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The Beacon

Volume 55 Issue 12

December 2019

University United Methodist Church
Welcoming all to grow as disciples of Christ as we
worship, learn, and serve in community.



Pastor: Jeff Potter

Administrative Assistant: Stacey Cooper

Music Staff: Melanie Wambsganss, Elaine Wellborn

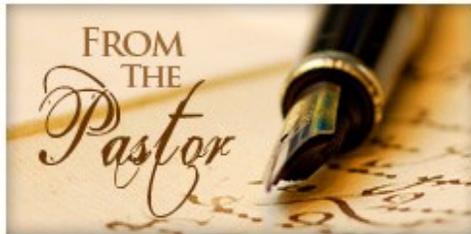
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Advent Greetings to My Family in Christ,

This Advent season we are going on a journey together. When I'm traveling with my family whether by car or by plane, at some point the question is inevitably coming. "Are we there yet?" If you have to ask the question, the answer is usually, "No." We're not *there yet*, we're *here*, and *here is somewhere in between where we are coming from and where we are trying to get to*. In this way, this question makes a lot of sense for us to explore during Advent. We live in this time of anticipation, in between the realization of what God has been up to throughout the history of this world, and what God still has in store for us. In between God coming to earth in the flesh through Jesus Christ, and the promise of Christ's return and a time when the love of God is received and shared fully within all of creation.

During Advent we remember and anticipate what God has done in Jesus Christ and what God will do in Jesus Christ. Are we there yet? No, but we are working everyday to go on to perfection in the love of God and neighbor.

This Advent season will give us many opportunities to gather together, to remember and anticipate, and to worship God with all that we are. May this season be a journey that brings you somewhere new, perhaps even someplace you never even expected. And along the way may you be blessed by the Holy Spirit with peace, hope, joy, trust, and love.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Jeff



WORSHIP IN DECEMBER

(Drinks and snacks are provided in Fellowship Hall following the 9:15 a.m. worship service)

9:15 a.m. Morning Worship

Pastor Jeff Potter

~~~~~  
Advent Series - Are We There Yet?

12.01.19 - Rev. Charles Benton

12.08.19- Matthew 3:1-12 - Hope

12.15.19 - Family Worship Program - Joy

12.22.19- Matthew 1:18-25 - Trust

12.24.19 - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - 5:00 pm

12.29.19 - Matthew 2:13-23 - So What Now?



~~~~~  
"Open Space" has been meeting around town for community-based worship and study.

We will gather on the FIRST THREE Sundays of December
at 907 SW 10th St. across from Topeka High.

For up-to-date information on meeting places and times, you are invited to join our "Open Space" Facebook page (premiering after Thanksgiving), which will also include supplemental materials and discussion.



CREATION CARE

Suggestions for Honoring God's Creation CHRISTMAS (from Blesses Earth)

- Agree as a family what you're going to do for Christmas gifts. One family decided that each person would receive three gifts each year to symbolize the gold, frankincense, and myrrh the wise men gave Jesus. They each received one thing they need, one thing they want, and one small surprise.
- Pick names out of a hat for extended family, so each adult only gets one special Christmas gift. Or opt for giving presents to children only.
- Spend less. It takes an average of six months for a credit card user to pay off holiday debt.
- Skip paper Christmas cards. If everyone sent just one less card per year, we could save 50,000 cubic yards of paper.
- Reduce the trimmings. If every family reused just 2 feet of holiday ribbon, the 38,000 miles of ribbon saved could tie a bow around the entire planet.
- Wrap in reusable material, such as cloth bags or reusable gift bags. If every household in America wrapped just 3 presents in reused materials, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields.
- Celebrate close to home. If each family in America consumed one less gallon of gasoline this holiday season (cutting out about 20 miles of travel), we'd reduce greenhouse gas emissions by one million tons. • Consider purchasing a live tree from a local nursery and replanting it after the holiday. Or purchase an artificial tree and save gas on annual trips to a tree farm; also artificial trees do not require pesticides.
- Instead of adding new ornaments this year, opt for edible or compostable items like stringed popcorn or cranberries for garland. Making Christmas decorations can also be a fun family activity.
- Switch to LED holiday lights. They cost about \$8 more per strand than standard lights, but use up to 100 times less energy and will last about ten years or one hundred thousand hours when used indoors.
- Give purposeful gifts this Christmas. Everyone appreciates homemade, personalized gifts more than store bought options. Another idea is to give an "environmental starter kit" filled with items such as high efficiency lightbulbs, a battery recharger, refillable bottles, canvas shopping bags, etc.
- Combine shopping trips to use less gas. And remember to bring your reusable shopping bags.

