



Manito COMMUNITY

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UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

FIRST EDITION •

• OPEN HEARTS • OPEN MINDS • OPEN DOORS

• FOURTH QUARTER 2016

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From the Pastor's Desk



With the turn of a kaleidoscope all colors and objects take on new shapes and patterns. So it is with the changing of the seasons. As we leave behind a hot, muggy summer and take in the cool, fresher air of autumn, we consider where we have been and where we are going. Change is in air at your Community UMC as well. After a successful Summer Picnic the Children's Ministry has kicked off its Sunday School Year and is preparing for a Fall Festival on Saturday, October 29th at 5pm in the open lot next to the parsonage. Be sure to come ready to carve pumpkins, bob for apples and

a number of other activities. All ages welcome. The Agape Youth Group is looking forward to its fall activities as well. Please see the newsletter article for details. As we move into the last quarter of the calendar year, our Church Body continues to invoke God's Spirit and seek his will for this community of believers. The "Just Say Yes" 6-week study has begun. Make time to join us on Sundays to explore where God is saying "Yes" to us in new and creative ways. We meet in the Lost and Found Room on Sundays at 8:45am. Worship follows at 10am, and throughout September and October I will be profiling men and women from the Old and New Testaments who stepped out on faith and gave God their "Yes!" Our annual charge conference convenes on Sunday, October 30th at 3pm, and all are welcome. Perhaps you can find where God is calling you to serve. Finally on a personal note, I have had a great start to my new appointment in Manito and look forward to what the fall will bring all of us. God continues to speak in new ways, and as Jesus affirms, there is no reason for us to be afraid; He is with us!

Blessings on you and your loved ones this upcoming season.

Pastor Gregory

*"Do all the good you can.
By all the means you can.
In all the ways you can.
In all the places you can.
At all the times you can.
To all the people you can.
As long as ever you can."*

John Wesley

Vision

TO PROVIDE SPACE AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN TO EXPERIENCE HIS LOVE AND MATURE BY HIS GRACE.

Mission

WE WILL PARTNER WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT IN WORSHIP, PRAYER, STUDY, SERVING AND SHARING GOD'S LOVE WITH OTHERS



United Methodist Women

On September 12, 2016 Five ladies from the UMW went to Crossroads United Methodist Church in Washington Ill. for a meeting of The 21st annual Il. River District UMW Fall Celebration. It was a Celebration for instalation of officers for The District and time for discussion on membership and how others are changing the way they do things to get more women of all ages to join and be a part of UMW. They had a luncheon and there was lititure to purchase and pledges from each church was brought in and an offering takin up for missions. The day was filled with information about UMW and what is going on now!

You ask what is a United Methodist Women:

Faith Hope Love in Action

We are women with a Purpose!

"United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church."

Turning Financial Gifts into Miracles for Women, Children and Youth

United Methodist Women is trusted with pledges and donations from individual members and local member organizations, as well as mission partners and anonymous donors who have a heart for mission. We support programs in the United States and around the world that benefit women, children and youth - thereby impacting entire communities. As an agency of The United Methodist Church, United Methodist Women abides by the social principles and discipline as determined by General Conference, giving only to projects in accordance with those guidelines.

I know this is a lot to try to understand but it is a group of women gathering together to help others in many ways. What I found out by going to this meeting is that each church has a core unit and officers but not everyone can make that main meeting. So to accommodate others they have other units that meet at other times, but each group reports back to the main core. Some of the suggestions were;

Book Club, Mommy Time, Tea and Cookies, Shut in's, Meals on wheels, Basement Garage Sale Mission, Funeral dinner ministry, Craft Mission, Community Outreach and they all never forget about Cunningham Children's Homes or Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House.

These are just a few of the groups that work together as individual's from the main core of the UMW. The consensus seemed to think it was working and once a year they all gather together for a meeting and report and have a tea or whatever suits them. This is when the pledges are brought forth and the missions are discussed.

United Methodist Women interprets the biblical passage from Luke 4:18 as both a model and a mandate for Christian social action and advocacy: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

If you are interested in knowing more about UMW group please contact Peggy Quick, Carol Parrish, Diana Budke and may God reveal to you your missions.

