

Our Values

WORSHIP OF GOD THAT
INSPIRES HEARTS AND MINDS

SERVICE TO OUR MEMBERS, OUR
NEIGHBORS, AND THE WORLD

SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

BEING A CARING COMMUNITY
OF FAITH



Strawbridge

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Messenger

December 2011

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Special in this issue:
Read about our missionaries the Savutos who will be with us at SUMC in January.

missionary
work

Crossroads Epiphany Sermon Series, F.A.Q.

During the Church Season of Epiphany (January and February), we will roll up our sleeves in the Crossroads service—taking head on the questions many ask about faith, life, life and faith. Epiphany is a season deliberately set aside to ponder and reflect upon Jesus as the “light of the world.” Is there not a better season then to bring some light to such nagging questions?!



In fact, to make sure that the questions he's answering are really the questions folks are asking out there, Pastor Reiter will collect and collate all your questions between now and December 18. These questions will form the basis of this Epiphany series. So, what questions of the Christian Faith have you always wanted to ask? Where are your struggles in living the Christian life? What are the larger issues of our culture and society about which you'd like to hear a United Methodist perspective?

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Questions can be sent directly to Pastor Reiter at jim.reiter@strawbridge-umc.org, or they can be submitted through the Sunday morning offering plate during all services between now and December 18. Final questions will be determined and posted by Christmas Eve. We're hoping that guests and friends who attend Christmas Eve services will overhear these questions and the intent of the coming series...and will want to be with us for these services in the New Year!

Remember, the deadline for submitting your question(s) is noon Sunday, December 18!

Advent Sermon Series, Creative Waiting

Advent is often misunderstood and engaged as a celebration of Christmas itself. In our Creative Waiting sermon series we examine Advent as a time of waiting for the gift. Not idle waiting, but productive waiting—creative waiting. There are things we can do. Or, better yet, positions we can put ourselves in to make the most of our waiting time.

First Sunday of Advent
November 27
“Creative Waiting”

Second Sunday of Advent
December 4
“Clarified Direction”

Third Sunday of Advent
December 11
“Faithful Willingness”

Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 18
“Joyful Encouragement”

Christmas Eve
December 24
“Creative Arrival”



Nepali Greeting and Christmas Cards



The Zimmermans, missionaries Strawbridge supports in Nepal, recently told us about Chet Karel, an evangelist in Nepal. Crippled from birth and unable to walk, at the age of eighteen Chet became a Christian, and after prayer began to walk. A missionary taught him to make beautiful cards from handmade Nepali paper and fabrics so that he would have a means to support himself in a country where disabled people either beg or are dependent on their families for care. Chet has established a ministry to preach the gospel and proclaim Christ's healing powers.

Chet's cards will be on display and available for purchase throughout the Advent Season. Proceeds will help support Chet's ministry and family in Nepal.



Christmas trees around the church are filled with opportunities to share true Christmas spirit.

The trees will be adorned with paper decorations—each filled with a Christmas wish.

Methodist Children's Home

Some tags have the names of pre-teens and teens who live at the Methodist Children's Home in Waco. Their tags request \$25 gift cards for WalMart (to be dropped off at church by December 11). Like all young people, these children like to shop for things that they want for themselves and others.

Mission Northeast

Other tags will have specific requests for items to be purchased for children of all ages and adults. These items will be delivered to the "Christmas Store" at The Mission Northeast in Porter. Adults and children in need shop at the store (at no cost) for Christmas items to give their children or parents. These unwrapped items may be returned under the tree at any time, but no later than Sunday, December 4.

1134 Cedar Creek Drive—Welcome Home!



We will soon break ground on our Habitat house at 1134 Cedar Creek Drive in partnership with our neighbor, Woodridge Baptist Church. A home owner has been selected and we know what the house will look like. The slab will be poured in December, smaller advance teams will begin work in early-January,

and framing and wall-raising is targeted for Saturday, January 28.

Volunteers are needed on site and behind the scenes (construction workers, construction helpers, painters, hospitality, communications, childcare). Crew leaders are also needed on Saturday and/

or Wednesday work days. If you'd like to lend a hand during this five-month project, send your name, telephone number, and e-mail address to Howard Deterding at harv@kingwoodcable.net. By necessity, we'll need to communicate with volunteers via e-mail.



Creative Waiting... on others

Advent Mission Giving 2011

“Creative Waiting” is making the most of Advent and receiving God’s gifts in his many comings. Through our Advent giving, we are walking in the hope, faith, and confidence that, in spite of what we may immediately see or feel, God is at work and will bring his plan to completion.

