

SHARING

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF HOHENWALD

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2014 NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

“Behold a voice is crying: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up and every hill made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed...” (Isaiah 40: 3-5)

There is an old story of a rabbi who was walking to the temple with his disciples one day when one of them asked, “Rabbi, when should a man repent?” The rabbi looked at him and calmly said, “Why, you should be sure to repent on the last day of your life.” The disciples began to argue among themselves concerning the meaning of this. At last, one of them spoke. “But Rabbi,” he said, “we can never be sure which day will be the last day of our lives.” And the wise old man smiled and said, “**The answer to that problem is very simple: Repent now!**”

It's true, you know. We can never be sure. We can never be too certain of God's timing. And the great dilemma of our lives seems to be that, however carefully we think we are preparing ourselves, the Christian message is still a message of a God who holds all our great human plans in the palm of His hand. Still, the message sounds again each year as we approach the season of Advent. How do we “prepare the way of the Lord?” How is it possible to ready ourselves once again for the coming of the Christ into our world?

In ancient days, whenever a king planned to visit a distant part of his kingdom, he would send a messenger ahead to announce his

arrival. In those days the roads were usually in poor condition, and the people

were expected to repair the roads so they would be smoother for the king. Often the roads had to be straightened, the hills cut down and leveled.

Isaiah and the other prophets wanted the people to know that the hills and roads over which this King must travel are in our hearts, that much work must be done there before we can truly welcome the Lord. So the question we are asked each Advent season is this: “**Is the way prepared in our hearts?**” We are not being asked if we have started our Christmas shopping, or if the tree is up, or if we have received payment on our Christmas Club account. In God's eyes, these things are unimportant, if not downright distracting.

Store owners want us to know there are only a few shopping days left before Christmas. But they don't know the situation is much more important than that. The Lord is coming! There is only a short time to prepare. The world is full of suffering. There is a lot to do in our world. There is a lot to do in our community. There is a lot to do in our homes. And, for most of us, there is lot to do in our hearts!

You see, if Christ is to come at all, that is where he will be appear. That is where he will make his home. That is where he will come, over the hills and the valleys, all the way to the farthest reaches of his Kingdom...the human heart! If Christmas is to come at all this year, that is where it will

happen: in the hearts of those who truly believe He is coming.

- Drew

Children and Youth News

Thanks so much to all who helped make our Fall Festival so successful. About 32 children, 15 teens and many adults had a great fellowship.

Through the blessing of Children's Sabbath, our church was able to make a nice donation to the Bethlehem Center. On November 6, we made Veterans Day "Dog Tags" to be distributed Sunday, November 10. We want to sincerely thank all veterans and soldiers for their service.

About 15 children and teens meet, in different classrooms, on most Wednesday afternoons now, 3 – 4 p.m., during the school year. We do not meet when school is closed, such as school closings due to bad weather (ice, snow, flooding, for example). On Wednesday, November 27, when school is out for Thanksgiving Break, we will not meet.

Please don't miss the blessings of Sunday School for all ages – babies through high school and beyond – from 9:30 – 10:15 a.m.

Holiday Preparations



Children and Youth will be packing boxes for Operation Christmas Child on two Wednesdays – November 13 and November 20 – with items the congregation brings.

In December, we will be practicing Christmas Carols, getting ready to spread some cheer at the nursing home.

- Submitted by Charlotte Morgan

Advent 2013 – Calendar of Events



Sunday, December 1

First Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 8

Second Sunday of Advent

"Hanging of the Green" Worship – 5 p.m.

Sunday, December 15

Third Sunday of Advent

Wednesday, December 18

Choral Cantata at 7 p.m. at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 2800 Trotwood in Columbia.

Friday, December 20

German Chorus – 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, December 22

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Choral Cantata – 7 p.m.

Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Eve Worship and Candle Lighting
– 5 p.m.

German Chorus To Perform



In June of 1894, J.G. Probst, a local newspaper editor, sent out a call for the establishment of a German chorus to sing at social events. During that period, Hohenwald was a largely German-speaking community with a German newspaper, "the New Switzerland Pioneer," which was published in German by Probst and distributed throughout the world.

Shortly after this call, under the direction of Mr. Johann Schwindemann Sr., the first members of the chorus founded an association and gave themselves the name "Alpenroesli," after the little rose which is indigenous to the Alps. Since that year, there has always been in existence in Hohenwald a German chorus that appeared at social events, except during the years of the World Wars. Members of the chorus met and sang in private even during the wars.

In the mid-1980s, the group re-emerged under the impetus and direction of Tommy Haskins, a local employee of the U.S. Corps of Engineers. The group then began to sing at the local Oktoberfest and held annual Christmas programs at the First United Methodist Church of Hohenwald, a tradition which continues to this day.

Current members of the German Chorus are: Peggy Anderson, Debby Campbell, Magda de Koning, Byrne Dunn, Barbara Hinson, Kenneth Kistler, Gwynn McVickers, Rita Perny, Bill Pulliam, Dolene Rogers, Dale Spears, Anna Terry and Jerry Turner. Tommy Haskins is esteemed as a member emeritus.

This year's Christmas program marks the 109th anniversary of the chorus' existence and will be held in the sanctuary on December 20 at 7:30 p.m.

"Pedaling Parsons" Receive Warm Welcome at HUMC



Around 25 bicyclists from Ohio, the "Pedaling Parsons," converged at the First United Methodist Church of Hohenwald on Monday, November 4, where they were greeted warmly, fed delicious meals and spent the night in the Christian Life Center.

The Pedaling Parsons have been traveling the Natchez Trace Parkway from Nashville all the way down to Tupelo, Mississippi, making stops at various Methodist churches along the way to rest and spread the word of their mission – to stem the tide of violence through supporting programs that help at-risk children and youth. Larry and Joyce McCutcheon organized the hospitality for the cyclists at Hohenwald First United Methodist Church, arranging for dinner on November 4 and breakfast the following morning.

The Pedaling Parsons began with a small group of Methodist cyclists in 1987 who shared a passion for cycling and missions. So far, the group has pedaled over 18,000 miles and raised more than \$900,000 for various missions in the past 27 years.

"Sharing" is the newsletter of First United Methodist Church of Hohenwald, TN, published six times a year as a service of the Christian Witness Committee. To submit news for "Sharing," please contact Deborah Baker at 931-285-0058; email deb.baker@wildblue.net, or contact other members of the Christian Witness Committee. The newsletter is also available on the church website.