

CHRISTMAS 2011

Dear Faith Church Family,

Joy to the World, The Lord has come...

He was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger...

Joy to the world, Let heaven and nature sing...

In these uncertain economic times, many are finding it difficult to be joyful- or even hopeful. Others of us have weathered these times without much hardship and feel the giving spirit nudging us to reach out to others. Let us celebrate, knowing that Jesus comes to us anew this Christmas bringing hope, grace and joy.

When we focus our care and concern on others, our own problems diminish. So with that in mind, your Mission's Committee has chosen the following projects for the Christmas offering.

*** SPRING VALLEY AREA FOOD SHELF**

The food shelf serves over 200 grateful families. Even though many of these families have jobs there is not enough money for food and bills. With less food available through Channel One and higher prices for food, the food shelf could use some monetary assistance.

***IMAGINE NO MALARIA**

Every 45 seconds a child dies from malaria. Imagine No Malaria goes beyond Nothing but Nets and works in full partnership with communities in Africa offering prevention, treatment, education and upgraded communication networks to get life saving information about malaria to the people.

Knowing that with all of us working together, making a contribution- large or small, we can make a difference. We can make a difference that will bring some joy and hope to someone who is hungry, someone who is hurting, someone who God is waiting for us to touch. Don't hesitate. Be bold. Be generous.

*Please **PRAY DILIGENTLY** and **GIVE GENEROUSLY** so that **TOGETHER** we can be the hands of Christ in mission in a needy world. What a **JOY** to see how such gifts of love can change the lives of both the giver and receiver.*

TOGETHER IN MISSION- *Your Mission Committee*

Nancy Cornell, Arlene Johnson, Marilyn Matson, Judy Tart and Marie Tart

PS *Please write checks to "Faith UMC" and write "Christmas Offering" in the memo*

The offering will be evenly split between the Food Shelf and Imagine No Malaria.



DECEMBER 2011 MAPLE LEAF PARISH NEWS

Cherry Grove UMC

18183 160th Street
Spring Valley, MN 55975

Worship: 10:00 am Sunday
Cowboy: 6:00 pm First Sunday

Pastors: Beth Perez & Mark Rader

Email: cgumc@frontiernet.net
Phone: 1-507-937-3177

Faith UMC

617 Maple Lane
Spring Valley, MN 55975

Worship: 9:00 am Sunday
Worship: 5:00 pm Saturday

Pastors: Mark Rader & Beth Perez

Email: faithunited@centurytel.net
Phone: 1-507-346-2830
Web: faithsv.net

Fountain UMC

Cedar Street & County Road 8
Fountain, MN 55935

Worship: 8:30 am Sunday

Pastors: Beth Perez & Mark Rader

Email: cgumc@frontiernet.net
Phone: 1-507-268-4456
Web: www.fountainumc.com

FROM THE PASTOR

Christmas is Not Your Birthday. If you were born on December 25th, your birthday may *fall* on Christmas, but the Christmas celebration itself is **not** your birthday! Christmas is not your birthday; it's Jesus' birthday, or at least it's the day that the Church has chosen to celebrate Christ's birth!

And yet somewhere along the line our culture has hijacked this wonderful celebration. Wander into a mall in late October (even before Halloween) and you're likely to already hear Christmas Carols over the PA system, an attempt by merchandisers to get you in the mood to spend more money on Christmas presents and to think about what you'd like to get from others.

But here's the thing. In most families it's the birthday boy or girl who gets to say how they want to celebrate their special day. They may ask for a particular type of cake, request a party, or even a certain meal. My younger brother's birthday is in early February, and I

still remember the year that my grandfather grilled steaks out in his garage because that was what Tim wanted.

So if Christmas is Jesus' birthday, shouldn't he have some say in how we celebrate his special day? This year during the Advent and Christmas seasons we'll be using Michael Slaughter's *Christmas Is Not Your Birthday* series in our preaching and worship services, tying it in with the United Methodist Church's campaign to wipe out Malaria in sub-Saharan Africa. The series will challenge us to think deeply about how Jesus might wish us to observe his birth, and there will be opportunities to make either a onetime gift or three year pledge to the Church's *Imagine No Malaria* campaign.

This year we'd encourage you to prayerfully think about how Jesus might wish to have you celebrate Christmas.

