



Connexion

Volume 6 Issue 21

December 21, 2011

Christmas Guests

Terri and I are grateful for all the invitations to be guests at Sunday School parties, Open Houses and other festivities that make the season so bright. It is always an honor to be invited as a guest.

The many invitations made me start thinking about the guest list at the stable in Bethlehem that first Christmas night. The party hall was hardly a place of luxury, or comfort, which anyone would clamor to gain entrance. No one worried about what they were to wear at the makeshift delivery room in the animal-crowded downstairs of the adobe house of some unknown Jewish family. If you could find it, you were welcome.

Shepherds found it. Angels announced to them in the fields they were on the guest list. Given no one else ever invited them to anything in town—smelly and antisocial as they were known to be—this itself was remarkable.

God's guest list starts with the humble and powerless and moves outward to the rich and powerful. This is just the opposite of our typical guest list. We invite those who are more likely to do us some good by our association with them, rather than those whom we can do some good for by their association with us.

Wise men from the East visited, too. The expensive gifts they brought suggest they were wealthy and likely non-Jewish Persians. Their invitation came in the stars. God arranged things in the heavens so the glory of Israel could be seen by anyone who looked earnestly enough for it.

Each year we, too, are invited to the annual party that commemorates Jesus' birthday. We come as we are, bring what we can, as long as it includes our hearts. They will be no one second guessing if you belong. There will only be a celebration that you came.

See you at the party on Christmas Eve!



**BIBLE
STUDY**

Look for NEW classes and NEW menu's beginning in February 2012!

BE SURE TO SIGN UP FOR OUR E-NEWSLETTER!

ATTENDANCE

NOVEMBER 20

10:30 AM Worship	278
6:30 PM Worship (Thanksgiving)	102
Total	380
Sunday School	183

NOVEMBER 27

10:30 AM Worship	281
6:30 PM Worship	25
Total	306
Sunday School	172

DECEMBER 4

10:30 AM Worship	246
6:30 PM Worship (Child's Prog.)	129
Total	375
Sunday School	181

DECEMBER 11

10:30 AM Worship	350
6:30 PM Worship	23
Total	373
Sunday School	174

DECEMBER 18

10:30 AM Worship	285
SAMMY'S OPEN HOUSE	0
Total	285
Sunday School	152

Financial Update

	November 30, 2011	Year to Date November 30, 2011
Contributions & Other Receipts	\$75,707.00	\$706,198.00
Less: Expenses	-\$71,801.00	-\$781,999.00
Net Gain or (Net Loss)	\$3,906.00	-\$75,801.00



A word from the Financial Chair

First, I would like to thank you for your generosity in your tithing to this church this year. On November 30th we were **(\$75,801)** in the red. The good news is that we are \$29,734 better than last year for this period. That is why I'm hopeful that you will make sure we finish this year in the black.

Now on a personal note, I would like to say thank you. Thank you for your faithfulness in putting your trust in me to hold such an important position in this church. I have been on the finance committee for the last six years, the last four as the finance chair. We have maneuvered through some of the most difficult of times in our economy. Yet when we ask you to step up and answer the call of the Lord, you do. On January 1, 2008 when I assumed the position, our building note balance at Comerica was \$1,840,607. In 2010 we ran a campaign to reduce our debt, and we did! With over \$400,000 raised by you, special gifts and funds from estate wills, we paid over \$850,000 in one year! Our current balance as of November 30th 2011 is \$519,897. Which means we have paid \$1,320,710 since January 2008! This proves that we are a strong congregation and if we remember what our mission is, we will do fine in His eyes. We are here to serve Him. If we stay focused on His work and not on ourselves we will stay united.

I also want to say a special thanks to those who have served on the finance committee with me over the years. Their input and commitment have made my job easier.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Ed Dame

The church office will be closed on
Monday, December 26, Tuesday,
December 27 & Monday, January 2.



Christmas Eve—Dec. 24

5:00pm ~
Family Service with
Traditional
Candlelight & Communion
6:30pm ~
Traditional Candlelight &
Communion
11:00pm~
Praise & Worship with
Traditional
Candlelight & Communion
(Chapel)

Christmas Day—Dec. 25

No Sunday School
10:30am Worship Service

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the *holiness* without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble... Hebrews 12:14-15a.