Blessed Earth is an educational nonprofit inspiring faithful stewardship of all creation

FINANCE

Thank you so very much!

The Finance Team would like to thank everyone who have returned their pledge cards indicating the amount that they plan to give to the church in the year 2020. It's very important that we receive all the pledge cards as soon as possible so that we can finalize the budget for 2020. We are very pleased with the number of cards that have been returned to date.

If you have not had an opportunity to return your pledge card, please do so within the next week or two at the latest. We are currently making budget plans to meet the needs of the church, as well as numerous opportunities to serve the community.

We are looking forward to 2020!

Blessings for a joyous Advent season,
Karen Myers,
Finance Chair



MISSIONS

Due to cold weather on Halloween, "Trunk or Treat" was moved inside to Fellowship Hall. Afterward, travelling trophies were awarded for tables decorated by the Benton / Rogers / Lear families (1st Place), Shannon Cooper (2nd Place) and Diana Whitney (3rd Place). Thanks to everyone who donated candy and came out to decorate a table for our neighborhood kids.

Continued thanks also, to all who bring non-perishable food and other items for the Blessing Box, Doorstep, and Fellowship & Faith. Thaine & Stacey recently delivered 145.3 lbs. of food and other items to Doorstep, plus Thaine got \$38 for recycled items. Also, in late October, Linda Benton delivered 13 health kits from Hope Circle to Fellowship & Faith.

From November 23rd to December 1st, another mission team from UUMC made a trip to Anapra, Mexico. Those travelling were: Thaine & Carol Hoffman, Diana Whitney, Robin Ghimire, and Barbara Wall (Carol's sister)

"Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."
(Matt. 25:40)



LUNCH BUNCH

All are welcome to join in lunch every Wednesday at 12:00. The Lunch Bunch meets at different restaurants around town. This month the Lunch Bunch will be eating at the following restaurants:



December 4 - Long Horn Steak House
December 11 - A-Hann Thai
December 18 - Annie's
December 25 - No Lunch Bunch

THIRD SUNDAY LUNCH

We have decided that because we are using church dinnerware, it is no longer necessary to bring your own. As always, we will have vegetarian and gluten free options available. The menus for the rest of the year will be:



December 15 - Ham, dressing, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, gravy, green bean casserole, dinner roll and salad.

If you have any suggestions for next year's Third Sunday Lunch menus, please let us know. We are always looking for new meals you would like to eat.

UUMC YOUTH FUNDRAISERS

Be sure and eat at IHOP Thursday, December 5th between 1:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Be sure and tell your waiter that you are there for the University UMC Youth Fundraiser. 20% of each meal will be donated to the youth. The money raised will help fund the Youth's mission trip to Anapra next year over spring break. Hope to see you there. Don't forget to invite family and friends.



NUTCRACKER

Come and see the ***Potter family*** perform in The Nutcracker with the Kansas Ballet Company. These performances are danced to live music provided by the Topeka Symphony Orchestra and this year there will be some professional guest dancers. The performances are at Topeka Performing Arts Center (TPAC) on Saturday, December 21st at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, December 22nd at 1:00 p.m. You can pre-order tickets through Pastor Jeff until December 6th. Pre-order tickets are \$22.50 for ages 13+ and \$13.50 for ages 2-12. After pre-order the cost is \$28.00 for 13+ and \$18 for ages 2-12.

