



In the First Place

*the monthly newsletter of First United Methodist Church, Sheridan, Arkansas
December 2019 Volume 2019/Issue 12*

Christmas Brunch for All Women & Girls Saturday, December 7, at 9:30 a.m.

*Come One Come All
Mothers and Daughters Small and Tall
To a Holiday Brunch where we will munch.
And Gather in a bunch.
Wear your favorite holiday attire
And plan to inspire
RSVP we want your name
Because we will play a game.
You will certainly recognize the Worth
As we celebrate our Saviors birth!*

The United Methodist Women invite **ALL** women, mothers, and daughters to a Christmas brunch on Saturday, December 7, at 9:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. The cost is a donation and everyone is asked to bring an unwrapped toy for children ages birth to 18 years old for the Angel Tree. If you plan to attend, please RSVP to the church office at 942-4127 or email fumcsheridan@gmail.com by December 1 with the number attending in your party. —Zoe Hines

New Bible Study for Women Planning Meeting Sunday, December 8, 2019

Interested in going deeper into God's word? With Pastor Todd -Paul's encouragement, Jenny Swilling and Claire Gatling will do just that by starting the 2020 New Year off with a new Bible study for Ladies-of-all-ages. They would love to have you share your ideas and suggestions about this at an Interest Meeting on Sunday, December 8, at 2:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. They can't wait to see you there!

The Christmas Shop Wednesday, December 18 6:15–7:30

It's the return of the annual Christmas shopping experience for children ages two years through fifth grade so they can buy gifts for their family. Every item in the shop is only \$1, and each child will have their own personal shopper to help them! This shop is sponsored by the UMW with all proceeds funding their mission.

A sheet with more information will be sent home with UMK children. Please help the UMW by listing who the child is shopping for (only parents, siblings, and grandparents this year, please) and labeling the gift tags with their names ahead of time. We will have snacks and entertainment for the children as they wait their turn to shop.

Children's Christmas Play & Potluck Sunday, December 15 at 5:30

We are gearing up for our annual Christmas Play. This year the pre-k thru 5th Grade will be doing an adaptation of *The Christmas Story*. The play will be December 15 at 5:30 followed by our annual potluck and visit from Santa. A huge thank you to Pam Reed, Dona Glaze, and Helen Shirron for planning and directing this year's performance.

We have started a children's choir we hope will be performing soon during a morning service. A big thank you to Alexis Tadlock, Jennifer Kelley, Tamyra Cody, and Johni Beth Teague for leading the older choir and Pam Reed, Helen Shirron, Elizabeth Taulbee, Amy Henson, and Audra Hines for working with the younger children's choir.

The children are also looking forward to "shopping" for their families at the annual Christmas Store sponsored by the UMW.

We have a wonderful group of young people – thank you to the parents for bringing them each week and giving us the opportunity to spend some time with them!

*-Nicole Cacciatori
UMK Director*

Choir Christmas Cantata Sunday, December 15 at the 10:50 Service No 8:45 Service

Help Give Out Books at the Christmas Parade Saturday, December 7 Lineup by 4:45



The annual Grant County Christmas parade is Saturday, December 7. Everyone is invited to join all the children of the church (big and small) and help hand out the annual Christmas books while walking the parade route. This is a fun community outreach ministry, and we hope to see you at the lineup by 4:45 on the visitors side parking lot of Yellowjacket Stadium. For more information, contact Joe Archer.

From the Pastor's Desk....

What an odd time to be alive. Even as I write this, I am listening to the impeachment hearings that have been held for the past couple weeks (and which I assume will continue through the publication of our newsletter). I suspect that most of us have already formed opinions about the hearings (and our hoped-for results thereof) as well as the state of political process in our country. Yet, even as I witness these historical events and certainly have opinions on what is happening, I also feel somewhat helpless. I have no doubt that the proceedings and machinations of real people in Washington, D.C. will have an impact on me, my family, and ordinary Americans (indeed on ordinary persons all over the world). But I certainly do not possess the power or access to impact these events (at least not beyond my vote).



As we enter into the season of Advent, I find myself able to identify a bit more with the holy family. As we all know, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Christmas art often portrays a be-fogged, soft-lit pastoral scene wherein Mary and Joseph are surrounded by wise men, shepherds, and adoring animals. The grit and grime of a stable, field hands, and even childbirth is washed away. This does not even mention that the event took place in Bethlehem, which was most certainly not where Mary and Joseph made their home and life!

Indeed, scripture tells us quite clearly that Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem precisely because of the political movements of powerful people far away. The emperor in Rome had decreed that a census be taken (and let us not even imagine the whats and whyfores of that), forcing persons all over the ancient world to travel in order to fulfill the law (or one might say, the whims of politicians). In a day when traveling half-way across the country is no more than an inconvenience and across the state a day-trip, it is easy to forget that travel was exceedingly difficult and dangerous during Mary and Joseph's day. In essence, it would be as if a trip from Sheridan to Grapevine (or Poyen or Prague or Center Grove) would only be undertaken under dire circumstances or for extraordinary reasons.

But because a powerful person far away made a decision, Mary and Joseph had to assume the risks of travel (with Mary pregnant no less) and she gave birth in a strange (and no doubt, dirty) place far from home and family. Furthermore, because of a decision by another powerful person far away, very soon after Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph had to escape to Egypt where they became refugees for several

years. Imagine how helpless they must have felt. Imagine how miserable it must have been.

