



Hill Top News

Markesan United
Methodist Church

December 2011

HERE I SIT

Here I sit at the computer contemplating what to write you this month and I look out my office window and see Clark Buchanan outside in the wind and cold anchoring down Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, a donkey, shepherds and kings in our Nativity display so the strong winds don't blow them all away. And I wonder . . . will this Christmas be different or will we just blow it all away—blow it off.

Will Christmas just be another day off from work? Another big meal to fix and eat? More debt piled onto existing debt for presents you can't afford? Another year of office parties, Christmas merriment with too much to drink and eat? One more Christmas Eve worship to get all dressed up for and sing the same old carols one more time? Another trip to grandma's house to fight with your brother or sister?

If that's all Christmas has become then maybe, for you, this is the year do something different, to make some changes in your life that will anchor you firmly to the Christ of Christmas. May I make a few suggestions?

Find your Bible, go to a quiet place and read the Christmas story from Luke 1 & 2 and Matthew 1 & 2.

Bake some Christmas cookies and take them to someone alone for the first time this Christmas or again this year.

Instead of time shopping and wrapping gifts that will not be appreciated make some donations to the Salvation Army, Hope School, Interhope, Porchlight or other worthy charities in the name of those whom would normally receive your gift(s).

Volunteer to work Christmas Day so someone else can spend the day with their family.

Help prepare and serve our Christmas Day dinner here at church.

Come to our weekly Advent studies of the book *The Journey* by Adam Hamilton

Read *The Journey* by Adam Hamilton or another Advent/Christmas book.

Know of a neighbor, friend or family member whom is the caregiver for someone then offer to sit in the home so they can go Christmas shopping or enjoy a Friday fish fry or just get out of the house.

Visit with a nursing home or hospital Activities Department or social worker and ask who is lonely or needs a visitor.

These are just a few suggestions—surely you can think of more. May Christ be in you in intimate and powerful ways this Christmas!

Merry Christmas!



PS: As I was completing this the Nativity has been completely blown over. I pray that is not a prophesy of Christmas this year!



2011 Chili Fest Report

A huge thank you to all the brothers and sisters that helped with the annual chili supper and bake sale, from working in the kitchen to serving in the dining room or whatever you did. Thank you! Whatever you did was important to the cause and much appreciated.

Receipts

Free Will Offering - noon	\$715.00
Free Will Offering - evening	\$646.50
Sale of Leftover Supplies	48.00

Total \$1,409.50

Expenses

Meat/Cheese/Groceries	478.91
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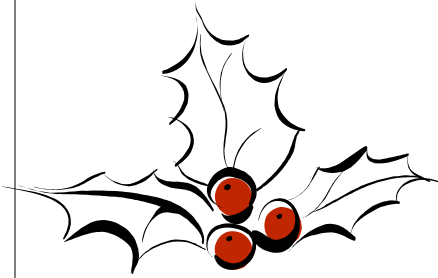
Net \$930.60

Projects Money Contributed To:

Markesan Food Pantry	100.00
Markesan Gifts Anonymous	100.00
Campus Crusade for Christ	100.00
Webster Missionary	100.00
Wilkinson Missionary	100.00
Hope School	100.00
Voice of Martyrs	100.00
UMC Youth Ministries	100.00

Total \$800.00

Twass the Treasurer's Dilemma



Twass the month of December, in the Methodist Church
Where many a church treasurer felt left in a lurch.
They'd issued their warnings, of impending doom
That Apportionment payments were ending too soon.

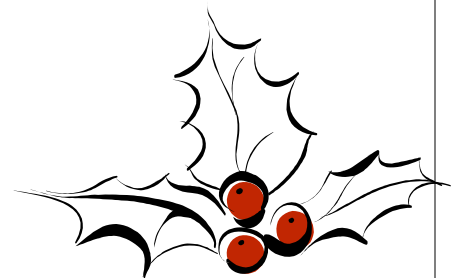
While the sanctuaries were decorated with such meticulous care
It was hoped that parishioners soon would be there.
Babies, children, parents and grandparents too
Coming for pageants, cantatas, worship and so much to do.

First comes Advent One, and then two, and now three
Though the giving is better still Treasurer's plea:
There is still so very little in the checking account
To pay all the bills and remove all the doubt.

Then down in the basement as the counters did count
There arose such a clamor of joy they did shout
For found in the offering of Advent Four and of Eve
Is Extravagant Generosity such as none could believe.