THANK YOU

Thank you for all of the wonderful cards I have received during my recuperation. I have enjoyed reading them. Donna Spray

UNIVERSITY CHILD DEVELOPMENT

December 6th - Christmas Program at 6:00 p.m.

UCD children will have their Christmas program, *Snowmen at Night*. Have you ever wondered about the secret life of a snowman? Maybe one morning his grin is a little crooked, or his tree-branch arms have drooped, and you've thought...what do snowmen do at night? This is your chance to see an answer to the question. Do snowmen get together and play? Do they go sledding, have races, participate in skating tricks or maybe have the worlds best snowball fight? Guess you will have to come see how the UCD children answer the Questions.

December 23rd - January 1st: UCD will be closed for winter break.
Alex Renyer UCD Director



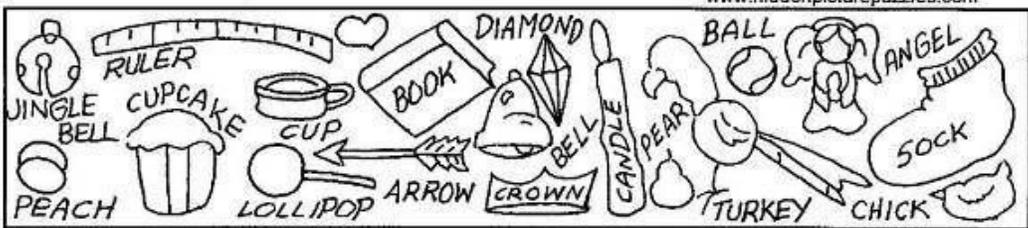
BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE

Blue Christmas, also called the Longest sleep in the Western Christian tradition, is a day in the Advent season marking the longest night of the year. On this day, some churches hold a church service which recognizes that the holidays are sometimes "blue" or filled with difficult feelings around painful life events such as death, disease, poverty, or abuse. **This years Blue Christmas Service is on Thursday, December 12th at 6:00 p.m.**

KIDS PAGE



www.hiddenpicturepuzzles.com



JUMP

Our congregation joins with 24 others in doing justice through Topeka JUMP. Being part of JUMP gives us a way to address overwhelming community problems such as: safe & affordable housing, transportation to better paying jobs, pay day loans practices, gun violence & violence in general as well as other issues. This year JUMP is attacking these issues:



Housing: Over 7,000 families in Topeka pay too much for rent, live in rat traps or both. JUMP fought for three years to finally win an Affordable Housing Trust Fund. The city acknowledged that we needed the Trust Fund and established it last July. Now, JUMP needs to win the money to fund the Trust. Some say that there isn't any money, but we know it is there, after all an established trust fund doesn't do any good if it is not funded.

Transportation: Two years ago, our justice ministry won a ride to work program. This program is getting hundreds to work at higher wage jobs outside the city limits where the bus doesn't run. The SOTO Ride-to-Work program offers \$5 rides through Capital City Taxi, from anywhere within the Topeka city limits to employees working at a number of south Topeka businesses, including Bimbo Bakeries, Home Depot, Target and Mars. The difference between the \$5.00 paid by the rider is paid by through the program, some of which funds are contributed by the businesses. By making more money, people contribute to the economy by paying taxes and purchasing more goods. They are able to provide affordable, safe housing and food for their families. This program in danger of ending due to JEDO (Joint Economic Development Organization) no longer wanting to fund the program. SOTO is the only program Go Topeka has for working class people to travel to the better paying jobs. By not funding the program, hundreds of people will lose their jobs due to lack of transportation. Letting this program die is unacceptable.