Our 2011 Advent offering recipients are Habitat for Humanity of Montgomery County, The Mission Northeast, The Krist Samaritan Center for Counseling, Family Promise of Lake Houston, and the Savutos, our missionaries in Kenya.

Our goal is \$25,000.

Please give generously.

One hundred percent of the Annual Advent Offering will benefit our mission partners. Contact Howard Deterding at harv@kingwoodcable.net or Pastor Jim to learn more.

When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you? The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

—Matthew 25:39-40

New Security Policy

Let’s all be safe and secure! Your Church Council has recently adopted a new security policy to ensure our safety after normal church hours. Our existing Building Use Policy requires that the responsible sponsor or supervisor of a group ensure that each member of his or her group has departed the building, and then requires the sponsor to lock the building (all exits) and set the alarm.

The new Strawbridge Security Policy is designed to comply with best practices for building security, and make the job easier on the sponsor. Beginning January 1, 2012 we will require that everyone who enters after normal church hours use only those doors near the church office. After entering

everyone will sign in and out on a log located inside this entrance.

Group sponsors may open one additional door for the convenience of their guests, but they retain the responsibility for signing in and out at the office entrance, ensuring all group members have departed, locking all open doors, and setting the alarm.

We hope that with more control of the open doors, we will be better able to control access, and avoid the many false alarms SUMC has experienced each month.

Women's Retreat 2012



Camp Allen

Relax Refresh Renew

January 13-15, 2012

at beautiful Camp Allen in Navasota.

Special Guest Speaker, Mindy Ferguson of Fruitful Word Ministries. Contact Cheryl Burnett at cheryldburnett@hotmail.com.

NEW Registration Deadline:
December 4!

Advent and Christmas



Sunday, December 11, 8:30 and 11 a.m.
 Special Choral Advent Music at Both
 Traditional Services in the Sanctuary

Saturday, December 17, 8:30 a.m.
 Breakfast in Bethlehem with
 Food, Music, and a Walk through the
 City of Bethlehem.

Saturday, December 24
 Three Christmas Eve Services:

- 5 pm, A Family Service in the Activity Center
- 7 pm, A Candlelight Service for Families
- 9 pm, A Traditional Service with Candlelight and Holy Communion

Sunday, December 25
 One Christmas Day Service at 11 a.m.

Remember

If you need child care for your event, be sure to schedule it at least two weeks in advance by e-mailing kimberly.kurtz@strawbridge-umc.org.



XYZ Events (Extra Years of Zest 50+ Fellowship)

The next Merry Widows luncheon will be at Zametti's on Wednesday, December 7 at 11:30 a.m.

We'll travel to College Station Tuesday December 13 (after dinner at Mallett Brothers BBQ) to Santa's Wonderland to tour the extensive light display via bus. Meet at the church at 2:30 p.m. to depart. We will return

to Strawbridge at approximately 10:45 p.m.

Our next XYZ Dinner will be Saturday, December 17 at Humble City Café (200 East Main Street in Humble) at 4:30 p.m.

Sign up for XYZ events at the Strawbridge office, 281-360-4500, or e-mail Trish at trish.king@strawbridge-umc.org.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday, November 6 8:30 86 11:00 85 11:00 Crossroads 141 Sunday School 202	Sunday, November 13 8:30 87 11:00 87 11:00 Crossroads 166 Sunday School 190	Sunday, November 20 8:30 95 11:00 77 11:00 Crossroads 122 Sunday School 141	Sunday, November 27 8:30 85 11:00 84 11:00 Crossroads 197 Sunday School 154
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Vital Congregations Initiative

Bishop Janice Riggle Huie

At the Council of Bishops meeting this week, the bishops heard a report from the Vital Congregations Initiative. Vital Congregations is an initiative of the bishops to identify the most vital congregations in Methodism, to publically share data on the indicators of vitality. When Bishop Schol announced the initial results of this program, I was very pleased to find that the Texas Annual Conference ranked in the top 10 with a vitality percentage of 19.77% (national average is 14.76%). Interestingly, six of the top ten conferences use conference-wide metrics. I want to share with you Bishop Schol's letter:

Dear Bishop Huie,
The leadership of the Call to

Action Vital Congregations Initiative thanks God for the laity, clergy, conference leadership and you for the important ministry you have demonstrated to grow vital congregations. The Texas Conference is in the top 10 conferences in the United States for the highest percentage of vital congregations.

