

THE CIRCUIT RIDER

A Publication of Centenary United Methodist Church

December, 2011



I have always loved Christmas. Even as a child I loved Christmas, and not for the reasons you might think. Oh, as a child and even today as an

adult I love the gifts under the tree, but for me there has always been so much more to Christmas than just the gifts.

I love the dedications of Christmas, I love the lights and the colors, and the beauty that decorations bring into our otherwise drab winter.

I love the spirit of Christmas. I know it doesn't last the whole season long but I love it when total strangers greet others with words of "Merry Christmas," I even like hearing "Happy Holidays" and "Best Wishes to you and yours."

And I love the music of Christmas. When I was a kid growing up in Dinuba every Christmas season our Church would get together, ride through the streets of Dinuba sitting on a very cold hay wagon and sing Christmas Carols.

At the end of the evening we would return to the Church for cookies and hot chocolate.

Years have past since those days of riding on a hay wagon, but I still love the music of Christmas. The writers of those carols were communicating deep theological truths through the songs.

In Charles Wesley's carol "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing," Wesley's teaching of the meaning of Christmas is; because He loves us much, God became one of us, so that He could pay the penalty for our sin and give us the gift of eternal life. Or in Wesley's words: "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail th' incarnate Deity." Wesley's declaration is Jesus is God become human.

"Pleased as man with men to dwell..." Jesus came because He loves us. "Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die, born to raise the son of earth, born to give them second birth."

I love Christmas. I love its message: Jesus came, because He loves us.

Shalom,

Pastor Bob

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Written by Charles Wesley
Music by Felix Mendelssohn

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With th' angelic host proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Hark! The herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new born King!"

Christ, by highest Heaven adored;
Christ, the everlasting Lord;
Late in time behold Him come,
offspring of the virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the God-head see
hail th' incarnate deity.
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus our Emmanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new born King!"

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
ris'n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,
born that we no more may die,
Born to raise us from the earth,
born to give us second birth.
Hark! the Herald Angels Sing,
"Glory to the newborn King!"

A Christmas Prayer

Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds and the wisdom of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world.

Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.

Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clean hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be Thy children, and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

Christmas Eve Worship Services

5:30 p.m. **Family Service**

7:00 p.m. **Contemporary Service**

9:00 p.m. **Traditional Service**

11:00 p.m. **Classical Service**



Mission Team Update

The holiday season is upon us. Your Missions Team will continue to provide opportunities for you to serve in our community through both our ongoing commitments to the Gospel Mission and Interfaith Ministry, but also with opportunities to provide extra help.

Dinner at the Gospel Mission

Gospel Mission dinner the third Sunday, December 18th.

We need turkeys delivered December 11th and salads and pies the 18th. See the sign-up table after worship at the Mission table.

Interfaith Ministries

Prepare Food for Distribution

Interfaith Ministries continues to need your help preparing

rice and canned foods for distribution to families in need. We can use up to six people each Tuesday and Thursday morning 9:00 to 11:00. This is a family friendly opportunity, children nine and older are welcome to help. Get more information at the Missions table after services, or just show up at Interfaith on one of these days.

Support Mission Team Projects

We will be collecting new socks and underwear for the Gospel Mission. We are also collecting diapers for Interfaith. Bring your donations to Church on December 11.

Check us out on Facebook. Look for Centenary's Mission Team at www.facebook.com. We will post updates on upcoming activities, along with information on past services.

SUNDAY

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY - Rm. 1 7:00 A.M.
CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP SERVICE 9:00 A.M.
ADULT SUNDAY CLASS - Rm. 15/16 9:00 A.M.
TRADITIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE 10:30 A.M.
CAMBODIAN WORSHIP SERVICE 10:30 A.M.
JR. HIGH Rm. 19/SR. HIGH SUNDAY SCHOOL Rm. 4/5 10:30 A.M.

TUESDAY

MOM2MOM - Rm. 6 9:30 A.M.
THRIFT SHOP 9:30 A.M. - 12:30 P.M.

WEDNESDAY

MEN'S BIBLE STUDY - PERKO'S MCHENRY AVE. 6:00 A.M.
SPIRIT SALON WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY/FELLOWSHIP
Rm. 6 9:00 A.M.
JR. HIGH Rm. 19/SR. HIGH YOUTH GROUP Rm. 4/5 6:00 P.M.