Payday loans: Payday loans have become the face of predatory lending in America for one reason: the average interest rate on the average payday loan is 391%. And that's if you pay it back in two weeks. If you can't repay the loans – and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau says 80% of payday loans don't get paid back in two weeks – then your interest rate soars to 521% and continues rising every time you can't repay the debt. If the loan isn't repaid in full on the first payday, a new finance charge is added and the cycle repeats. Within a few months, borrowers can end up owing more in interest than the original loan amount. The average borrower pays \$520 in fees to repeatedly borrow \$375. Payday lenders prey on people in desperate economic situations, meaning low-income, minority families. JUMP is fighting for interest rates to be regulated and fair.

JUMP is always looking for more Network Members. Members are asked to attend 5 meetings a year. There is very little time commitment, but you can help make a big difference in Topeka. Contact Suzy Springer or Stacey Cooper through the church office at 785-235-2331.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

We are entering one of the most joyous months on our church calendar. December is all about the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior. The UMW Christmas Luncheon will be on December 7, with HOPE Circle hosting. It's always fun to get together with our friends for a lovely meal and then a program. This year we will be entertained by the Melodears who will present a program of Christmas music.



Jo Miller, President wishing you all a very happy month in December.

BAZAAR

A huge Thank You goes out to all who visited and purchased items, made crafts, donated items for the Silent Auction, baked, cooked, served the meal, and cleaned up afterwards. The Bazaar had a steady crowd during the day and a lively bunch for Chicken and Noodles for dinner. This year's quilt winner was Grace Reichle.

The totals for the Bazaar were:

Children's Workshop \$14.80
Silent Auction \$312.00
Quilt \$589.00
Meals 91 Full, 35 Small \$1,063.00
Fellowship Hall \$1,632.00
Sunday \$1,100.00 Total \$4,710.80

Expenses

Meals \$206.32
Cash Box \$270.00
Custodians \$100.00
Total \$576.32

Total Net \$4,134.48

Thanks again and blessings to all,
Tammy Call, Bazaar Chair

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS

Buildings & Grounds will be meeting on December 4th, so we will have to wait for the January Beacon to find out what exciting plans they have for the church!



VISION ACTION TEAM

Our Prayers:

Tammy convened the meeting at 6:00 pm on November 6th. Pastor Jeff opened with a prayer. *Pastor Jeff:* presented his proposal for 2020 Vision and Goals. Vision: To cultivate and equip committed disciples of Jesus Christ who build life-giving community within our church, our neighborhood, and our world through mission, service, and outreach. He reviewed his outline of Committed Discipleship. After discussion, the proposed 2020 Vision and goals were, by motion and second, approved and voted. The 2020 Ministry Teams were presented. Jeff also presented a list of inactive members recommended for removal of membership.

Our Presence: Some Committee Reports are noted elsewhere in the newsletter.

Personnel: Carla Hearrell reported that the team met 5:00 pm this evening. They completed an Appointment Recommendation for Pastor Jeff, in which they recommended that he continue as our pastor. After reviewing this with Pastor Jeff, they will send it to the District Superintendent by December 1.

Our Gifts:

We provided cookies, fudge, and beverages for the Charge Conference that was held at the church for our Network Churches on November 20th.

We also pray for our Mission Team that travels to Anapra, Mexico starting November 23rd.

We will be assisting with the UCD Program on December 6th.

Our Service:

In December, Pastor Jeff will fill the Blessing Box, and VAT will provide desserts and help clean up after the 3rd Sunday Lunch.

Socks, hygiene items, and first aid items are needed for the Blessing Box.

Our Witness:

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them--not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock." 1 Peter 5:2-3 NIV

There will be additional information regarding the Charge Conference in the January Beacon...stay tuned.

DOORSTEP

This year has presented many challenges for Doorstep, and thankfully many blessings. As you have heard, with the sewer issue in our basement in late August we lost at least 1/3 of the Christmas items we had stored. We have cleaned up and organized the donations and have a good idea what we really need for the Christmas Store, which isn't far away now! The Christmas Store is the week of December 8th – 12th!

