



News From Holland

Holland First United Methodist Church

December 2009

Dr Phil Shuler, Pastor

Web Site: www.hollandum.org

FROM THE PASTOR'S PEN

Life lived to the fullest involves expectation! We expect the sun to come up every day, and we look forward to the experiences and opportunities it brings with its rising. We look forward (joyful expectation) to trips and vacations, to children/parents coming to visit, and to good relationships on the job. Unless we are experiencing depression, economic or physical problems, we expect good things to happen!

Many years ago, there was a man whose ministry could be described as creating the atmosphere of expectation. Of course, I'm talking about John the Baptist. For example, consider Mark's account of John's words regarding Jesus: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie." (Mk 1:7). John's expectation proved to be vital to the gospel accounts of the meaning of Jesus' ministry and the effectiveness of Jesus' ministry among us. He successfully built expectation among his hearers that would later culminate in the recognition of Jesus as Messiah. The lesson is that when we truly expect things to happen, they do!

For us, Thanksgiving is over and our eyes look forward to Advent and Christmas. Advent is really the time of building up our expectation of the coming to us once again of the Messiah. In other words, the time of Advent is the remembering (re-experiencing) of John the Baptist's ministry during the four weeks of Advent. To paraphrase, "one greater than us is coming the thongs of whose sandals we are not worthy to untie!"

The real problem for me is that I'm not sure exactly how he will come. My problem is that of Tolstoy's "Cobbler" of long ago. He could come in the form of a baby as was the case with Mary and Joseph. On the other hand, he could come in the form of a grandchild, a friend, a husband/wife, a son/daughter, a brother/sister, an old friend whom we haven't seen years, or in the form of a stranger in need of help. If we create the expectation, he will come!

I know it sounds corny, but he could come in a church event. He will no doubt be present for our Christmas Carols and Candlelight service Dec. 20 @ 6:00 pm and our special annual Cowboy Christmas service on Dec. 22 @ 6:00 pm. He will also be present at our regular Advent services on Sunday beginning Sunday, Nov. 29. If we expect him, he will come.

He may appear in the form of special things we do for others this time of year. The Christmas cards we send, the notes/newsletters we write, gifts we give, the joy with which we greet each other: these come to mind as occasions to receive Christ, the Messiah. Oh yes, I mustn't forget the "Open House" at the parsonage on Dec. 21 from 4 to 8! The address is 3113 El Camino Dr in Temple, across the street from the Fire Station. Remember, if we expect him, he will and DOES come!

I hope you have a wonderful Christmas season and an even better 2010! Expect this, and this will happen for you! See ya in Church...

In Christ,

Phil Shuler, Pastor

Cowboy Church

Cowboy Christmas will be held on Tuesday, December 22nd at 6:00 P.M. It will be a night of singing Christmas carols celebrating Jesus' birth. Homemade soups will be served. Pastor Shuler will bring a short devotional and it will be a time of witnessing of God's blessings during the past year. Everyone has a story to tell. This service has always been so meaningful, brings the real meaning of Christmas to light. See you there. Let's have a packed barn!

Judy's News

Community Food Bank –Granger UMC

God was at work and we fed 37 families for Thanksgiving with a choice of a turkey or ham, all the fixings down to dessert of apple or pumpkin pie. Now it is time to get ready for Christmas food bank on the 17th of December. We are in need of stuffing mix, sweet potatoes, and cranberry sauce. 37 was a record number of families but I am expecting 40-45 for Christmas as a lot of our regulars did not come. God will provide with wonderful people who give so generously.

Community Thanksgiving Service (Nov. 22nd) & 5th Sunday Community Service (Nov. 29th)
Both services were well attended and well represented. It is such a blessing to see God at work in Granger.

Holland Community Candlelight Service – December 20, 2009

On Sunday evening at 6:00 P.M. we will host the annual Christmas Community Candlelight Service. We will provide refreshments following. It is always a night to enjoy by everyone.

Granger Community Candlelight Service – December 21, 2009

We will be hosting this at our church. Kristen has graciously agreed to come and play. You are all invited to come and enjoy another Candlelight Service. Food and fellowship will follow.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

Date	Time	Event	Location
Dec 2 nd	5:30 pm	Youth Bible Study	Cearley's
Dec 12 th	8:30 am	UMM/UMME	Fellowship Hall
Dec 16 th	5:30 pm	Youth Bible Study	Cearley's
Dec 20 th	6:00 pm	Comm. Candlelight Service	HFUMC
Dec 22 nd	6:00 pm	Cowboy Church	Tentative Date

If you have any events to add, please give the information to Betty Jett.