Vital congregations are congregations that grow over time, engage more of their people in ministry, and are engaged in their community. This is the Wesleyan movement in action and the Texas Conference is a leader in this movement.

We recognize this accomplishment does not come

easy, but is due to the commitment, sacrifice and hard work of the congregations and conference leadership. The vital congregations team would like to learn from your conference so that we can help all of our conferences excel in growing vital congregations.

Grace and Peace,

John R. Schol, Bishop

Vital Congregations Team Leader
The United Methodist Church
The Washington Area
Baltimore-Washington Conference



Bishop Janice Riggle Huie



From our Missionaries, the Savutos

7 November 2011

Dear Friends and Family,

"Joy can be real only if people look upon their life as a service and have a definite object in life outside themselves and their personal happiness." Leo Tolstoy

This is a rather difficult mission to write as what is most important for you, the reader, to know is that God is so good and it is only through His love, grace and mercy that Bill and I are able to do anything. Without God we are nothing. Thus, we are hopeful when you finish reading about our day, Saturday 5 November 2011, you will

give God all the glory and honor.

Saturday Mr. Gitari and his Community Outreach team, AIDS Orphan's workers and Hope Companions staff gave Bill and me the most amazing, incredible farewell event. During the event Stanley told us that Scott Brown, a mission work team leader and wonderful friend from Memorial Drive UMC in Houston, had given a large donation to pay for the event. Thus we are so very grateful to God, Stanley and his marvelous team and Scott Brown for possibly the best day of our lives in Maua.

The event started at 11 a.m. when Stanley came to our home and asked us to come down to the Chapel. I had been praying I would not cry all day. I thank God for the answer to that prayer. As we reached the side of the Chapel there were two lines of AIDS Orphan grandmothers and caretakers that faced each other. Bill started down the right side shaking the hands of the women and I started down the left side. As I shook many hands I made a point of looking into their eyes and saw Jesus Christ in their beautiful, smiling faces. After shaking about 15 – 20 hands I found myself whirling and twirling in joy-

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Bill and Jerri dancing with one of the groups.



Some of the older dancers.

From the Savutos



Some of the dancers.



A group lines up to enter.

(Continued from page 5)

ous dancing, laughter and joy with some of the women. The line of women went from the Chapel through the hospital gate to the first entrance to the School of Nursing (at least 700 women) and then back up the school field to tables and chairs under a cover. As I walked to my chair, I pinched myself to make sure I was still alive and hadn't somehow found my way to heaven but if this is what heaven is like, I'm ready!

The program began with a prayer by Chaplain Gikabu and scripture reading and a wonderful meditation by one of the Hope Companion recipients who is lovingly called "pastor". His message focused on the potential in all of us, regardless of our status in life. We then heard a message from Joseph, a crippled friend from St. Joseph's Methodist Church, who we have known for many years.

Then we were entertained with songs and dancing from 20 women's groups and three integrated groups from villages near and far. The groups had written songs for Bill and me and sang and danced and often had us dancing with them.

The songs assured us we would be prayed for and asked us to greet all those who had given to help the orphans and widows. The songs told us the orphans thankfully ate all the food they received, joyfully went to school and wore the uni-

forms given to them, and lovingly lived in the houses that were built for them.

Somewhere in-between the groups, we were taken by Stanley and Mr. Mailutha, the CEO of the hospital, to plant two podocarpus trees that were dedicated to the work we had done with the AIDS Orphans and Hope Companions. We can't think of a better way to be honored than to plant indigenous trees.

After the planting ceremony it was back for more songs and dancing. We then had tributes read by Flora, who was responsible for all the women's groups, Stanley, and Mr. Mailutha. Then Stanley read one e-mail from the USA and one from a young man in Kenya who had been helped by the program and is now a student at Kenyatta University. Bill and I had a chance to speak briefly.

We then were presented with gifts that seemed unending. Two of the Hope Companion Groups from Maua gave us a banana leaf and bark picture. The picture shows two round huts next to a house that looks much like the AIDS Orphans' homes we build with a few people including two wazungu (us) blessing the house. A very special announcement was made by Stanley stating that sufficient money had been raised to complete the building of the hospital kitchen that will be dedicated to my mom. Each gift, each card and note, message, and e-mail will be

especially precious to us and enjoyed and read and reread many times. Thank you for your messages of hope and love and for your generosity in helping to build the kitchen. We are grateful beyond words.

