

December 1, 2013

The Oaks



Riverton First United Methodist Church, (217) 629-9721

SCRATCHINGS FROM THE DIXON PENCIL

I read earlier this year about a British romantic comedy from back in 2003 called *Love Actually*. I never saw the film myself, but I understand that the plot is built around a school Christmas play. My source for this information is the Rev. Steve Beard, who writes columns on popular culture for *Good News Magazine*. Beard recalls one particular scene in the film where a child brags to her mother about her role in the play. She is a lobster, but not just any lobster. She is the First Lobster. (There is obviously more than one.) The nativity play becomes the climactic conclusion of the film, says Beard. Besides the lobsters, there are an octopus, several penguins, Spiderman and a variety of other peculiar creatures. In a Nativity Play.

Mr. Beard recited that scene because he was reminded of it later when he visited the set of *The Nativity Story*, a film about the birth of Christ made in Italy in 2006. While he was there in Matera, Italy, looking at the cave that was the setting for the manger scene, a five-foot black snake slithered by. The point he took from it is that maybe we should not be so shocked by snakes, or lobsters, penguins or whatever characters show up at our nativity scene. He goes on to say that difficulty and evil lurk all around the edges of the story of the incarnation, even though we sanitize it for our church displays.

Mary and Joseph were real people, poor people, living a difficult life in a land occupied by an enemy army. They were subject to gossip and innuendo because of the circumstances of the

pregnancy. Joseph had to come to terms with confusion and questions about betrayal. There was no hospital for the birth, no midwife, no anesthetic, just a shelter shared with animals. Jesus, our Savior, was a helpless baby. Then there was Herod, the jealous king who tried to kill baby Jesus, and the Roman army ready to carry out his orders.

As we remember the nativity story this month, let us not forget the evil and difficulty that surrounded it, and still surround it in our world. There are still threats and violence. There are still lack of adequate medical attention and poverty for many. A snake or some other peculiar creature may make an unexpected appearance in our routine observances of the nativity. But remember that “Christmas remains the only light sparked in a cave that can illuminate the human soul and bring peace in the midst of chaos.”¹

¹ Steve Beard, “Straight Talk,” *Good News*, January-February, 2013, pp.6-7.

May God bless you this Advent/Christmas season!

Pastor Jonathan Dixon



RFUMC Calendar – December 2013

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 First Sunday of Advent 9:30 AM Worship; 10:30 Adult Bible Class	2 7:00 PM Board of Trustees	3 6:00 PM UMW Christmas Party	4 9:00 AM Quilt- ing; 9 – 12 CLM at Church; 7:00 PM Choir Prac- tice	5	6	7 6-8:30 Christmas Open House at Parsonage
8 Second Sunday of Advent 9:30 AM Worship; 10:30 AM Adult Bible Class; 6:30 PM Finance and Administration Meeting	9	10	11 9:00 AM Quilt- ing; 9-12 CLM at Church; 7:00 PM Choir Prac- tice	12	13	14 10:00 AM Choir Prac- tice
15 Third Sunday of Advent 9:30 AM Worship; 10:30 Coffee Fellowship; 10:35 AM Adult Bible Class; 7:00 PM Christ- mas Musical Program	16	17	18 9:00 AM Quilt- ing; 9-12 CLM at Church; 7:00 PM Choir Prac- tice	19	20	21
22 Fourth Sunday of Advent 9:30 AM Worship; 10:30 AM Adult Bible Class	23	24 Christmas Eve 10:00 PM Can- dlelight Service	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28
29 9:30 AM Worship; 10:30 AM Adult Bible Class	30	31				

December Anniversaries

Richard and Jolene Carr 12/28/2009
Tyler and Samantha Sloman 12/28/2002

December Birthdays

Betty Peel 12/1
Harold Shepherdson 12/2/1932
Timothy Phillips 12/11
Brian Sutherland 12/13/1986
Sandra Caldwell 12/16/1962
Alexander Sloman 12/17/2003
Melissa Pfeiffer 12/18/1963
Glenna Wainwright 12/21
Jolene Carr 12/23/1963
Carolyn Binion 12/24/1949
Eileen Kendle 12/27/1942
Timothy Sexton 12/29/1957
Tyson Binion 12/31/2005

Looking Ahead...