My thoughts today are focused on this verse that speaks of something we desperately need in our lives today. The bold italics is mine. The Greek word for holiness means, sanctification wrought by the Holy Spirit (of heart and life). It's easy for me to sit in my position as Youth Pastor and point to all the problems the kids are dealing with and make statements about how they ought to do...whatever it is I think they should do to cure their woes. However, I am constantly reminded of our current cultural moray *against* holiness. If we think that creating more laws or instilling more forms of judgment or anything else that will force our culture to bend, then I am afraid we will be met with the same resistance we see in the news today whenever religion or rights or reason is required. It appears to me that this verse is speaking on how we are to treat EVERYONE, with peace. And it is also speaking about how WE ought to act, with holiness. Interesting. Strive for peace with everyone and for ourselves, be holy. Further, Paul declares that we "See to it that NO ONE fails to obtain the grace of God", which means that it is our duty as Christians to first be at peace with everyone, second, be holy and third, make sure everyone obtains God's grace. THEN, the result will be no "root of bitterness" will spring up and cause trouble.

My dear friends, during this Christmas season, what would it look like if we followed these timeless steps to aid our homes, cities, counties, states, nations, countries and world if we just acted with Peace for everyone, Live holy lives, and Give God's grace. Peace will not always win over our enemies. We will not always live holy lives. Not everyone will obtain God's grace. And the "root of bitterness" is evident now. BUT, what would happen if we TRIED to work for these things? As you can see, I'm running in circles with this argument. So, I just leave you with the Word of God. May the Light of the world illuminate peace, holiness and grace in our lives now and forevermore.

Blessings,
Sean

Communications:

In an effort to keep everyone informed of Church schedules and activities, a spot has been set aside at the end of the table outside the office where you can pick up hardcopies of the Church Calendar, the Connexion, the Weekly Activities List and the Leadership Roster. If there is other material you would like to see, please let the office know.

Next Connexion will be mailed and emailed on January 18! If you would like something in the Connexion please have it to Keri by Monday, January 16.
keri@fumcirving.org

Thank you so much to my church family for all of your prayers for me and my family over the last month. I am doing better! Praise God!

Paula Gonzales



What a wonderful Advent season! In the midst of all the hustle and bustle, I hope you've all been able to find some quiet time to relish the gifts of hope, peace, joy and love bestowed upon us by the Christ child.

Christmas is just a few days away, but we are already looking forward to 2012. Wednesday night activities, including Grace Place, will begin again in February. In the past, Grace Place tended to focus on providing programming for children whose parents were in Bible studies. However, I want to invite **all** children in Kindergarten through 5th grade to participate in Grace Place. I will be teaching a series on the Gospel according to Dr. Seuss. We will enjoy biblical lessons based on some fun Dr. Seuss stories, along with games and crafts.

Grace Place (and all Wednesday activities) will begin on February 1 and run through May 9. Grace Place will begin at 6:30 p.m. (or immediately after children's choir practice) and end at 8:00 p.m. Please watch for a sign-up sheet in mid- January.

I've been blessed this year to work with the wonderful children and families of FUMC and to be a part of this great congregation. Thank you very much to everyone who volunteered and supported our children's ministry throughout the year.

I wish you all of God's blessings this Christmas and in the year to come!

Kelly



Russell Floyd
Senior Pastor

Sammy Hargrove
Associate Pastor

Susan Smith
Director of Music Ministry

Sean Cawthon
Youth Pastor

Kelly Drury
Children's Director

Debbie Robinson
Director of Parent's Day Out

Cindy Alleman
Program Facilitator

Barbara Canafax
Keri Moreno

Jessica Anderson
Administrative Staff

.... AMONG OUR PEOPLE AMONG OUR PEOPLE ...

IN HONOR OF: Billie Waldo to Chapel Renewal Fund from Earl and Carol Ayles; Wednesday Work Crew to Chapel Renewal Fund from Jim and Boosh Brown; Sammy and Barbara Hargrove to Audio-Visual Fund from Gwynn and Jimmie Nell Sutton; Kum Doubles to Choir Robe Fund from Ralph and Terry Hudnall; Geraldine Beavers to Chapel Renewal Fund from Gloria Bohne; Mark Riley to Chapel Renewal Fund from Golden Age Fellowship; Deb's parents, Bill and Mary Bailey, and her brother to General Budget from Jimmy and Deborah Bellew

