

Downs UMC NEWSLETTER

December 2009
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2009's SEASON OF BLESSINGS

By *Rev. Ron George*

A flip of the calendar now takes into a winter world – boy did we get there quick! And we are once again brightened by the anticipation and preparations for Christmas. Once again it will be a time of looking into store windows, listening to carols and hoping for all sorts of happy surprises. It's a wonderful time of the year, coming now as it came over 2,000 years ago, bringing the most wondrous light into our lives.

But before we begin to get too busy, let's think about some other meanings of "looking," "listening" and "hoping." Because the obvious things we notice are not necessarily the ultimate. The ultimate is God.

The season is filled with blessings (in spite of the world's troubles), some of which though are less obvious. You have to look carefully. For instance, it is one thing to see a whole flock of birds headed south in this season; it is another to see a solitary bird as if chosen to stay behind to bring a message of joy. A single leaf may remain on a tree by some yet-unfrozen pond – what a beautiful sight! NOW you will notice the beauty of that single leaf when all the others are gone, but not before. And the stars of night – does each one seem to shine more brightly through the Christmas season, or is it just my imagination? Their light can make us feel so humble and yet so cared for. And there is a brightness in the stars that symbolizes the most eternal Truth – as it was for the shepherds and kings of old, a guide to follow to Christ.

Kathy and I always look forward to

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

2009's SEASON OF BLESSINGS	1
Family Night/A Downs Christmas Eve	2
Giving Back/Mission Minutes/Stewardship/OCC	3
Dates to Know/Birthdays & Anniversaries/ UMW	4
Opportunities to Fellowship	5
Sunday School/Volunteers	5
2009 Official Role/Office Hours	6
Newsletter List/Directories	6

the first snow, even the first frost. For us it adds to the brightness of the holiday spirit ahead. If you look, you can see God in all of these. He is there, always, with the good and lovely.

Truly listening is a skill that needs practice we were reminded in a recent Bible study. Shopping crowds will be noisy; traffic will be heavy; and with nerves frayed, we may find ourselves weary of taped carols over brassy speakers and the ringing of Salvation Army bells. But stop in your tracks and listen to their message. For in them if you listen you can hear words of peace from God! You CAN if you focus on opening that secret place inside of you – that place where you are still as you were as a child. When you do, be reminded that you are His child, and rejoice.

May each of us follow the One star of faith that is brighter than the others and find our heart's own Bethlehem.

*Lord, bless us with a Christmas heart.
Amen.*

From our family to yours, Kathy and I wish you a most blessed holiday season and a Merry Christmas.

FAMILY NIGHT ON WEDNESDAYS

5:30pm-8:00pm

We as a church have many opportunities and a responsibility for passing God's love on to others. We are also responsible to help mold the children to grow in their faith and understanding on how much God loves them, as well as continuing our own spiritual education, so please consider being a part of this vital program.

Here is a our schedule.

5:30-6:45pm	Dinner
6:00-6:30pm	Drama
6:00-7:00pm	Choir practice in Sanctuary
7:00-7:15pm	Praise Music in Sanctuary
7:15-8:00pm	Free2Praise Practice in Sanctuary
	Bible Study for Adults in Old Parsonage
	Sr. High Youth Group in Annex
	Jr. High Youth Group in Fellowship Hall
	PreK—5th Grade in Church with a VBS format which include crafts, games, snack & lesson.



Helpers are still needed in **Crafts/games** and **Lessons for younger group**. Please contact Peggy Stark at 378-4546 to let her know how you can serve in this vital ministry.

Choir and Praise Band are also ministries that practice on Wednesday nights and anyone is welcome to give these areas a try. There is a Bible Study for the adults, so all ages are included. It is always a great night of fellowship. Don't miss this opportunity.

~~Should school be canceled due to weather Wednesday nights will not take place.~~

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEALS

Dec 2	Beef Stew	Dec 9	Potato Bar	Dec 16	Pizza
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A Downs Christmas Eve

Please accept this special invitation to all to join us, December 24th, at 7:00 p.m. for our 4th annual Downs Christmas Eve Service.

Dress casually (bring your children in their pajamas as you wish) and come for a delightful and meaningful time of Christmas joy and praise with the people from our community and area including: carols and candles, special music, poems, readings, skits, prayers, a tribute honoring the soldiers in our families serving around the globe, The Christmas Story, Silent Night by candlelight, treats for the kids, and more.

Come to just relax and enjoy, or those who wish are invited to bring a special gift to the Christ Child in the form of singing a special, playing an instrumental, offering a Christmas reading, poem or other. Please call the Downs United Methodist Church office 378-2651 or Rev. Ron George at 378-2650 by Wednesday, December 23rd if you have a special gift you will be willing to share for Christ so we can fully prepare for the evening. Remember – seating is limited.

Come and enJOY!

A Downs Christmas Eve

Thursday, December 24th, 7:00 p.m.