Yes, of course the impeachment hearings will have an impact on me and on each of us. And of course, I (nor probably any of us who read this) have any ability to impact the process or its results. But I certainly do not anticipate being "inconvenienced" quite as much as Mary and Joseph (and Jesus) were. I certainly don't think that I'll end up in a refugee camp. Nor do I believe that I will be "inconvenienced" as much as others who live at the margins of our society or the world will be impacted. Powerful people make decisions every day that change the lives of regular people, sometimes for the good and sometimes for ill. That will never change. I submit that part of our duty is to support those in power who do their best to make decisions that have a positive impact on the least of these.

Beyond our vote and our political advocacy, I think that it is at least incumbent upon us all to make a positive difference directly with and for those whose lives are upended because of the decisions of powerful people – at least for those who are around and near us. As has been said repeatedly, it is not the duty of the Christian to decide who is worthy of love. It is the duty of the Christian to love. Our love must take the form of action on behalf of those who need it.

Perhaps you or I will never be the one who has the ability to (or burden of) making weighty decisions. But we will always be able to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the sick or those in prison. Thus, as Jesus taught, we might always be able to do the same for him. Matthew 25 appears to be linked quite closely with Matthew 1. I encourage us all this Advent and Christmas season to seek ways to positively impact the lives of those around us. That might just be the fullness of the Christmas season.

-Pastor Todd-Paul



Poinsettias can be placed in the church in honor or memory of a loved one. Please contact the church office at 942-4127 for more details.

Christmas Programs & Services

December 15

Choir Christmas Cantata 10:50 service

Children's Christmas Program &
Church Potluck 5:30

December 24

Christmas Eve services at 6:00 & 11:00

First United Methodist Church
At the corner of Church and Main Streets
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Todd-Paul Taulbee, Pastor
Betty Lancaster, Church Secretary and Treasurer
Sandra Parham Turner, Newsletter Editor

United Methodist Women

In October 2018, I heard myself tell Betty Cook I would be UMW interim president so she could focus on her responsibilities as president of the Southeast District UMW. Shortly after that, Sandra Turner reminded me I needed an article for the newsletter. Oh, I didn't really sign up for that, did I? So through the year, Sandra has "assisted." Now in January, I will hand this position and this task over to Sandra.

I do want to thank each and every UMW member. You've supported me and our activities, and you have always been ready to lend a hand. I also want to tell our congregation just how very important you are to our mission work. Thank you so much for making this a wonderful year for me.

So, for our December activities:

Ladies, one and all, small and tall, please join us on Saturday, December 7, at 9:30 a.m. for brunch. Wear your favorite holiday attire, and we will fellowship and celebrate the birth of our Savior.

On Wednesday, 12/18/19, with the help of our youth, we will host our children's Christmas shopping store.

Then it will be January, and Sandra Turner will become our Sheridan First United Methodist Church United Methodist Women's President! I'm excited for her leadership and consideration of new ways that we can be in Mission as the Voice, hands, feet, and heart of God! I know she will enjoy her position because of you.

*- Zoe Hines
UMW President*

Congratulations!



Congratulations to Haze Robinette for earning the rank of Eagle Scout in a ceremony held on Sunday, November 17, in the sanctuary. Shown with Haze are his parents, Dr. John and Lezleigh Robinette.

Memorials and Honorariums

In Memory of Tom Waller: Backpacks by Cassie Hatch; Dee Ann Daniel; Anonymous; David & Jane Robinson; David & Charlene Holloway; Charles & Alexis Tadlock; The Plunkett Group, Inc.; **Youth** by Shirley Phillips & family; Sparky & Cindy Hedden; Betty Freier; Liz Shannon; Jim & Bobbie Allen; Linda & Kenneth Archer; Anita Gatzke; Jim & Betty Lancaster; **Choir** by Bo & Sheila Aaron; **Summer Feeding Program** by Jeanie Camp

In honor of Allison Archer & Hudson Wells: Backpacks by Jeanie Camp

In honor of Hope Layton and Brady Bone: Backpacks by Jeanie Camp

In honor of Rachel Sanders and Cobey Wingfield: Backpacks by Jeanie Camp

In honor of Sandra Turner: Youth by Charles & Alexis Tadlock

A Gift that Gives Twice Sharing Our Table for \$20

Sharing Our Table, the UMW cookbook, has 815 delicious recipes contributed by church members, the history of our church, and full-color illustrations of each of our beautiful stained glass windows with an explanation of each. You give a gift twice when you purchase this cookbook, because all proceeds from the sales go to UMW mission. Copies are available for \$20 in the office or from any UMW member.

Thank You for Contributions to the Veterans Care Package Drive

Thank you all so much for your donations to the SMS Veterans Care Package Drive. Our drive was a huge success. We were able to collect enough articles to send 25 care packages to active deployed troops in Afghanistan

In addition, we collected so many items that we are donating the remaining items to both the Voluntary Service and Day Treatment Center at the VA Hospital of Fort Roots. The centers are going to give the items out to both inpatient and day veterans.

It is so amazing that anything a member of our church wants to do, our church will give to make it a reality.

Thank you ALL for all you do for our family, the church, and our community.

-Shannon Archer

Remember to bring your coke tabs and toiletries by Sunday morning December 8 for the Youth to deliver to Ronald McDonald House