Sincerely Diana Budke- Spiritual Growth Leader

2016 OFFICERS

President - Peggy Quick
Vice- President - Loretta Whitaker
Secretary - Donna Thompson
Treasurer - Pat Smith

Mission Coordinators

Spiritual Growth - Diana Budke
Reading Program - Loretta Whitaker
Social Action - Peggy Quick
Membership • Nurture • Outreach - Jerry Charlton
Committee on Nominations - Carol Parrish, Becky Williams

UMW CALENDAR

October - Thursday, October 6 - 10:00 a.m. - CUMC
Trip: Lincoln IL (Shopping in the area)
Lunch atn Cracker Barrell

November - Thursday, November 3 • 9:00 a.m. - CUMC
Distribute the money.
Response: Becky Williams
Refreshments: Peggy Quick

December - Thursday, December 1 • 9:00 a.m.
Fill Fruit Baskets and deliver them
Food: Bring cookies
December 2- Take Desserts to Winery



- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 - Ian Gaskill | 19 - Shari Duvall |
| 1 - Marilyn Vaughn | 19 - Tracy Trettin |
| 2 - Lee Garman | 20 - Bree Kerley |
| 3 - Denny Talbott | 20 - Marcia Meeker |
| 6 - Larry Bridgeman | 22 - Brody Bernshausen |
| 6 - Kristine Hilst | 24 - Stacy Smith |
| 8 - Selena Willett | 24 - Verle Charlton |
| 10 - John Bernshausen | 24 - Patia Picken |
| 11 - Todd Whitaker | 25 - Sherry Carroll |
| 14 - Carson Herrman | 25 - Hannah Luckring |
| 14 - Frances Simpson | 25 - Donna Schimmelpfenning |
| 14 - Alison MaeRose Trettin | 31 - Lacey Shelabarger |



- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 Eileen Runyon | 20 Adam Armbrust |
| 7 Dan Wood | 20 Gwen Gaskill |
| 10 Carl Meeker | 20 Beth Meyer |
| 13 Camryn Picken | 24 Derrick Armbrust |
| 15 Frank Vaughn | 25 Roger Laurent |
| 17 Virgil Dawson | 27 Ron Thompson |
| 18 Anita Meeker | 29 Diana Budke |
| 19 Gabriel Reynolds | 30 Alyssa Patterson |

Happy Birthday

December



- | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 - Todd Shelabarger | 18 - Chris Meeker |
| 2 - Mark Duval | 19 - Katie Armbrust |
| 3 - Makenzie Rendleman | 19 - Dale Meeker |
| 5 - Troy Schimmelpfenning | 21 - Steve Baker |
| 7 - Louise Kwasigroh | 22 - Jacob Meyer |
| 8 - Susan Messman | 24 - Linda Meyer |
| 10 - Josh Charlton | 24 - Marilyn Thompson |
| 14 - Debra Schmitgall | 25 - Jesus |
| 15 - Dana Karcz | 26 - Jackie Christensen |
| 17 - Rhandi Weinstock | 26 - Brittany Meeker |
| 17 - Melissa Goetze | 27 - Brenda Boss |
| 17 - Richard F. Green | 28 - Dree Ann Kay Barr |
| 17 - Matthew Vanderheiden | 30 - Chase Picken |

Happy Anniversary



- 2 - Roger & Sandra Laurent
- 6 - Bob & Grace Larson
- 6 - Neal & Lisa Shelabarger
- 6 - Scott & Brandi Bailey





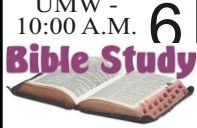






- 14 - Kirk & Rhonda Woiwode
- 26 - Frank & Marilyn Vaughn
- 27 - Jim & Mary Meyer
- 30 - Larry & Diane VanDyke




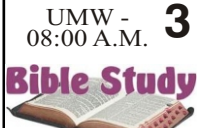








- 12 - Richard & Shannon Green
- 14 - Ted & Jill Eads
- 15 - Dan & Sandi Duval
- 22 - Dirk & Terri Heinhorst
- 29 - Virgil & Lavonne Dawson
- 30 - Max & Donna Schimmelpfenning
- 31 - Tim & Janet Anderson



OCTOBER 2016

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
 <p>2 Sunday School 9:00 Worship/Communion 10:00</p>	3	 <p>4 6:00 P.M.</p>	5	 <p>6 UMW - 10:00 A.M. 6:30 P.M.</p>	7	8
 <p>9 Sunday School 9:00 Worship- 10:00</p>	10	11	12	 <p>13 6:30 P.M.</p>	14	15
 <p>16 Sunday School 9:00 Worship- 10:00</p>	17	 <p>18 6:30 P.M.</p>	19	 <p>20 6:30 P.M.</p>	21	22
<p>23 Sunday School 9:00 Worship- 10:00</p>	24	25	26	 <p>27 6:30 P.M.</p>	28	29
30	31					