Giving Back to God

Part 12 of "How to Manage Your Money" an in-depth Bible Study on Personal Finances by Larry Burkett

Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."

To put God's financial plan into action, we must do the following:

1. Surrender all ownership to God daily.
2. Accept God's answers.
3. Acknowledge God's ownership.

To live by God's plan, it helps to have a list of principles to consider in making decisions. We are all faced with numerous opportunities and choices that affect God's money. Left to our own logic and resources, we will usually miss God's best for us. By weighing every decision against God's principles, Satan's snares can be avoided. These are principles, as opposed to laws. God has given them to enhance our lives because He understands what is best for us. Failure to follow His principles can result in both financial and spiritual loss.

1. Avoid Hasty Speculation
2. Keep Your Finances Current
3. Do Not Go Into Debt to Do God's Work
4. When in Doubt, Rather than lend, give to the needs of others.
5. Avoid Cosigning
6. Evaluate Purchases Based on Needs, Wants, Desires
7. Never Make Quick Financial Decisions
8. Accept God's "No" as well as His "Yes"
9. If You Don't have Peace, Don't Buy
10. Husbands and Wives should agree.
11. Understand Who You Are

To learn more on how to implement the principles studied this year. If you'd like to go into more depth on this subject the book is available in the Library.

Mission Minutes by Ginger Campbell

Merry Christmas to everyone! Thank you for all your support this year. Many needs have been met due to your generosity.

Good Sam buckets in November totaled \$125.02 and it is being used for gifts in November and December.

Gifts were made to the following:

Utilities	\$200
Nursery	\$150
Samaritan's Purse for the Shipping	\$973

In December we will be doing gifts for families in need. If you know of any families with a need please let the committee members know. Committee members are: Ginger Campbell, Donna Clark, Peggy Stark and Jamie Ward.

Stewardship report–	Giving for 2009	
	Month of November	YTD
Tithes & Offerings	\$14,987.65	\$133,792.31
Total Need	\$15,150.00	\$145,440.00
Difference	(162.35)	(11,647.69)
Building Fund	\$ 365.00	\$ 14,443.66
Mission & Special Project Giving		
Good Sam	\$ 1,525.02	\$ 20,157.13

Thank you to everyone that has helped with all the special needs, mission projects, renovations and repairs in 2009. This is a very giving church!

As you can see above our General Fund continues to be in need. With everyone's help and generosity we can keep up with our budget needs and continually strengthen our ministries.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD generated 139 boxes. Thank you to everyone that had a part in this mission to spread God's word and send boxes to children that may not have a gift at Christmas.

December Dates to Know

1		Home Extension to Use Parking Lot
2	5:30pm	Family Night
3	7:00pm	Girl Scouts
5	8:00am	Moms In Touch
6	6:00pm	Bible Study
7	6:00pm	Trustees
		Boy Scouts in Annex
9	5:30pm	Family Night
	7:00pm	Cookie Decorating
12	8:00am	Moms In Touch
	9:00am	Cookie Walk
13	7:15am	UMW at Jacks
	6:00pm	Bible Study
14	6:00pm	Boy Scouts in Annex
16	5:30pm	Family Night
19	8:00am	Moms In Touch
20	6:00pm	Bible Study
21	6:00pm	Boy Scouts in Annex
24	7:00pm	Christmas Eve Service
27	10:30am	Praise Band
28	6:00pm	Boy Scouts in Annex

Office Hours the week of Christmas will be hit and miss. Should you need something, please call the church at 378-2651 or the parsonage at 378-2650. Please leave a message if no one answers and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

December Birthdays

2	Donna Kleinlein	26	Jill Wilsey
4	Kevin Goveia	28	Eric Mushrush
5	Jordan Whitted	29	Michelle Forbes
7	Kari Cooperider	31	Bridget Caldwell
9	Andy McNaught		
11	Kristyn Cobstill		
12	Lucas Hammer		
13	Mike Halloran		
13	Darla Lanchester		
16	Chris Mushrush		
16	Brent Ward		
18	Sally Wagner		
18	Brian Zachow		
19	Aaron Mushrush		
20	Ashlynn Solvie		
23	John Forbes		
23	Holly Layten		
23	Austin Weichman		
24	Robb Erlenbush		
26	Tom Coulon		



MILESTONES

Someone is turning 5, 20, 25 and 45.

Congratulations & Blessings to you all!

2009 UMW Officers

- President—Donna Clark
- Vice President—Kay Hull
- Secretary—Sheri Mushrush
- Treasurer—Leigh Hayes
- Social Concerns Chair—Peggy Stark

All women of the church are encouraged and welcomed to be a part of this Mission Ministry. The ladies meet on the 2nd Sunday of the month for breakfast.

They will meet again on December 13th at Jacks in LeRoy, at 7:15am.

Contact Donna Kleinlein if you would like to attend.

COOKIE WALK

**Saturday, December 12th
9:00-Sold Out**

Bakers please bring cookies by 8am on the 12th. They can be dropped off on the evening of the 11th.

