

December 1, 2012

# The Oaks



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

## 'Twas the beginning of Advent

by Todd Jenkins (Slightly revised by J. Dixon)

*Today I want to share with you a poem that is based on a rather famous one about Christmas. It will tell you a little bit about this season we celebrate. – Pastor J. Dixon*

'Twas the beginning of Advent and all through the Church  
Our hope was all dying; we'd given up on the search.  
It wasn't so much that Christ wasn't invited,  
But after 2,000 plus years we were no longer excited.

Oh, we knew what was coming no doubt about that.  
And that was the trouble; it was all "old hat."  
November brought the first of a series of pains  
With carefully orchestrated advertising campaigns.

There were gadgets and dolls and all sorts of toys.  
Enough to seduce even devout girls and boys.  
Unfortunately, it seemed, none were exempt  
From this seasonal virus that did all of us tempt.

The priests and prophets and even the kings  
Were all so consumed with the desire for "things!"  
It was rare, if at all, that you'd hear of the reason  
For the origin of this whole holy-day season.

A baby, it seems, once had been born  
In the mid-east somewhere on that first Christmas morn.  
But what does that mean for folks like us,  
Who've lost ourselves in the hoopla and fuss?

Can we re-learn the art of wondering and waiting,  
Of hoping and praying, and anticipating?  
Can we let go of all the things and the stuff?  
Can we open our hands and our hearts long enough?

Can we open our eyes and open our ears?  
Can we find him again after all of these years?  
Will this year be different from all the rest?  
Will we be able to offer him all of our best?

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## The United Methodist Women

will meet

Tuesday, December 4 at 6 P.M.

Program: Christmas Potluck

Hostesses: Nancy Daniels, Rose Hughes  
and Betty Peel

Grab Bag Gift \$3.00  
Food Pantry Offering

Bring a dish to share  
Turkey and drinks provided

So many questions, unanswered thus far,  
As wise men seeking the home of the star.  
Where do we begin how do we start  
To make for the child a place in our heart?

Perhaps we begin by letting go  
Of our limits on hope, and of the stuff that we know.  
Let go of the shopping, of the chaos and fuss,  
Let go of the searching, let Christmas find us.

We open our hearts, our hands and our eyes,  
To see the king coming in our own neighbors' cries.  
We look without seeking what we think we've earned,  
But rather we're looking for relationships spurned.

With him he brings wholeness and newness of life  
For brother and sister, for husband and wife.  
The Christ-child comes not by our skill,  
But rather he comes by his own Father's will.

We can't make him come with parties and trees,  
But only by getting down on our knees.  
He'll come if we wait amidst our affliction,  
Coming in spite of, not by, our restriction.

His coming will happen of this there's no doubt.  
The question is whether we'll be in or out.  
"Behold, I stand at the door and knock."  
Do you have the courage to peer through the lock?

A basket on your porch, a child in your reach.  
A baby to love, to feed and to teach.  
He'll grow in wisdom as God's only Son.  
How far will we follow this radical one?

He'll lead us to challenge the way that things are.  
He'll lead us to follow a single bright star.  
But that will come later if we're still around.  
The question for now: Is the child to be found?

Can we block out commercials, the hype and the malls?  
Can we find solitude in our holy halls?  
Can we keep alert, keep hope, stay awake?  
Can we receive the child for ours and God's sake?

From on high with the caroling host as he sees us,  
He yearns for our prayer: Come Lord Jesus!  
As Advent begins all these questions make plea.  
The only true answer: We will see, we will see.

## Christmas Musical

Sunday, December 16 at 7 PM

Please join us for the Christmas Musical, "Silent Night, Holy Night". The church choir and the children of the Sunday School will sing new and familiar carols as we celebrate the reason for the season. We'll end the hour with a cookies and punch fellowship provided by the ladies of the church. Come one, come all!



## December Birthdays

Betty Peel	December 1
Anne Armbruster	December 2, 1976
Harold Shepherdson	December 2, 1932
Timothy Phillips	December 11
Brian Sutherland	December 13, 1986
Alexander Sloman	December 17, 2003
Ernest Grieme	December 18, 1927
Melissa Pfeiffer	December 18, 1963
Glenna Wainwright	December 21
Jolene Carr	December 23, 1963
Carolyn Binion	December 24, 1949
David Bumgardner	December 25, 1944
Eileen Kendle	December 27, 1942
Timothy Sexton	December 29, 1957
Tyson Binion	December 31, 2005
Fraňa Evans	December 31

# RFUMC Calendar – December 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 9:00 AM Hanging of the Greens
2 First Sunday of Advent 9:30 AM Worship; 10:30 Sunday School	3 7:00 PM Board of Trustees	4 6:00 PM United Methodist Women's Christmas Potluck	5 9:00 AM Quilting; 7:00 PM Choir Prac- tice	6	7	8 7:30 AM United Meth- odist Men
9 Second Sunday of Ad- vent 9:30 AM Worship; 10:30 AM Sunday School; 6:30 PM Fi- nance Committee; 7:15 PM Administrative Council	10	11	12 9:00 AM Quilting; 7:00 PM Choir Prac- tice	13	14	15
16 Third Sunday of Advent 9:30 AM Worship; 10:30 Coffee Fellowship (Jesus Birthday Cake); 10:35 AM Sunday School; 7:00 PM Christmas Mu- sical Program	17	18	19 9:00 AM Quilting	20	21	22
23 Fourth Sunday of Advent 9:30 AM Worship; 10:30 AM Sunday School	24 Christmas Eve 10:00 PM Candle- light Service	25 Christmas Day	26	27	28	29
30 9:30 AM Worship; 10:30 AM Sunday School	31 New Year's Eve					



