

# THE COKESBURY COURIER

an edition of *The United Methodist Reporter*

Two Sections, Section A

Vol. 154 No. 32

Friday, December 14, 2007

076453

## Cokesbury United Methodist Church

10030 Scarsdale Boulevard  
Houston, TX 77089  
(281) 484-9243  
www.cumchouston.org  
www.mycokesburyspace.com



## Come Visit Bethlehem This Week



There are not one, but two opportunities to visit Bethlehem this week without ever leaving Houston!

On Sunday afternoon, December 16, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., our Live Nativity with Bethlehem Animals will be open in our front yard. After the brief presentation, boys and girls (and their attendant adults) are welcome to pet the donkey, goats and camel, and to visit

with Baby Jesus and his parents.

On Friday evening, December 21st, from 6:00-8:00 p.m., our youth will present their version of the Nativity, also in our front yard. This is a very special tradition at Cokesbury.

You are invited to these two wonderful occasions, when we celebrate the birth of Christ. Bring your neighbors, too!

## Choir Christmas Cantata Sunday, December 16 at 6:30

## Advent 2007 Calendar of Events

December 16 -	2 - 4:00 p.m.	Live Nativity with animals
	6:30 p.m.	Chancel Choir Cantata
December 21 -	6 - 8:00 p.m.	Live Nativity without animals
December 23 -	6:30 p.m.	Christmas Without Them Service
December 24 -	5:00 p.m.	Children's Christmas Eve Service
	7:00 p.m.	Traditional candlelight Service
	11:00 p.m.	Traditional candlelight Service
December 30 -	8:30 a.m.	Blessing of the Toys
	11:00 a.m.	Blessing of the Toys
December 31 -	7:00 p.m.	MYF New Year's Eve Lock In

## "Christmas Without Them" Service

Sunday, December 23 6:30 p.m.

Christmas is a time of great joy -- but sometimes it's hard to be joyful when you are missing someone you love. When there is one less chair at the Christmas dinner table, and one less package under the tree, Christmas can be painful and sad.

On Sunday, December 23rd, at 6:30, there will be a service called "Christmas Without Them." It is designed for everyone who has experienced a loss during the year.

Far from being a depressing service, it will be a service of hope and remembrance. Each loved one who has died will be honored in a special way, with the lighting of candles.

If you have experienced a loss this year, please know that you are welcome to attend. Even if you have not experienced a loss, but you know someone who has, offer to bring them to this service. Grief shared is grief lightened.



**December 16** - Flowers this week are given to the glory of God and in honor of the 17th. anniversary of Johnny and Kathy Lemaster.

## Prayer Corner

Please keep the following persons in your prayers for health and healing:

**Dollie** Philpott, **Dot** Margheim, **Katy** Kuhlman, **Mildred** Lohec, **Gloria** Markovich, **Carissa** Goodman during a difficult pregnancy and for all our servicemen and women who are serving overseas. If you have prayer requests for the Prayer Chain, please call the church office at 281-484-9243.

## FROM THE PASTOR

One of my favorite parts of each Sunday's worship service is the children's message. I'm always amazed by what the kids come up with.

They quickly realize that I am looking for a particular answer to my questions, and most likely those answers are "God" or "Jesus."

A pastor friend of mine was describing an animal to the children at his church one Sunday morning. He said, "It's brownish-gray and it has a fluffy tail. Can you tell me what it is?" Silence.

"And," he went on, "it runs up and down trees." Silence.

Becoming more desperate, he said, "It buries nuts in the ground for winter."

Finally, one little boy raised his hand. "I know it's supposed to be Jesus," he said, "but it sure sounds like a squirrel."

I especially love the children's message time during worship during the Advent season.

I always ask the question, "Who are we expecting to come at Christmas?" The first Sunday in Advent, I always get the same reply.

Who are we waiting for? Santa, of course!

By the second week in Advent, at least some of the kids are aware that a different answer is expected. About half the kids answer "Jesus!" while the other half are still hoping for the guy in the red suit.

Usually, by the time the 4th Sunday in Advent rolls around, everyone in the group knows the right answer. It's Jesus.

He may not be as exciting as the man with the eight tiny reindeer, but at church he's the Man.

This is also a good thing for grown-ups to know.

Jesus is the light shining in the darkness. He is the Savior of the world, the Prince of Peace.

No matter what else happens this Christmas, try to remember what this whole season is all about. It's God choosing to leave his throne in heaven and live among us, sharing our human condition. It's a birthday party for Jesus. That's all it is and all it has to be.