NOVEMBER 2016

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		 <p>1 6:00 P.M.</p>	2	 <p>3 UMW - 08:00 A.M. 6:30 P.M.</p>	4	5
 <p>6 Sunday School 9:00 Worship/Communion 10:00</p>	7	8	9	 <p>10 6:30 P.M.</p>	11	12
 <p>13 Sunday School 9:00 Worship- 10:00</p>	14	 <p>15 2:00 P.M.</p>	16	 <p>17 6:30 P.M.</p>	18	19
 <p>20 Sunday School 9:00 Worship- 10:00</p>	21	22	23	 <p>24 6:30 P.M.</p>	25	26
 <p>27 Sunday School 9:00 Worship- 10:00</p>	28	29	30			

DECEMBER 2016

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				UMW - 08:00 A.M. 1 Bible Study 6:30 P.M.	2	3
4 Come & Worship Sunday School 9:00 Worship/Communion 10:00	5	6 BOARD & Trustees' MEETING 6:00 P.M.	7	8 Bible Study 6:30 P.M.	9	10
11 Youth Led WORSHIP Service Sunday School 9:00 Worship- 10:00	12	13	14	15 Bible Study 6:30 P.M.	16	17
18 Come & Worship Sunday School 9:00 Worship- 10:00	19	20 FMF MEETING 6:30 P.M.	21	22 Bible Study 6:30 P.M.	23	24
25 Come & Worship Sunday School 9:00 Worship- 10:00	26	27	28	29 Bible Study 6:30 P.M.	30	31





2016 FUNDAY

“Power To The Tower

The Community United Methodist Church of Manito (109 S. Washington St) is having a fundraiser to make necessary repairs on the two towers present on the church. Years of sun, rain and snow exposure have deteriorated the flat roofs and caused damage to the masonry.

The Board of Trustees of the Church first became aware that the North Tower’s flat roof was leaking a couple years ago when damage to plaster was found beneath the tower. At that time, the Trustees were able to complete temporary roof repairs to fix the leaks.

When the Trustees inspected the condition of the roof late this summer, they found that not only did the flat roof need repair, but the brick on top of the tower was in very bad shape. The Trustees believe that water from snow and ice sitting on the flat roof was able to penetrate the brick and mortar, and freeze and thaw cycles have made replacing the masonry with new bricks the only option.

In order to prevent this from occurring in the future, the rubber roofing material will extend upward along the inside of the brick to protect the inside of the masonry from water penetration.

The East Tower’s which houses the Church’s bell over the main entry to the sanctuary, has two flat roofs of which both show signs of leaking. Both East Tower roofs, just like the North Tower, will be sloped to encourage water to run more quickly to the roof drains, and prevent water from pooling on top of the roofs like is shown in photo.



The Church’s bronze bell cased in 1881, which is rang each Sunday after worship service by the children, resides between the top and bottom flat roofs of the East Tower.

The estimate to repair the 3 flat roofs and the masonry is \$20,000. The Church currently has raised \$3,255 towards the repairs, which need to be completed before this winter to prevent further damage to the Church.

Donations can be given by calling the Church office at 9686226, or mailing your donation to “CUMC, Power to the Tower Campaign, 109 S. Washington St, Manito, IL 61546”.

Thank you for your support.





Plans are beginning for the fourth annual Trunk or Treat which will be held from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. on Halloween night Friday, October 31, 2016

What is a Trunk or Treat? This is where people gather in large area such as a blocked street. Here they open their trunks or the back of their vehicles and pass out candy. Many even wear costumes and decorate their trunks.

This provides a safe area for the children. They do not have to worry about cars. It also offers the opportunity for the elderly and disabled to be a part of the season. They do not have to continually be up and down answering the door and do not have to be concerned about those at their door. Also those from the rural areas who would like to see the costumed children will have a place to do so. It is a great opportunity for fellowship as the parents can accompany their children.

Plans are to hold the event in the large pavilion/stage area in Veteran's park. Costume judging will begin at 6:00 p.m. Cash prizes will be given to four age groups: 0-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12 in four categories: Seasonal, Original, Scariest and prettiest. Refreshments will be served.

