

HAPPY ADVENT AND MERRY CHRISTMAS.

Here is a list of upcoming worship and ministry events with which we will be anticipating and celebrating the birth of Jesus.

Friday, December 1, Intergenerational Party, 7:30 pm at church
Christmas decorations, pizza, fun!

Sunday, December 3, First Sunday in Advent, Holy Communion, 11:00 am
Jeremiah 33: 10-16
Luke 22: 25-36

Sunday, December 10, Second Sunday in Advent, 11:00 am
Luke 1: 68-79
Psalm 105: 1-15

Friday, December 15, Advent Worship Service and Luncheon, 12:00 pm
Join us for an informal communion service and lunch

Sunday, December 17, Third Sunday in Advent, 11:00 am
Isaiah 40: 1-5
Isaiah 65: 17-25
Dramatic Reading based on the Gospels According to Matthew and Luke

Sunday, December 17, Advent Candlelight Service, 7:00 pm

Sunday, December 17, Advent Party, 8:00 pm
Hosted by Pat and Mel Oakes at their home.

Sunday, December 24, Fourth Sunday in Advent, 11:00 am
Luke 2: 1-14
Baptism of Gavin Firestone
Children's Christmas Pageant

Monday, December 25, Christmas Day Service and Open Door Lunch, 11:30 am
Brief informal service followed by an open door feast for all who are hungry

Sunday, December 31, First Sunday of Christmas
Colossians 3: 12-17
Luke 2: 41-52

Please join us for all or any of these events, and have a blessed Advent and Christmas.

Tom

OUTREACH ALERT

Christmas Dinner

Following our long-standing tradition, the Outreach Board will be sponsoring a Christmas Dinner, where the homeless in our area are invited to share a meal with us in the Appel Room. This is a wonderful event that always draws a large crowd of members, friends and guests. Please make plans to attend.

Front Porch Lunch Volunteers

The Front Porch Lunch continues to welcome new volunteers for preparing and serving meals for homeless youth Lifeworks clients. We serve the lunch every first and third Thursday of each month. Volunteers arrive by 11:30AM to prepare sandwiches and set out food, and stay until ~1PM for cleaning up after the meal. If you are interested, please contact John Goff (goff@ig.utexas.edu).

CHRISTMAS FAMILY NIGHT ON DECEMBER 1

On Friday evening, December 1, at 7:30 p.m. the Christian Ed. Board will host a Christmas Family Night for our church families and friends (including one person families) of all ages. We will be making Christmas ornaments, decorating a tree in the Fellowship Hall, enjoying Christmas music, and sharing pizza together. The ornaments we use to decorate the tree will be available for sale in the church, with proceeds to benefit a cause appropriate for the celebration of the coming of Jesus. This promises to be a wonderful evening to spend together to begin Advent.

Chairs of our Boards

Trustees:	Reuel Nash
Deacons:	Betty Bodman
Christian Education:	Nancy Edison & Doyal Pinkard
Christian Outreach:	John Goff

THE CHILDREN'S CHURCH CHRISTMAS PAGEANT IS COMING!

This year's Christmas pageant will be part of the Christmas Eve worship service on Sunday morning, December 24th. The children, youth, and all older participants will, with help from our wonderful choir, present "Las Posadas: On the Road with Mary and Joseph." This pageant, adapted from one posted on the UCC website, will help us hear from some folks we never thought would be part of Mary and Joseph's journey.

We will start rehearsing during Sunday School in late November. Most of the rehearsals will be on Sundays during and just after worship, with a dress rehearsal on Saturday, December 23rd from 10 am to noon. Children and youth (and adults who want to help), come on and be part of the fun! We do ask that families let Jennifer Howicz or Liz Nash know whether your kids will be participating and, if so, when we can expect them to be here for rehearsals. We try to fit kids in who show up at the last minute, but we can give them a much

more meaningful way to participate if we know they will be participating and when they can be at rehearsals.

For all of our church and our friends, we invite you to be part of the celebration of "Las Posadas" on the Sunday morning of Christmas eve.

