

“Loving God, Serving Others, Changing Lives”

HIGH DESERT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

REUBEN'S RAMBLINGS

December, 2023, Issue 12

Christmas is just around the corner. They have already started playing the Christmas songs on the radio stations. One of the popular songs over the years has been “I’ll Be Home for Christmas.” Someone said that at Christmas, all roads lead home. I remember how much I looked forward to returning home for Christmas once I went off to college, and then after Judy and I got married. I have many precious memories of celebrating Christmas in that old house in Carlisle, South Carolina. After our sons Jack and Ben were born, I cherished the memories of Christmases in our homes in Maryland, Virginia, Atlanta, and Santa Fe as the boys grew from wanting stuffed animals to computers to finally only money for Christmas.

The song “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” was written during World War II by Kim Gannon. For those living then, this song represented their hopes, dreams, and prayers better than any other song, movie, or story during that dangerous period in history. Not only were families of overseas soldiers caught in a world of uncertainty and fear, but so were many displaced men and women from the rural areas of the country who moved to New York and other

large cities to work in the war plants and government offices. For the very first time, most were spending their first Christmas away from their families, and were lonely and homesick.

The song captured the emotions of a nation in upheaval in the 1940’s. In a way, this song sounds more like a letter to home rather than a Christmas carol. There is a sense of hope in this song; a message of “Don’t give up; we will be together again soon.” The spiritual nature of the song comes from its almost prayer-like message. Christmas in America had always been about family and about remembering the One who made it all possible. Yet World War II had broken those bonds and upset the normal traditions of the holidays. This song acknowledged the hope that while things had changed, given time, everyone would be home again.

Another Christmas popular song is “There’s No Place like Home for the Holidays.” Maybe you are like me: the old family home is either gone or now owned by someone else; you are the oldest one of the family left; and you have moved around a lot and lived in many houses. Now all of this got me to thinking – what is really a home? I have found in all my travels and moves that there is a

definite difference between a house and a home. A house is made of walls and beams; a home is made of love and dreams. A house is just a structure of wood and brick, but a home is a family of love and support. And one thing is for sure, and that is because of what happened in that stable in Bethlehem, we all have a home where we are welcome and the table is always set. When Jesus went back home, He left the door open for you and for me.

Jesus came over 2,000 years ago looking for you and for me so that we could become part of His family and that He could make His home in our hearts. Christmas began in the heart of God, and it will not be complete until it reaches our hearts. Do you really want to be at home for Christmas, then let Christ dwell in your heart and you will experience Christmas every day of your life. There’s no place like home for Christmas when Jesus Christ dwells there.

Merry Christmas!

Reuben

OBSCURE NAMES IN THE BIBLE



Who was Epaenetus in the New Testament? Find the answer elsewhere in this issue.

Bible Studies Available

To help us grow spiritually in our personal relationship with Christ, High Desert UMC is offering the following Bible studies this fall. Please join one of the following studies in the classroom.

SUNDAY 10 AM: Studying The Gospel of Luke, Topical Bible Studies, Led by Tony Smith.

MONDAY 10 AM: Studying *Who Needs Christmas* by Andy Stanley, led by Francie Larsen.

WEDNESDAY 10:30 AM: The Holy Spirit, and the book of Psalms, led by John Kottenbrook.

WEDNESDAY 5:30 PM: The entire Bible using "The Story" led by Reuben Thomas

AT FAIRWINDS: Tony Smith leads a Bible Study at Fairwinds each week.

ONLINE STUDIES: We send out a weekly email from Tony Smith discussing Isaiah. You can also participate in Tony's online studies on Daniel, John & Revelation at coraleno@aol.com.

PODCASTS: "Footsteps" Available on the church website.



FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The Duke City Swampcoolers gave an outstanding performance for us at the November 4th Fellowship gathering. Although I didn't get an exact count, the event was well attended with over 40 people showing up. After the uplifting performance we were treated to a great pot luck which is to be expected anytime Methodists gather. I would like to thank The Duke City Swampcoolers for the performance, Bonnie Korngiebel and Wanda Giovengo for coordinating the pot luck and the members of our Fellowship Committee for planning the event.

We have no events scheduled for December because many people will be busy and traveling for the holiday. We will however start the new year off right with a fellowship event in January, so stay tuned for more information.

Until next time, Ken Dewbre, Fellowship Committee Chairperson

Christmas Tamales

The Spanish Church is taking orders for Tamales for Christmas. Cost is \$20 per dozen. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. Last day to place order is Sunday December 10; they will be delivered on Sunday December 17 at the church at 12:30 pm.

Making a Difference – High Desert in Missions



Jearlene, Earl, Bruce, Bonnie & Drew packing boxes for Operation Christmas Child



Gallup family with quilt they made after sewing lessons from Lorraine Zapf and Carolyn McDowell

UMCOR and High Desert UMC!!

