Circuit Rider



The Christmas decorations have gone up, and Christmas music can be heard in stores. There are parades, lessons and carols, hanging of the greens, and Christmas parties. Before having children, my wife and I would open our house at Christmas. Once we had kids, however, we protected their privacy which is hard to do in small towns as ministers. Now that I will be spending Christmas alone, there is no reason not to have a Christmas open house. And it was recently pointed out that very few people have seen the parsonage.

So, on December 5th from 3 to 5 (before the Baptist's Hanging of the Greens), I will be hosting an open house. It will give people something to gossip about before I leave in the summer. It also gives me a reason to decorate. Without kids and my wife, who loved everything Christmas, decoration seems like a pointless choir. In a way, it would seem to make the house lonelier especially since neither one of my daughters will be coming home for Christmas. This year, however, feels like the right time to end my time here with an open house. Don't expect too much because I have never been much of a party person, either attending or hosting. But I will do my best and not embarrass my mother's memory too much since she was a born hostess.

Christmas is full of traditions and movies about homecomings. This is ironic since the first Christmas was spent far from home and broke all the traditions. At first, it would seem that the last place Mary would want to give birth was away from home but, given the controversy concerning how she became pregnant, maybe being away from home was not a bad thing. In fact, spending time in Egypt may have helped the family come back to the small town although we know the older people never forgot the scandal of Mary's pregnancy. There was nothing traditional about the first Christmas. Whether it was having to travel for a new government census, giving birth where the animals were kept, or shepherds bringing news of angels, the first Christmas was anything but traditional. Nowadays, however, if you don't have Christmas with family or you cannot go home, you are pitied and made to feel like it wasn't a true Christmas. If the decorations aren't up by a certain time or you don't have the "Christmas cheer", you are somehow failing the community. I remember how guilty the television advertisements made my sister feel when she could just afford clothes and food not to mention the newest toy her daughter must have according to marketers. When did Christmases become competitions to see which year had the most presents or the best dinners. Even those that want to bring Christ back into Christmas seem obsessed about using the best plates and silverware for the Christmas guests. Somehow the smell of the barn like the cry of the baby seems to fade into the background as we try to live up to some perfect image of a family Christmas.

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There is an old saying, “I think you protest too much”. Could it be that the more lights we have, the bigger the decorations, the grander the dinners, and the more expensive the presents are all just ways of trying to hide our emptiness? Maybe we feel like the world is even darker than when Jesus was born? Maybe we need the light now more than ever and all of our traditions and expectations blind us to the truth? The simple message of Charlie Brown’s Christmas tree or the Grinch’s failure to steal Christmas or the conversion experience of Scrooge are still needed today. We need less Disney and more It’s A Wonderful Life. We need to stop romanticizing the Hallmark homecoming or the bygone Christmas Story. What we need is O Henry’s The Gift of the Magi and other stories that talk about faith, hope, and love even in the midst of darkness. What if Christmas became a time to teach our children how even at the darkest times, there is light and even when we have nothing, God still provides? For all of you who must party in order to enjoy Christmas, maybe it is time to leave the noise and go to the barn and remember. All I know is that somehow my father’s stories of the Christmas during the Great Depression made me appreciate Christmas more even when there were no party invitations and I was left alone on that silent night. Knowing the gift that was given somehow made that silent night not a night of loneliness but of holiness.

May you be blessed with a Holy Christmas this year.
Pastor Mark

December Birthdays



12/1 Linda Wallace
12/2 Whitney Keller
12/11 Jansen Morris
12/12 Alicia Brechin
12/13 TJ Thorp
12/15 Donna Hill
12/18 Matt Davis
12/26 Claire Jones
12/27 Al Elliott

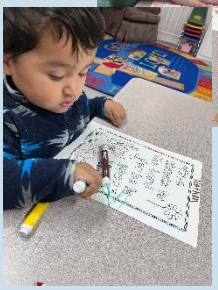
Methodist Day School

November is our month to give thanks, and we are so very thankful for all of our MDS children, their families, our wonderful staff, Pastor Mark, cooler weather, wonderful rain and so much more. We are truly blessed. God is so good! Our Thanksgiving Feast brought lots of parents and family who celebrated in our classrooms with the children. Thank you to all who helped and came to spend time with us. You are appreciated!
Looking forward to December, which will be here before we blink.







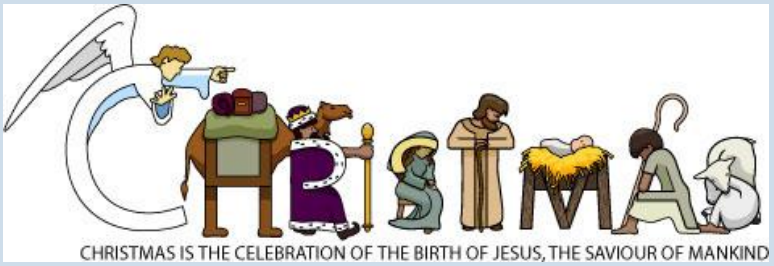








"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me."
John 10:14



LOOKING FORWARD TO DECEMBER

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
29 9:45am Sund	30	Dec 1 SHS Bball @ S 12pm Pastor	2 Methodist Day Downtown Ch	3 SHS Bball Sonora Tourney	4 3pm SISD No	5
6 9:45am Sund 6pm FBC - H	7 SMS Bball @ S Methodist Day 12pm Ministe	8 SHS Bball @ B SISD - Seconc 12pm Pastor	9 Methodist Day 5pm Bible Sti	10 SHS Bronco Bball @ Junction Tourney	11 3pm SISD Re	12
13 9:45am Sund 5pm St. John	14 SMS Bball @ M Methodist Day	15 SHS Bball @ R 12pm Pastor	16 SISD - Early Release 2PM MDS - Christm 5pm Bible Sti	17	18 SHS Ball @ So 3pm SISD No	19
20 9:45am Sund	21 SISD - Christmas Break MDS - No Sch	22 12pm Pastor	23 Church Office Closed MDS - No Sch	24 Christmas Eve 5pm Christm	25 Christmas Day 3pm SISD Re	26
27 SISD - Christmas Break Church Office Closed 9:45am Sund	28 SHS Varsity Bball @ Caprock Classic MDS - No Sch	29 12pm Pastor	30 MDS - No Sch	31 New Year's Eve	Jan 1 New Year's Da 3pm SISD Re	2

Circuit Rider is Published by :

First United Methodist Church

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Sunday Schedule

Open door Sunday School	9:45am
Worship Service	11:00 am

*Weekly worship service is broadcast at 11:00 a.m.

FUMC SONORA STAFF

Rev. Mark Brechin– Pastor

Virgil Burge– One Board Chair

Patti Barker– MDS Director

Darrell Barker– Custodian

Kendra Vyvlecka–

Finance Secretary and

Communications Director