If you would like to be a part of this event monetarily or as a participant, or if you want more information please call 309-657-8667.

Photos from 2015 Trunk or Treat



Santa - St Nicholas Trivia



The Viking god Odin is one precursor to the modern Santa Claus. According to myth, Odin rode his flying horse, Sleipnir (a precursor to Santa's reindeer), who had eight legs. In the winter, Odin gave out both gifts and punishments, and children would fill their boots or stockings with treats for Sleipnir.

Early illustrations of St. Nicholas depict him as stern, commanding, and holding a birch rod. He was more a symbol of discipline and punishment than the jolly, overweight elf children know today.

Santa Claus is based on a real person, St. Nikolas of Myra (also known as Nikolaos the Wonderworker, Bishop Saint Nicholas of Smyrna, and Nikolaos of Bari), who lived during the fourth century. Born in Patara (in modern-day Turkey), he is the world's most popular non-Biblical saint, and artists have portrayed him more often than any other saint except Mary. He is the patron saint of banking, pawn broking, pirating, butchery, sailing, thievery, orphans, royalty, and New York City.

St. Nicholas was bishop of the Turkish town of Myra in the early 4th century. The Dutch first made him into a Christmas gift-giver, and Dutch settlers brought him to America where his name eventually became the familiar Santa Claus.

When distributing gifts in Holland, St. Nicholas is accompanied his servant Black, who is responsible for actually dropping the presents down their recipients' chimneys. He also punishes bad children by putting them in a bag and carrying them away to Spain.

When visiting Finland, Santa leaves his sleigh behind and rides on a goat named Ukko. Finnish folklore has it that Ukko is made of straw, but is strong enough to carry Santa Claus anyway.

Each year there are approximately 20,000 "Rent-a-Santas" across the United States. "Rent-a-Santas" usually undergo seasonal training on how to maintain a jolly attitude under pressure from the public. They also receive practical advice, such as not accepting money from parents while children are looking and avoiding garlic, onions, or beans for lunch.

What do you get if Santa goes down the chimney when a fire is lit?
Crisp Kringle.

A Christmas Star

by Katherine Pyle

"Come now, my dear little stars," said Mother Moon, "and I will tell you the Christmas story."

Every morning for a week before Christmas, Mother Moon used to call all the little stars around her and tell them a story.

It was always the same story, but the stars never wearied of it. It was the story of the Christmas star - the Star of Bethlehem.

When Mother Moon had finished the story the little stars always said: "And the star is shining still, isn't it, Mother Moon, even if we can't see it?"

And Mother Moon would answer: "Yes, my dears, only now it shines for men's hearts instead of their eyes."

Then the stars would bid the Mother Moon good-night and put on their little blue nightcaps and go to bed in the sky chamber; for the stars' bedtime is when people down on the earth are beginning to waken and see that it is morning.

But that particular morning when the little stars said good-night and went quietly away, one golden star still lingered beside Mother Moon.

"What is the matter, my little star?" asked the Mother Moon. "Why don't you go with your little sisters?"

"Oh, Mother Moon," said the golden star. "I am so sad! I wish I could shine for some one's heart like that star of wonder that you tell us about."

"Why, aren't you happy up here in the sky country?" asked Mother Moon.

"Yes, I have been very happy," said the star; "but tonight it seems just as if I must find some heart to shine for."

"Then if that is so," said Mother Moon, "the time has come, my little star, for you to go through the Wonder Entry."

"The Wonder Entry? What is that?" asked the star. But the Mother Moon made no answer.

Rising, she took the little star by the hand and led it to a door that it had never seen before.

The Mother Moon opened the door, and there was a long dark entry; at the far end was shining a little speck of light.

"What is this?" asked the star.

"It is the Wonder Entry; and it is through this that you must go to find the heart where you belong," said the Mother Moon.

Then the little star was afraid.

It longed to go through the entry as it had never longed for anything before; and yet it was afraid and clung to the Mother Moon.

But very gently, almost sadly, the Mother Moon drew her hand away. "Go, my child," she said.

Then, wondering and trembling, the little star stepped into the Wonder Entry, and the door of the sky house closed behind it.

