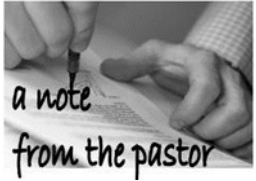


The Springs



Rev. Don Tabberer

December 17, 2014



"The Word became flesh and made his home among us. We have seen his glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14, CEB)

It just dawned on me that this would be our last newsletter for 2014. It is so hard to believe that we are approaching Christmas again and another year is about to end. We already have to write 2015 on some paperwork and it feels awkward. Where has our year gone? Can we look back on 2014 with any sense that we have accomplished what God asked of us?

I was just having a conversation this morning in our weekly prayer gathering about how remarkable it is that God managed to send Jesus to us, into a world that would not receive him; and continues to find ways to work God's plan through us – *in spite* of us. It is truly a Christmas miracle that God manages to push us, pull us, and drag us forward into the Kingdom and good things keep happening. It certainly is **not** through **our** own strength and power.

That is what I want us to consider today – **the true Christmas miracle**. The presence of God in Jesus Christ who makes his home among us is the most miraculous truth of Christmas every year. At the risk of sounding like a trite greeting card, Jesus really is the *"reason for the season."* In the midst of all the busy-ness we make for ourselves between Thanksgiving and Christmas, Jesus finds a way to settle in with us and offer us a bit of peace. This got me to thinking about some of the ways in which I felt God's presence in our church this past year.

In January a group of us went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. It was the perfect way to begin our year by walking where Jesus walked and learning more about the lands of the Bible. God was present with us, guided us, and brought us home safely.

In March we celebrated 100 years of Methodism in Sand Springs with several activities, including a visit from our Bishop Robert E. Hayes, Jr. It was a joyous time to reflect on the past and plan for the future as we saw how God had been present and moved through the life of this church through the years. It was also a time to celebrate that our church was born from the foundations of two wonderful congregations

who are now one in Christ as SSUMC.

This summer also marked a serious time of crisis for our congregation as we faced a financial crisis that necessitated difficult decision-making and challenging sacrifices. God was present with us throughout the months of this ordeal and brought us through with hope for a brighter future.

This year our Thanksgiving Dinner Ministry served 1200 meals, setting a record. Dozens of volunteers from this church and from the community participated in this event – an event that could only be possible with God's presence in the middle of it.

Our Helping Hands Ministry has been working hard to establish its niche and many wonderful projects were accomplished this year. They have partnered with Restore Hope, Sand Springs Community Services, and the Tulsa Regional Food Bank to provide goods and services that help the needy in our area. We believe that God is calling us to continue to grow this ministry and we pray for God's leading every day. If not for God's miracles, this group could do nothing.

Through all of this, our church has welcomed six new families and three individuals this year. We confirmed seven youth and we have baptized eight individuals. We are so blessed that God is leading people to us so that we can live out our call to be light and salt.

So, in the middle of all that is going on right now as we gear up for Christmas services, and Linda and I get ready for family gatherings, I do find some peace in recognizing the Christmas miracles that come to us throughout the year. My message for Christmas Eve is called *"Connecting the Dots."* It's about recognizing Jesus in the Christmas bedlam and seeing the true Christmas miracle as something that comes to us every day. It's about connecting the dots from that tiny **baby Jesus**, born in a manger, to the glory of the **Resurrected Jesus** whose Holy Spirit lives in us and through us every day.

Linda and I want to thank you for the wonderful year we have shared in ministry together and for all your prayers and support. Through everything we have faced, we have felt God's presence in this church, and counted on God's Christmas miracles. We wish you the best that God has to offer and pray you sense God's presence in your life.

*Merry Christmas,
Pastor Don and Linda*

Sacrificial Giving this Christmas

This year we have decided to designate 100% of our Christmas Eve offering to Restore Hope Ministries. This will be our last opportunity to make a significant contribution to Restore Hope through the Kaiser Family Foundation Matching Gift grant. Every dollar we give will be matched by this grant, doubling the amount of our gift to this important ministry. Please be generous this Christmas Eve. You need to make your check payable to SSUMC and write "Restore Hope" on the memo line. To qualify for the matching funds this gift must come from the church.

This ALSO means that we will not be taking up an offering on Christmas Eve to benefit our church. We are asking that you plan ahead for this reality and make your regular contributions on Sunday, December 21st and 28th. As we approach the end of the year it is very important that you make your gifts to the church so that they will be credited to your accounts in 2014 for Income Tax purposes. We will place a locked box in the lobby at the back of the Sanctuary if you need to make a gift to the church on Christmas Eve or if one of your guests would like to do that. However, all the money collected in the offering plates at both services will be forwarded to Restore Hope via a single check written by the church. Your gifts will then be recorded on your church giving statement.

Thanks you and Merry Christmas!

UMW Yearbooks

Can you believe it ladies? It's that time of year again already. I need all your yearbook changes as soon as possible. I will start working on the new yearbook as soon as we return from Christmas break. Please be sure to PRINT your changes so they are readable. If you have address and/or phone changes or additions, please be sure to get the new address and/or phone number. Make sure your changes are easy to read. This will make getting the new yearbook out a lot quicker. Thanks for all you do!

Tracey G.



Socks for Sand Springs Community Services

The Kids are collecting girls/women's and boys/men's socks for all ages for Sand Springs Community Services. They will collect the socks thru December 28th then walk them up the sidewalk to SSCS. Such a special group of kids doing another special mission project!

There is a donation box available in the Narthex by the offices for anyone who wishes to donate.