In Christ,

Pastor Mark

CHRISTMAS SERVICE SCHEDULE

With Christmas Eve falling on a Saturday this year we WON'T be holding our regular 5 PM service at Faith Church on that day. Instead we'll be offering two Christmas Eve services, one at 4:00 PM and the second at 7:30 PM.

A Christmas Eve service will also be held at 6:00 PM at the Fountain UMC, and again at 8:00 PM in Cherry Grove.

All three churches will be offering their customary Sunday services on Christmas morning, though they'll likely be much more casual than usual.

Please note that there won't be Sunday School or a fellowship time at Faith Church that day due to preparations for the Christmas Dinner.

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Faith United Methodist Church

617 Maple Lane

Spring Valley, MN 55975

Web Page: faithsv.net

Saturday evening worship 5:00 p.m.

Sunday morning worship 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School- all ages 10:00 a.m.

Coffee & fellowship at 10:00 a.m.

Office Hours:

8:00 - 4:00 Tuesday through Friday

Office Phone:

507-346-2830; Fax: 507-346-2877

Office E-mail:

faithunited@centurytel.net

Pastor Mark Rader:

Phone: 346-2878

Email: faithpas@centurytel.net

Pastor Beth Perez

Phone: 259-4553

Email: bethperez@myclearwave.net

Youth Director Laura Perez

Phone: 507-352-9522

Email: lauraperez3@gmail.com

Secretary:

Louise Winfield

Custodian:

Paul Eberle

Organist:

Suzanne Eberle

Bell Choir Dir.

Kathy Casady

Choir Pianist:

Kristie Shorter

**NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE**

The newsletter deadline for January 2012 will be Wednesday, December 21st at noon.

If you would like to email your announcements or articles the address is faithunited@centurytel.net.

Thank you.

FUMC - SERVICE GROUP

The Service Group handles the Sunday Coffee Hour the first three Sundays of the month. The 4th Sunday will be served by the Sunday School and Youth. The 5th Sunday will be served by Cursillo participants.

DECEMBER

- * John & Darlene Vrieze 346-2074
- Geoffrey & Melissa Erdman 352-5678
- Jon & Dana Kuehn 346-2181
- Marilyn Matson 346-2673
- Arlynn & Carla Ness 561-4962
- Dan & Susan Nodtvedt 346-7853
- Donald Reiland 346-7967
- Falene Rowe 352-4003
- Ron & Sheryl Stain 346-9800
- Lance & Diane Sikkink 346-7709



**CHRISTMAS ON BROADWAY
ALS Christmas Bake Sale!**

ALS (Lou Gehrigs Disease) Fundraiser

Saturday, December 10, 2011

Our 5th Annual Bake Sale will be held at the Spring Valley Community Center. We look forward to this event and would love to have everyone's participation.

You can participate by:

providing baked goods for us to sell

visit the Bake Sale to make a purchase

or make a cash donation/check donation (please put "Blakeslee Fundraiser" in the memo)

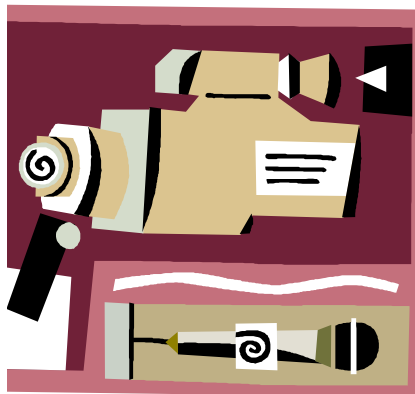
We will be at the Community Center on Saturday (Dec.10) from 8:30 AM on to receive any donations. As always, we always feel blessed and very thankful for everyone's support in this event!

Sam & Gloria Blakeslee



MEDIA TEAM

The Media Team is looking for 2 or 3 more volunteers to learn to run the computer and record the service. If you have an interest in learning how this amazing technology works and helping the Media Team to make our worship experience more meaningful, please talk to Jeff Kappers or Pastor Mark.



WORSHIP SERVICE ARCHIVES!

