

DECEMBER 2021

Pastor Debbie

Volume 36 Issue 12

Center United Methodist
Church

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Saguache United Methodist
Church

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My trip to Italy was amazing and I will be adding things that apply to future sermons, but I feel compelled to share this observation in December's newsletter article. *Pictures are available). Besides the restrictions to even be able to fly into Europe, we noticed that we not only had to wear KN95 masks which are 6 ply thick. Every store, restaurant, church, basilica, even ruins like the colosseum and Pompeii, our temperature was taken and we had to show our ID and vaccination card. If you didn't have it or weren't vaccinated, you were turned away, even if you had purchased a ticket for entry – no refunds. Everyone took COVID seriously like any medical personnel does. Even in small shops and restaurants with limited space, they limited the amount of people allowed in their place even if it was outside. Tourists were constantly being reminded to pull their masks up and Italian police were station throughout Italy to step in at a moment's notice. There were four NAWAS groups of about 75 travelers who all tested negative before our return, so the country must be doing something right. As long as we allow division to remain around this disease that doesn't care who you are or where you come from, we will continue with protocols and restrictions and unfortunately perhaps a lock down again if it becomes necessary.

Thank you for those who participated in Center's One Board meeting in November. We are busy completing all the reports due for our charge conference which will be via Zoom December 15, 2021 with the time to be arranged. I have requested a 6:30 pm time. Advent is here. Please join us for this year's Advent Bible Study beginning at Saguache November 28th after the service, at Center on December 1, 2021 for a noon in person study with lunch provided, and later that evening via Zoom at 6:30 pm. We will have a guest appearance from Scrooge each Sunday as the companion sermon series about the Redemption of Scrooge will bring us to Christmas Eve services. At Saguache Christmas Eve service will be at 5 pm and at Center will be at 7 pm. For those who are grieving or just don't feel in the Christmas mood, we will be having a Blue Christmas service on the longest day, December 21st at 6 pm.

At Center, our holiday community meal will be December 2, 2021 with prep time at 5:30 pm and dinner at 6 pm. Be sure to invite everyone to our holiday meal. The meat will be provided, so we are looking for some delicious meals and desserts to complete the meal. Let's see if we can offer a meal to at least 50 folks. Door prizes will be given as well as our effort to put together Christmas food boxes for those in need in our community.

You don't want to forget the Sips with Ceramics with Hannah Saturday November 27th and December 4th at 2 pm. Proceeds will go to UMCOR.

For our veterans this year at Homelake, I will be collecting the small lap blankets you can get from Walmart that are rolled up and they are \$3 each. If you wish to join me in this endeavor, please try to get solid red or solid blue or blue with white stars on them. As of today, there are two large boxes in the middle of the left entrance aisle half-way back. I need to collect about 100 of them, so if you can help, it would be greatly appreciated.

Please remember the end of year giving. We are still behind in our budget and so every donation will be greatly appreciated in continuing our ministries and meeting our financial obligations at both churches.



The Moment You Never Noticed In A Charlie Brown Christmas: Just Drop The Blanket

I was in the first grade back when they still performed Christmas pageants in schools (less than 50 years, but still a very long time ago), and our class performed a version of the Charlie Brown Christmas. Since I was kind of a bookworm and already had a blue blanket, I was chosen to play the part of Linus. As Linus, I memorized Luke 2:8-14, and that Scripture has been hidden in my heart ever since. But while working so diligently to learn those lines, there is one important thing I didn't notice then. And didn't notice until now.

Right in the middle of speaking, Linus drops the blanket.

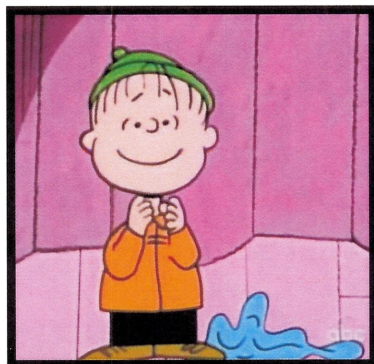
Charlie Brown is best known for his uniquely striped shirt, and Linus is most associated with his ever-present security blanket. Throughout the story of Peanuts, Lucy, Snoopy, Sally and others all work to no avail to separate Linus from his blanket. And even though his security blanket remains a major source of ridicule for the otherwise mature and thoughtful Linus, he simply refuses to give it up.

Until this moment. When he simply drops it.

In that climactic scene when Linus shares "what Christmas is all about," he drops his security blanket. And I am now convinced that this is intentional. Most telling is the specific moment he drops it: when he utters the words, "fear not".

Looking at it now, it is pretty clear what Charles Schultz was saying, and it's so simple it's brilliant. The birth of Jesus separates us from our fears. The birth of Jesus frees us from the habits we are unable (or unwilling) to break ourselves. The birth of Jesus allows us to simply drop the false security we have been grasping so tightly, and learn to trust and cling to Him instead. The world can be a scary place and most of us find ourselves grasping to something temporal for security, whatever that thing may be. Essentially, this is a world in which it is very difficult for us to "fear not."