Did you know that High Desert UMC has a history of supporting UMCOR (United Methodist Committee On Relief) with their financial support and with their hands and feet? Prior to Covid, during 2018 – early 2020, Linn Carlson served on 14 long term disaster recovery/rebuilding mission trips to St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, spending a total of 7 months on the island (a month at a time). She also spent 2 weeks on the U.S Territory of Saipan, doing similar work. Randy & Eileen Sever served on teams on St, Croix, as well.



Linnette (& crew) on a hot tin roof

UMCOR seeks to alleviate suffering caused by disasters within the United States and its territories. UMCOR partners with the local communities with a “communities own their recoveries” philosophy. St. Croix experienced 2 hurricanes in 2017 and Saipan experienced a super typhoon in 2018.

The focus of the long-term recovery was to rebuild roofs and other needed repairs for the elderly and handicapped persons who were not eligible for other rebuilding programs. Imagine being in your 80’s and still living in your home with no roof for 1 – 2 years with a worn-out, leaky tarp waiting for help!

HDUMC generously supported these recovery efforts with their prayers and financial support by purchasing much needed large tools (i.e., hammer drill/chisel) and other essential supplies.

The UMCOR long term disaster recovery mission trips are finally gearing back up post Covid. Current work is being done on the island of Guam, Northern Mariana Islands in the Pacific that experienced the Super Typhoon in May. Be ready to hear more about long term recovery construction missions next year!



Linn, Randy & Eileen with other Mission team members in St. Croix

DECEMBER SECOND MILE GIVING:

FEED NEW MEXICO KIDS

Did you know that many students in Rio Rancho are homeless and even more go hungry, especially on the weekend? A hungry child is twice as likely to repeat a grade; three times as likely to be suspended; and a hungry teen is five times as likely to commit suicide.

To address this need, High Desert UMC through Women with Purpose (WWP) has been participating in and supporting Feed New Mexico Kids, a local nonprofit organization, by providing weekend food packs to children in our local community. Currently, WWP and other volunteers assemble over 500 food packs per month which are given to over 100 students in five local schools. Originally, it cost about \$7 for each food package, but with rising food prices this is going up.

Our Second Mile Giving during December will go to the purchase of the food for these packs. You can support this worthwhile ministry by writing "Feed NM Kids" on the memo line of your check to the church. Thanks for making a difference for these children.

Women with Purpose

Thursday, December 7, 2023, at 10:00 AM in the Sanctuary

December is always the favorite mission outreach for Women With Purpose. We get to stuff [Christmas] stockings with goodies for the homeless element in Albuquerque. Our assembly-line task will start with rolling up one sock and putting it in the toe of its mate. Next, we will stuff the 'stockings' with essentials like lip gloss pocket comb, a really neat fleece hat, granola bar and small flashlight. Of course, we will pile in a goodly amount of candy and gum as treats! A gaily colored Christmas ribbon will finish off this Christmas observance. Rev Joanne Landry, head of the Interfaith Bible Center, will be at the distribution end as usual. Come join us as we prepare this small holiday gesture for the less fortunate folks of the International Zone in Albuquerque.

THANKSGIVING BOXES

For the last four years, High Desert has been providing Thanksgiving Boxes with all the items needed for a Thanksgiving dinner including the turkey to the clients of Haven House. Haven House is the only domestic violence shelter in Sandoval County. They provide emergency shelter, case management, support groups, life-skill classes, legal advocacy, referral to job opportunities, housing and other supportive services, and therapeutic counseling for both women and their children. Due to your generosity, on November 11, we distributed 50 Thanksgiving Boxes to the clients of Haven House.

DISCIPLESHIP CORNER

by Lisa Isenberger

Sharing Hope, Peace, Joy and Love

The season of advent is upon us. Advent is the period before Christmas in which we celebrate the anticipation and coming of Jesus Christ. Lighting the advent candles is a custom that we follow at HDUMC. The traditional structure involves three purple or dark blue candles and one rose pink one, set in a wreath, with a single white candle in the center. The first candle represents the Hope born out of all that God has done and will do. The second candle represents Peace. The third candle, Joy, is the pink candle. The fourth candle represents Love. The final candle is the Christ candle, which is lit on Christmas Eve. This candle represents Christ as the light of all mankind. John 1:1-5 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome[a] it. This month, I encourage you to grow as a disciple of Christ by shining the light of Christ into the world during this season of advent. In doing so, you will be sharing some of the most wonderful and needed gifts of Christmas: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love. Prayer: Father God, during this season of Advent, I thank you for the wonderful gifts of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love that we remember at Christmas-time. Help me to share these gifts with others by allowing the Light of Christ to shine through my words and actions. In Jesus' name, Amen.