So don't be anxious, don't worry and work yourself into a frenzy getting ready for the right jolly old elf. Let the children at church remind you what Christmas is all about!

Love from your pastor, Sandra Smith



## Cokesbury Christmas Eve Services

Christmas Eve is the holiest night of the year! This year, we will celebrate the birth of Christ with three special services.

At 5:00 p.m., we'll center our worship around the needs of young children and their families. This will be a brief service with carols, the Christmas story, and candles.

At 7:00 and 11:00, worship will be at its most traditional, with Holy Communion and candlelight. No nursery will be provided for these services, as we want our children to worship with us. At the 7:00 service, there will be a children's message.

At all services, a small gift will be given to each family/household in attendance.



## Music Notes



**Youth Choir** will meet on Saturday, December 15 at 9 a.m. At 10, we will be caroling at a nearby nursing home.

### The Chancel Choir Schedule

Sunday, December 16 at 5:30, we meet in the sanctuary (unrobed) for final preparations for our Christmas Cantata "*The Gift Goes On*" with orchestra and soloists at 6:30.

On December 19, choir practice will be Chancel Choir only, no bells.

We give special thanks to everyone for a joyous Christmas season.

God Bless All of You, *Marsh*

## Apportionments Update

The church still has about \$10,000 left to pay on our annual apportionments. As you know, the apportionments are our "Great Commission" gifts. They are the funds that reach out in mission both in our own country and around the world. Please consider a special gift to help us make sure we do our fair share. Thanks!

## Courier Next Week

We will publish a Courier next week, not skipping a week as we usually do. Deadlines will be 9 a.m. Monday morning.

Due to the holidays, we will not be issuing a paper with publication dates of December 28 and January 4.

## MYF Upcoming Events

December is always a busy month, so here are some Youth events to make it even busier! This Saturday the 15th we will be having a Youth Christmas Party from 6-8 p.m. right here at church. We will be making Christmas cookies, gingerbread ornaments, singing carols, and having a Gift Swap! So please bring a wrapped gift of no more than \$10 to exchange. And of course, dress in your favorite Christmas outfit!

Of course, we will be the main characters in the Nativity scenes in front of the church: Sunday, December 16 2-4 p.m with **live** animals and Friday night, December 21, 6-8 p.m.

On New Year's Eve, we will be having a Lock-In from 7 p.m. - 7 a.m! If y'all could bring a food or beverage of your choice, that would be fantastic!

January 4th we will be helping to serve the homeless at Crossroads at Park Place UMC. This will be a great opportunity to be used by God to be a blessing to others.

On January 13th at 5:30 - 8pm for MYF we will be having a Special event! Speakers from the Christian organization "Teen Challenge" will be coming to tell their life journeys through some very difficult situations, such as alcoholism, drug abuse, and eating disorders. They will share what they have been through and how through Christ they are overcoming those addictions. Everyone is welcome to this event, youth of at least 6th grade age, their parents, and all other adults. A love offering will be taken.

- Peter Bonanno

## Thanks

Thanks so much for providing comfort, assistance and support during our time of mourning. Your prayers were comforting, the reception food was delicious and the many heartfelt messages consoled us greatly as we grieved the loss of my father.

**The Johnson Family**

Lory, Lisa, Janice, Brandon, Jeremy, Noah and Jacob

I thank all at Cokesbury for their prayers for my daughter Laura Scott. She knows your prayers helped her through her surgery and will continue through her recovery. She is doing very good so far, thanks to the Grace of God.

-Jean Bonds

## Other UMW Circle News

**Sara Owens-Gemoets Circle** met Tuesday morning, November 27 at Charlene Knox's home. A delicious brunch was enjoyed by all. Eight members were present.

Chairwoman, Linda Heinrich, directed the meeting. The bazaar was discussed plus plans for a called UMW meeting at the church on December 4.

Billie Kestler reviewed the book "God Has Never Failed Me, But Has Sure Scared Me to Death a Few Times" by Stan Toler.

-Billie Kestler

**Brenaman Circle:** Sixteen ladies came from the cold outside into Jay Standridge's warm home on November 27th. Mary Hackward, Circle Chaplain, brought the devotional. Mary Short presented the program on repositioning ourselves using our God given talents. She referred to the book *Reposition Yourself (Living Life Without Limits)* by T. D. Jakes.