But in the midst of fear and insecurity, this simple cartoon image from 1965 continues to live on as an inspiration for us to seek true peace and true security in the one place it has always been and can always still be found. (By Mel Johnson)



Finance Report

As the Holidays approach I am sure that there is something in everyone's life that they can be thankful for. I know that I sure do this holiday season. My eyesight has been restored to my left eye! After 2 years and 3 months of drops, surgeries, and many tears. I thank God for helping me through these tough times and for all my wonderful church congregation that helped in so many ways. Our little church also has something to be thankful for, a wonderful Memorial Donation has brought our deficit in the checking account to **-\$5,670.69**. This still is a cause for concern for our church as we continue to have our bills to pay. Matthew 6:19-21

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth or rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Donations can be mailed to Center UMC at P.O. Box 626, Center, CO 81125, and for the Saguache UMC at P.O. Box 184, Saguache, CO 81149. For your convenience you can make your donations by text at 719-628-1830 (then just follow the prompts). Or online at our website www.umcofcenter.com the link is on the front page.

Vicki J Ratzlaff

Center Finance Chairman

Charge Conference

We will be having our charge conference on December 15 hopefully at 6:30pm. The time has not been confirmed as of yet. All are welcome and encouraged to attend, this is a time we get to communicate with the conference and have our voices heard. If you are tasked with filling out forms for charge conference, please get them to me ASAP. Thank you.

Thanksgiving Thoughts

It's official, I am old. That is usually the first thought I have each morning as this joint and that muscle begins to wake up while I am sitting on edge of bed.

Sitting here on the patio, I am thinking what blessings I have had in my life. Yes, that old lady is counting her blessings. I would not trade one of my grey hairs for a blonde one. I earned them all. But, really what am I grateful for?

My life, full of family, friends, church and community. I have been blessed to have a roof over my head, food, warmth which I seem to need more of every day. I had a good life, one filled with obstacles that I hated, but which made me stronger. Obstacles that once the battle lessoned, had made me stronger if not also worn out. I was never going to be a lavish life, but one that met my needs. I learned early in life not to desire too high but that you needed to be grateful for what you need. (Only later did I learn how much that really is).

I am especially thankful I have the church I do. While other churches have not even had their doors open yet, we have a dedicated Pastor and secretary, who instead of letting the world come to us, they brought us and the community (even in Mesa).

My list also includes:

-I am grateful to be alive. I am grateful to the medical teams, my friends and ALL of the folks in the church, community and everywhere the prayers were sent up to the Lord for my help in time of need.

- I have had a full life. it has not always been easy and certainly not lavish but oh so blessed. I have never been without a home, food or loving family and friends.

-After realizing some churches here have not been open at all since COVID, Thank God for sending Pastor Debbie and Hannah to help us get the word out to us without a camera crew. How Blessed that we can get the message. Yes, it is always nice to be there in person but nothing is perfect. We may find it hard to hear, there might be a sound delay or any kind of glitch but we get the message, unlike those who do not always know how to work all of the tech items. I love getting to share the services with you. I love I can do Bible studies with you. I am Thankful we have these talented people who could just sit and wait for folks to come into the church but they use technology, movies, coffee, crafts etc. to reach out to the people much as Christ and the disciples did. They went to the people and interacted with them to spread the word.

- I Thank God that hospitals and clinics I need and go to, do not have to get into petty fighting about masks, or no masks, vaccines. Everyone just does it because they want and need help. YES, that will not guarantee anyone one will not get sick but it will help folks maybe not die from it. And it slows the crazy illness numbers and brings it down. God gave us brains to get FACTS, not Facebook, internet, etc. but collect facts and then pray about it and move forward not with fear but caution and contemplation. I say this as several folks in our little park do risky exposures by playing in bands. (No masks when singing) A neighbor with asthma and they did not use masks when visiting because they had partial vaccines. The neighbor died this week. Where she got exposed, I don't think we will ever know. But I will always wonder. I was the only one at Bingo with a mask. Not sure I am going to help with concessions again

