

Richardson Park United Methodist Church  
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In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

- John 1:1-5 (New Revised Standard Version)

December 21<sup>st</sup> of this year is the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year for those of us in the northern hemisphere. I always find the contrast between the melancholy I feel during these short days and the wonder and joy of Christmas to be profound. I long so desperately for Christ to revisit our tired and broken world, yet I dread the dreariness and the sluggishness that the lack of sunshine brings to my heart. I've often thought how interesting it would be to celebrate Christmas in Australia where everyone wears shorts and tee-shirts, goes to the beach, and "throws another shrimp on the barbie" on one of the longest days of their year. What a disconnected feeling that would be to have Christmas in 90° weather when I am so used to the way things are. A drastic shift like that would make it feel more like the 4th of July than the day we celebrate Christ's birth.

These kinds of unusual Christmas thoughts also invite me to reflect on the people all around us who are feeling their very own sense of disconnection this year. The heartache caused by the loss of a close family member or spouse, a move in the last few months, or a change in marital status. All of these changes can turn the holidays of Christmas and Epiphany that we love so dearly into something that mirrors Elvis' Blue Christmas. I know because I've been there too. The Christmas after my first marriage dissolved was very hard for me. I was in South Carolina, many miles from home, and I was miserable. Even when I did get home for a few days right around Christmas, it was tough to shake the isolation and failure that plagued me. But the presence of my family and the love that we shared that year made all the difference. They reminisced and cried and laughed and fed and gave and hugged and loved me right out of my *deep blue funk*. That year I received a gift that I could never repay, and I know that it was given just to me so that I could be whole. Much like Jesus, the "Light of the World" was given to us at Christmas so that we could be whole and never have to walk in darkness again. God knew about humanity's *deep blue funk* and responded with a gift that we could never repay.

This year I want to challenge us as a community of faith to do two things. First, to pray for those persons who we know have lost loved ones, relocated, or have gone through a divorce. Second, I want each of us to reach out to at least one person going through a difficult time and perform an act of love for them. It can be as simple as making a phone call to see how our friend is doing, or we can include this special person in some of our plans, or we can take him or her a small present or a meal. The actual act itself doesn't matter as much as the thought and time that goes into it. Our friends and loved ones need to know, in a tangible way, that we love them. It's that simple. So who are you going to pray for and reach out to? What are you going to do to say, "I love you"? I think you'll find that the experience of reaching out blesses you as much as the person to whom you are reaching out. Which brings me to my final Christmas paradox -- isn't it funny how the more we give love away, the more that we find out how much love we really have?

May this Christmas be the merriest one ever.

*Pastor Tom*



**RICHARDSON PARK U.M.C.**  
**CELEBRATES ADVENT and**  
**CHRISTMAS!**



**Sunday, December 5**

**Christmas Caroling**

Meet at the church at 4:00 PM

**Sunday, December 19**

**Family Advent Pageant and  
 Covered Dish**

4:00 PM

Peniel United Methodist Church

**Friday, December 24**  
**Christmas Eve**

6:30 PM - Family Candlelight Service

10:30 PM - Traditional Candlelight  
 Service



**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

William Edwards	12/2
Patrick Elliott	12/2
Bruce Workman	12/2
Anthony Burgos	12/3
Bryan Cummings	12/3
Andrea Burgos	12/5
Marjorie Newton	12/5
Dorothy Scarborough	12/5
Don McFarland	12/7
Josiah Straughn	12/7
William Boyce	12/9
Zachary Casalvera	12/9
Andy Hughes	12/9
Billee Boyd	12/10
Carolyn Stafford	12/11
Mary Lou Boyce	12/12
Rose Davis	12/12
Steven Ott, Sr.	12/12
Justin Farren	12/14
Melanie Mitten	12/14
Megan Edwards	12/15
George Smallwood	12/15
Holly Bentley	12/16
David Brown	12/16
Shirly Ritter	12/19
Michael Toy	12/22
Adeline Le Breton	12/23
Tom Atkinson	12/25
Cheryl Lynn Krebs	12/25
Barbara Przywara	12/26
Betty Swain	12/26
Bill Aurelio	12/27
Neal Davis	12/27
Amanda Graham	12/31

**Note: If your name is not listed on our birthday calendar, please call the office at 654-0961. Thank you.**

# UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



In December, Rebekah Circle will take care of the flowers in the church. Both Circles will help with the poinsettias.

## Circle Meetings

All Circles will not meet in December. They will gather together to enjoy a Covered Dish Luncheon in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, December 12 after Worship.