PERSONALS **by Pat Oakes**

Eleanor Towery had some bad luck while she was watching John (our pastor emeritus) play football with their 8 eight-year-old great-grandson on September 15. She was pulling up a chair to sit down and enjoy the game when she tripped and landed on her left elbow (fortunately she is right handed). She ended up having surgery and a cast to get it fixed. She got the cast off in October and has been working to strengthen her arm and is doing fine now. John's doctor has decided not to do back surgery on John, so he is dealing with a good bit of discomfort. In other Towery family news, son Ches and Ches' wife Maggie went to Colton, NY, to visit her dad who was quite ill. He rallied however, but remains in a nursing home for folks with Alzheimer's. While there they stayed with Maggie's aunt and enjoyed a visit with her. The senior Towerys were expecting 19 for Thanksgiving dinner including daughter Sally and son-in-law Tommy from Massachusetts, their daughter Tanya and her new husband John (who live just minutes away from Sally and Tommy), plus daughter Mary and Danny Masters and their son Ricky, and Ches' family here in the Austin area.

Mary Sinclair and Richard Jackson have moved from Longmont, Colorado, to Ontario, Canada. They had looked forward to living close to Mary's mom Joyce (a frequent visitor in our church in years past). Unfortunately, Joyce had a stroke, fell, injured her hip (which had been replaced twice), and was not found for 11 hours. They were not able to replace her hip again, so she is in a nursing home confined to a wheelchair and recuperating from the stroke. Richard and Mary and Joyce are understandably distressed by this situation. However, Richard and Mary have found a new home close to where Joyce is. Their new address is: Sinclair/Jackson 11 Venus Crescent Heidelberg, Ontario NOB 1Y0. Mary reports that it's a small house but will have a fully equipped guest room. The gardens are fantastic! The town has a population of about 600-1000 and is in the heart of Mennonite country so there are lots of horses & buggies and great German-influenced food. They're only a few minutes away from Waterloo and one of the best engineering schools in the country. They are looking forward to enjoying the terrific Gilbert & Sullivan society. They are putting out the welcome mat for those of us who get that far north!

In November **Paul and Ellen Deisler** attended the fall luncheon meeting of the Shell Oil Company Retirees' Club of Central Texas at the Gristmill Restaurant (which Paul heartily recommends) in Gruene, Texas. They had a wonderful time being with old friends and colleagues from Paul's working days. There was an excellent talk by the president of the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society, who has worked all over Texas with the Parks Department, on the subject of how land in Texas has been used over time and how the fragmentation

of habitat is now impacting many species. Shell used to send a representative to Retiree's Club meetings from time to time to tell us what was going on in Shell. Cutbacks have eliminated such communications so that what we now know is what is published in the Wall Street Journal or on the Web. At the end of the meeting, the president of the club asked if anyone present had any insights as to what is what with Shell. Dead silence. He concluded the meeting by saying: "Well, I guess we're all really retired!"

Maggie Smith has been in her new home in Lakeway for 3 months now, although, as it was a fixer-upper, she won't go so far as to say she is 100% ensconced. It was a life-style change for her, and she is loving it - funky charm, park setting, sweet pool, friends-- all of it. She is also busy with real estate and Nikken. The drive in is long, but it doesn't dampen her joy of the beautiful scenery, sky, and horizons. She loves it when a front is approaching - seems like the world is rent in two - high drama! Good friend Vic Appel enjoys coming out once or twice a week. Granddaughter Josie and the London grandkids just love it there! That helps Maggie with the ongoing, unspoken grandparent competition.