We first began recording our Sunday messages as MP3 files on Confirmation Sunday in 2010, but with the limited disk space provided by our previous webhost could only leave them online for a few months. With the recent migration of our website to a provider who offers us unlimited storage we are now able to make all of our older sermons available again. You can find them at: www.faithsv.net/SERMONS

UMW CHRISTMAS POTLUCK

Put December 7th on your calendar to attend the Christmas potluck at church at 11:30a.m. You do not need to bring your own dishes, we will use the churches. Bring a dish to share or just come and enjoy a meal and fellowship. This is open to all church members and yes that means men, also. Hope to see you December 7th!

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS

Looking for Christmas Gift Ideas? Here are a couple of ideas.

1. Check out the Equal Exchange Coffee table. Dark Chocolate and Milk Chocolate candy bars make tasty stocking stuffers. For coffee lovers there are whole bean as well as several different roasts of drip grind coffee. When you purchase these fair trade products you are helping small coffee and cocoa farmers who use environmentally beneficial growing practices and who give back to their communities.

2. Select an item from the UMCOR Gift Catalog (www.umcor.org) and give as an alternative gift.



THANK YOU

Thank you all so much for the nice cards I received at the death of my sister, Joyce. You are all so kind!

Thanks again,
Rhieny & Arlene Oeltjen

Thank you so much for your participation in the basket and boxes sold at the Mini Market this year. We had a nice turnout.

Judy Thomas

The 5:00 pm worship service is a wonderful option for those of us who have physical issues that make early Sunday services difficult to attend. We would like to thank all of the people who make special music at the 5:00 pm service happen. A special service recently was a large family baptism. The special music was provided by Karla Hamersma and her daughter Lexy. Lexy sang a song for the new baby titled "This Little Light of Mine". God has pulled this all together for our enjoyment of worship.

Twyla Hellickson

FOOD SHELF NEEDS

Peanut butter (no longer available thru Channel One)
Baking items; flour, sugar, oil, chocolate chips, etc.
Pancake mix and syrup
Laundry and dish detergent

FAITH UMC COUNCIL MEETING November 15, 2011

The meeting was called to order at 6:58 pm by Chairperson Jill Douglas. Members present were Jill Douglas, Carol Langdon, Barb Paul, Jan Hammon, Kathy Lucas, Pastor Mark Rader, Jeff Kappers, Deanna Capelle, Carla Ness.

A devotional was given by Jeff Kappers.

The October minutes were reviewed & a motion was made to approve them. m/s/c

While the October meeting began with a presentation & discussion on FUMC's 2010-2013 Ministry Plan, which contained 16 key ministry strategies; November's meeting began with Pastor Mark presenting the Ad Council with "Suggested Modifications to FUMC's Ministry Plan". These modifications included adding an alternative Worship Service, saying, "We will seek to offer a more "contemporary" worship service besides our "blended service" on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings." Also, the original point #5 was deleted, and replaced with:

5) Add a congregational emphasis on Discipleship. (copies of FUMC's 2010-2013 Ministry Plan are available at the church office). There was discussion on the Ministry Plan suggested changes.

Financial Report: In addition to the financial report being made available to the Ad Council, Jan pointed out that the roof loan will be paid in full in November 2011! In fact, the amount given to the roof fund is slightly more than the

amount due on the loan. There will be future discussion on where to use the additional funds. The 10/30/11 ending checkbook balance was \$321.79. The apportionment balance is \$12,318.76. A total of \$14,485.23 has been sent in to the Conference.

Correspondence: None

Worship: Carol reported that the Worship Committee met 10/22/11. It was decided at that meeting that All Saints Sunday would be observed by a slideshow, candle lighting and bell ringing. There was discussion about dedicating the new paraments. Pastor Beth stated that the Advent sermon series would be titled "**Christmas Is Not Your Birthday**". The Ad Council thanked Barb for the beautiful All Saints Sunday presentation.

Education: Barb reported that the planning for the Christmas Program is underway. The program will be on 12/11/11.

Trustees: Jeff mentioned that he would bring up the Trustees request under New Business.

SPRC: Deanna reported that SPRC will be meeting again on 12/13/11 and will be, again, working on Staff Evaluations.

Pastor's Report: Pastor Mark reported that "**Christmas Is Not Your Birthday**" will be the theme of the Advent & Christmas series this year in all three congregations of the Maple Leaf Parish. This series will be used to promote the United Methodist's Church's "*Imagine No Malaria*" campaign.