After this we had more singing and dancing and a beautiful cake which we cut and many people helped us deliver to all the participants, which were between 700 – 1500. After the cake we were all fed. Though there had been food made for 500 and many of the women's groups had brought their own food, they fed 700 which included some of the street boys. After we ate we stood by the gate and shook everyone's hand as they left. I had so wanted to do this and have a chance to look into their eyes and thank them. What a privilege it has been to be a tiny part of the lives of these wonderful, generous, loving people. By the last hand shake I felt I could burst wide open with all the joy and love I had received. You will be happy to know that I didn't cry except during my talk and as I shook some of the hands of my dear friends. Thank you God for answering that prayer.

The day was not over as there was a dinner at the Basin Hotel for close friends. We enjoyed a delicious meal and then most of the participants shared something about the two of us. It was a wonderful end to a most incredible day. As we made

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Youth group SCHEDULE

Dec. 4, Worship-Prayer Experience-Waiting at MYF

Dec. 11, Worship-Prayer Experience-Following the Star at MYF

Dec. 18, Christmas Party at MYF

Dec. 25, MYF takes a Christmas Break

Jan. 27-29, Refuge DNOW

Feb. 17-19, Ignite (Mid Winter at Forest Glen)

Feb. 18, Boy Scouts 10 Commandments Hike

March 12-17, Family Ski Trip

April 20-22, Mid-High Break Thru Camp

First Week of June, All Youth Mission Trip

Prayer Requests

Sympathy to:

Jim and Carol Matuschak and family on the death of Jim's father, Albert Matuschak
Sympathy to Rick and Ann Bryan on the death of their friend Manch Cadwallader



To honor the need for privacy regarding medical information, it is necessary to list first names only for some of our friends and family.

For our family and friends who are experiencing illness or injury:

Haiden Cantwell (great niece of Kim Kennedy); Nancy Ahmann; Mary Gammage (mother of Gary Burleson); Doug Ware; Cadance Saenz (daughter of Annie Price Saenz and granddaughter of Alvie and Sally Price); Stephanie Myles; Jack Johnson; Kathy Illig (former SUMC nursery worker); Alyssa (Sandra Piliar's granddaughter); Ryan Brown (son of Steve and Judy Brown); Michael (junior at Kingwood Park High School); Greg Carscallen (friend of Bill and Jerry Morgan); Caleb Elston (grandson of Bill and Darlene Elston); Patricia Miller (mother of Martha Paradysz); Helen Meley; Carolyn Treynor; Mike Harris; Thomas Joseph Stanton

For our family and friends recovering from surgery:

Joe Falcon (brother of Simone Belflower)

For our military family and friends who are deployed overseas:

Timothy Bonnoitt (Kaytee Fuller's fiancé); Danny Braud (Kim Kollehner's fiancé); Matt Lennon (son of co-worker of Marsha Johnson); Spencer Brady (friend of the Capaletti family); Heather Lane; Lance Stephens

For our family and friends who are living with cancer:

Gary (brother-in-law of Linda and Jerry Bell)
Dave (friend of Bill Chenault)
Kevin (neighbor of Bill and Beth Chenault)
David (friend of Bill Chenault)
Fred (friend of Amelia Keel and Esther Jones)
Hildy (friend of Andrea Lee)
Carolyn (wife of 1st Presbyterian Pastor)
Mary Ellen (Kathy Reiter's grandmother)
Don (Nola Ostrowski's father)
Christian (son of Coach Holley)
Beth (Bill Chenault's sister)
Gayle (friend of Amelia Keel)
Doug (friend of Ann Bryan)
Mark (friend of Corena Lipstreuwer)
Donald (uncle of David Vannauker)
Leo (friend of Linda Bell)
Linda (grandmother of Elisha James)
Pete Larimer (grandfather of Elisha James)
Ines (co-worker of Elisha James)
Dale (friend of Elisha James)
Donna (friend of Crystale Strange)
Lori (friend of Laurie Zalewski)
Maria (friend of Laurie Zalewski)
Tommy (step-father of Laura Ross)
Alysha (Pauline and Garry Musy's niece)
Debra (co-worker of Halina Duncan)
Arda (Pam Smith's mother)
Matt (teammate of Cody Smith)

