OAK FOREST NEWS

VOLUME 4, Issue 54 December 2015

Pastor's Message:

Our Lord Jesus Christ says, "But be alert; I have already told you everything."

Mark 13:23

The above Scripture seems especially appropriate during Advent. Here Jesus instructs the disciples about waiting. The word õAdventö means coming, which means as Christians we find ourselves waiting on the coming of Godos reign in the world.

Waiting is an important part of faith. As Mary waited 9 months from the day of announcement of Jesusø birth to the day of his arrival, so the church has waited nearly 2,000 years for the announcement of Christøs returní and still we wait.

Jesusøadvice for waiting? õBe alert; I have already told you everything.ö

Recently, I went into a beautifully decorated sanctuary and noticed the nativity. Shepherds, sheep and donkey all seemed to be leaning into an empty manger scene. Clearly, they were waiting with great expectation for the arrival of the holy family and a manger filled with the Christ child.

While their waiting seemed expectant, I thought how different Maryøs waiting must have been. Anyone who awaits the birth of a child knows thereøs much to be doneô doctorøs appointments, certain changes in diet, rooms to be prepared, gifts and advice to be received. Mary went to Elizabethøs to receive encouragement in preparation for the arrival of her Son, our Savior. And Mary might also add, that great pain and sacrifice comes before the arrival of her awaited promise.

I couldnøt help but think, then, how are we preparing our lives, our home or our church to õremain alert?ö Jesus seems to think heøs already told all we need to know to help us wait alertly. Perhaps Jesus refers here to the great commands of õLove the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself.ö

As Methodist we explain Jesus great command concerning loving God and others through the õGeneral Rulesö of the churchô do no harm, do good and attend to the ordinances of the church. Clearly, Methodistøs are practical people. Waiting alertly simply means abstaining from harming others in our words and deeds. Doing good means going out and showing mercy through concrete actions in our community. Attending to the ordinances of the church means, come to church, pray, fast, receive communion and prayerfully read the Scriptures.

Just as Jesus had the utmost confidence that loving God and loving neighbor kept us alert and ready to receive our Savior upon his return, so too John Wesley and countless Methodistøs since believe that through a life given over to the practices of doing good, doing no harm and attending to the ordinances of the churchô ordinary folks like us remain alert and become the kind of people God created us to become.

Advent, then, simply calls us to refocus and become alert again. It teaches us to alertly and actively wait for that blessed day when God finally gets what God wantsô a new heaven and a new earth. This Advent, then, I pray our waiting is alert and that God further completes that good work which He started in us. Amen.

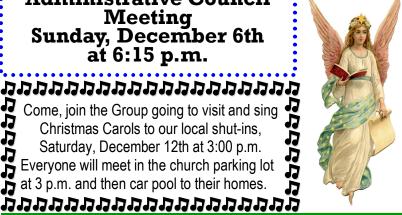
Pastor Bryan



Administrative Council Meeting Sunday, December 6th at 6:15 p.m.

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Come, join the Group going to visit and sing Christmas Carols to our local shut-ins. Saturday, December 12th at 3:00 p.m. Everyone will meet in the church parking lot at 3 p.m. and then car pool to their homes.



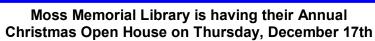
A BIG thank you from the Outreach Committee to anyone who helped with Operation Christmas Child by manning our collection center, packing a shoebox or saying a prayer. We collected 278 shoeboxes!



C A N D L E L I G H T S E R V I C E

UMW Annual Christmas Luncheon & Christmas Basket packing

Thursday, December 17th 11:30 p.m. at the Hiawassee Chophouse. Then return to church and pack and deliver the Christmas baskets.



Stop by anytime between 11:00 a.m. & 7:30 p.m. for Holiday Cheer and Entertainment by the Blue Ridge Dulcimer Players 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Dong forget to bring your favorite appetizer, dessert, or snack food, with the recipe to share with others.

Christmas Concert & Covered Dish

Sunday, December 20th at 6:00 p.m. Invite your family, friends, neighbors and co-workers. Bring your favorite dish to share. Then stay for the Joyful Christmas Concert.



Christmas Eve Candlelight &

Holy Communion Services Thursday, December 24th 4:00 p.m.

11:00 p.m.

Dec. 1
<i>Dec.</i> 2
<i>Dec.</i> 2
<i>Dec. 3</i>
<i>Dec.</i> 6
Dec. 11
Dec. 14
Dec. 16
Dec. 16
Dec. 19
Dec. 19
Dec. 21
Dec. 31

Our Outreach ministry delivered 37 Thanksgiving meals to local shut-ins on Thanksgiving Day. Thank you goes out to all of the people who delivered the meals. The meals were a blessing to all who received them.

Parsonage Open House Saturday, December 19th

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from 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Come and go as you please. Bring only yourself, and enjoy light food and fellowship at Pastor Bryan, Stephanie & Patrickøs home.



Come, worship the newborn king!

To share information in this newsletter please call the church office: 828-389-9077 Or send an email: oakforestumc@dnet.net