The next thing the star knew it was hanging in a toy shop with a whole row of other stars blue and red and silver. It itself was gold. The shop smelled of evergreen, and was full of Christmas shoppers, men and women and children; but of them all, the star looked at no one but a little boy standing in front of the counter; for as soon as the star saw the child it knew that he was the one to whom it belonged.

The little boy was standing beside a sweet-faced woman in a long black veil and he was not looking at anything in particular.

The star shook and trembled on the string that held it, because it was afraid lest the child would not see it, or lest, if he did, he would not know it as his star.

The lady had a number of toys on the counter before her, and she was saying: "Now I think we have presents for every one: There's the doll for Lou, and the game for Ned, and the music box for May; and then the rocking horse and the sled."

Suddenly the little boy caught her by the arm. "Oh, mother," he said. He had seen the star.

"Well, what is it, darling?" asked the lady.

"Oh, mother, just see that star up there! I wish - oh, I do wish I had it."

"Oh, my dear, we have so many things for the Christmas tree," said the mother.

"Yes, I know, but I do want the star," said the child.

"Very well," said the mother, smiling; "then we will take that, too."

So the star was taken down from the place where it hung and wrapped up in a piece of paper, and all the while it thrilled with joy, for now it belonged to the little boy.

It was not until the afternoon before Christmas, when the tree was being decorated, that the golden star was unwrapped and taken out from the paper.

"Here is something else," said the sweet-faced lady. "We must hang this on the tree. Paul took such a fancy to it that I had to get it for him. He will never be satisfied unless we hang it on too."

"Oh, yes," said some one else who was helping to decorate the tree; "we will hang it here on the very top."

So the little star hung on the highest branch of the Christmas-tree.

That evening all the candles were lighted on the Christmas tree, and there were so many that they fairly dazzled the eyes; and the gold and silver balls, the fairies and the glass fruits, shone and twinkled in the light; and high above them all shone the golden star.

At seven o'clock a bell was rung, and then the folding doors of the room where the Christmas tree stood were thrown open, and a crowd of children came trooping in.

They laughed and shouted and pointed, and all talked together, and after a while there was music, and presents were taken from the tree and given to the children.

How different it all was from the great wide, still sky house!

But the star had never been so happy in all its life; for the little boy was there.

He stood apart from the other children, looking up at the star, with his hands clasped behind him, and he did not seem to care for the toys and the games.

At last it was all over. The lights were put out, the children went home, and the house grew still.

Then the ornaments on the tree began to talk among themselves.

"So that is all over," said a silver ball. "It was very gay this evening - the gayest Christmas I remember."

"Yes," said a glass bunch of grapes; "the best of it is over. Of course people will come to look at us for several days yet, but it won't be like this evening."

"And then I suppose we'll be laid away for another year," said a paper fairy. "Really it seems hardly worth while. Such a few days out of the year and then to be shut up in the dark box again. I almost wish I were a paper doll."

The bunch of grapes was wrong in saying that people would come to look at the Christmas-tree the next few days, for it stood neglected in the library and nobody came near it. Everybody in the house went about very quietly, with anxious faces; for the little boy was ill.

At last, one evening, a woman came into the room with a servant. The woman wore the cap and apron of a nurse.

"That is it," she said, pointing to the golden star. The servant climbed up on some steps and took down the star and put it in the nurse's hand, and she carried it out into the hall and upstairs to a room where the little boy lay.

The sweet-faced lady was sitting by the bed, and as the nurse came in she held out her hand for the star.

"Is this what you wanted, my darling?" she asked, bending over the little boy.

The child nodded and held out his hands for the star; and as he clasped it a wonderful, shining smile came over his face.

The next morning the little boy's room was very still and dark.

The golden piece of paper that had been the star lay on a table beside the bed, its five points very sharp and bright.

But it was not the real star, any more than a person's body is the real person.

The real star was living and shining now in the little boy's heart, and it had gone out with him into a new and more beautiful sky country than it had ever known before - the sky country where the little child angels live, each one carrying in its heart its own particular star.

UPDATING MEMBERSHIP



On September 13, 2016 Pastor Greg brought to the attention of the Administration Council a reminder that the church membership records are not up to date. He asked for volunteers so Diana Budke and Martha Willard volunteered to help and organize the membership records. We are asking for everyone's help in this important project.

Beginning on Sunday November 27th, which is the beginning of Advent, we will be starting this project and we hope you will be able to help us accomplish this with some of your information. A clipboard

with information on it will be passed around in order that you can fill it out and help us update the records. We are asking if you have any information concerning your membership whether it is baptism, family records, addresses, phone numbers or email address that would help us update the records please fill out the clipboard in November/December.

