

# KNOW GROW GO

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF  
PORT CHARLOTTE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
VOLUME 43 - ISSUE 12

## December 2012

Sunday Worship: 8:00am - 11:00am - 6:00pm    [www.pcumc.info](http://www.pcumc.info)    941-625-4356 ph / 941-625-0144 fax

### “CHRISTMAS – IT’S ALL ABOUT HIM!?”

As the holidays rolled forward and Christmas got closer, a young boy saw that his mom seemed really stressed. She was irritable and just about everything seemed to get on her nerves.

It came time for the little boy to get ready for bed. He bathed, put on his pajamas, got under the covers and as his mom came in and sat beside him on the bed. They would usually finish their prayers by saying the Lord’s Prayer, but the little boy altered one line that changed everything. “God, forgive us our Christmases, as we forgive those who Christmas against us.”

The circumstances that caused that little boy to pray for his mom “Christmasing” against others can happen to any of us. It happens when we lose focus on the true meaning of Christmas. We can get so caught up in our method for pulling off Christmas, that we lose track of the message of Christmas. When we get weary with Christmas we can miss the wonder of Christmas. The Divine took on the human, God became man.

Jesus stepped off of a throne in heaven to be placed in a stable in Bethlehem. Or as it says in 2 Corinthians 8:9, “*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*” Talk about stressed out parents, can you imagine what Mary was thinking after the angel Gabriel sang his song to her? What about Joseph? What will people think?” But God knew that the time was right.

Scripture said that the Messiah’s birth was to take place in Bethlehem. But both Mary and Joseph lived in Nazareth. But God took care of that situation by using a little man with a great big ego. His name was Caesar. Caesar decided to see just how powerful he was, so he issued a decree that everyone had to go back to their place of origin to be counted. Mary and Joseph made the difficult and in convenient journey all the way to Joseph’s boyhood home of Bethlehem. It was there Mary gave birth.

Years later, at just the right time, Jesus walked into the synagogue in the town of Nazareth, he opened up the scroll and started to read from the book of Isaiah: “*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.*” (Luke 4:18-19)

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#### December 1

Pancake Breakfast  
7-11am (with Santa!) 

#### December 12

WNO Dinner 5pm  
Choir Cantata 7:00pm

#### December 15

Family Ministry Caroling  
and Potluck 2pm

#### December 19

Children’s Christmas  
Program “Sing to the King”  
6pm—during WNO

#### December 24

#### Christmas Eve

6pm / 8pm / 11pm Services

#### December 25

#### Merry Christmas!

#### Community Christmas Dinner

11:30am—2:30pm  
Fellowship Hall

#### December 28

Family Dinner & a Movie  
“Santa Clause 3” 6-8pm

#### Note:

The church offices will be closed at noon 12/24 and 12/31. We will be closed all day 12/26 & 1/1.

continued from page 1...

Jesus had just declared what had been in the heart, mind, and will of God since before the world began. The One sent by God was always in perfect sync with God. He mentored spiritual leaders like Nicodemus, and still treated outcasts like the woman at the well with respect and care. He ministered on earth only a short time, before He was crucified. But then He rose and then ascended into heaven, promising to return.

Friends, the Jesus who was born in a stable, who walked on this earth, who was crucified, and rose again, is not merely a figure in history. He was that, but a whole lot more. He is alive, and He is still changing lives today; in this season of Christmas and every season. That is the reason He came: He came so that because of God's gracious love and His sacrifice, this season that is "all about Him," somehow becomes "all about us."

My prayer is that our church family at Port Charlotte United Methodist Church reflects that same loving grace in each of our ministries. That in a season that many believe is "all about them," we can make it "all about Him."

Have a blessed Advent, and a meaningful Christmas season,

Pastor Brian

## Extravagant Generosity

As of 10/31/12  
Y-T-D  
Income \$719,473.74  
Expenses \$747,255.33

HELP (October)  
Utilities 8 - Rent 3 - Gas Vouchers 33

### A Note About Charitable Contributions for 2012

Checks or cash for 2012 contributions must be delivered to the church by December 31<sup>st</sup> in order to claim a charitable contribution deduction for this year on your tax return.

Checks that are placed in the church offering during the first worship service in 2013 will not qualify for a 2012 deduction even if the check is dated in 2012 or was actually written in 2012. However, checks that are written, mailed, and postmarked in 2012 will be deductible in 2012 even though they may not be received by the church until 2013.