Items we really need are:

New, winter clothing youth, boys & girls, sizes 6-16, teens, women and men.

Women like the sweat sets, pajama pants & tops & long nightgowns. The men can use sweat sets, long sleeved shirts & boxer briefs (all sizes). All children receive an outfit and a set of pajamas.

The youth section, sizes 6-16, is the largest age range we help, and we always have to buy clothing in these sizes to cover the children we have adopted.

We also need toys for all children, and gifts for teenagers. And, monetary gifts to help cover the food expenses of the Christmas Store, which is the largest expense.

We need volunteers to work each day starting on Sunday, December 8th from 2pm- 5pm to help move all collected items to First Nazarene Church across the street. Monday volunteers are needed to help sort and organize donations. Then on Wednesday the 11th and Thursday the 12th we need volunteers to escort the families around as they shop. Flyers have been distributed with the dates and times. We schedule 19 households per hour during distribution, so we need plenty of volunteer escorts!

You can bring donations for the Doorstep Christmas Store, Monday – Friday from 8am – 3pm. We are located at 1119 SW 10th Avenue (10th and Buchanan), or to your congregation. Donated items for the Store are needed by Monday, December 9th at the very latest!

You can also donate online at: www.doorsteptopeka.org

The staff at Doorstep wishes each of you Happy Holidays and a Blessed 2020!

D

A mother is a person who, seeing there are only four pieces of pie for five people, promptly announces she never did care for pie.

—Tenneva Jordan

I knew I was not supposed to be quite so excited. I was too old for that. At age eleven, the oldest and my mom's "grown up" girl, I had to keep my cool. I was in middle school after all. But every chance I got, when I was alone, I checked each present under the tree. I read every tag and felt every package, guessing at the contents within. I had examined each gift so often that I could tell which present went to which person without even looking at the tags.

It had been a tough year for my family. Whenever my mom looked over at the tree and scattered presents, she would sigh and warn us, "There won't be as much for Christmas this year. Try not to be disappointed." Christmas had traditionally been a time for my parents to spoil us. In years past, the presents would pile up and spill out from under the tree, taking over the living room. I had heard the phrase "giving is better than receiving," but thought that whoever had said that must have been out of their mind. Getting presents was the whole point! It was the reason I couldn't get to sleep on Christmas Eve.

On Christmas morning, we eagerly waited in the hallway until Dad told us everything was ready. We rushed into the living room and let the wrapping paper fly. We made weak attempts to wait and watch while other family members opened their presents, but as the time passed we lost our self-control.

"Here's another one for you," said Mom as she handed me a package. I looked at it, confused. Having spent so much time examining the presents before Christmas, I recognized this one. But it had not been mine. It was my mom's. A new label had been put on it, with my name written in my mother's handwriting.

Mom, I can't..."

I was stopped by my mother's eager, joyful look—a look I could not really understand. "Let's see what it is, honey. Hurry and open it."

It was a blow dryer. Though this may seem but a simple gift, to me it was so much more. Being an eleven-year-old girl, I was stunned. In my world, where receiving outweighed giving by light years, my mom's act of selflessness was incomprehensible. It was a huge act. Tears filled my eyes and I thought in disbelief about how much my mom must love me to give up her Christmas so I could have a few more presents.

I have always remembered that Christmas fondly. It had such an impact on me. As an adult with children in my life whom I adore, I can now understand my mom's actions. I see how she was not "giving up her Christmas" as I had thought, but was finding an even greater joy in her Christmas because giving truly is better than receiving. My mom's simple act meant the world to me.

