

Third Word News & Notes



DECEMBER 2012

Pastor's Message

NO ROOM AT THE BETHLEHEM INN

I remember a family vacation when I was very young. We had a long drive ahead of us so my dad drove all day and well into the evening. When we thought we had gone far enough for one day, we started looking for a motel to spend the night. The first one we came to had a No Vacancy sign so we drove to the next town only to find another No Vacancy sign. When there was no room for us at the third roadside motel, our initial disappointment started to turn into panic. The thought of spending the night in our crowded car was unbearable. At last, and to our great relief, we came upon a motel that had a room for us. That is the closest I have been to experiencing what Joseph and Mary must have felt as they looked for lodging in Bethlehem. Perhaps that is why the line in the Christmas story, *there was no room for them in the Inn*, tugs at my heart strings. I know the disappointment and growing desperation they must have felt, especially with Mary close to delivering their first child.

No one in Bethlehem opened their doors to Joseph and Mary and welcomed them in. They found No Vacancy wherever they went. Finally they made room for themselves in a little open air stable where travelers fed their animals. They turned a feeding trough into a crib for their new baby. Christmas broke into the world uninvited and unwelcome. It found a place for itself in the humblest of circumstances. Surely there is a lesson here for us. Is there room in our hearts for the true spirit of Christmas? Let us pray that through all the hours spent shopping in crowded malls, the glittering lights, the festive music, and office parties, that our lives are never so busy and full, that there is no room left for Him who is the reason for this joyful season.

Christmas Blessings,

Pastor Norm

Christmas is forever, not just one day for loving, sharing, giving are not put away like bells, lights and tinsel, in some box on a shelf. The good you do for others is good you do yourself.

—Norman Wesley

Fellowship Christmas Party

The Fellowship Committee planned a gathering to celebrate the holiday season. On December 8th the evening started with a pot luck dinner, then moved on to a Yankee Gift Swap. The evening ended in a Carol Sing. There was a great feeling to love and friendship during the evening. We hope that many more will attend next year. Our PF group joined in the evening festivities also.



Missions Gift Giving



Our Missions group once again has wrapped gifts for New Horizons Women's Shelter for families who are moving out on their own. A family in Brooklyn, NY was also chosen due to storm damage. There also many mugs filled with toiletry items. Our members generously donated many items for the mugs as well as washcloths, hats, gloves, long underwear and more. We are so blessed to have a great congregation and a wonderful group to remember the homeless and those in need during this season of giving.

Christian Education Gives Back

Our students have been hard at work learning about the advent season and the coming of Jesus. Our mission project this year is to create birthday boxes for those who are in need of assistance. We created about 30 boxes filled with cake mix, frosting, napkins, plates, balloons, streamers and candles. The students were also able to make cards to send to our troops and a local nursing home. They are truly learning about what this season can mean, giving to those in need and Jesus gave to us.



Stewardship Campaign

The proposed budget for 2013 is now \$135,450. The proposed budget goal for 2013 from pledges is \$110,900.00. The pledges received as of December 17th is \$91,276.00. The balance needed to reach our goal is \$19,624.00. We are getting close! Let's get there. Be part of our success and send in your pledge. With three weeks to go, we are at 82.30% of our goal. The remainder of the budget income comes from donations, plate collections, fundraisers and endowment income.

Treasurer's Corner by Sharon Maloney

As of December 16th, the budget stands as follows: Income from pledges is \$93,891.00 which shows a shortfall of \$15,109.00 from the original budget of \$109,000. Please, please do the best you can to catch up on your pledge. If you are able, please consider giving a little more to help cover the unpaid pledges of the families who have fallen on hard times and are unable to fulfill their pledge in 2012. Thank you.

Upcoming Events

1/12	Boy Scout Ham Dinner
1/19	Cub Scout Pinewood Derby