Loving  
Memory

Helen Clymer 11-14-2012

## Sunshine Ministry

"An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up." Proverbs 12:25 NIV

For over 31 years, the Sunshine Visitation has been a vital ministry of this church.

More visitors are urgently needed to bring a little "sunshine" into the lives of shut-ins by contacting them at least once a month by a personal visit, or a phone call, a note or card.

If you can devote several hours a month to this important ministry, please call the church 625-4356.



### Ladies! What is a "Secret Sister"?

- ◆ Someone who prays for you throughout the year
- ◆ Someone that remembers you on special occasions
- ◆ An anonymous "secret" friend

### Ready to be a "Secret Sister"?

Just stop by the Welcome Center to fill out a brief questionnaire, and return it to the Church Office, or any of these women: Sharon Bencivengo, Lynda Freas, or Ann Van Hoose-Oleson

At the end of 2013, we will have a "Reveal" Tea when you and your "Secret Sister" will be revealed.

Then we will start it all over again...!

## Children's Ministry

*Barbara Hald*

The Children's Ministry wants to thank everyone who made our Pumpkin Patch and "Eats and Treats" a huge success this year. There are many stories of how God is working in this place. One family who was afraid to go to a church, but was persuaded to attend "Eats and Treats" felt so welcome and had great time. The child won a door prize and was ecstatic. It's experiences like this that start the process of bringing people to Christ and the church.

We will be caroling with the Family Ministry on December 15. The bus will leave promptly at 2pm with a pot luck to follow at the church at 5 pm. All are welcome to join us as we go to the nursing homes and sing.

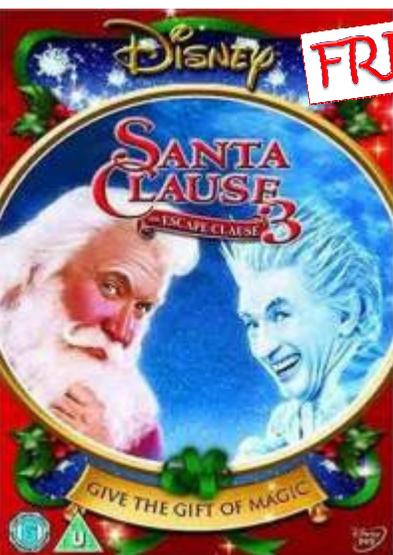


Our P,B, and J's have been working hard for their Christmas performance on Wednesday Dec.19 during WNO at 6 pm. Please come and support the children as they "Sing to the King."

Dinner and a Movie Night will be on December 28th at 6pm. The movie will be "Santa Clause 3 / The Escape Clause."

Wishing Everyone A Wonderful Christmas.

In His Love,  
Barbara



### Family Dinner and Movie

Friday, Dec. 28th  
at 6pm  
Fellowship Hall



## Children's Weekday Ministry

*Erica Brown*

I don't know what happened but November is gone and it's Christmas time already! What a wonderful time of year to teach in a Christian school. We ended November with a Thanksgiving feast. The children dressed as pilgrims, Indians, and turkeys for a small program, then we ate, and ate, and then had pie! As usual, the parents brought in food galore... it's one of the perks of being a teacher and a Methodist. In December we look forward to celebrating Jesus' birthday with a party on the 19th and 20th. We could always use extra hands helping at the different "stations." If you would like to volunteer, we would love the help! We work on all sorts of fun projects in December, some of our highlights are... Christmas, candy canes, silly shoes and socks, stars, and Jesus. Come check out the hallway and the classrooms, you will see all sorts of creative works.

*Our Thanksgiving Feast was so much fun!*



### It's the Angel Tree time of year!

On Wednesday, November 28th, the Family Ministry and Children's Weekday Ministries will be decorating the Salvation Army Angel Tree. Once again, the after-school children have made an Angel ornament for you to take as you adopt an angel. It is our gift to you and a reminder to pray for the child you adopt. **They will be due back to us on Sunday, December 9th.** We will deliver them to Salvation Army on the 10th. Thank you for helping us with this very worthy cause.

We pray you have a blessed new year.

Praising God,

Erica  
Love ♥ Play ♥ Learn



## Youth Ministry *Paul Kisner*

### Youth Christmas Party

December 19

6:00 – 8:30 pm

Please bring a \$5 donation for World Vision  
and a gift (\$5 or less)

for our white elephant gift exchange.