Our Circle leader, Donna Northrup, gave a reading titled *Dancing With God*. All enjoyed the fellowship and a lovely lunch amid Jay's many collections at this, our last meeting of 2007.

**Dulin Circle:** The UMW Dulin Circle met on Tuesday, November 27 at the home of Ellie Melanson. Six members were present. Ellie opened the meeting with an inspirational reading. The program was a video about the hymn *How Great Thou Art*. It told about how it was written and inspired and how verses were added to the original song. It is a most beautiful and inspiring hymn and the video was breath-taking. A unanimous decision was made to donate our Love Offering, collected at each meeting to the Cokesbury discretionary fund. This fund is used to help those who have a need and Cokesbury is able to help them with these funds. We received a notice about the UMW Christmas party which will be at the church on December 11 at 6:30. We will bring finger food and various gifts to be given to The Bridge. The night circle is hosting the party and all women of the Church are invited to join the fun and fellowship. We thank Ellie for being a gracious hostess and we enjoyed a delicious lunch.

-Jean Bonds

## It's Your Time to Help with Helping Hands

The following folks have signed up to help with Helping Hands for the next two weeks:

**Third Sunday:** Anna and Ray Aquilar, Edna Faye Campbell, Lynda Detwiler, Jo Farris, Betty Grigsby, Karla Parker, Jim Roller, Carol Trotter, Martha Von Krigenbergh, Danna Whorton, Patsy and Allen Womack, and Fran Wright.

**Fourth Sunday:** Jo Felts, Nancy Hensley, Suzanne Houck, Janice Johnson, Thank Le, Peggy Smith, Faye Stafford, Linda Trevathan, Kris Wallis and Carol & Jerry Yeane.

## Cokesbury's Statement of Purpose

Learning to serve God and humankind in Jesus' name.

## UMW Spreads Christmas Joy at Bridge

The UMW Christmas Party hosted by the Stafford-Wyatt Circle took place on December 11 in the Fellowship Hall. This year's theme was a Baby Shower for Jesus and a Wedding Shower for Joseph and Mary. Ladies who attended the party brought gifts to be donated to the Bridge, a local battered woman's shelter. The gifts included diapers, medications, utensils, towels and even a microwave!

The Stafford-Wyatt Circle (night circle) also visited the Bridge on December 1st for their annual "Christmas at the Bridge Party". The women at the shelter enjoyed a delicious brisket lunch while the children enjoyed a hot dog lunch. Circle members also gave each woman a Christmas tree and ornament set as well as a small gift. As in previous years, the ladies and children were very appreciative of the party. They always love having their very own Christmas tree to decorate.

The UMW of Cokesbury are blessed to be able to share the joy of Christmas to those in need. And as long as we are blessed, we will continue to share! Please plan to join us in 2008.

-Charlene Provence

## There Is A Glow About Christmas

A Reflection for the Season

There is an energy about this season of Christmas that seems to come sometime during the fall of the year. People get interested in what they can give to others--their husbands, their wives, their children, their parents, other family members, friends, and others they may not even know. People decorate their homes so others can enjoy the beauty. People invite other people into their homes to share food and conversation and just plain joy. People seem to go to church more and worship and sing praises to our Lord and remember the promises of God and how he brings his promises to happen for the wonder and betterment of all mankind--love, hope, faith, peace.

There is this energy--this glow--about the Christmas season and it can last all year long. We can pray everyday to our Lord and ask him to give us this energy--this glow--to have joy in our hearts and hope and faith to share our thoughts and things. We can give of our talents and give of our time and material goods because giving is the most significant sign of our love for others.

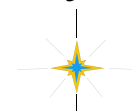
There is a glow about Christmas. Let us make it last all year long.

Mary Short, Family Coordinator

## 2008 Flower Calendar

Spots are still available in the 2008 flower calendar. Check the available dates Sunday.

### Tree of Lights



The  
Tree  
of Lights

is being offered

at Cokesbury again this year.

It is a beautiful and meaningful way to remember those people who have touched our lives. You can honor or memorialize someone special by lighting a light on our tree. The tree will be placed on the Scarsdale (front) side. Fill out the form below, attach your check, and drop it in the offering plate. You can also mail it to the church office. All proceeds will benefit the church.

Watch our tree  
begin to glow  
with beauty!

### Tree of Lights

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of \_\_\_\_\_

\$25 - Red Light

\$50 - Blue Light

\$100 - Yellow Light

\$500 - Star at the Top

Please print CLEARLY exactly the way you want your light to appear.