IN MEMORY OF: Opal Adamson to General Budget from David and Sylvia Mayhew, to General Budget from Ralph and Terry Hudnall, to General Budget from Max and Jackie Whitley, to Building Fund from Stella Gee and daughters Becky, Patti, and Sandy, to Building Fund from Jimmy and Christine Burkett, to Building Fund from Allan and Pam Knott, to Building Fund from Gene and Marian Hodges, to Building Fund from Mickey and Linda Wheeler, to Building Fund from Golden Age Fellowship; Jewellene Barnett to General Budget from Bobbie Campbell, to General Budget from Bill and Joyce Newmon, to General Budget from John Tilley, to General Budget from Wednesday Work Crew, to Wednesday Work Crew from David and Sylvia Mayhew, to General Budget from Charles and Jean Brown; Beckie Penney to General Budget from Bobbie Campbell, to General Budget from Bill and Joyce Newmon, to Wednesday Work Crew from David and Sylvia Mayhew, to Wednesday Work Crew from Janice Summers, to Wednesday Work Crew Endowment Fund from Dick and Jeanell Bischofhausen, to Building Fund from Homebuilders Sunday School Class; Buck Buchanan, Father of Ronnie, to General Budget from Allan and Pam Knott; Bettie Kannenberg to General Budget from Gwynn and Jimmie Nell Sutton, to General Budget from John Slaughter, to General Budget from John Tilley, to General Budget from Gail and Barbara Clemens, to Chapel Renewal Fund from Evening Stars Circle, to Chapel Renewal Fund from Earl and Carol Ayles, to Chapel Renewal Fund from Mac and Jackie Spruce, to Chapel Renewal Fund from Dick and Jeanelle Bischofhausen, to Chapel Renewal Fund from Ruth Henson, to Building Fund from Wayne and Jean Tyrone, to Music Ministry from Dr. and Mrs. Francis Gilbert; Sally Marshall to Choir Robe Fund from Bill and Janet Bailey, to Choir Robe Fund from Ralph and Terry Hudnall, to Choir Robe Fund from Dick and Jeanelle Bischofhausen, to Music Ministry from Dr. and Mrs. Francis Gilbert, to Music Ministry from Allan and Pam Knott; Bill Stramp to General Budget from Wednesday Work Crew, to General Budget from D.W. (Don) and Mary Bailey, Jr., to Building Fund from Mac and Jackie Spruce, to Wednesday Work Crew Endowment from Bill and Janet Bailey, to Wednesday Work Crew Endowment from Dick and Jeanelle Bischofhausen, to Chapel Renewal Fund from Earl and Carol Ayles, to Wednesday Work Crew from Paula Warthan, to Wednesday Work Crew from David and Sylvia Mayhew, to Wednesday Work Crew from Jim and Phyllis Street, to Wednesday Work Crew from Wayne and Jean Tyrone, to Wednesday Work Crew from David and Connie Fredd, to Wednesday Work Crew from Ralph and Terry Hudnall, to Wednesday Work Crew from Janice Summers, to Wednesday Work Crew from Jerry and Sally Wicks, to Wednesday Work Crew from Jerry Richter, to Wednesday Work Crew from Pathfinders Sunday School Class, to General Budget from Charles and Jean Brown; Jon Waldo to Chapel Renewal Fund from Earl and Carol Ayles, to Chapel Renewal Fund from John Tilley, to General Budget from Bobbie Campbell; Keith Whitley to Building Fund from LaWanda Richardson, to Building Fund from John and Sarah Hamberger, to Chapel Renewal Fund from Earl and Carol Ayels, to Chapel Renewal Fund from Jim and Boosh Brown, to Building A Legacy from Allan and Pam Knott

MERRY CHRISTMAS in lieu of Christmas cards: From Rod and Cindy Alleman to Chapel Renewal Fund; from Earl and Carol Ayles to Chapel Renewal Fund; from Bill and Janet Bailey to General Budget; from Charles and Jean Brown to General Budget; from Stephen and Sheryll Bunt to Choir Robe Fund; from Jimmy and Christine Burkett to Chapel Renewal Fund; from Jack and Pat Carnell to General Budget; from Gail and Barbara Clemens to General Budget; from Les and Becky Flanery to Chapel Renewal Fund; from Ralph and Terry Hudnall to General Budget; from Richard and Carolyn Mahan to Chapel Renewal Fund; from Mike and Kathy Minturn to General Budget; from Kathy Stramp to General Budget; from Wayne and Jean Tyrone to General Budget.