

## From the Pastor...

A few weeks back I challenged the congregation to ask friends and co-workers, "How can I ask God to bless you today?" I like the question because it has a more positive tone than "How can I pray for you?" and it puts the emphasis on God, which is where it should be.

I find myself asking people this question on a regular basis now, not only during the week that I challenged the congregation to do it, but when I hear of someone having to make a trip to the emergency room or when I hear of someone worrying about a friend who is hurting.

Often it turns the conversation to the person with whom I'm conversing as we talk about how God can bless them and give them the strength to reach out to their friend. I'll also pray for the friend who is hurting, of course, but I can add a prayer of blessing to the one who is worried about their friend.

Those of us who serve others, who worry about others, who seek to help others, often shortchange their own needs as we reach out to others. We need to have our well replenished, to have our needs taken care of, lest we give and give and give and find ourselves burning out.

I have found that people in this congregation replenish me and fill my well. I've had brief but blessed conversations with people as we talk after worship. One woman, after the Sunday that I challenged people to ask someone "How can I ask God to bless you...?" came up to me as I was shaking hands at the door and asked me how she could ask God to bless me. Another woman, after I spoke of the poor widow's offering of two small coins which was all that she had, told me to remember the widow's offering whenever someone criticized something I had said. She was saying to me, "You gave all you had for the sermon. It is enough."

In January we often think about what we would like to do differently in the coming year, something that will improve our lives or bring us greater health. My New Year's Resolution? I'm going to focus on bringing God into more of my conversations, especially with those I am meeting for the first time in the Wyoming community.

I'm going to ask more people: "How can I ask God to bless you today?"

Chances are, it will not only bring God into the conversations I have with others, it bless both of us as we converse.

In God's care,  
Holly



## Thank You

Many thanks to all who brought in school supplies for our November drive to help the inner city elementary children who are new to America and in great need of supplies. They were so very grateful, writing cards and a poster to thank us. Supplies continued to come in December which is once again evidence of the generosity of Wyoming UMC. Even as we prepared our Joy Bells gifts and financial help for food, you continued to give and give. I love being part of this body of Christ!

As a side note: at a recent neighborhood gathering I was updating a friend on our work for the upcoming homeless shelter "Haven Home" and somehow commented on the number of people we see regularly in worship. My friend remarked, "But you do so many things for other people! I can't believe so few of you do so much!" Thank you, church friends, for living out your faith as Jesus asks us to: by loving God & loving our neighbor. People in the community do know us by how we serve!  
~Jane Rylander

*"How can I  
ask God to bless  
you today?"*

## January Celebrations

### Birthdays

1-01	Tom Sausen	1-17	Pat Killian
1-03	Lois Janke	1-18	Cxie Thomson
1-11	Marcus Whiting	1-19	Jessa Engstrom
1-14	Steve Turbeville	1-26	Dorothy Bierma
1-15	Ben Pampusch		Evelyn Smith
1-16	Dorothy Berntson	1-31	Jane Denovchek

\*If you do not see your special date listed, please let Michelle in the office know!

### Anniversaries

1-03	Gary & Chris Sycks
1-07	Dave & Holly Clastuen



*Our sanctuary filled with Joy Bells gifts and groceries. Fifty-four children (plus parents) were blessed by your generosity!*

## Joy Bells Ministry

A huge "Thank you" to each of you who participated in our Joy Bells program by purchasing gifts, giving money, helping pack groceries and helping to give out packages! We gifted 54 children with Christmas gifts and provided 30 families with full turkey dinners. We also gave these families joy in the midst of a tough time in their lives. They are so grateful for all we do for them. We received hugs from the parents (especially many of the Dads) and several folks had tears in their eyes when we gave them the gifts. We were Jesus' hands and feet, reaching out to these families. These families were greatly blessed by this ministry and those of us who were able to help received a blessing as well. Thanks again to all!

## A Note From the BeFriendHers

Thank you to all who helped make our annual Christmas Tea an afternoon to remember! The freewill offering helped pay for the food baskets for the Joy Bells families. Thank you!

We continue to plan and serve funeral lunches, reach out to those in need, gift a Joy Bells family, and help the church with special projects like purchasing an additional tv and dvd player. Generous memorial gifts allow us to do ministry to others as we are called to serve and share our time and talents.



*But Jesus looked at them and said to them, 'With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. -Matt. 19:26*

## 2016 Annual Church Conference

This year our annual Church Conference will be Sunday, January 24 after worship. The business we conduct at this meeting includes passing the budget for 2016, accepting the reports of our church ministry teams, and electing the new leadership for 2016. We will celebrate how God has been working through the members of Wyoming United Methodist Church in the past year and begin our celebration with a pot-luck meal. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy this time together. The business part of our time together promises to be short as we know that people would like to spend the majority of our time together enjoying one another's company.



## Christmas Pageant

What a joy it was to celebrate the coming of the Christ Child with a no-rehearsal Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 20! The host of angels, the magi, the shepherd with his black sheep (Chevy Ann Sausen did a great job, as did her owner, Tom!) all came together to remind us of what we are truly celebrating this season: the love of God come down to earth as a baby.

*The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe. -Prov. 18:10*

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# Wyoming United Methodist Church MESSENGER

January 2016

## End-of-the-Year Giving

Please make sure your end-of-the-year gift to the church is postmarked by December 31 so we can credit you for that gift in your 2015 Contributions Statement. And, thank you for your support of our church and its ministries.

## 2015 Christmas Offering

This year's Christmas offering (which you can contribute to at any time mid-December through mid-January) will go to help pay for the weekend/school break food for the students in need at Wyoming Elementary School. The total cost to provide food for these weekend packs is approximately \$3000 for the school year. We're being challenged to raise this money by keeping track of what we spend on Christmas presents and donating an equal amount to this worthy cause. Please mark the memo of your check "Food Packs." Thank you!

## Church Office Hours

Between Christmas and New Year's the church office will be open, but Pastor Holly will not be holding regular office hours that week. If you need to get hold of her during that week, please call the church office.

## Santa's Helpers had Great Fun!

This year we had 10 kids stop by for an evening of fun, food and (at times) frenetic activity! The big hits were Santa's visit, (especially when he read 'Twas the Night Before Christmas), the Treasure Hunt that took the kids all around the church looking for treasure, and decorating a Christmas ornament for the kids' parents. Thanks to Lois Janke, Jane Rylander, Donna Keacher, Janet Rasmussen, Carole Aalderks, Nancy Hebrink, Holly Aastuen and Santa for making this a fun-filled event for all the kids. Thanks also to Russ and Maddie Janke for stopping by and helping out!



## Worship Services in January

This month we will be looking at some of the common complaints about worship, the Bible and church in general. We'll look at those concerns that people have about the church as they've experienced it in the past and see how those concerns are being addressed now. We'll look at the real purpose of each of these elements of church and see what we are called to do and be as the beloved community of faith serving God.

### Sunday, January 3rd

"I Want to Know...  
Why is the Bible so Boring?"  
2 Timothy 3:14-17

### Sunday, January 10th

"I Want to Know...  
Why is Church so Dull?"  
1 Chronicles 16:23-34

### Sunday, January 17th

"I Want to Know...  
Why is the Sermon so Long?"  
Isaiah 61:1-4

### Sunday, January 24th

"I Want to Know...  
Why are Church Songs so Slow?"  
Colossians 3:12-17

### Sunday, January 31st

"I Want to Know...What is Church Anyway?"  
Acts 2:42-47

*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life of whom shall I be afraid? -Ps. 27:1*