He mentioned that the attendance at

our Saturday night services at FUMC has been picking back up this fall. Saturday night services have now been offered for a year, and it appears that the summertime will bring the smallest attendance, though the same is true of the Sunday morning service. Pastor Mark suggested FUMC might want to explore different options for the Saturday service in 2012, perhaps a weeknight or some other approach.

Ric Koehn, a former pastor at Cherry Grove, will be leading a VIM team to Haiti in June of 2012. Pastor Mark will be making the funds raised in our Lenten Offering a year ago (& designated to a Haiti VIM project) available to this group. At this time, they still have room on the team for more participants if anyone is interested.

Pastor Beth officiated at a wedding last Saturday, 11-12-11.

The Fall Stewardship Campaign was launched on 10-30-11. This year, different reasons for giving have been lifted up during worship services. The congregation is being encouraged to step up towards tithing, by increasing their giving next year by 1% if they're not already tithing.

Preparations for this year's Charge Conference continue. FUMC will be hosting a larger "Cluster" style Charge Conference at FUMC on 11-29-11. Only necessary business will be conducted so that FUMC's Dist Supt, Clay Oglesbee, can offer instruction on the UMC's Vital Congregation Initiative. The link to the website introducing the program is

www.UMVitalCongregations.org

FAITH UMC COUNCIL MEETING

(continued)



PRE-CONFIRMATION CLASSES

Old Business: There was discussion on Mandy Hyland using the church for counseling. This is still in the works.

New Business: There was discussion on purchasing a vacuum cleaner from Arnold's Supply for approximately \$400. A motion was made to make the purchase. m/s/c

There was discussion on purchasing some additional sound equipment which could be used to plug in instruments (mostly electric guitars) for future use in worship services, for a cost of approximately \$200. A motion was made to make the purchase. m/s/c

Services for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day were discussed. Christmas Eve services will be held at 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm. There will be no specific Saturday night service at 5:00 pm because of this. Christmas Day service will be at 9:00 am. There was discussion on what type of service to do for New Year's Eve. All Christmas services will be discussed by the Worship Committee.

Devotions for the 12/20/11 will be offered by Kathy Lucas.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 pm. m/s/c

Respectfully submitted,
Carla Ness,
Co-Ad Council Secretary

Did you know:

- that a child dies of malaria in sub-Saharan Africa every 45 seconds?
- that this figure was once even higher, but that efforts to eradicate Malaria have already begun to succeed?
- that the United Methodist Church is the first church to ever take on the task of wiping out a disease?
- that we are being partnered with in this endeavor by the World Health Organization, the United Nations Foundation, the Global Fund and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation?
- that **you** will have an opportunity to support this campaign this Christmas at each of our congregations?

CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER

The Spring Valley Ministerial Association will once again be sponsoring the Christmas Day dinner held here at Faith Church on Sunday the 25th. St. Ignatius Catholic Church is in charge of preparations this year. If you're planning to attend please call the Faith Church office to reserve your meal (s). A free-will offering will be taken to go to the Ministerial Associations Emergency Assistance Fund.

This January we'll be starting our pre-confirmation classes at Faith Church. We generally prefer to wait until students are in the eighth grade to start pre-confirmation, though we will allow a youngster who is in seventh grade into the program if there are no other students in their class at the church.

The program will be offered in two sections this year. The first part, on the United Methodist Church, will be offered at 7 PM on Wednesday evenings at the church beginning January 4th. Pastor Mark and Pastor Beth will teach this segment. The second section, on the history and beliefs of the Church Universal, will be taught on Sunday mornings at 8:00 AM (before worship) by Barb Paul with help from others in order to avoid conflicting with Wednesday evening Lenten services. Please put these classes on your calendars.

NEW YEARS EVE SERVICE

New Year's Eve will also fall on a Saturday in 2011, and we'd like to extend an invitation to the entire Parish to join us at 5 PM that evening at Faith Church for a special service. We'll be building it around John Wesley's Historic Covenant Service, and Communion will be served. Join us for worship on December 31st before gathering with friends for your New Year's Eve celebrations!