Mary Anne (friend of Marsha and Frank Johnson)
Andrea (friend of Frank and Marsha Johnson)
Joel
Debbie (friend of Pat Chandler)
Sam (father of Sindi Sonnier)
Rosalyn (Elisha James' boss)
Joyce (friend of Kelsey Belflower)
Cade (13 year old friend of Ann Bryan's daughter's family)
Charlie (3 year old cousin of the Drees Family)
Ward (Sky Cheney's father)
Vivian (friend of Theresa Snyder)
Carol (friend of Paul and Brenda Hulse)
Heather (friend of the Ahmanns)
Frank (Erin Robbins' grandfather)
Jim (Gary Williams' stepfather)
Hazel (mother of a friend of John Barnett)
Debbie (cousin of Linda Barnett)
Marge (friend of John Barnett)
Lucy (friend of John Barnett)
Mr. Miller (friend of John Barnett)
Martha (mother of George and Carolyn Reed)
Debbie (cousin of Linda Bell)
Keith (friend of Layne Smith)
Matt (Layne Smith's nephew)
Sean (friend of Lauren Llewellyn)
Richard (Barbara Stream's cousin)
Wanda (friend of Pat Flinn)
Tom (Doug Henry's father)

From the Savutos

(Continued from page 6)

through e-mails, prayers and the weakest of vessels to our way home driving in a donations to the kitchen fund, show His strength and His heavy rain, we felt we too had to our supporting churches love. been showered with God's who allowed us this time at love, joy and blessings. We are Maua Methodist Hospital. We Dancing and singing and shouting for joy! eternally grateful to Stanley are especially grateful and ing for joy! and his team, Scott Brown, to thankful to our loving and all of you who participated faithful God who has chosen Jerri and Bill Savuto



Bill by the tree he planted.

**STRAWBRIDGE
UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH**

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Submission Deadline:	For Issue:
December 15	January

E-mail submissions to:
karla.goolsby@strawbridge-umc.org

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A Spiritual Sanctuary in a Hectic World



The church office will be closed December 23, 2011 through January 1, 2012. Pastor Beth will be the on call for emergencies.

December Birthdays

- | | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 12/1 Rod Claros | 12/14 Kathie Perfetti | 12/28 Zachary Strange |
| 12/1 Catherine Rice | 12/15 Kelsey Bright | 12/28 Leslie Wahrmund |
| 12/2 Kim Rabalais | 12/15 Amy Slaughter | 12/28 Ashley Kreischer |
| 12/4 Jessie Sneed | 12/15 Loren Peerson | 12/28 Shelby Westover |
| 12/4 James Perales | 12/16 Lauren Deerhake | 12/28 Kierston Val |
| 12/5 Lori Christian | 12/17 Laurel Erickson | 12/29 Kaden Champion |
| 12/6 Meredith Ehrhardt | 12/17 Mark Green | 12/29 Laura Bleier |
| 12/6 Sarah Vannauker | 12/18 Dennis Wycoff | 12/29 Charlotte Christian |
| 12/6 Ashley Browning | 12/18 Cory Rabalais | 12/29 Alberto Meszaros |
| 12/6 Jake Spence | 12/18 Kathy Struzynski | 12/30 Shelly Balleau |
| 12/7 Chuck Essick | 12/19 William Thorpe | 12/30 Richard Aslanian |
| 12/7 Theresa Bruns | 12/19 Terri Sticker | 12/30 Allison Warren |
| 12/7 Austin Bleier | 12/19 Adam Mowery | 12/30 Barbara Hall |
| 12/7 Bailey Blakemore | 12/20 Kimberly Kurtz | 12/30 Harold McLallen |
| 12/8 Steve McKenzie | 12/20 Bill Chenault | 12/30 Amanda Hogan |
| 12/8 Betty Robert | 12/22 Matthew Chapman | 12/31 Steve Johnson |
| 12/8 Gene Stephan | 12/22 Kathy Morisette | 12/31 Scott Murray |
| 12/9 LeeAnne Kortus | 12/22 Lauren Herink | 12/31 Sarah Murray |
| 12/9 Monica Brown | 12/22 Phoebe Dillewyn | 12/31 Patrick Mccullough |
| 12/9 Darlene Elston | 12/23 Ellen Larson | |
| 12/9 Mallory Michael | 12/24 Mark Cuda | |
| 12/10 Laura Price | 12/24 Matthew McDonald | |
| 12/10 Doug Burrage | 12/25 Meredith Gosselin | |
| 12/10 Dick White | 12/25 Ben Browning | |
| 12/11 John Christensen | 12/25 Melanie Johnston | |
| 12/11 John Vittitow | 12/25 Mark Dykstra | |
| 12/13 Tate Harris | 12/26 Linda Barnett | |
| 12/13 Colton Meszaros | 12/27 Shirley Nelson | |
| 12/14 Laurie Bridges | 12/27 Cathy Hower | |
| 12/14 Karen Wagner | 12/28 Tracy Monk | |