**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 11 - 9 AM**  
**Annual Cookie Walk**

The annual UMW cookie walk will be held on Saturday, December 11 from 9 AM until 11 AM. The aroma and taste of delicious homemade cookies will fill the air in the Extension on that day. Come and buy these delicious goodies! Price is only \$5.00 for a ribbon-tied bag.  
\*\*\* Attention cookie makers: Please bring your cookies to the Extension before 9 AM if possible. Thank you.



## WESLEY TOWER BANKS

November 2010 \$102.95

Thanks for remembering to bring in your filled banks the first Sunday of each month. Our total to date for 2010 is \$1,109.64. Remember to pick up an empty bank as you leave the altar area on Communion Sunday. AGAIN, THANKS FOR SAVING YOUR CHANGE.



## MISSION TREE



On Sundays in December, we will be hanging **Bells** on our Mission Tree. Hang a "bell" on the tree in honor or memory of someone special to you. Minimum donation is \$1.00. Our tree is located in the Extension.

**CONGRATULATIONS....to Kristin Fleming who was inducted into the National Honor Society at Wesley College on Sunday, November 21, 2010.**



## **CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS THIS ADVENT SEASON**

The beautiful decorations adorning our church have been graciously provided by the following members and friends of RPUMC:

**Advent Wreath**

**Altar Trees**

**Altar Wreath**

**Altar Wreath**

**Balcony Wreath**

**Door Wreath**

**Door Wreath**

**Door Wreath**

**Door Wreath**

**Nativity**

**Phyllis Bowman**

**Clyde & Carolyn Nafzinger**

**Jay & Pat Cummings**

**Ruth Gibney**

**Paulette Cleaver Lazzard**

**Kathy Russell**

**Dorothy Scarborough**

**Joan Stadelman**

**Marvin & Betty Swain**

**Koinonia Class**

CHRISTMAS



SHOPPE

*Every Thursday through December 16*

*9 AM - 1 PM*

*Located next to the Parsonage*

*Adjacent to the garage*

## KIDS' KORNER



It's the most wonderful time of year - - Christmas! Come to Sunday school and bring a friend where we'll learn about God's most special gift to us.

Greetings from Room 3 and Ms. Marlene! December is a wondrous season, and we are starting an exciting Bible adventure. Our journeys are based on the Bible books of Luke and Matthew. Come and join us as we encounter Mary, Joseph, shepherds, the town of Bethlehem, baby Jesus, and more as we travel through this season of Advent!

Grades 4 thru 8 will begin to focus on 1 John 2:17 – relationships – discussing Serving Others (What difference can I make?); Pursuing Peace (Why can't countries get along?); Sharing with Others (Why isn't there enough to go around?); and Responsibility for Creation (Is our environment really falling apart?).

Grades 9 thru 12 will be thinking about the gifts we receive and can bring to others at Christmas, making some fun Christmas crafts and watching a new Veggie Tales' movie, It's a Meaningful Life!



Look for our hot chocolate kits on Sunday's during Advent during the coffee hour right before church. Sale proceeds will be sent to "Imagine No Malaria", a partnership between The United Methodist Church, the United Nations Foundation, and other organizations to provide insecticide treated nets to families to prevent malaria.



## ***Laity Enlightenment***

After Thanksgiving it's a mere 30 days until Christmas! The holiday hustle and bustle can get the better of us if we let it. All of the decorations and preparations take time which always seems to be in short supply. Just take a minute to think about the things you do in the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas. What do you spend your time doing and with whom? What do you remember about each Christmas?

My most memorable Christmases became such naturally because something significant occurred during that time. As a child, I remember when I got a brand new, pink and white Schwinn bicycle. I was so proud of that bike! A few years later, the bike was stolen from in front of my aunt's house while I was inside visiting. I learned a few life lessons about the temporary joy and long-lasting disappointment of placing too much value on material things. I also remember receiving an Easy Bake Oven. I loved taking requests from my family and producing special treats to their delight. This was the start of my most favorite hobbies: cooking and baking. As a young adult with two young children, my family and I moved into a newly purchased home and celebrated our first Christmas by decorating a tree that was later taken outside and planted in the front yard. Each year, we would decorate it with lights, having to add more and more strings of lights as the tree grew. The tree is still there in my front yard about 27 years later. It's too big to decorate like I used to, but it continues to remind me of how much everything changes over time. In more recent years, I served lunch around the holidays at the Emmanuel Dining Room on Jackson Street in Wilmington. It affects me deeply each time to see so many men, women and children who are hungry, cold and struggling to survive everyday. Because of that experience, I will always feel exceptionally fortunate and grateful to God. Seven years ago my father, Dick Jackson, passed away three days after Christmas, and the significance of that loss is revisited by his loved ones every year at that time. And I'll never forget last Christmas when Dave Rogers formally proposed to me on Christmas Eve. Disappointment, happiness, gratitude, sadness, and joy are all part of my Christmas memories and part of all our everyday lives.