**Join us for food, fun, and fellowship!**



### December Wednesday Night Series: "The Messiah"

December 5: His Family: Mary and Joseph  
December 12: His Visitors: The Shepherds & the Magi  
December 19: Christmas Party  
December 26: No Youth (Merry Christmas)



### Family Ministry Sunday Morning Study Group

#### The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem

In this study, Pastor Adam Hamilton travels with us from Nazareth to Bethlehem in a fascinating look at the birth of Jesus Christ. Using historical information, archaeological findings, and personal reflections, Hamilton illuminates this most amazing moment in history. We follow the footsteps of Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and others, gaining insight into our own journeys with Christ.

5-week DVD study begins December 2 at 9:30 am. Join us in the conference room for discussion and reflection.

## December Birthdays

01 Stacey Kern	18 Gertrude Lynch
02 Norma Bertling	18 Richard Mallard
02 Carol Fisher	21 Rita Hockett
04 Gary Mason	22 Virginia McConocha
05 Paul Bencivengo	22 Marsha Mikus
06 Chantel Young	22 Samantha Fisher
07 Jessica Wilcek	23 Jacob Bowers
10 Laura Donham	24 Janice Brown
10 Carson McNamara	25 Sophia Bonsky
11 Merle McDonald	26 Gay Kemp
11 Fern West	27 Dorothy DeSilva
11 Julie Scott	29 Joyce Gooden
11 Angelica MacKenzie	29 Nicholas Bonsky
11 Seanna Bailey	29 Kordell Slater
13 Lucy Leavitt	30 Maxine Bolitho
14 Judy Western	30 Arthur Miller
15 Sam Force	30 Bob Cates
15 Wade Warden	31 Jean Nordstrom
15 Nathan Foster	
16 Elfreda Bryan	
16 Angelo Wilkins	
17 Bud Heinig	
17 Paul Campbell	
17 Judy Brown	



## December Anniversaries

01 Warren and Alice Heidenis
06 Jerry and Gail Swanson
10 J. C. and Margaret Spann
12 Kristian and Jessica Dunda
16 Lloyd and Viris Brown
18 Ron and Patty Royer
19 G.Walford and Marlene Young
23 Steve and Phyllis Cox
26 Paul and Norma Campbell
26 Don and Esther Keirnan
27 Dick and Peg Thompson
27 Lisa and Gary Friend
27 John and Josephine Keating

## Frequently Heard Questions *Jonathan Carlsen*

**Question:** What is the Christmas Conference and why is it important to us?

**Answer:** The Christmas Conference was the founding conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest of the ancestor denominations of the UMC. Until the American Revolution, Methodists in the British Isles and North America were a mainly lay-led movement within the Church of England. A few Anglican priests — John and Charles Wesley, John Fletcher, and Thomas Coke — provided guidance, but most of the preachers and leaders were laity, men and women. Methodists in America had no clergy of their own. They depended on local Anglican priests to baptize, give communion, and conduct weddings and funerals. But after the Revolution all these priests fled to England or Canada. John Wesley begged the Anglican Bishop of London to ordain some of his preachers to serve in America. The bishop refused, because an obsolete British law required all priests to swear allegiance to King George III. America's non-Methodist Anglicans faced the same obstacle until that law was repealed. But Wesley couldn't wait. He ordained two lay preachers and sent them with Thomas Coke to meet with and ordain resident leader Francis Asbury and organize an independent Methodist church. They did this at a conference in Baltimore over Christmas, 1784 — the Christmas Conference.

**Question:** What is this thing all over the sanctuary Christmas tree? It looks like a **P** and an **X** fused together.

**Answer:** The figure is called a *chrismon*. That comes from the Latin phrase, "*Christus Monogramma*" or "monogram of Christ." The letters are actually the Greek letters **X** (*chi*) and **P** (*rho*), the first two letters of the Greek word *Χριστος* (*Christos*) or *Christ*. We pronounce the **X** like the *ch* in *Bach*.



**Question:** In Matthew 1:23 in the *Revised Standard Version*, the *New Revised Standard Version*, and the *Good News Bible* (TEV) we read that a "virgin shall conceive ...," but Isaiah 7:14, which Matthew quotes here, says it's a "young woman." Are the translators denying the Virgin Birth or attacking Biblical prophecy?