—Jennifer Yardley Barney

WASHBURN SERVERS

Washburn Servers have brought in \$668.45 so far this year. The money raised by Washburn Servers goes to our Mission Shares. If you would like to be a volunteer, please contact me at: 785-224-4155 or mewinans@sbcglobal.net and I'll get you signed up to help. Most of the volunteering is at Rotary meals on Friday mornings from 6am - 10am. Black shirt, black slacks, black slip-resistant shoes will be your outfit for this job.

Mary Winans

UUMC/Washburn Volunteer Coordinator



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Again this year, Children's Ministry is sponsoring a Christmas party for UCD. The party will be held December 6 in Fellowship Hall, immediately following UCD's Christmas program at 6:00 pm.

The theme for the program and party is Snowmen at Night. We will feature photos with a snowman for UCD children, with photographs taken by Charles Benton. We will offer various snowman themed games, activities, and refreshments. Many from our congregation are working at the party. Anyone interested in participating is welcome: contact Mary Peters or Linda Benton.

University Family Christmas Program will be December 15th during worship. Jenay is organizing the event and reported some exciting ideas are being implemented: poetry, song performances, and sharing of family traditions and special Christmas ornaments.



FELLOWSHIP AND FAITH

Fellowship and Faith requests for Christmas gifts this year include: blankets, toys, underwear, socks, shorts (all for all ages male and female), housewares, and soccer balls. Dates for Christmas gift wrapping are November 30, December 7 and December 14, from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Christmas gifts will be given out on December 21. Fellowship and Faith continues to struggle due to decreased funding and decreased donations.

One reason is that they are viewed as only a Mercy Ministry, which is liable to be less valued. They are, in fact, very much a Justice Ministry; they provide many services such as help with tax form preparation, ESL classes, tutoring, and filling out resumes. They continue to need generous donations to the food pantry: beans and rice, soups, peanut butter, jelly, rice meals, and the like.



OUR PRAYERS AND CONCERNS GO OUT:

TO OUR MEMBERS & FRIENDS WITH SPECIAL CONCERNS:

Jo Miller's son - John, Lisa Eiben, Becky Ross's sister, Diane Potter's niece, Jane Noble, Pam Land, Susie Marchant, Mary Winans' cousin Lynne, and friends, Michael Springer, Norma Pike, Donna Spray, Zack Hearrell, Jim Fredrickson, our devoted caretakers, our enemies, and peace for our world.

Our deepest sympathy to friends and family in the death of Ralph Reichle.

TO OUR HOMEBOUND MEMBERS:

Joanne Armstrong, Gayle Dick, Peggy Harrison



Please contact the UUMC office if you know of someone who should be included or removed from our prayer list.

1 December	8 December	15 December	22 December	29 December
Holton: Evangel/ Nueva Vida Kelly Sipes Hector Sanchez Trish McAllister	Holton: First Kathy Williams Karen Stous	Horton-Whiting- Netawaka Younghwan Won Darlene Burk Jon Yingst Marilyn Banka	Hoyt Norma Miller Delbert Boling	Lecompton Rob Ernest Mary Sue Sledd

TO THESE DISTRICT CHURCHES:



