

COLLIERS CURRENT



UMW FOR THE WIN!

The Colliers UMW collected over \$1,100.00 for Christmas love offerings, in the midst of a very unusual season. Donations were made to Yokefellow, South Caldwell Christian Ministries, and Christmas treat bags for students at the backpack program students at Whitnel School. Donations were also made to support a couple of church members. Thanks so much for your support and willingness to do God's work, even in difficult times. God Bless and Merry Christmas! (adapted from an email written by UMW President, Patsy Pilkenton)



Following yonder star...

Have you heard about the Christmas Star that will shine in the night sky for the first time in 800 years? According to astronomers, Jupiter and Saturn will align in the night sky to create a brilliant ball of light during the upcoming winter solstice. Such an event has not happened since the middle ages, around 1226 A.D. "Look for them low in the southwest in the hour after sunset," NASA officials said in a press release. This event will happen on December 21st,

which is one week away. The two giant planets will appear just a tenth of a degree apart - that's about the thickness of a dime held at arm's length! This means the two planets and their moons will be visible in the same field of view through binoculars or a small telescope. In fact, Saturn will appear as close to Jupiter as some of Jupiter's moons." Source: Fox 8 News

Christmas Eve Service @ 4 p.m. in the parking lot

Communion - (bring your own bread & juice)
Candlelight - LED candlelight will be available.
The weather forecast is calling for rain on 12/24. We will also offer a virtual Christmas Eve Service via Facebook, YouTube, and email.

Oh the weather outside is frightful, ...or is it?

At the November Admin. Council meeting, the church leadership agreed to continue to meet in the church parking lot as we enter into the winter months. In spite of the likelihood of much colder temperatures and bad weather, the group was in agreement that we should continue to meet rather than suspending worship during this difficult season. It seems like folks have been fairly appreciative of the parking lot worship experience, and it has been particularly meaningful for those who do not or cannot access the online worship services that have been posted on either Facebook, YouTube, and email.

Of course, weather is not the only deciding factor in our efforts to host parking lot worship. As your pastor, I am constantly monitoring Caldwell County's increasing positivity rate, and I am regularly weighing the risks vs. benefits of meeting together for worship as the COVID-19 crisis persists in our community and beyond. After seeing the virus hitting much closer to home in the past couple of weeks, I wrestle with the potential risks of gathering for worship.

Given the fact that our partner churches have suspended indoor worship, and will be returning to virtual worship through the Zoom platform for the foreseeable future, it may be possible that Colliers will eventually join with the other Foothills Cooperative Parish churches for an online worship experience. To date, this has been helpful for folks who continue to yearn for a safe worship experience.

This past Sunday, I stood before the congregation and announced that we would be suspending parking lot worship as we entered the new year, and we would be sharing a Christmas worship video produced by Bishop Leeland and District Superintendents of the WNCUMC as our primary worship service on the Sunday following Christmas.

Since making that announcement, I have reconsidered what the worship service appears to mean to the folks who have been faithfully attending in the comforts of their cars and camp chairs, and I think it will be prudent to continue to hold services outside IF the conditions are conducive to comfortable and safe worship.



Thank you for your faithfulness.

Oh what an odd season this has been. Many of our traditions, decorations, and festivities have been placed on hold in hopes of keeping us safe in the midst of an ongoing health crisis. Though we did not decorate the sanctuary, and we have not been able to be in the places that often make Christmas so cheerful, we have been able to walk together in a variety of ways as we call upon our faith to carry us through a uniquely challenging moment in the history of our world.

As the body of Christ, we are reminded that the watching and waiting that we do today, will one day be met with the coming of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. In the meantime, as we set aside our traditional Christmas celebrations and many of the gatherings that we love so much, I want to say thank you for your faithfulness and the many ways that you have lived into the season and allowed your lights of hope, peace, joy, and love to shine brightly for all to see.

May this be the merriest Christmas of all, and may 2021 be filled with opportunities and blessing beyond measure!!