmas!!

**In God's Love,
Ms. Leigh Ann**



Here's what the youth are doing.....

Our kids have been participating in basketball, band, choir, robotics competitions, work, soccer, the Nutcracker, school projects and homework!!! WHEW!!! They are always busy!!! They're looking forward to a much needed break and not setting their alarm clocks.

This Sunday, our group will go to the VA Hospital to play chimes and sing Christmas carols. Our schedule has been adjusted this year, so we'll eat pizza around 7:15 and then enjoy a wonderful hayride through Honor Heights Park beginning at 8:30 pm. We should return to the church by 9:45 pm. Please let me know if we need to help with rides home for the kids..... sorry it is so late.

Our next BIG adventure will be the upcoming Rummage Sale!!!! We'll begin setting up after school on Tuesday, January 29. We'll work after school every day that week until 8:00 pm and the sale will be on Saturday, February

2. Hey church family... if you have items for the sale, they can be brought to the stage. Please, please make every effort to place any items behind the curtains. The kids will stack the boxes each week to make sure we have plenty of room. Hey parents... if you have a flexible schedule and can work during the day for rummage sale set up, please let me know. We'll need all the help we can get.

Hey parents.... A medical release for 2019 will be attached to your child's newsletter this week. Please fill it out and return to my office. New info..... I need the birth date of the policy holder and an area has been provided for this in the section on insurance.

Our ski trip to Crested Butte is approaching quickly and the kids (and adults) are so excited about this awesome time with our church family. Hey parents.... Please make sure you are up to date on ski payments. I'll text balances paid later this week.

Love those FUMYs... Cindy

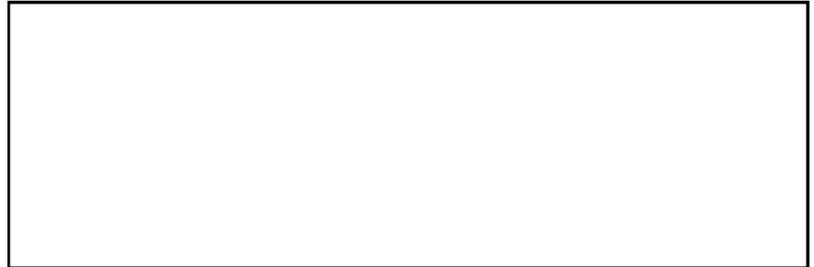


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Return Service Requested



9:00 GREETERS for January:

Jim and Vickie Tracy and Bud and Melba Ranks

11:00 USHERS for January:

Roy Entz, David Miller, Hardy Clark, Harold Mattox, Ken Reagan

Keep in Your Prayers

Ann Briggs, Ken Webb, Sarah Grayson, Alice Hendrickson, Elizabeth Remer, Kevin Key, Nancy Marklewitz, Sue Ann Melton, Mark Webb, Don Wade, Bert Irwin, Teri Edge, and Robert Haxton. Remember to pray for each other.

January Food Pantry Item:

**Check the weekly bulletin for food item.
Your support is greatly appreciated.**

ATTENDANCE

Date	9:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	Total
November 18	Combined Service		223
November 25	124	74	198
December 2	146	89	235
December 9	127	63	190
December 16	146	68	214

Broadway Manor Schedule:

- December 30 Turning Point
- January 6 New Beginnings
- January 13 Adult Alternatives
- January 20 Crossroads
- January 27 Horizons
- February 3 Children
- February 10 Wesley