THURSDAY

PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY - Rm. 15/16 9:00 A.M.
CHANCEL CHOIR REHEARSAL - Rm. 2/3 7:00 P.M.

SATURDAY

CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP SERVICE 6:30 P.M.



- December 7 Ad Council Meeting*
- December 8 Staff Parish Relations Committee Meeting*
- December 11 DCU Benefit Brunch/Christmas Celebration*
- December 12 Board of Trustees Meeting*
- December 14 Final Spirit Salon Fall Session*
- December 15 Missions Team Meeting*
- December 15 Preschool Advisory Board Meeting*
- December 16 Women's Fun & Fellowship Cards/Lunch*
- December 18 Congregational Blood Pressure Screening*
- December 18 Gospel Mission Christmas Dinner*
- December 19 Finance Committee Meeting*
- December 23 Office Closed at Noon*
- December 24 Christmas Eve Services*
5:30, 7:00, 9:00 & 11:00 p.m.
- December 25 Church Office Closed*
- December 30 Church Office Closed*

Centenary Thrift Shop

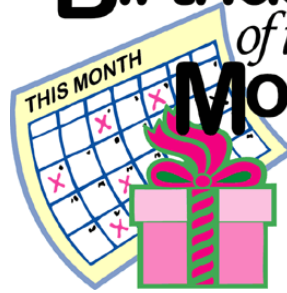
We have been busy at the Thrift Shop on Tuesday mornings. We thank you for all your donations. This little brown door has been open for many years now, and this endeavor sends many dollars to the Gospel Mission, Interfaith Ministry, our VBS and other church functions.

Please note the upcoming schedule:

We will be OPEN on: 12/6 and CLOSED on: 12/13, 12/20, 12/27.

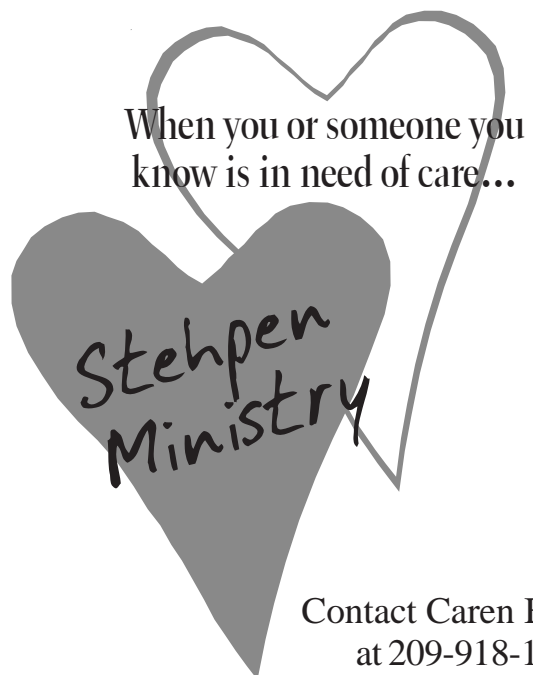
We will reopen on January 3, 2012. Please hold your donations until January 3, 2012. Volunteers are always welcome on Tuesdays 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Merry Christmas!

Birthdays of the Month



12/1	STEPHANIE DIX	12/13	ZACHARY LEAM
12/1	JEVON SWANSON	12/15	NICOLE ASCASO
12/2	TED BRACHT	12/16	CAROL CRETSER
12/2	JOHNASEN SATH	12/16	LYNNE THOMPSON
12/3	KATIE STUERMER	12/17	GARLAND WHETZLER
12/3	HOLLY DAVIS	12/17	JULIE FORBES
12/4	CHENDA KLOAK-KHEK	12/19	WILLIAM HINRICHS
12/5	TED MEYER	12/20	NATALIE HELLMAN
12/6	LES LIGHTHALL	12/20	JOHN HERR
12/7	BONNIE GANSEL	12/20	APRIL MCCLANAHAN
12/8	DARRELL SEVER	12/21	ROXANN HAYS
12/8	JACK STABERG	12/21	TY COLE
12/9	KAY RAYMOND	12/21	JULIE ECKLES
12/9	RUSS HAYS	12/23	DUANE STEWARD
12/9	SCOTT WEBSTER	12/25	DAVIN PEOU
12/11	JUDY ROBINSON	12/26	KIM MEY
12/12	NANCY LEE	12/26	BOB STREET
12/12	FRANKLYN VINCENT	12/27	DENNIS CUMMINS
12/13	MARION STABERG	12/27	MERRI BEHRENS
		12/27	LINDA VOORHEES
		12/27	LESLIE TORRANCE
		12/28	ROBERT SCHWENDIMAN
		12/28	GEORGE TE VELDE
		12/28	MICHAEL HAYNE
		12/28	DIENA STREET
		12/29	LINDA BEAMER
		12/30	BURT VASCHE
		12/31	MALCOLM WYCKOFF
		12/31	GEORGE CATRAMIS
		12/31	DIANE STEWARD