Now that I'm older and have grandchildren, I have a fresh perspective on Christmas time. I am spending less time decorating around the house and more time sharing dinner or visiting with my friends, my brothers and their families, my children and grandchildren. I still struggle with the hectic nature of things this time of year and occasionally have to remind myself about why we celebrate Christmas; the birth of Christ, God's love, and ultimately our salvation sent to us in the form of a child.

This year I encourage you to do something different; just one thing different. Maybe volunteer at a soup kitchen or work to collect contributions to your favorite charity. Bake something for a friend or neighbor and invite them to join you at church on Sunday. Buy a new coat or hat and donate it to Brighter Day Ministries. Get together a small group and go caroling at a nearby nursing home. Help with Meals on Wheels or have lunch with a person who is alone or confined to their home. Offer to drive someone to the store or decorate a small tree for an elderly friend. Come to church at 9 A.M. and sit in on a Sunday school class or sit in the sanctuary to pray for others and be with God. There are countless ways to do one small thing different this Christmas that might well make a very big impact in your life and the life of someone you touch.

Consider what you can do with your time, talents, love and kindness and be generous with them. Let Christ's light shine through you to be a blessing to others this Christmas and you will surely be blessed in return. Merry Christmas!

Your Lay Leader, Kathy Russell

# December 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 6:30 PM Disciple I 7:30 PM NA Meeting	2 9 AM Ye Olde Shoppe 3:30 PM Kids Café 6:30 PM Chancel Bells 7:30 PM Chancel Choir 8:15 PM AA Meeting	3 10 AM Disciple II 11 AM Soup Kitchen	4 9 AM Ye Olde Shoppe
5 9 AM Sunday School 10 AM Social Time 10:30 AM Worship 11:30 AM Education Mtg. 4 PM Christmas Caroling	6 5:30 PM Weight Watchers	7 8 PM AA Meeting	8 6:30 PM Disciple I 7:30 PM NA Meeting	9 9 AM Ye Olde Shoppe 3:30 PM Kids Café 6:30 PM Chancel Bells 7:30 PM Chancel Choir 8:15 PM AA Meeting	10 10 AM Disciple II 11 AM Soup Kitchen	11 Fellowship Hall Res. 9 AM Cookie Walk
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19 9 AM Sunday School 10 AM Social Time 10:30 AM Worship	20 5:30 PM Weight Watchers	21 8 PM AA Meeting	22 6:30 PM Disciple I 7:30 PM NA Meeting	23 8:15 PM AA Meeting	24 6:30 PM Family Candlelight Service 10:30 PM Traditional Candlelight Service	25 <b>MERRY CHRISTMAS!</b>
26 9 AM Sunday School 10 AM Social Time 10:30 AM Worship	27 5:30 pm Weight Watchers	28 8 PM AA Meeting	29 7:30 PM NA Meeting	30 9 AM Ye Olde Shoppe 6:30 PM Chancel Bells 7:30 PM Chancel Choir 8:15 PM AA Meeting	31 11 AM Soup Kitchen TYG New Year's Eve Party at Peniel UMC	

RICHARDSON PARK  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
11 NORTH MARYLAND AVENUE  
WILMINGTON, DE 19804-1305

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# “THE MESSENGER” DECEMBER 2010

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Parsonage Phone: (302) 652-6168 E-Mail: [rpumc@rpumchurch.org](mailto:rpumc@rpumchurch.org)  
Tom Pasmore, Pastor



## LAY READERS

December 5	Betty Swain
December 12	Tod Mitten
December 19	Marlene Johnson
December 27	Youth

## ALTAR FLOWERS

December 5	
December 12	John Burke
At the Cross	Dorothy Burris
December 19	Poinsettias
December 26	Anna Mae Shewbrooks

## ALTAR FLOWERS

For the month of December, Rebekah Circle is responsible for the flowers.

\* \* \* \* \*

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING FOOD FOR  
CAP THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH.

\* \* \* \* \*

Please submit your articles for the  
January Messenger to the church office by  
Wednesday, December 8. Thank you.

*The purpose of Richardson Park United Methodist Church is to help people  
experience the amazing love of God and develop a vital relationship with Jesus Christ.*