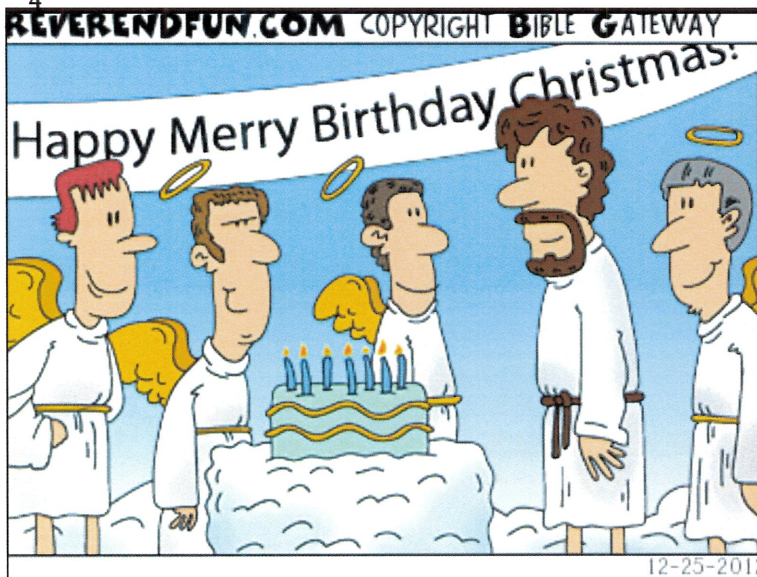
-I Thank God for many many more things. Safe travels, for hearing our prayers, for that little voice that says help that person with food, clothing, money, a smile, a hand to hold onto, an open door, a chair to rest, a ride to get groceries, see a doctor. I Thank God I can give hope or warmth to someone. God doesn't expect us to do miracles of wonder, just be kind, generous and remember to be able to love others as WE love ourselves.

- To love someone as we do ourselves, we need to know about each other. I distinctly remember a time when my father and I had gotten crosswise over some incident that was REALLY important to me. He 'ignored' it, making me feel like he had discounted my feelings. He was hurt and angry because I was mad about something he didn't even know about. I was mad because he didn't think my needs were important. When the 'dust' settled, I remember him saying, if ever again you have something important to you, do not assume I can SMELL what you need or want, bring IT up again. The truth is the same in everything in life If something is bugging you, go to that person (in private) speaking about how you are feeling. Not when angry but in a 'help me understand' and a 'listening ear' attitude. That gives others information that they need to know in order for common ground to be found. I believe it was Abe Lincoln once said: I don't like that man.....I need to get to know him better. We all need to keep that in mind when working with others. but I digress.

Please have a "HAPPY THANKSGIVING" and remember to verbalize Your Thankfulness this year for there are so many we do not recognize.

Your Lay Leader,
Charleen





Joke of the Month

Did you hear about the dyslexic devil worshipper? He sold his soul to Santa.

Children's versions of Christmas Carols:

"...sleep in heavenly peas";

"Joy to the world, the Savior rains";

"Angels we have heard on high, sweetly singing o'er the plane";

"While shepherds washed their socks by night".

Christmas Star Cookies

Ingredients

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter, softened
- 1 cup white sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons strawberry jam
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup green decorator sugar (Optional)

Recipe by: anonymous (Allrecipes.com)



Directions

1. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Gradually add eggs and vanilla. Mix well. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Stir flour mixture into the butter mixture until well blended. Divide dough in half and wrap in plastic. Refrigerate dough for three hours.
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease two cookie sheets or line them with parchment paper.
3. On a floured surface, roll out half of the dough to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thickness. Cut dough into star shapes using a 3- to 4-inch star cookie cutter. Using a 1- to 2-inch star cookie cutter, cut a star into the center of half of the big stars. Place the full stars on one cookie sheet and the "tops"--the cookies with the center cutouts--on another. Sprinkle colored sugar on the star tops, if desired.
4. Bake in preheated oven until edges are golden brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Allow cookies to cool completely. (You can re-roll the mini stars cut out of the centers, or bake them separately for about 5 minutes.) Repeat with remaining cookie dough.
5. After cookies cool completely, spread 1 teaspoon of preserves in the center of each full star cookie. Place a cut-out cookie on top of the layer of preserves. Pack cookies between waxed paper in a covered tin to preserve freshness.

*** Has not been adjusted for High Altitude Baking (adjust baking powder) ***

DECEMBER



2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
Soulful Sweets & Sips Monday— Friday 2-5p	(V) = Facebook Live/Zoom (IP) = In Person		Bible Study <i>Redemption of Scrooge</i> 6:30p	Cookin' with Our Neighbor (IP) 5:30p	Yoga 9:30a (IP)	AA Saturdays 10a Sips & Ceramics 2pm
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
CUMC Service** 9 a (IP & V) SUMC Service** 11a (IP)			Bible Study <i>Redemption of Scrooge</i> 6:30p		Yoga 9:30a (IP)	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
CUMC Service** 9 a (IP & V) SUMC Service** 11a (IP)		Worship Committee 8:30a (IP & V) CUMC Council 6:30p (IP & V)	Bible Study <i>Redemption of Scrooge</i> 6:30p	Movie Night Double Feature! - Muppets Christmas Carol - Nativity 6p (IP)	Yoga 9:30a (IP)	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
CUMC Service** 9 a (IP & V) SUMC Service** 11a (IP)		<i>Blue Christmas Service</i> Center 6p (IP & V)	Bible Study <i>Redemption of Scrooge</i> 6:30p		<i>Christmas Eve Service</i> Saguache 5p (IP) Center 7p (IP & V)	
26	27	28	29	30	31	
CUMC Service** 9 a (IP & V) SUMC Service** 11a (IP)						