Rizer Everett is unable to attend church services very often any more, but he enjoys viewing the Shoreline and River Bend church sermons that are broadcast at seven and seven thirty each Sunday morning. He also stays busy with rehab sessions at a clinic and at his cottage--working on his mobility. This is the time of year that he is able to enjoy the football and baseball games, as well as the golf tournaments, on television. He continues to enjoy the dates and visits with his octogenarian friends, but some of them are now confined to their living quarters and are unable to dine at restaurants. On a recent visit with Johanna Householder, they viewed her copies of the 1933 and 1935 year books of Austin High School. They were impressed with how young their classmates looked in those books. Rizer was surprised to learn that he had met the national requirement for scholastic excellence by having an A minus average for four years of high school grades. He notes it is a pleasant experience to learn in old age about accomplishments made in one's younger years. On November 9th, he attended the end-of-session dinner for members of the LAMP (Learning Activities for Mature People) organization that was held at the UT Alumni building. He has been unable to attend LAMP meetings recently because of a reaction to the spinal injection of a steroid. However, because of his favorable progress with his rehab treatments, he is hoping to attend meetings of the next session of LAMP. Rizer has been trying to find out what percent of the people in the USA reach age 90 each year. He says, "Before I received a special plaque from the Geological Society of America, I thought the answer would be between 30 and 50 percent. However, the number must be much smaller than that because my plaque compliments me on being on of 41 GSA members reaching 90. There are several thousand active GSA members."

Paula Fracasso's big news is that she is taking classes to become a yoga teacher. She finds it to be fun and challenging. She has long been a student of yoga and meditation and is hoping to combine these with her interest in working with businesses to make them more productive.

We have heard **Nodie and Dennis Murphy's** eloquent pleas for prayers for the people of New Orleans. Nodie wrote the following to describe their recent trip there. "Here's a brief synopsis of our trip to New Orleans for my 46th(!) high school reunion (the first one I've ever attended). Sadly, Dennis was not feeling well for most of the trip, but he did get to attend two of the four reunion events. My mother had some sort of bug for most of the time we were there as well. Plus they were in the midst of replacing some floors and a bathroom (more memories of Katrina), so the place was in even more turmoil than usual. The real highlights of the trip were the unexpected and peripheral events. Julie (Nodie's sister) is president of the Friends of Music in New Orleans and Richard Stoltzman, the clarinetist, was scheduled to give two concerts for them--one a jazz one with his son Peter as pianist, and a classical one with his usual accompanist, David Deveau. They came to Julie's for dinner after the first concert, just when we had arrived from Austin. Tuesday they held master classes, Wednesday there was a lecture on the development of the clarinet as a favorite instrument of composers, followed by a concert and another dinner at someone else's house, where I met and spoke French with the former first flutist of the Louisiana Philharmonic. The following Sunday, the Prazak String Quartet from Prague flew into town. They are scheduled to play for the Friends of Music in March, but had an open spot in their schedule, so came for an Artists-in-Residence program. Sunday night we all had dinner at Julie's again. Monday I attended a master class held at the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts, a high school for the performing arts opened in 2000 on the Mississippi in the French Quarter. Tuesday I attended a house concert in a mansion on St. Charles Avenue, followed by a dinner. Wednesday, we came back home! The master classes opened my ears to so many nuances and musical treats that I was overwhelmed by it all and actually talked to strangers!! As part of my reunion, we took a tour of my old high school, which had degenerated into a prison-like trash heap before a charter school took it over after the hurricane and is transforming it into a magnet school for the performing arts. Imagine, two new high schools with an art focus in New Orleans. Julie says that musicians who come to New Orleans to give concerts play their hearts out, having viewed the devastation and wanting to buoy up the survivors. Stoltzman ended his classical concert with a solo jazz version of "Amazing Grace" which he dedicated as a blessing to the people of New Orleans--and it left the crowd breathless by its sincerity and beauty."

Mardie Oakes was also recently in New Orleans as a part of her social entrepreneurship Echoing Green involvement. The group worked with citizen groups in New Orleans giving them new ideas on how to work with the bureaucracy to make progress and help the struggling folks of that city.

Pat Oakes' ninety-year-old father **Bob Winter** died in North Carolina on October 29th. Mel acted in a timely manner and got her a plane ticket so that she could be at home with her dad and her sisters before his passing. Memorial services were held on Nov. 18th at the retirement home in Columbus which served her parents so well. Daughter Sarah was able to attend, but daughters Beth and Mardie had their own memorial service on the west coast that week. Beth and her family were traveling from Iowa to be with Eugene's mother in San Jose.

Mardie and her husband Tony live in San Francisco, just a few miles away. Pat is most grateful to the folks at church who had been so supportive during her dad's illness and continue to be so after his death.