After gathering the information, in **January of 2017** we will start updating the Membership Records. When I went into the UMC website looking for encouragement on how to start this project I found this Paragraph below that says it all:

When performing at its best, the church focuses its attention and resources more on nonmembers than members. The mission statement of The United Methodist Church is "to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" (The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church ¶120). This reminds us that while we seek to make members, our ultimate purpose is for the benefit of the whole world. Church membership, then, is not about privileges or what we can "get out of church." Rather it is a call to participate as part of a fellowship of followers of Jesus Christ who seek to make the world more like the Kingdom of God.

Please take the time to look up your own membership records at home to help us out. By doing this we will be able to update our records and get information out to all members.

Thank You for helping us, Diana and Martha, and if you have any questions please call.

Diana Budke # 309-369-3534

Martha Willard # 309-840-2154

**Happy
Thanksgiving**



The Agape Squad is going strong!!

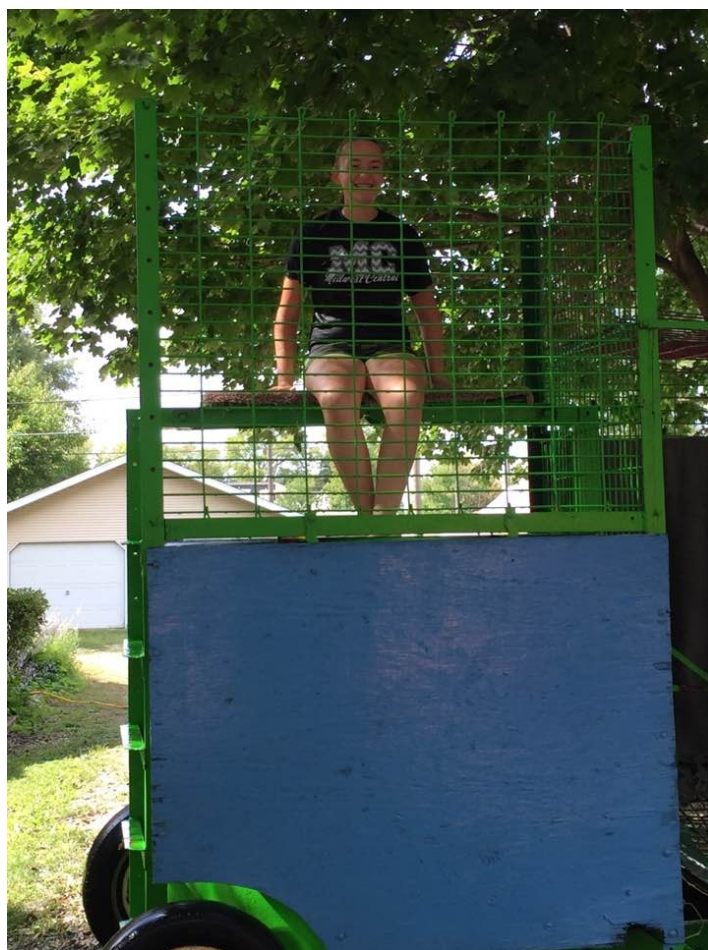
The kids decided to keep meeting throughout the summer, and we met weekly. We didn't get to meet with all of them together thru the summer due to family summer plans but we always had a few. Now that school is back and everyone is more on a schedule we have gone back to meeting the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays each month. The kids love coming and we all enjoy our meetings tremendously!

This year they decided to have a dunk tank at the popcorn festival as a fund raiser. It was a great success and they were pretty waterlogged by the time they were done. Even Pastor Greg got dunked! They were able to raise \$288!

We just held our first meeting after getting back to the school schedule and had a great turn out. Our biggest so far this year! We are planning several things, but one they are excited to do again is our shoebox drive. They have started collecting shoeboxes and are ready to start collecting items to fill the shoeboxes, to give to those local kids that are less fortunate and don't have the opportunity to have a Christmas. This project touched the Agape Squad's hearts, and they are wanting to continue to bless others. So, as you are out doing a little shopping, please remember to grab some items that we will be able to put in a shoebox for kids, kindergarten High school. During the month of October, the kids will be having a "Socktober" drive. They will be collecting socks of all sizes, colors, and cute prints, to include in the shoeboxes. (again, kindergarten through high school sizes)

To Thank everyone for their support and to share their experiences they have had while in Agape Squad, the group would like to invite you to their Thanksgiving dinner. It will be held November 16th. Please save the date and we will get more information out to you as the date gets closer.