CHRISTMAS GIFT CARDS

St. Joseph Mission School in San Fidel is one of our mission projects. The school serves 41 students from the Acoma and Laguna Pueblos. Last year, when we asked the principal Antonio Trujillo what we could do for the students at Christmas, he indicated that gift cards would be an excellent Christmas gift. Due to your generosity, we will give each student a \$50 gift card on December 15. This allowed the students to purchase what they really wanted for Christmas.

A Sincere end of the year THANK YOU to the congregation of HDUMC!

During this season of being grateful, I would like to take the time to thank you all for your ongoing support for the Walk to Emmaus and KAIROS Prison Ministries. Your thoughts, prayers, financial support and YES...Cookie Baking have been amazing! Our congregation baked over 73 DOZEN cookies for the August KAIROS weekend! I appreciate each of you! A heads up: The Women's Walk to Emmaus will be held on March 21-24, 2024. If you are interested in attending, please talk to me as registration is occurring as we speak. Linn Carlson

A Heartfelt Thank You!

To Jodi Myers for her dedication as Web Master/Designer for High Desert for the past 5 years. She created an eye-catching and easy to use web page and kept it up to date. Thanks to Jodi, our church's online presence made us accessible to the public. Who knows how many people found our church because of Jodi's expertise.

DECEMBER

2023

HIGH DESERT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Friday Team						
					1 11:00-2:00 Food Pantry	2
3 9 AM Worship 10 AM SS 10:30 AM MS 11 AM Worship	4 10 AM Bible Study, (brunch)	5	6 Office Hrs: 9-12 9:00 Mission Comm. 10:30 AM Bible St. 5:30 PM Choir and Bible Study	7 10 AM Women with Purpose	8 10 AM Emmaus Agape Group	9
10 9 AM Worship 10 AM SS 10:30 AM MS 11 AM Worship	11 10 AM Bible Study 10 AM FNMK Bagging	12 6 Pm Ministry Team	13 Office Hrs: 9-12 10:30 AM Bible Study 5:30 PM Choir and Bible Study	14	15	16
17 9 AM Worship 10 AM SS 10:30 AM MS 11 AM Worship	18 10 AM Bible Study	19 9:00 AM – 12:00 noon Food Pantry	20 Office Hrs: 9-12 10:30 AM Bible Study No Choir or Bible Study	21 1:00 -4:00 PM Food Pantry	22	23
24 10 AM Worship 10:30 AM MS 5 PM Worship	25 Merry Christmas!	26	27 Office Hrs: 9-12 10:30 AM Bible Study 5:30 PM Choir and Bible Study	28	29	30
31 9 AM Worship 10 AM SS 10:30 AM MS 11 AM Worship						

HIGH DESERT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Invites you and your family to join us for
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, 5 pm

We're located at:
1201 Golf Course Rd SE
Rio Rancho, NM



Visit our website:
highdesertumc.org
for more information.

Join us as we celebrate the birth of our Savior.

The Chrismon Tree

The Chrismon Tree in the front of the church is a variation of the Christmas tree developed in the 20th Century. It includes ornaments called Chrismons, borrowing that term from the ancient Christian symbolism.

The concept was developed in 1957 by Frances Kipps Spencer, of the Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia, when she set out to create decorations appropriate for a church's Christmas celebrations.

The Chrismon Tree is highly symbolic; conveying the life of Christ and the meaning of Christmas through commonly found items and easily understood symbols. At no time were the symbols meant to be worshipped, but serve as reminders of our faith in God. Also, there are symbols reminding us of the meaning and truth of Christian doctrine. The word Chrismon is a combination of two words: CHRIST and MONogram. The tree is evergreen, representing eternal life. The colors used in Chrismons are white and gold. White refers to our Lord's purity and perfection; gold to His majesty and glory. Tiny white lights are used to symbolize Christ as the Light of the World.

Some of the Chrismons on this tree are:

The Fish – (also three fish in a circle) The fish was a commonly used symbol for Christ in the early days of Christianity. The Greek word for fish can be an acrostic meaning Jesus, Christ, God's Son, Savior. Early Christians who were subject to persecution used this code to identify themselves to others.

The Star – symbolizes that Jesus is the light of the world.

The Lamp – Jesus is a "lamp unto our feet."

The Cross – a reminder of Christ's sacrifice for humanity. (There may be various types of crosses used, such as the Greek cross and the Latin Cross.)

The Dove – a symbol for the Holy Spirit which descended on Christ at His baptism.

X in a Circle – Chi (X) is the first letter of Christ in Greek. The circle symbolizes eternity.

The Butterfly – a symbol of resurrection.

Snowflakes – symbols of the purity of Christ.