Bill and Betty Phillips, who lived in Panama for several years, continue to find ways to create improbable moments. They hosted a "Panama party" with 15 guests at a celebration for one of the days of Panama's independence. There were some in colorful dresses and guyaberas. A large Panama flag was tacked to the living room wall. People prepared such delights as yucca pie and every bit of the meal was authentic(except for the Mexican beer and the Peruvian "Inca Cola"). There was an attempt at salsa dancing, but the men were slow to really get this going. Perhaps the most moving moment was the singing of all verses of the Panamanian national anthem. The anthem gained strength after the first few lines and was sung to the very end with gusto (or should that be "mucho gusto?"). Their Panamanian dog and cat (Chuleta and Entonces) wound their way through the festivities, adding to the authentic decor and basking in the attention. Arabella, their German Shepherd, remained in the backyard, guarding the perimeter and keeping things safe. They had a great deal of appreciation by students and oldsters for the opportunity to talk about Panama and, for just a few hours, to feel that a little bit of that country was right here with them. They even had a long-distance phone call from Panama from one of Betty's former students and the mother of one of their guests. Abrazos were given and plans were already underway for some of them to get back together atChristmas.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 1 Sarah Moore
- 3 Sally E. Tomasek
- 6 Lisa Miriam Kirch
- 8 Robin Rosson
- 7 Jeffrey Lemley
- 10 Hester Novotny
- 12 Jennie Peet Ashton
Sarah Clarissa Kirch
- 13 Carol Ann Burlinson
Audrey Loomis
- 14 Jake Burlinson
- 15 Sara Ross
Gedeon Karasi Bukasa
- 20 Carol Barrett
- 28 Larissa Pickens
- 29 Lynn Loomis
- 30 Mouloud Randal Sennour

FRIENDSHIP SUPPERS

The idea of Friendship Suppers has been presented to the Board of Deacons as a great way for us to get to know each other better. The suppers will give you a chance to talk to other members of the congregation while sharing good food and fellowship in a setting other than the church since they will be hosted in people's homes.

- The primary purpose is to build community and friendship
- All adults are welcome to participate – members, non-members, young, old, single, married
- We ask you to commit to attending as many as four dinners over the course of the year, one of which you could host in your home if you wish
- If you don't think you can manage to host a dinner alone, we'll help you find a co-host
- Hosts would provide (besides their home) a main course and would assign others to bring appetizers, salads, etc.
- The groups of 6-10 people will change for each dinner
- You don't need a "house beautiful" to participate – or even an "apartment beautiful"; informal works for many of us
- If you don't drive, we'll help you find a ride

The dates for the dinners will be:

December 2

January 20

March 10

There are sign-up sheets on a clip-board in the Fellowship Hall.

LANDSCAPING

Fall is one of the best times to plan or plant your yard. As an avid gardener, lover of the beauty of nature, conservationist, and do-it-yourselfer, I totally enjoy taking the desires and needs of a homeowner and translating them into a plan that will enable those in that home to enjoy their outdoor surroundings.

"Landscape and Love It" is the name of my landscape design company and if you or anyone you know could use my expertise, call Nancy Edison at 524-5272. I'd love to help!

SAY "CHEESE"

This is a heads-up everyone – heads up and say, "cheese"!! You may remember a project was started to create a picture directory. Unfortunately, Betty Bodman's face broke the camera and things were put on hold for a while. Now the deacons are hoping to make that long awaited picture directory a reality and plan on taking (or re-taking if you wish) pictures of the congregation this fall. Start practicing that big smile

COFFEE HOUR

Please sign up in the Fellowship Room to be coffee hour hosts on an upcoming Sunday. The coffee hour time is such a good opportunity to visit old friends and meet visitors. We keep coffee and ginger ale and some punch fixings in the pantry in the kitchen. There are usually paper napkins, and we use coffee mugs and punch cups to avoid wasting natural resources. Your menu can be as simple or complicated as you want. Cookies and/or chips and salsa are just fine! If you have questions, talk to Pat Oakes, Tommie Pinkard, or Lynne Lemley.

Deadline for January VISITOR — December 15