Thank you for your support and God Bless!



A Wonderful Thanksgiving Story

A blind boy sat on the steps of a building with a hat by his feet. He held up a sign which said: "I am blind, please help."

There were only a few coins in the hat.

A man was walking by. He took a few coins from his pocket and dropped them into the hat. He then took the sign, turned it around, and wrote some words. He put the sign back so that everyone who walked by would see the new words.

Soon the hat began to fill up. A lot more people were giving money to the blind boy. That afternoon the man who had changed the sign came to see how things were.

The boy recognized his footsteps and asked, "Were you the one who changed my sign this morning? What did you write?"

The man said, "I only wrote the truth. I said what you said but in a different way." I wrote: "Today is a beautiful day but I cannot see it."

Both signs told people that the boy was blind. But the first sign simply said the boy was blind. The second sign told people that they were so lucky that they were not blind. Should we be surprised that the second sign was more effective?

Moral of the Story: Be thankful for what you have. Be creative. Be innovative. Think differently and positively. When life gives you a 100 reasons to cry, show life that you have 1000 reasons to smile. Face your past without regret. Handle your present with confidence. Prepare for the future without fear. Keep the faith and drop the fear.

The most beautiful thing is to see a person smiling. And even more beautiful, is knowing that you are the reason behind it!

Happy Thanksgiving to all!

Help Me Thanksgiving Day Prayer

O God, when I have food, help me to remember the hungry; When I have work, help me to remember the jobless; When I have a home, help me to remember those who have no home at all; When I am without pain, help me to remember those who suffer, And remembering, help me to destroy my complacency; bestir my compassion, and be concerned enough to help; By word and deed, those who cry out for what we take for granted. Amen.



Recipe for a Happy New Year.

Take twelve fine, full-grown months; see that these are thoroughly free from old memories of bitterness, rancor and hate, cleanse them completely from every clinging spite; pick off all specks of pettiness and littleness; in short, see that these months are freed from all the past—have them fresh and clean as when they first came from the great storehouse of Time. Cut these months into thirty or thirty-one equal parts. Do not attempt to make up the whole batch at one time (so many persons spoil the entire lot this way) but prepare one day at a time.

Into each day put equal parts of faith, patience, courage, work (some people omit this ingredient and so spoil the flavor of the rest), hope, fidelity, liberality, kindness, rest (leaving this out is like leaving the oil out of the salad dressing— don't do it), prayer, meditation, and one well-selected resolution. Put in about one teaspoonful of good spirits, a dash of fun, a pinch of folly, a sprinkling of play, and a heaping cupful of good humor.

TIME FOR NEW BEGINNINGS

... Though even thinking on the subject of time may prove discomfoting, it is not a bad idea—especially at the beginning of a new year.

As we look into **2017** we look at a block of time. We see 12 months, 52 weeks, 365 days, 8,760 hours, 525,600 minutes, 31,536,000 seconds. And all is a gift from God. We have done nothing to deserve it, earn it, or purchased it. Like the air we breathe, time comes to us as a part of life.

The gift of time is not ours alone. It is given equally to each person. Rich and poor, educated and ignorant, strong and weak—every man, woman and child has the same twenty-four hours every day.

Another important thing about time is that you cannot stop it. There is no way to slow it down, turn it off, or adjust it. Time marches on.

And you cannot bring back time. Once it is gone, it is gone. Yesterday is lost forever. If yesterday is lost, tomorrow is uncertain. We may look ahead at a full year's block of time, but we really have no guarantee that we will experience any of it.

Obviously, time is one of our most precious possessions. We can waste it. We can worry over it. We can spend it on ourselves. Or, as good stewards, we can invest it in the kingdom of God.

The new year is full of time. As the seconds tick away, will you be tossing time out the window, or will you make every minute count?

A New Year's Prayer

Lord, You make all things new,
You bring hope alive in our hearts
And cause our Spirits to be born again.

Thank you for this new year
For all the potential it holds.
Come and kindle in us
A mighty flame
So that in our time, many will see the wonders of God
And live forever to praise Your glorious name.

Amen

