



Hill Top News

Markesan United
Methodist Church

January 2012

WE THREE KINGS

Many of you, like me, grew up in a time when we sang Christmas Carols in school and our concerts in December were labeled Christmas Concerts rather than Holiday or Winter Concerts. One of the earliest carols I remember singing was “We Three Kings”. Of course, today we know the Bible does not tell us how many they were and further that they weren’t even kings at all but were “wise men” or astrologers from the East who came to worship the new born king. Jesus, by the time of their arrival was a toddler of two or three years of age. On our church calendars we mark the time of their arrival on the twelfth day of Christmas, or January 6th of each year. We call that day Epiphany. An “epiphany” is a sudden intuitive leap of understanding.

As children Christ’s birthday is all about Santa Clause and the opening of gifts. It’s all about you even though as a child we are told it’s Jesus’ birthday. Then one day we have an epiphany and learn the story of Santa is just that—a story, and we begin to shift our focus to Christ’s birth. But, as one article on Christmas I read in December points out, we never lose the “he sees you when you’re sleeping / he knows when you’re awake. / He knows if you’ve been bad or good / so be good for goodness sake!” It seems we reduce God to a mythical watchdog who judges our niceness or naughtiness and metes out rewards and punishments accordingly. But this is not the God we see in Jesus.

We must not let the true Christ be distorted in us by laying on him the mythical images of Santa or any other such “sugar daddy.” We carry in us so many unbiblical images of Christ’s birth and expectations of the Savior. Even our carols mislead us speaking of “the cattle lowing, the poor baby wakes, the little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.” A newborn that never cries?—how unlikely. How can we relate to such false images?

Think about it! Christ was born into extreme poverty amid much fear and anxiety. It was no antiseptic hospital birthing room. And his life was threatened almost immediately so the family had to flee to Egypt. He came into the world to transform our lives that we might transform the world to make it right for all the world. He came at great cost—to his earthly parents, to himself, and to God. And the transformation God desires for each of us also comes at great cost—cost of our self wills, motivations and agendas, not to mention sacrificial financial costs as well.

The wise men brought great and costly gifts, as did Mary Magdellan when when she poured out the costly perfume on him for anointing. We have an old adage many of us are fond of saying: “you get what you pay for.” Another is “no pain, no gain.” The “peace on earth, good will to men” we all seek is ours only when we bring the gift of ourselves—our entire being—and lay it at the manger, or the feet of Jesus.

This Epiphany, what gift will you bring?



NEW FOR 2012

Just before Christmas the church acquired a new digital video camera and two portable DVD players. The Christmas Eve worship services were recorded and as soon as we figure it all out we plan to make those services available on DVD for any who might like them. Our plan is to make a video recording of our morning worship and place it on DVD for any who might like it.

We have long made an audio cassette recording of the 8:30 a.m. worship and made that available to our shut-ins. Now we will do the same via video. We may ultimately make it available on line as well but first steps, first.

You can help in a number of ways. First we could use some individuals to run the camera during worship. On Christmas Eve we just set it and let it record unaided but it would be so much better to actually have someone on the camera to facilitate close-ups, etc. The camera is extremely user friendly and this might be a great project for some of youth and/or younger members to take on. Just let the office know of your interest.

A second way in which you might help would be to submit names and addresses of any who might appreciate getting a copy of the video on a regular basis. Those who already have their own video players could simply be mailed a DVD each week. Others we will put on a list for delivery with one of the DVD players. If that list becomes extensive we may need another volunteer or two to help route the players and video.

And finally, though the purchases were made using earnings from our Olsen/Rasmussen Technology endowment fund we nearly exhausted the fund's earnings and if would welcome any support of this ministry with a financial gift so we can replenish some of those funds and also provide funds to purchase the DVD's on which to copy the services and provide for mailers and postage.

Thank you for your help and prayerful support as we begin a new opportunity of outreach.

WHY ARE FEELINGS SO IMPORTANT IN OUR COMMUNICATION?

Did you ever notice how you react when your spouse walks in the door with a wrinkled brow and a sad or angry look? You might think, "What did I do now?" Or, "What is bothering him or her?" The point is we see the behavior and we react to it; not understanding what caused the behavior. The Marriage Encounter Weekend helps you to understand why.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter-United Methodist Weekends in Wisconsin:

February 17 -19, 2012 Comfort Suites, Oshkosh, WI

October 5-7, 2012 Bishop Sharon Zimmerman Rader Retreat Center, Westfield, WI

More information: www.encounter.org toll free # 866.633.3862

Moody Bible Institute Symphonic Band will be in concert at the North Scott Baptist Church on Friday, January 13th at 7:30 p.m.

North Scott Baptist church is located on W4697 Cty Rd E; Pardeeville



Tracts:

A former surgeon general of Portugal was out walking one rainy day. When he returned to his home, he found a piece of paper sticking to his shoe. When he pulled it off, he discovered it to be a Tract that presented the Gospel by using scripture. On reading it, he soundly converted to Jesus Christ. THE HOLY SPIRIT—Billy Graham

Eight thousand and eighty two new Christians were baptized last year in India. Ninety two new house churches were planted—all through the distribution of Tracts to the glory of God's immense power.

May you determine to distribute as many Tracts as you are able to do this year. Please begin with "The Choice Is Yours" in the Tract Rack by the bulletin board. There are always Tracts in the holder on the wall near the downstairs parking lot door for children.

Lorraine Behrs,
Tract Ministry

Dear Members and Friends of Markesan U.M. Church-

The Food Pantry thanks each one who contributed in any way with non-perishable food items or with a check or cash during 2011.