The baskets were flowing with wonders bestowing
Making the glad hearts of Treasurers be glowing.
The Treasurers then the checks they did write
Paying Apportionments such that all was quite right.

Now Conference offices, Bishops and Treasurers
Did receive with thanksgiving those checks to their coffers.
And too they did then pay all their bills and invoices
And together will all Methodists lifted joyous their voices.



* *Advent/Christmas Hymn Festival*

Sunday, December 18, will be a very special musical Sunday in Advent. At the 8:30 worship the Chancel Choir will be presenting "Savior of the Nations, Come" by Michael Burkhardt. This is an Advent/Christmas celebration in song and scripture and includes short passages from Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The congregation will be invited to join in many familiar seasonal hymns. Accompanists will be Jason Davis and Sharon Doxtator. Come prepared to receive a blessing in music.

 **Habitat for Humanity®**

PLAN AHEAD!!!

Habitat departure date for Marquette, MI, is June 10, 2012. Work week is June 11 - 15. Update on the projects as of Nov 28th include a duplex project in Marquette, a house already having interior painted in Gwinn, a lot procured in Ishpeming, and an additional family selected for a house in Gwinn.



Second Mile Giving for December-

Hope Secondary School is the 2nd mile recipient for December. For nearly 50 years, Hope School has been educating, nurturing and inspiring teens. The school was originally a prep school for orphaned and disadvantaged boys in Israel but has since broadened its ministry to include female and disabled students. Both Christian and Muslim students are welcome. All of the students experience hardships at home due to the political unrest of the area, limited employment opportunities, illness, and single parent homes. Hope school does its best to care for each student offering love and hope, along with an education and specialized training to help them make their way in the world.

Christmas Eve Offering-

Our Christmas Eve offering will once again be given in support of Porchlight. Porchlight provides emergency shelter, food, employment services, counseling and housing assistance to people in Dane County. One service Porchlight provides is assistance to households with limited income to maintain stable housing including assistance with preventing homelessness in the wake of a short term financial emergency for a household. Porchlight also recently initiated a unique program to assist veterans with housing, employment and overcoming mental health issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, and substance abuse. This funding assisted in renovating a building in Madison into 24 single rooms. Veterans using the housing pay a portion of their income to live in the housing where they receive meals, employment training, health care assistance and counseling. The goal for each veteran in the program is to obtain independent permanent housing within two years. The envelopes included in the newsletter are for your use for the Christmas Eve offering.

NEW YEAR'S DAY WORSHIP

Covenant Renewal Service

Methodism's founder John Wesley frequently made use of a special worship service when visiting *Methodist Societies* as many of the early Methodist worship gatherings were called in the 18th century. He recorded in his journal variously after such services:

“Many mourned before God, and many were comforted” (April 1756)

“It was, as usual, a time of remarkable blessing” (October 1765)

“It was an occasion for a variety of spiritual experiences . . . I do not know that ever we had a greater blessing. Afterwards many desired to return thanks, either for a sense of pardon, for full salvation, or for a fresh manifestation of His graces, healing all their backslidings” (January 1, 1775).

In recent times this service is commonly used on New Year's Eve as a Watch Night Service or on New Year's Day. We do not typically do a New Year's Eve Watch Night Service. You might think that every seven years New Year's Day would fall on a Sunday but that is not the case. In fact, it has only fallen on a Sunday in recent memory in 1995 and 2006, then this coming year in 2012 and will occur again in 2017, so you see this is somewhat unique opportunity this year and is why we will use the Covenant Renewal Service form of worship at 10:30 on New Year's Day, January 1, 2012 when we have the one service of worship that morning.

Please consider making a special effort to be with us that morning for worship to experience this wonderful way to begin the New Year.



Practice Schedule For the Children's Christmas Program are as follows:

Saturday, December 3rd, 8:30-10:00 am

Saturday, December 10th, 8:30-10:00 am

Saturday, December 17th, 8:30-10:00 am

The Children's Christmas Program will be held on Sunday Evening, December 18th at 7:00 p.m.

Christmas Dinner Sign –Up

Have you/your family/or friends signed up for the **Second Annual Christmas Dinner?** Do you know someone or a family that will be alone on Christmas Day? Invite them to the Second Annual Christmas Day Dinner! Sign Up Sheets are placed in the Narthex and Common Ground, or contact the Church Office. Please reserve your spot/s by signing up prior to Wednesday, Dec. 14th. There will be a free will offering.