**Answer:** The short answer is neither. The head of the NRSV translation committee was a solid evangelical in his faith. Something more subtle and complicated is going on. Isaiah 7:14 uses the Hebrew word *almah*, meaning "young woman," not necessarily a virgin. When you read this verse in its context, you find that Isaiah is telling King Ahaz that a child named Immanuel from their own time would be God's sign of His plan to deliver Judah from invaders. The child's name was the crucial sign, not whether his mother was a virgin or not. But, later, when Isaiah was translated into Greek, God, looking forward to Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, inspired the translators to use a Greek word that specifically meant *virgin*. TEV committee member Eugene Nida says that if they used *virgin* in Isaiah 7:14, they'd be mistranslating the Hebrew and saying that the Bible records **two** *Virgin Births!* (*Good News for Everyone*, Word, 1977).

Do you have a question about the Bible or United Methodist belief, organization, or practice? E-mail them to me at [theexhorter\\_fl@yahoo.com](mailto:theexhorter_fl@yahoo.com) or leave them with Katherine Warden at the church office and I'll try to answer as many as I can. — JAC



## *Greetings from Connie*

# *October 2012*

*Iglesia Evangélica Dominicana  
Apartado 42 Barahona, Dominican Republic*

### **Iglesia Evangélica Dominicana 90 Years of Ministry**



We thought we were not going to be able to go to the capital on Sunday, October 28<sup>th</sup> to be a part of this great celebration of 90 years of the Evangelical Church, but God had other plans. When the storm Sandy took out part of the bridge that spans one of the rivers we were cut off from the capital. I know this has happened before, and I remember the amount of time it took to repair this and to get transportation moving again. I remember the closing of the gas stations because the trucks could not get through.

So our trip was cancelled and I went immediately to fill up the gas tank on the truck. But Saturday night at 7pm, the chauffer of the bus we had commissioned called to say the bridge had opened to all traffic. There was a shout of joy when I announced at the end of our youth service that we would be leaving at 5:30 am the next morning to attend the service.



### **Memorial Service**

In the last newsletter, I told you about the death of a 16 year old boy named Juan. The custom here is to have a time together with the family to mark the one month date of the person's death. Some of the youth came to me with the boy's aunt and asked if I would have a service for Juan on this date. The mother of the boys has always been one of our worst critics as she comes from a very conservative and critical denomination and had always spoken badly of our church and members. When I heard that her pastor refused to have this service because Juan was not a Christian and was disobedient, I immediately agreed to do so.

I prayed so much about this service and how to present the gospel to those who would be there. What an amazing opportunity God gave our congregation to demonstrate true Christianity. It was a wonderful service attended by around 120 people, held in the street in front of the home. We comforted the family, sharing in their pain, and challenged those that were there to take a good look at their lives and to accept the sacrifice that Christ made for each of us without judging others. When I came here ten years ago, I never would have imagined I would have an opportunity like this. The mother is no longer a critic of ours and many have seen that we are truly Christians even if our ladies can wear trousers and wear make-up.

Col 3:12, 13 says "...clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another... and over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity." NIV

## [ MISSIONARY CONNIE DI LEO'S NEWSLETTER ]

**Youth Club**

Our youth ministry continues to be a successful. I wondered if a ministry could have too much success! Sometimes when I have 25-30 youth here playing dominoes and other games the noise is a bit loud! But I always remind myself that they are here in a safe and healthy environment with supervision and not participating in motorbike races or in the bars. Dominoes is still the favorite pastime and I have ordered a few more tables so more can play and not watch as that is when the discussions get loud. Everyone knows better than the ones playing! The second favorite pastime is using the internet on my computer! Facebook is not only popular in the states but here as well.



Rev. Connie Di Leo, Advance Special # 014169  
 connie\_copa@yahoo.com 1-809-399-3096

General Board of Global Ministries of the United  
 Methodist Church

**Orphanage**

Pastor Pedro and his congregation have done a wonderful job building this large orphanage behind their church. It can house up to 100 children. They will concentrate on boys ages 9 to 18 and hope to begin housing the boys in January. I have been asked to serve as the chaplain so God is leading me to a new outreach for 2013. Our youth will be involved as much as they can in providing enrichment activities and Spiritual guidance for these boys.

**Prayer Requests:**

**For the pregnancy of Grisel:** I finally got a picture of Mello, Grisel and Henny so those of you that are praying for them can see them. So far all is going well with Grisel's pregnancy so keep her in your prayers.



**For continued guidance as I lead this young congregation;**

**For spiritual growth in the young believers;**

**For continued good health in order to serve as God asks me to serve;**