FOUNTAIN UM

Church members and
Ladies Aid

I would like to see news from our church and ladies aid in the Maple Leaf Parish Newsletter. If you would like to have your birthday, anniversary, special occasions or events, prayer concerns, or anything you would like to share published in the Maple Leaf Parish Newsletter, please send me the information to my email address bluva404@yahoo.com or call and leave a message on my home phone 507-765-4771.

Thank you,
Tracy Wingert

FOUNTAIN UMC PROGRAM

Sunday School Program will be December 11th at 8:30 am with fellowship of cookies and coffee to follow in the church basement.

FOUNTAIN ANNUAL EVENT

Fountain UMC would like to invite anyone and everyone to come to our annual crafts, white elephant and bake sale on December 10th at the Fountain Community Hall. There will be a lunch menu consisting of Methodist BBQ sandwiches, hot dogs, homemade pies, and bars, milk, and coffee. There will also be a fish pond for the children to fish for prizes. The event starts at 11 am through 2 pm with Santa Claus making an appearance at 1:30 pm. Watch for flyers in your town.

PRAYER CONCERNS

Darliene Vrieze
Alice Winslow
Jan & James Earley
Char & Philp Goldsmith
Marjie Earley

FOUNTAIN UMW

Fountain UMW will have their Christmas potluck and secret pal gift exchange on December 14 at 6:30 pm at Leona Cambern's home with Sarah Cambern co-hosting. Joann Gillespie will have the program. The word for December is Joy.

FOUNTAIN UMC THANK OFFERING

Fountain UMC Thank offering service was November 13th at 11am. We were entertained with wonderful music by Steve Arnold, Walter Bradley, and Russ Geryer. Afterwards there was a variety of potluck dishes with everyone walking away full.

THE PERFECT GIFT

The Spring Valley Community Blood Drive will be at the Spring Valley Community Center on Thursday, December 1, 2011, from 1:30 - 6:30 p.m. For apt/info call Val @ 346-7367 #1.



SNOW REMOVAL

Dean Benter would like to do some snow removal jobs in Spring Valley. Email him at bnttree@yahoo.com or see him after church on Sunday.

POINSETTIAS

We would like your help in creating a Poinsettia Garden during the month of December. Please inform the church office as to whom the poinsettia is in memory of so that it can be recorded in the bulletin. You may bring it to the church or have it delivered. Thank you!

SEMCAC SENIOR DINING

Join us for SEMCAC's Senior Dining Christmas meal on Tuesday, December 13th at the Community Center. Music beginning at 10:30 am followed by the meal at 11:00. Door prizes. Call to reserve a meal at 346-7795 or 346-2111 by Monday, December 5th.

YEAR END GIVING

Contributions for 2011 must be received or postmarked by December 31, 2011 to be counted toward your giving statement for this year.

New offering envelopes for 2012 will be available soon. Please throw away the old envelopes as the numbers change each year. Thank you.

Friends,

As our year begins to wind down, I'm so thankful for the ministry opportunities that we've had this year. As I think about and commit to the Imagine No Malaria Campaign, I marvel at all that we can do to save lives. I'm excited about all that the Youth have done with the Project Linus and all the fun they had as they "gave" of their time and energy. We gathered children's outerwear and underwear through the Clothing drive. And a few were moved to donate coats and other items. Judy Tart and Gloria Blakeslee coordinated that project. We have been active in ministry lately.

I shared a little while ago with you all that I was interested in giving a gift to La Puerta Abierta United Methodist Church. If you will recall, this is an important developing Hispanic UM ministry in St Paul. They are ministering to people for whom Spanish is their first language. The services are lead in both Spanish and English, the message is translated and delivered in both Spanish and English. So, they are in need of Bi-lingual Bibles so the Scriptures can be read in both languages. I think this is so exciting! Those for whom English is the first language have an opportunity to see how the Scriptures look and sound in Spanish and vice-versa. At first, I thought I would buy one Bible and give that as a personal gift. But, then I began to share this need with others in the Parish. I shared it with Laura as well and she in turn, shared it with the Youth.

God spoke to hearts and soon many from these ministry groups wanted to get in on this gift as well; the Youth group became so excited about this that they asked me to order several Bibles for them to give. Fountain UMW, Cherry Grove UMW and Faith Missions Committee all asked me to order Bibles to be presented to LPA UMC in their name. We hope to create a label to show where the "gift" is coming from. I plan to take them to the church in St. Paul in the next couple of weeks. The Bibles are beautiful!