Salvation Army Bell Ringers Needed!!

We are in need of Bell Ringers on December 10th at Ted's Piggly Wiggly. A sign up sheet is in the Narthex at Church. Sign Up Early to make sure you get the time slot you would like. If you would like to split a shift; find another person and sign up and split the time in half.

Reminder:

The Children's Christmas Program will be held on Sunday evening, December 18th at 7:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served following the program.



Thank you for your prayers, cards and visits, while I was having knee surgery.

June Zauner

90th Birthday Open House

You are all invited to an Open House to Celebrate the 90th Birthday of Lorraine Laybourn.
Saturday, December 31st from 2:00—4:00 p.m.
in the Fellowship Hall.



Administrative Council Meeting – November 14, 2011 The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. In attendance were: Karen Davis, Russ Hirschy, Shirley Parker, Jim Clark, Margaret Whirry, Jan Horn, Pastor Paul, and Cindy Hilke.

Pastor Paul opened the meeting with prayer.

The Secretary's Minutes were reviewed. Russ Hirschy made a motion to approve the minutes. Seconded by Jim Clark. Minutes were approved.

No Old Business

New Business:

Worship Committee-Reported that Charge Conference will be Dec. 4 between services. Traditional Worship will begin at 8:45 a.m. and the Second Service people should arrive early to partake in join Communion. District Superintendent Gordon Lind will be delivering the message this Sunday, leading Communion, and also overseeing the Charge Conference. On Dec. 18th, there will only be one service at 8:30 with a Christmas Cantata at this service. In the evening of the 18th the children will be having their Annual Children's Christmas Program at 7:00 p.m. In other events from the Worship Committee, Lori Krueger will be leaving her position of working with the children. There have been thoughts of looking for someone to staff this position and possibly reconfigure this position for a possible Youth Director. Discussion was held on having a meeting later and inviting the parents of youth to attend this meeting. Also discussed was a informal Summer Worship @ Margaret Whirry's home on Saturday evening and we will need people to help in publicity. This would run from Memorial Day-Labor Day weekends. There will also be only one Worship Service on Christmas and New Year's Day.

Missions-The Mission Committee will be meeting in the next couple of weeks to discuss 2012 Missions and a decision needs to be made what to do with matching monies that have not been used thus far in 2011.

Samaritan House reported that the Christmas Store is open and going well and that they have dispersed funds to Gifts Anonymous, Salvation Army, Samaritan Purse, and to Porchlight.

Appliancefest reported that referral calls are coming into the church and being forwarded to Kirk Fauska, Chairperson of Appliancefest.

The Treasurer reported that we are 6 months behind in apportionments and that 4 have been paid.

The Finance Committee presented a tentative Budget for 2012. While viewing the tentative budget there was a motion made by Margaret Whirry for the Pastor to pay \$1700 of his insurance. This was seconded by Russ Hirschy, motion carried. This would be reflected through a reduction of salary and compensation. The \$4,000 that the Trustees had asked for to be placed in the budget for seal coating the parking log was rejected, and they are being asked to use the monies that they have available or make a fund, and ask for donations for this. Pledges for 2012 are just getting in, so if pledged are off, another meeting will be called to adjust the budget prior to the Charge conference. Russ made a motion to approve the Budget and seconded by Shirley Parker. Motion was carried to approve tentative Budget for 2012.



The Trustees reported that the electricians have been in to work on the lights in Common Ground, and that the furnace people are scheduled to be here sometime this week to look at the exhaust ventilation. A suggestion was made also that the Trustees place a railing on the steps coming out of the Sew Blessed Room and the Education Room into the Fellowship Hall Floor.

Nominations reported that people that have been asked to fill their current elected positions are agreeing to remain in that position. They reported that they are having trouble finding someone for Chairperson of the SPRC, and that the current Chairperson, Jim Clark, cannot run again, as he has filled his maximum number of terms per the Discipline.

SPRC had nothing to report.

Lay Leader, Shirley Parker, reported that she will be filling out her Lay Leader forms for Charge Conference, and that she is available for helping in worship, and listening to people's comments or complaints and working with the pastor.

Membership reported that they were meeting on Wednesday morning at 8:30 a.m.

Discussion was held on the Concealed Carry Law. More discussion will be held after the meeting with the insurance agent on Wednesday afternoon. No action is being taken at this time to post. We will revisit at a future meeting.