It is not our intention to overlook your birthday. If your birthday was not listed, please call the church office @ 527-5441 and let us know, so that we can update our records. Thank You!



Contact Caren Burhans
at 209-918-1003



Once again the Christmas holiday season is upon us! I love this time of year because this is when we begin to practice our

Christmas program with the preschool children. It is such a joy to see them practice in their costumes, saying their lines and singing the Christmas songs. At this age we have to practice many times to be ready for the program. The beautiful thing is, by the time we present our play to the parents, our big four year olds can tell you everyone's lines in the play, including the narrator's. It warms my heart to know they have learned the real reason we celebrate Christmas and that is to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

We had a beautiful November. The children had fun making leaf prints with some of the leaves they collected on a walk across the campus. They also worked on categorizing the leaves in different shapes, sizes and colors. The teachers cleverly incorporated leaves into some of the children's art projects. Nature provides many ways to help us learn!

The children loved learning about the different means of transportation the first two weeks of November. They cut, glued, decorated and painted cars, trucks, trains, busses, boats and airplanes. We talked about some of the ways the children have traveled. They also had discussions about how some of their relatives would travel when they came to visit for Thanksgiving.

The last two weeks of November, we learned about Thanksgiving. In circle time, they had the opportunity to tell the one thing they wanted to thank God for the most. We heard some interesting things, but nearly all of them said they were thankful for someone in their family. Whether it was Mom, Grandpa or the family pet, this told us how important family life is to our children. The children learned that they have many things to be thankful for, and we need to thank God every day for our many blessings.

The children made many fun art projects in November, including turkeys with colorful corn, handprint turkeys and beautiful paintings with fall colors. Just for fun we had pajama day on November 15 and had a crazy hair day on November 29.

For December our themes will be "Our Families" and "Christmas." Our chapel themes will be *kind* (Eph. 4:32), *be joyful* (Prov. 17:22), *be truthful* (Eph. 4:25) and *be trusting* (Isaiah 26:4).

We are now looking for someone to play the piano for us during our Christmas program on December 9th at 10:00 a.m. It will involve playing several simple songs as the children sing. This will mean some practice time with us in the mornings, for a few days before our program. If you know anyone who would be interested, please call me at the preschool 522-7091. I hope everyone enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving with their families and friends. Thank you so much for your continued support and prayers.

In His love,
Janet Lewis



For many years, coaches had their entire team run up and down bleachers for conditioning. "Step" aerobics class provides the same basic concept but without the impact. It is a moderate to high cardio level but with low impact to the feet and joints. In fact, research shows that one gets the same aerobic benefit as running seven mph, but without the risk of injury caused by impact.

"Step" aerobics is just one of the types of classes we offer in our S.W.E.A.T. Fitness program. This particular class is held Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. We provide the steps and have two different heights from which to choose.

Each step we take in life is important...we are to follow His steps:

"For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you as an example for you to follow in His steps."

Peter 2:21

**S.W.E.A.T. Aerobics
meets in the Fellowship Center:
Mon., Wed., & Fri. - 9:00 - 10:00 a.m.
and Mon. - Thurs. - 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.
(High or Low Impact)
Tues. & Thurs. - 8:00 - 8:45 a.m.
(Non-Impact/Seniors)
For Information Call:
Sandra Hegwood @ 988-5655**

Good Things Come in Small Packages

~ Ben Akina
Director of
Contemporary
Worship

Of all the
characters in the
Christmas story,
my favorite
appears only in the book of Luke.