Decorating of sugar cookies will be done on December 9th at 7pm. All



Questions?
Contact Donna Clark at 378-1573, or call the church at 378-2651.

December Anniversaries

3	John & Sherry Reed
8	Chuck & Lori Rogers
8	Jesse & Kathy Hammer
23	Ron & Kathy George
27	Brent & Jamie Ward

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES ARE DUE TO THE OFFICE BY THE 20TH OF EACH MONTH. They can be faxed to 378-2651 or emailed to officedumc@juno.com. Input is welcomed. It is your newsletter!

OPPORTUNITIES OF FELLOWSHIP & OUTREACH

Sunday Fellowship

Every Sunday after the 8:00am service

Breakfast items are served.

A freewill offering is taken to cover the cost of the food. Thank you for your support for this ministry, and to everyone that has volunteered to help with this ministry!

We are in need of people that can ‘substitute’ in this area. Please let the office know if you can be a part of this ministry. There are people more than willing to “guide” you in working in this ministry. It would be of great help to have a list of people we can call on in a pinch or a planned absence.

CHRISTMAS GIFT OPTIONS

Check the table in the back of the Sanctuary for the Music CD's by Mary Romine & Ginger Campbell. A suggested donation is \$10. Eight remaining. Note cards with the picture of the church are also there and are priced at \$8.50. There are 8 of these as well. The knives are located in the kitchen, just ask someone if you have a need.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ALL AGES

Downs UMC has a class for ages 3 and up on Sunday Morning. Ages 3-5th grade meet in the Sanctuary at 9:15 for music and then go to classrooms in the education wing of the church.

Junior High (6-8th) meet in the Jr. High Room
(2nd floor) in the Annex

Sr. High meets on the first floor of the annex and
the Adults are meeting in the LOFT

Sunday School is coordinated by
Leigh Hayes 378-3008 and Jamie Ward 378-4621

GREETERS are always needed.

Contact Sherry Reed @ 663-2999 if you can serve in this capacity.

December Volunteers~~We appreciate You!

Power Point Operators

8:00 am Service 10:30 am Service

6	Blaise McNeese	HELP!!!!
13	Rhonda Nalley	Laura Walters
20	Kyle Connour	Tom Coulon
27	Sue Colclasure	Jean Riordan

GREETERS 10:30 am Service

6	Betty Harvey/Madelyne Gelsthorpe
	Sherry Reed
13	Jon Nelson Family
20	Tom Coulon Family
27	Tim Riley

NURSERY SCHEDULE

10:30am Service

6	Michelle Forbes
13	Brian & Janelle Zachow
20	Sr. High Youth
27	Karyn Spelde

Fellowship Coordinators

6	UMW
13	Etta Whitted
20	Rick Hayes/Michelle Forbes
27	Jean Riordan

Downs UMC

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309-378-2651

E-Mail:

Pastor Ron

reverend@downsumc.org

Secretary:

secretary@downsumc.org

Office Hours

Tuesday 1-3pm
Wednesday 8-12pm & 1-3pm
Thursday 8-12pm

2009 Official Role (Positions being Served)

Ad Board Chairperson:	Brent Ward	<u>FINANCE:</u> Bill Erlenbush, Larry Stark, Brent Ward, Janice Cuba, Rhonda Nalley, Donna Kleinlein, John Werner, Jon Spelde.
Recording Secretary:	Lyn Edwards	<u>TRUSTEES:</u> Jon Spelde; Dave Wysocki; Scott Holmes, Rick Hayes, Andre McNaught, Craig Solvie, Dave Caldwell, Kathy George, Darla Lanchester, Dave Bach
Finance Chairperson:	Bill Erlenbush	<u>PPRC:</u> George Lewis, Darcie Jones, Kay Hull, Tim Riley, Jon Nelson, Lyndall Cuba, Becky Connour, John Werner
Sunday School Super:	Jamie Ward & Leigh Hayes	<u>NOMINATIONS:</u> Glenda Fike, Sheri Riley, Cheryl Bach, Larry Stark, Jamie Ward, Kim Lewis
PPRC Chairperson:	George Lewis	
Lay Leader:	Larry Stark	
Lay Member to Confer.:	John Werner	
Treasurer:	Janice Cuba	
Financial Secretary:	Rhonda Nalley	
Nurture Chairperson:	Cathy Finch	
Outreach Chairperson:	Ginger Campbell	
Witness Chairperson:	Etta Whitted	
UMW President:	Donna Clark	
Youth Director:	Peggy Stark	
Camping Coordinator:	Carrie Cobstill	
Trustee Chairperson:	Jon Spelde	

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.downsumc.org

Should you be receiving this newsletter and wish to be removed from the list, please contact Janice at 309-378-2651 or secretary@downsumc.org.



We still have Pictorial Directories. If you have not signed for your copy, please contact the office.

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Address Service Requested