January 18, Beef and Noodle Supper
February 8, Family Valentine Dinner
March 4, Pancake Supper
March 5, Ash Wednesday
April 13, Palm Sunday
April 20, Easter Sunday

NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: DECEMBER 15



**RIVERTON FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH**

*Cordially invites you attend the
weekly Worship Service for:*

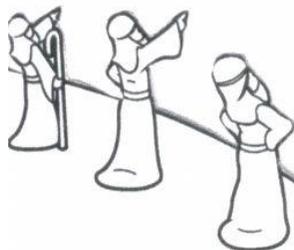
**A LIVE
NATIVITY
SCENE**

**WEEKLY IN SUNDAY WORSHIP IN
DECEMBER**

9:30 A.M. TO 10:30 A.M.

429 East Lincoln in Riverton IL

Parking is available.



Holiday Greetings to Soldiers

At worship services in November, the congregation circulated and signed a few holiday greetings for soldiers who are being treated for their injuries. For those interested in sending more of these greetings, here is a place to send Holiday Greetings to soldiers who are being treated for their injuries. These are due by December 6th.

Holiday Mail for Heroes
PO Box 5456
Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5456

Trustee News

Some of the trustees have been working for several weeks getting the proper measurements and the proper materials. It finally was coordinated and the new frame and door have been installed into the existing exterior frame of the church's lift. It isn't quite complete, but it should be soon. Please have patience until all the finishing touches have been completed.

You may also have noticed that the flower bed at the southeast corner of the front steps have been stripped of its old foliage. New plants have been selected and will soon be planted.

If you have a need for some extra leaves for mulch, please come by the church yard and help yourself. Take all the leaves that you might need.....NO CHARGE!

SCRIP Update

'Tis the season for giving! So if you have too much Christmas cooking, cleaning, decorating and shopping to do, let us relieve some of that pressure. Select gift cards to fill those Christmas stockings and gift bags. You will have more time for other things to enjoy and you help your Church at the same time. This will be a definite Win, Win situation. Several of our cards from local stores increase their percentage of giving during this wonderful season.

Parsonage Holiday Open House

Saturday, December 7th from 6-8:30.

Please come and eat with and enjoy fellowship with those who come for the Christmas Open House at the Parsonage.

Come see the new Kitchen and great floors!!

Parking is available in the Church parking lot-Just follow the lights to the Parsonage.

Everyone is welcome to enjoy the traditional Cheese Soup and Chili!





Quilters

Quilters needed! We can always use more quilters and wanna-be quilters. We will teach as you go. The quilters took a few weeks off to work on school bags for the missions, but they just got back to quilting. Another quilt is being marked to go in the frames when the present one is complete. Come join the fun any Wednesday morning from 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M.

Christmas Musical: The Love of God at Christmas

Sunday, December 15 at 7 p.m.

The greatest theme in all the world, the topic whose depths of meaning can never be adequately explored, is God's love. From the greatest theologian to the newest believer, no words describe the beauty and wonder of what it means to be loved completely by the Creator of the universe. That embodiment of God's love is Jesus, and the night Jesus took on our flesh and came to us as a baby made it possible for each of us to know God's love as we never could otherwise. This stirring presentation celebrates the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who comes to us, not to conquer, not to enslave, not to dominate, but to give us all His love.

Please join the choir, the children of the Sunday School, and others in the congregation for this brief (less than an hour) musical performance in the sanctuary. We will share in a time of fellowship afterwards.



The United Methodist Women

will meet: Tuesday, December 3rd at 6:00 p.m.

Program: Christmas Potluck

Hostesses: Nancy Daniels, Rose Hughes, and Betty Peel

There will be a \$3.00 gift grab bag. Bring a dish to share.

We welcome all the ladies of the church.
Come see us in the fellowship hall.

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Address Correction Requested

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