Simeon was a righteous man who'd been told "by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:26, NIV). Upon seeing the child, Simeon rejoices, saying "Sovereign Lord, as You have promised, You may now dismiss Your servant in peace" (2:29)—basically, "I've seen Jesus. I can die happy." That statement always led me to think of Simeon as an old man. In my mind's eye, Simeon learned when he was young that he would see the Messiah but was not told how long it might take. I usually picture Simeon living his life in patient expectation, always keeping his eyes peeled for the Messiah.

I always found Simeon's story remarkable...the idea of this old man having waited forty, fifty, or even sixty years before God's prophecy about Him came true is awe-inspiring to me. Despite the long wait, the thorns of daily living didn't dull his senses. He instantly knew that he held the infant Messiah in his arms.

But Scripture doesn't tell us how old he was when the prophecy was fulfilled. He may have waited sixty years, but he may have been a 25 year old man who'd received the prophecy fifteen minutes earlier. This realization dulled my wonder a bit, until I really thought it through. What if Simeon was only twenty-five? True, it would mean he hadn't waited sixty years, but his declaration rings even stronger than before. The thought of a young man saying "I've seen Jesus, so I can die happy" is breathtaking.

In spite of my young age, I feel that I'm beginning to understand what Simeon knew. I've never been to England, bought a house, or fathered a child, but Christ has been a part of my life. And His presence has made my life endlessly satisfying. I've seen Jesus. I can die happy.

Whether you've been waiting sixty years to see Christ face to face or you've known Him only fifteen minutes, I urge you to live this holiday season in eager anticipation of the Messiah. And as you see Him engage in your life, please recognize that the number of presents under your tree is not the true indicator of a full, rich, and satisfying existence.

"A little child will lead them."

Isaiah 11:6, NIV



Did You Know?

Each week of Kid's Own Worship we collect an offering from the children. The small change and dollar bills that the children offer back to God can make big things happen when they come together. In 2011, we were able to:

~Send several soccer balls printed with Scripture in Spanish to Mexico with a mission team for kids there to enjoy,

~Buy 120 chicks for Heifer Project to give to needy families around the world,

~Supply the Gospel Mission with over 40 packs of new underwear to be given to needy children,

~Purchase 20 bed nets to prevent African children from being bitten by mosquitos carrying life-threatening malaria, and

~Supply malnourished Burmese refugee children who have fled to safety in Thailand with children's vitamins to strengthen their bodies.

As we give to help the basic needs of people in our world, we give to organizations that also share hope through God's love.

We also had our Family Fun Service Project in November, giving our families with children an opportunity to come together and help those in need. We put together about 50-75 lunch bags filled with a water bottle, a juice box, crackers, a fruit cup and a copy of the New Testament. Families can keep these nonperishable bags in their cars to give to people they see in our community who need food and water. More importantly, we're giving people hope in Jesus through God's Word. That same afternoon, we also made 50 goody bags for the children at the Gospel Mission Christmas Dinner that are filled with crayons, toothbrushes and other fun treats. Finally, we were able to pack up all 209 shoe boxes that our church family gave to Operation Christmas Child and take them to the distribution center.

Through our efforts we were able to reach out to those in need in our community and around the world. Thank you to all of you who contributed money toward the Gospel Mission or packed a shoe box (or several!) to give to children around the world. Together, we are making a difference!

We look forward to a new year and more great things to happen!

Heather Daniel
Children's Ministry



DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



**Centenary United Methodist
Church**

1911 Toyon Avenue
Modesto, CA 95350
(209) 527-5441
www.centenarychurch.net

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



**Centenary's
Christmas Celebration**

**A time for the whole Church Family
to come together to celebrate Christmas.**

Centenary's Fellowship Center

**Sunday, December 11th
10:15 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

**Brunch fundraiser to benefit
Donetsk Christian University.**

Christmas Crafts for the children.

**Servant opportunities:
Craft helpers, brunch servers & clean-up crew.**

**Sign up after worship services, or call
Heather Daniel or Deanna Hutton at 527-5441**