Prayer Requests

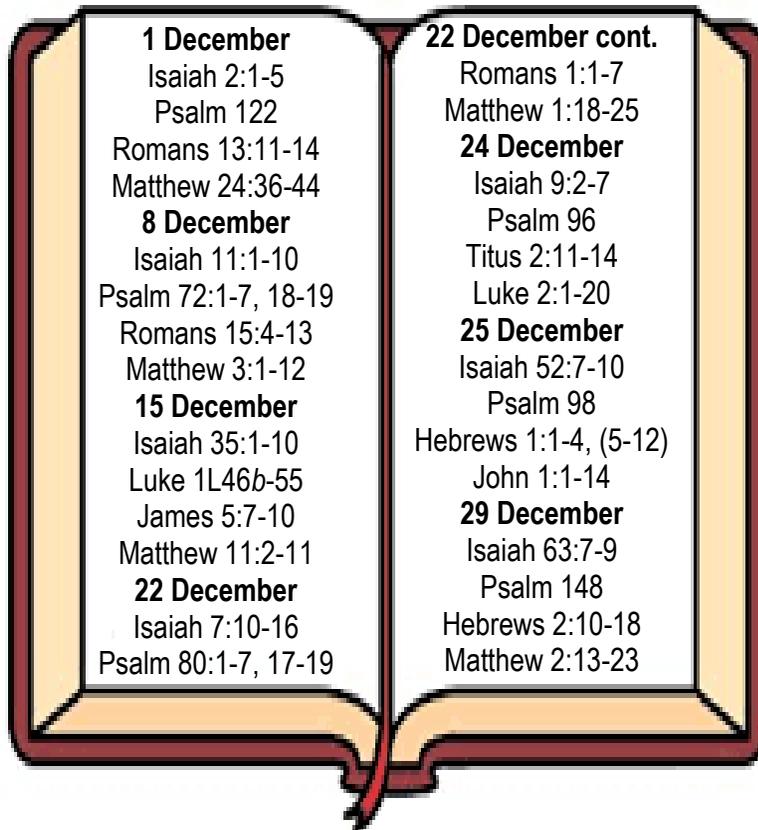
If you would like to be notified by e-mail when there are new prayer requests, such as church members in the hospital, surgeries, births, deaths, etc., or if you have a prayer request you would like others to know about, contact Mary Winans at mewinans@sbcglobal.net or phone 785-224-4155 and leave a message. If you do not have email and would like to be

December Birthdays

- 1 Aiden Wills
- 6 Charles Benton
- 11 Evie Unkefer
- 15 Donna Spray
- 20 Rick Raney
- 24 Marlene Harder
- 28 Jackson Wills
- 31 Jo Miller
- 31 Scott Campbell
- 31 Edward Querbach



If you know of a birthday or anniversary that has been omitted or is not correct on this list, please call the office and let us know.



DECEMBER 9:15 AM WORSHIP LEADERS

Liturgist

1 Mike Peters
 8 Carol Hoffman
 15 Melanie Wambsganss
 22 Carla Hearrell
 29 Jenay Weekly

CHILDREN'S MOMENTS

1 Mary Peters
 8 Thaine Hoffman
 15 Pastor Jeff
 22 Carla Hearrell
 29 Jenay Weekly

HOSPITALITY TEAM CAPTAINS

1 Bob & Mary Ann Bearce
 8 Stacey Cooper
 15 Youth
 22 Diana Whitney
 29 George & Val Carter

DECEMBER LAY SERVERS

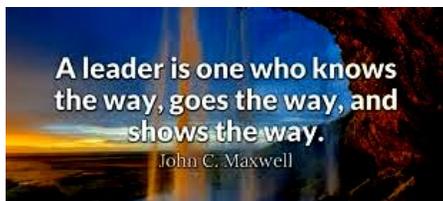


Nursery

NURSERY ATTENDANT

9:00 a.m.-11:15 p.m.

Shannon Cooper



SUNDAY CHURCH OPENERS

1 Kevin Koester
 8 Melanie Wambsganss
 15 Dale Bearce
 22 Linda Reece
 29 Rick Raney

SUNDAY CHURCH CLOSERS

1 Dan Orndorff
 8 Mary Winans
 15 Dale Bearce
 22 Linda Reece
 29 Rick Raney

LAY CONGREGATIONAL CARE TEAM

HOMEBOUND
 1 Cheryl Walters & Mary Winans

Hospital Visits
 Mary Winans

University UMC
1621 SW College Ave
Topeka, Kansas 66604-2761

The Beacon is published
monthly for the members
and friends of University
United Methodist Church.

*** SUNDAY SCHEDULE ***
9:15 a.m. Worship Service
10:15 a.m. Sunday School
11:30 a.m. 3rd Sunday Lunch
Open Space
(See inside for locations)