We thank all persons who helped assemble and deliver food boxes for Thanksgiving and for Christmas. The staff of Gifts Anonymous is grateful for the gift wrappers, the drivers, and the delivery people. The cookie trays looked awesome and we are thankful for all of those who provided cookies.

Thanks for caring and sharing!
Happy New Year!

January Birthday's and Anniversaries

Birthdays

1 Karen Panten	21 Carol Davis
2 Jenny Davis	23 William Fox
6 Denise Roehl	24 Sue Powers
7 Sharon Doxtator	25 Lurah Sanders
Evelyn Jahnke	28 Dean Abendroth
Carson Davis	29 Nancy Cotterill
10 Myrtle Arms	30 Robert Kufalk
11 Andrew Jahnke	31 Louis Jahnke
12 Renee Vande Streek	
Adam Panten	
13 Emery Cluppert	
14 John Cotterill	
16 Helene Severson	
18 Jathan Schmerse	
Erma Daye	

Anniversaries

12 Robert/Kathy Wagener
14 David/Helene Severson
26 Tom/Diann Wilde



Second Mile Giving—Gideons & Human Relations Day

Mr. Hayward from South Carolina reports the following: Not a Mistake after all!

After I had finished a Gideon presentation at Main Street United Methodist Church in Columbia, South Carolina, several people stopped by to ask questions or share a thought with me. The last one to speak to me was a plainly dressed young man, probably in his mid-twenties. He said, “I want you to know that one of your Gideon Testaments changed my life.”

He went on to explain that a few months before, he had been in the vicinity of the University of South Carolina campus on a day that Gideons were making a university distribution. Mistaking him for a student, a Gideon gave him a Testament, which he accepted. The young man told me, “I thought it was really funny because at that time I was a hopeless, homeless alcoholic!”

He continued, relating that since he had nothing better to do at that time, he began to read the New Testament, but it raised questions in his mind about what he was reading.

Finally, he came to the Main Street United Methodist Church and spoke with the pastor. He asked his questions, received answers, and returned for many such meetings. The pastor invited him to Sunday School and church services, which he began to attend. He finished his story by telling me that he had accepted Christ as his Savior. He got sober, too, through attending Alcoholics Anonymous, and now had a full-time job. He assured me that he knew his circumstances would continue to improve because his whole life had been changed—all through receiving a Testament from a Gideon by mistake!

Gideons distribute Scripture in over 190 countries. Yet, there are still many countries left (for example) Iran, Algeria, North Korea, Somalia where the doors are closed.

Will you please pray that these doors will be opened; and that there will be enough funds for Scriptures. In supporting this you can be a missionary.

The Second Second Mile Giving for January is Human Relations Day, which is a Churchwide Special Sunday of the United Methodist Church

Your **Human Relations Day offering** supports vital community ministries that teach and advocate for justice, especially among people struggling to survive in the margins of society.

For example, students at United Methodist-related [Philander Smith College](#) in Little Rock, Ark., are becoming more involved in social concerns with help from the United Methodist Voluntary Service program. Combining academics with activism, the tiny, historically black college—with “Think Justice” as its motto—is teaching students to pursue justice for a better world.

During one Thanksgiving week students explored and responded to the worsening plight of hunger and homelessness in central Arkansas. They hosted a Faces of the Homeless symposium, volunteered at a shelter and soup kitchen, slept in cardboard boxes outdoors overnight and collected food and clothing for 100 needy families.

Other lessons have come from a letter-writing campaign to lobby for tougher drunk-driving laws and public forums with consciousness-raising guest speakers.

Your gifts to **Human Relations Day** provide avenues to restored relationships through ministries like Youth Offender Rehabilitation, Community Developers self-improvement programs and United Methodist Voluntary Services community advocacy programs. It’s time to think and support justice, to become radical in changing lives and changing the world. Please give generously.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
January 2012 1 10:30 am Worship Service/ Communion	2	3 6:15 pm— Worship Committee Mtg	4 6:30 pm— Celebration Singer Practice 7:30 pm Chancel Choir Practice	5	6	7
8 8:30-Worship 9:30 - Hospitality/ SS 9:35-Adult SS 10:30 –Worship	9	10 6:30 am Men’s Prayer Breakfast & Bible Study at Sandy’s Diner	11 6:30 pm— Celebration Singer Practice 7:30 pm Chancel Choir Practice	12 1:00 pm— Circuit Mtg in Green Lake	13	14
15 8:30-Worship 9:30 - Hospitality/ SS 9:35-Adult SS 10:30 –Worship Gideon Speaker	16 3:30 pm- Finance Committee 4:30 pm— Admin. Council Mtg.	17 6:30 am- Men’s Prayer Breakfast & Bible Study at Sandy’s Diner	18 6:30 pm— Celebration Singer Practice 7:30 pm Chancel Choir Practice	19	20	21 SPRC Training in Fond du Lac
22 8:30-Worship 9:30 - Hospitality/ SS 9:35-Adult SS 10:30 –Worship	23 Conflict Resolution @ Pine Lake	24 6:30 am Men’s Prayer Breakfast & Bible Study at Sandy’s Diner	25 6:30 pm— Celebration Singer Practice 7:30 pm Chancel Choir Practice	26 9:30 am-Hymn Sing/Bible Study @ MRH 11:00 am– Bible Study @ Bar- rett House	27	28
29 8:30-Worship 9:30 - Hospitality/ SS 9:35-Adult SS 10:30 –Worship	30 Pastor Paul on vacation	31 6:30 am Men’s Prayer Breakfast & Bible Study at Sandy’s Diner				