## Looking Ahead...

January 6 Epiphany; Retiring of the Greens  
 January 19, Chicken Noodle Dinner  
 February 9, Family Valentine Dinner  
 February 12, Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper  
 February 13, Ash Wednesday  
 March 31, Easter Sunday  
 May 19, Consecration Sunday

*NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: DECEMBER 16*

# Church Committees

Recently the Stewardship Committee met and determined that there may be members of the congregation that are not aware of what certain committees and groups do in the church. It was decided to place an article regarding one of these committees or groups in the newsletter each month to inform the congregation and perhaps interest some of you to join a committee or group and enhance our church with your knowledge and talents.

This month our committee is the Worship Committee. This committee assists with communion and organizes the orders for poinsettias for the Christmas season to decorate the church and also the spring flowers to decorate the church for Easter. They assist and plan events for worship as is necessary.

The Worship Committee meets as needed. If you have any questions or are interested in joining the Worship Committee, (terms are for 1 year at a time) please contact a member of the committee. Current committee members are: Patsy Skaggs (Chairperson), Ellen Dixon, Sharon Caldwell, Carly Shank and Nadine Mackenzie.

## Advent / Christmas Offering

Inserted in your paper copy of this newsletter is an envelope labeled Christmas Offering. Following the example of God, who gave us the priceless gift of Jesus that first Christmas, we want to give to others as a church. Moneys that come in with the designation Advent or Christmas Offering will be forwarded to other charitable organizations whose work we support. They are the Mini O'Beirne Crisis Nursery and Kumler Neighborhood Ministries this year. We are able to give to these other good causes because of your generous support of our local needs. We are closing out the year much better than we started, thanks to the response to our Consecration Sunday promotion. Again, thank you.

Those of you who receive the newsletter electronically will not have an envelope inserted, of course. But you can still support this outreach effort by designating an amount on a check or envelope as Advent Offering or Christmas Offering.

## Quilting

The busy hands of the ladies quilting have just completed a quilt and they have two more in the quilt frames they are working on. Everyone is welcome to come help with this quilting. If you are unsure about your ability.....we will teach you how to put those stitches in and keep you up-to-date on the latest happenings in the community. Come join us on Wednesday mornings from 9A.M. until 11:30 A.M.

### December Anniversaries

David and Paulette Bumgardner	December 20, 1969
Richard and Jolene Carr	December 28, 2009
Tyler and Samantha Sloman	December 28, 2002

# Trustee News

Much has been happening at Riverton United Methodist Church and grounds. A very special thank you should go to Scott (and Tom) Pantier for the many hours of blowing, raking, blowing, raking, blowing and.....well, you get the picture. Those beautiful oak trees (and all other trees) are dropping leaves by the truckload. Scott and Tom have spent many hours collecting these leaves and cleaning the parking areas of all the leaves. Thank you for helping to keep the areas so neat.

Then the United Methodist Men spent their time decorating the exterior lamp posts along the drive and parking areas for the Christmas holidays. It is a sight to behold. Also a special thank you to Nik Caldwell for installing exterior lights in the pavilion. His time and finances are much appreciated.

The final plans have been chosen for the parsonage kitchen remodeling project. It is hoped that this up-dating will begin right after the holidays. Much of the material will be purchased from Lowes; so with that in mind, please feel free to donate Lowes Scrip Cards to the trustees to assist with the expenses.

The trustees are delighted with the response to the SCRIP program. This program has paid another \$1,000.00 recently on the church's loan. This loan was readjusted this year in order to give us a much lower interest rate, plus the added funds to pay for the tuck pointing project that was just completed and also to assist with some of the finances needed for the kitchen repair project. The new loan amount was for \$130,500.00. We have already been able to pay over \$3,000.00 on the principal of this loan in just the past few months. Thank you for your participation in the Scrip Program.

## Scrip Update

The holiday season is upon us.....whether we are ready or not! Here are some updates on the program. The donation amount has increased for the following: Applebees has increased to 10%; Hallmark has increased to 6%; K-Mart has increased to 6%; Sears has increased to 6%; Meijer has increased to 4%; Bass Pro Shops has increased to 12%; CVS has increased to 7%; Panera has increased to 11%; PetSmart has increased to 6%; Staples has increased to 10%. When you purchase a Bath & Body card for \$10.00, you will receive a gift card for the value of \$10.50. All of these increases are valid through December 7, 2012 only.

Also during the holiday season, you may purchase gift cards for the following businesses: Coldwater Creek (8%, \$25.00); Banana Republic (14%, \$25.00); Build-A-Bear (8%, \$25.00); Burlington Coat (8%, \$25.00); Catherines (6%, \$25.00); Crazy 8 (13%, \$25.00); Express (10%, \$25.00); Chipotle Mexican Grill (10%, \$10.00).

We will permanently be adding the new store to our list: Ross Dress for Less at 8% for \$25.00. A lot of additions and changes. All great values and all great gifts for the holidays. We wish you a Happy and Peaceful Shopping Spree right in our Church!

Last month the church's loan payment had an additional \$1,000.00 payment to the principal of the loan. Thank you for your support! With holiday shopping at the present, we may be able to pay another \$1,000.00 before the end of the year.