Anyone else want to get in on this gift? I can order more. They come in quickly. Right now, I can get them shipped for just a little under \$20 per Bible. That's a small price to pay for the sharing of God's Holy Word.

So, I'm grateful...for God's Word and generous hearts from our Cooperative Parish who, when a need was identified, said, "Amen". Yes, to sharing God's Word. Yes, to sharing the resources that we have at our disposal. Yes, to giving in the name of Jesus Christ.

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Beth

WHAT FEEDS YOUR SOUL?

I would guess that there are as many answers as there are people to answer. I have been thinking about this for sometime and decided that many everyday happenings are what "feed my soul." One of my favorite hymns is "Count Your Blessings" and as I continually count my blessings, I realize how wonderful God is. There are many blessings that "feed my soul" and I am going to "name them one by one."

Communing with God thru prayer

Reading God's Word

Listening to the sermon

Lifting our spirits with piano and organ music

Raising our voices in song

Fellowship with old and new friends

A smile and a cheerful greeting

A bountiful table and comfortable home

Seeing our family enjoy each other's company

Hugs and kisses from grandchildren

A loving spouse, who understands our moods and loves us

A beautiful sunrise and sunset

The ever-changing seasons

The bursting out of green in the spring

A refreshing rain and promising rainbow

The smell of fresh mown hay

Clothes fresh from the line

The abundance of crops in the fields and all the aromatic colorful flowers

The riot of colors in the fall

A shining world of white after a snowstorm

An evening of rest after a day of labor

These are some of the things that "feed my soul" as I go through each glorious new day and just remember. "Count your blessings, count them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done."

Bernie Finke

COWBOY CHURCH

Our next Cowboy Church service in Cherry Grove will be Sunday, December 4th, at 6:00 p.m. Steve Arnold and Walter Bradley will be among our featured musicians for this service, anchored by Barb Mosher on her Steel Guitar! We're also hoping that Tracy Ebmeyer, the fiddler we mentioned last month, will be able to join us for this service.

CHERRY GROVE WORK GROUPS

In our discussion for Nominations (Lay Leadership) this fall, we agreed to move forward with work groups rather than having a social committee, as we have in the past. There is a great need for people to work the different events and ministries that we have throughout the year. Men and women of Cherry Grove Church will be assigned to a quarterly work group. Each group will have a chairperson and they will be responsible for church functions such as serving at funerals and fellowship following Cowboy Church and other events that may be planned.

Beth Mulhern and I will be meeting to get the groups organized. The Work Groups will be new to the Cherry Grove Church and we appreciate your cooperation as we move forward with this. Watch for further details in the next newsletter.

Janice Mensink

CHERRY GROVE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Cherry Grove Sunday School Christmas Program will be on Sunday, December 18th during our worship time. If you have any questions, please contact Angela Forland, Sunday School Superintendent.



CHRISTMAS ON HISTORIC BROADWAY

You are invited to help celebrate 'Christmas on Historic Broadway, on Saturday, Dec. 10th in Spring valley. Supper with Santa will be served from 4:-5:30 and 6:00-7:00 at the Community Center. (Free will offering goes to Food For Kidz.) There will be an ALS Bake Sale all from 1-5. The Root River Revelers will sing at 4:30. The Light Parade will be at 5:30 downtown. Hot chocolate will be served during the parade. Santa will be present. A fun day for the whole family and all ages. Bring your friends! (Blizzard date is Dec. 11th.)



Maple Leaf Parish

- **Cherry Grove UMC**
- **Fountain UMC**
- **Faith UMC**
617 Maple Lane
Spring Valley, MN 55975

Spring Valley, MN
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit #62
Non-Profit
Bulk Rate



COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER

December 25, 2011 at noon

The Spring Valley Area Ministerial Association is sponsoring a free Community Christmas Dinner. It will be held at Faith United Methodist Church at noon on December 25th. Anyone and everyone is invited! Come and meet some new people from the community and surrounding area. Meals will be delivered for those who cannot get out and transportation will be provided for those who need it, living within the community. Please call to reserve a meal at Faith United Methodist Church at 346-2830.

Anyone interested in helping with this meal or who would like to donate toward the purchase of groceries should also call Faith UMC.