Angels – heralded Christ's birth.

The Chalice – a reminder of the cup used at the Lord's Supper; represents His blood shed for humanity.

The Heart – the symbol of perfect love.

My First Christmas in Heaven

I see the countless Christmas trees below. With tiny light, like heaven's stars, reflecting in the snow. The sight is so spectacular! Please wipe away the tear. For I am spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I hear the many Christmas songs that people hold so dear. But the sounds of music can't compare with the Christmas choir up here.

I have no words to tell you the joy their voices bring. For it is beyond description to hear the angels sing.

I know how much you miss me; I see the pain inside your heart. Even though I am far away, we really aren't apart. So be happy for me loved ones.

You know I hold you dear. Be glad I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

I send you each a special gift from my heavenly home above. I send you each a memory of my undying love.

After all, "LOVE" is a gift more precious than gold. It was always most important in the stories Jesus told.

Please love and keep each other, as my Father said to do, For I can't count the blessings or the love I have for you. So, have a Merry Christmas and wipe away the tear!

Remember, I'm spending Christmas with Jesus Christ this year.

ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

- December 3 First Sunday of Advent
Worship Services 9 & 11 am
Sermon: Do You Know?
- December 10 Second Sunday of Advent
Worship Services 9 & 11 am
Sermon: Joseph of Bethlehem
- December 17 Third Sunday of Advent
Worship Services 9 & 11 am
Sermon: Mary's Visit to Elizabeth
Ugly Sweater Sunday
- December 24 Fourth Sunday of Advent
Worship Service 10 am
Sermon: From Nazareth to Bethlehem
- December 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Worship Service 5 pm
Sermon: Come to the Manger



Please invite your family, friends, and neighbors to join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Merry Christmas!

Care Ministry

You're invited to call or send cards to these of our church family, to offer words of support and encouragement.

Phil Pittman	C/O Ravenna Assisted Living, 3051 Twin Oaks Dr. NW Albuquerque, NM 87120	
Lorra Garner	Genesis, 9150 McMahon Blvd. NW Albq 87114	408-722-6482
Grover Donahoe	766 Hood Way SE, Rio Rancho, NM 87124	220-3839
Rod Warpole	600 First Street NE, Rio Rancho, NM 87124	332-9706
Mac Esquibel	4544 Aguila Road SE, Rio Rancho, NM 87124	891-1469
Sister Barbara Kopecki	3800 W. Peterson Ave., Chicago, IL 60659	
Ella Jerome	813 Banco Court, Bernalillo, NM 87004	312-2992
Wanda Schierling	921 Purple Aster, Bernalillo, NM 87004	970-398-0501
Polly Van Lenten	920 Riverview Dr. SE, Apt 280, Rio Rancho 87124	979-277-4852
Vi Ortega	517 Dartmouth Pl SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106	985-0953



Rusty & Debby Dils	Dec. 3
Bill & Kay Boss	Dec. 23
Glenn & Sue Hinchcliffe	Dec. 23
Paul & Leuretta Lewis	Dec. 24
Jeff & Cindi Bair	Dec. 30

Sandie Fawcett	Dec. 2
Randy Sever	Dec. 3
Kathy Harrell	Dec. 7
Rose Meyer	Dec. 10
Cindi Bair	Dec. 10
David Polhemus	Dec. 12
Glynda Samford	Dec. 14
Gloria Lamoreux	Dec. 14
Rohan Gandham	Dec. 15
Polly Van Lenten	Dec. 16
Marlaine Gaylor	Dec. 16
Edna Billings	Dec. 19
Pamela Lee	Dec. 20
Dorcas Rauri	Dec. 20
Jan Herrington	Dec. 21
Joel Salisbury	Dec. 22
Sue Hill	Dec. 24
Marie Donat	Dec. 26
Sity Roach	Dec. 29
Sara Hendricks	Dec. 30
Clara Mohr	Dec. 31, (1923)
(Turning 100!)	

ANSWER TO OBSCURE NAMES

IN THE BIBLE:

HE WAS PAUL'S GOOD FRIEND AND THE
FIRST CONVERT TO CHRIST IN ASIA.

ROMANS 16:5

HIGH DESERT UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Office Hours: Wednesday 9 AM - Noon

Email: highdesertumc@outlook.com

We're on the Web!
www.highdesertumc.org

December, 2023 Newsletter

HDUMC CHURCH PANTRY

Distribution dates for December, 2023 are:

Friday, December 1 at 11:00 AM

Tuesday, December 19 at 9:00 AM

Thursday, December 21 at 1:00 PM

December Collection: Oatmeal, small packages
Containers are in the Narthex & Fellowship Hall for these donations.
Contact John Samford at (505) 870-0667
for more information.