Next Meeting will be held January 9, 2012 at 4:30 p.m.

Jim Clark made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Margaret Whirry. Meeting adjourned at 5:25 p.m.

Poinsettia Orders are Due by 12/11

Cost is \$7.00/plant. Make your check payable to Markesan UMC and place the cash or check in the offering plate with this slip. You may pick up your Poinsettia following worship on Dec. 25th.



I would like a Poinsettia/s for the sanctuary in my/our name

I would like it noted in the bulletin as:

_____ In Honor or _____ In Memory of

Name _____



CHRISTMAS EVE

Please join us Christmas Eve for Candlelight worship at either 4 p.m. or 7 p.m. The Celebration Singers will be our worship leaders at 4 while the Sanctuary Choir will be part of the 7 p.m. worship. Holy Communion will be served at the later service. Both will close with candlelight and the singing of Silent Night. You are encouraged to invite family and friends to these special services celebrating the birth of Christ, our Savior.

DECEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

There is only ONE Sunday this month in which the worship schedule is unchanged. Please note the schedule below and mark your calendar as necessary to avoid missing worship.

December 04 - 8:45 & 9:45 (*Holy Communion & Annual Meeting at 9:45 with 2nd worship service to follow*)

December 11 – 8:30 & 10:30, normal worship schedule

December 18 – 8:30 ONLY – All music, choir led worship

December 24 – 4:00 & 7:00 – Christmas Eve, Holy Communion at 7 only

December 25 – 10:30 ONLY, NO 8:30 worship

January 1st – 10:30 ONLY, NO 8:30 worship, Service will be John Wesley Covenant Service

December Birthdays & Anniversaries

1 Dennis Cotterill	11 Jacob Schwoch
2 Bob Fischer	Ronald Davis
3 Wilbur Sauerbrei	13 Eric Kruger
4 Jim Fox	21 Geraldine Jackowski
6 Isabelle Wilsnack	22 Ruth Bremer
Darrell/Nancy Cotterill-Ann.	25 Bill Coleman
Hannah Davis	27 Verlys Marquardt
7 Owen Schwandt	28 Dylan Prill
Shirley Parker	31 Lorraine Laybourn
9 Evelyn Menke	Marcel Marquart
Diana Strahota	Jeremy Jackowski



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
December 2011				1 7:00 pm- Advent Study Group	2	3 8:30 am-10:00 am— Children's Christmas Pro-
4 8:45-Worship/ Communion thru 10:30 -Worship/ Communion With Charge Conference	5	6 6:30 am—Men's Prayer Breakfast @ Sandy's Diner 6:15 pm— Worship Com- mittee Mtg	7 10:30 am— Advent Study Group 6:30 pm— Celebration Sing Practice 7:00 p.m.— Chancel Choir Practice	8 7:00 pm- Advent Study Group	9	10 8:30 am-10:00 am— Children's Christmas Pro- gram Practice Salvation Army Bell Ringers @ Ted's Piggly
11 8:30 am— Worship 9:30 am— Hospitality/SS 9:35 am—Adult SS 10:30 am— Celebration Worship Service	12	13 6:30 am—Men's Prayer Breakfast @ Sandy's Diner	14 10:30 am— Advent Study Group 6:30 pm— Celebration Sing Practice 7:00 p.m.— Chancel Choir Practice	15 7:00 pm- Advent Study Group 7:00 pm— Friendship Circle/Jean Hollander hostess	16	17 8:30 am-10:00 am— Children's Christmas Pro- gram Practice
18 8:30 a.m.— Advent/ Christmas Hymn Festival 7:00 p.m.— Children's Christ- mas Program	19	20 6:30 am—Men's Prayer Breakfast @ Sandy's Diner	21 10:30 am— Advent Study Group 6:30 pm— Celebration Sing Practice	22 7:00 pm- Advent Study Group	23	24 4:00 p m— Family Christmas Eve Service led by Celebration Sing- ers with Candle- light Service 7:00 pm— Christmas Eve Service/ Communion/ Candlelight Ser- vice
25 10:30 am— Worship 12:30 pm—2nd Annual Christmas Dinner at Church.	26	27:30 am— Men's Prayer Breakfast @ Sandy's Diner	28	29	30	31 2:00-4:00 pm— 90th Birthday Open House for Lorraine Lay- bourn in Fellow- ship Hall