Year-end Giving

We pray that as the year draws to a close that you will consider an extra year-end gift to support the ministries of Sand Springs UMC. The church is making a difference in people's lives both here in Sand Springs and around the world: 1,200 Thanksgiving meals for people who otherwise would do without, school supplies for children whose families can't afford them, Christmas gifts and dinner for families in need, ministries that are changing the lives of our youth and children, the list goes on and on. Help to change the world.

Here are some details you need to know. To be counted on your 2014 giving statement, donations must be received by the church or postmarked by December 31. The church office will be closed from December 24 - January 4 so year-end contributions must be made on Sunday, December 21 or 28, placed in the special marked box on Christmas Eve (all gifts in the offering plate will go to Restore Hope Ministries that evening), mailed and postmarked by December 31, or given electronically through the church's website or using the QR code printed in the bulletin. Thank you for helping to do God's work!

Questions about SSUMC Women?

Priscilla: Trish House-918-245-5508

Ruth Esther: Barbara Fisher (Mrs. Connie)-918-241-9859

Faith: Rita Randall: 918-224-8482



Kidzone

The children are still collecting socks for Sand Springs Community Services through the end of the month. The donation box is in the narthex. The kids have also been hard at work making some Christmas gift boxes of SSCS that are sure to make someone smile! Great job serving our community!

Ms. Debbie, Ms. Marty and Ms. Cathy want to wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

We'll see you Sunday!



The Awakening

Rev. Don Tabberer and the Staff Parish Relations Committee are actively looking for our next Youth Director. Please be in prayer as they continue this search into 2015. Also, be in prayer for Kent Warkentin and all the volunteers who are "holding down the ship" during this process. They are giving up so much time to keep this group active and together until we hire someone.

Please Keep In Prayer

Ruth Weaver, Martha Scudder, Billie Schmidt, Destinee Tackett, Darryl Muse, Tristan Schwartz, Irene Stogsdill, Owen Johnston, SSUMC, Mrs. Frank Dudek, Paul Waldschmidt, Barnard Family, Jim McCormick, Clare Caldwell, Unspoken Requests

Sunday Lists

Sunday Volunteers—December 21

Visitors Center & Coffee-TNT
Head Usher-11:00 a.m.-Eddy David
Child. Church-8:30 a.m.-Kingdom Kids
Child. Church-11:00 a.m.-Amy & Lauren Miller
Counters-Sheree Buttler & Jami Warkentin

Sunday Volunteers—December 28

Visitors Center & Coffee-TNT
Head Usher-11:00 a.m.-Eddy David
Child. Church-8:30 a.m.-Kingdom Kids
Child. Church-11:00 a.m.-Susie H. & Family
Counters-Janie Moore & Kent Warkentin

Acknowledgements

Thank you for your hospitality and generosity in feeding the football team this season!

Tristia Watson-Quarterback Club President

Dear SSUMC-Thank you so much for the delicious Thanksgiving Dinners. They have been a blessing and fulfilling. I truly appreciate the food, kindness, and thoughtfulness.

Sincerely, Mary Williams-Kirkwood Apts.

Thank you from Earl, Barbara, Earlene, Cheryl, Kaye, Rhonda, Nancy-all from Lucille Page Manor; thanking you for the Thanksgiving meals.

Thank you so much for the wonderful food provided to our family at the bereavement lunch after Ralph's dad's funeral. Many thanks to all of the helpers in cooking, baking, serving and cleaning up. You all are the best. Your love and thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated.

Ralph & Anne Ward

We Offer our Prayers and Sympathy...

...to the family and friends of Virginia Clark Vice who passed away December 10, 2014.

Memorial Contributions can be made to the SSUMC Women.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
FLC-Family Life Center * Unsponsored Event

Wednesday, December 17

7:30 a.m.-Men's Breakfast—Crescent Café *
11:30 a.m.-SIA Christmas Potluck-F. Hall
11:30 a.m.-Staff Luncheon
6:00 p.m.-Chancel Ringers
6:30 p.m.-The Awakening Christmas Party-Youth-FLC
7:00 p.m.-Chancel Choir

Thursday, December 18

12:30 p.m.-Ruth Esther Christmas Luncheon-Crescent Cafe
7:00 p.m.-Karate at FLC *

Friday, December 19

5:30 p.m.-FLC in use
Evening-F. Hall in use

Saturday, December 20

F. Hall in use

Sunday, December 21

8:30 a.m.-Modern Worship; 11:00 a.m.-Classic Worship
9:45 a.m.-Communion Service
10:00 a.m.-Small Groups

Monday, December 22

No Activities

Tuesday, December 23

10:00 a.m.-Intercessory Prayer Group
5:30 p.m.-FLC yard in use*

6:30 p.m.-Cub Scouts-FLC
7:00 p.m.-NO Praise Team
7:00 p.m.-Al-Anon-Upstairs

Wednesday, December 24-Merry Christmas Eve!

7:30 a.m.-Men's Breakfast-Crescent Café *
5:00 p.m.-Christmas Eve Service
9:00 p.m.-Christmas Eve Service

Thursday, December 25

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Friday, December 26

No Activities

Saturday, December 27

No Activities

Sunday, December 28

8:30 a.m.-Modern Worship; 11:00 a.m.-Classic Worship
9:45 a.m.-Communion Service
10:00 a.m.-Small Groups

Staff will be out of the offices the week between Christmas and New Years. Staff will return to office January 5th.

Sand Springs UMC

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Family Life Center: 918-245-3725

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