Open hearts

Open minds

Open doors

The People of the United Methodist Church

Faith United Methodist Church 8640 North 19th Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85021

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

Matthew 2: 1—2 (NIV)



The *Koinonia* is a monthly publication from Faith United Methodist Church. Its purpose is to provide items of interest and information about events and people related to the ministry of the church locally, district-wide and in the conference.

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#### **KOINONIA**

Monthly Newsletter from Faith United Methodist Church

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Members of Faith UMC: Volunteers of Time, Talent, Prayers, Gifts, Service and Witness.

# Koinonia

# Faith United Methodist Church

8640 North 19th Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85021 Phone: (602) 943-3465

January 2017

# From the PASTOR—

# Thoughts for the New Year...

The other day I was looking through my Facebook Newsfeed and noticed a lot of people lamenting about how horrible 2016 was for them. Many of the comments were about people who had died –



celebrities mostly – which made the year very sad. Others commented about the how awful the political scene had become, while still others pointed to the strife in the Middle East as the source for their disenchantment with the year. And while all of these things contributed to 2016 being a difficult and disappointing year, so many other more positive things happened, especially in our corner of the world.

From my own personal perspective, 2016 was a pretty good year. It was the year that the Phoenix Chorale – the professional choir of which David is a member – won the Grammy in the "Best Choral Performance" category for their CD *Rachmaninoff: All-Night Vigil.* (If you haven't heard their performance of this work, you've missed something spectacular...it's a "must have"...and it's available on iTunes!!). It was also the year I was ordained an Elder in the United Methodist Church, ending a nearly 9 year journey, and beginning another that will last the rest of my life. And 2016 was the year our first grandchild, Anderson Richard Topping,

was born! Those three events alone made 2016 a wonderful year...but wait...there's more!!

If you attended our Annual Church Conference, you heard about some of the wonderful things we have done as a church. Attendance in worship increased over the year, and we baptized 5 new members into the household of Christ, and welcomed 11 new people as members at Faith United Methodist Church. Our Sidewalk Sunday School ministry continued to reach out to children and their families in our neighborhood, and we became actively involved in the 19 North Neighborhood Initiative, which is working to bring new life to this part of the neighborhood. We hosted two groups of NOMADS, who improved the look and security of our church campus, and we moved one step closer to welcoming Lura Turner Homes and their clients to our facility. It also looks like we will end the year "in the black" financially, which is always a good thing! All in all, we had a blessed year, but now it's time to look forward into the future.

During our Stewardship Campaign (the results of which are reported in another article inside this newsletter), I asked all of you to consider the ways in which we have Faith in the Future, and how you, through the giving of your time and talents as well as your financial giving, will be a part of that future. As followers of Christ, we look forward to the time when He will come again, but we also know we cannot and must not sit idly by as we wait. We are

(Continued on page 2)

called as God's people to work while we wait... to do everything we can to make this world a better place. That doesn't mean we have to make any Herculean efforts; it's the small stuff that really makes a difference, many of which we talked about during our sermon series called "7 Habits of Effective Christians." When we devote some of our time to reading and studying Scripture, and set aside time each day to be in conversation with God through Prayer, when we make a commitment to be in Worship ever week, and adopt God's Vision for a better world as our own, when we promise to give part of our time as well as our financial resources in pursuit of excelling at the habits of **Servanthood** and **Generosity**. And finally, when we express our **Thankfulness** for all of God's blessings in everything we do – by sharing what we have and ministering to those in our community and throughout the world – we are investing in the future – God's future – a place where we all can live in harmony and peace.

I know that for some of us, the future seems bleak, but when we put our trust in the One who loves us, the One who wants to be in relationship with us, and the One who brings us Good News of Great Joy, our future can and will be bright. I am so grateful and thankful to be in ministry with all of you...now and in the future! Happy New Year!

God Bless, Pastor Jody

# Thinking Theologically with Pastor Jody

Recently we received the new editions of *The Upper Room*, a little devotional booklet that I know many of you read each day, and since I wanted to write about the promise of the new year, I decided to take a look at what had been written for January 1, 2017. The contributor, a gentleman by the name of Gus Browning from



Texas, wrote "The best New Year's resolution Ι can i s make t o appreciate each day God gives me, to become а better

steward of my time, and to grow to be more Christlike – the better to serve God."

When I read those words, I thought to myself, "Am I being a good steward of my time?" What is it that God wants me to do with my time, and how can I best serve God with the time I have, each and every day?

I think this is something we all need to do: Take an inventory of the time we have and how "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven..."

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (NRSV)

we are spending it in ways that will glorify God. That doesn't mean we always have to be busy, because I believe God wants us to engage in leisure activities in addition to work, but I think it does mean we should take a look at the ways we spend our time, so the things we do are indeed pleasing to God.

For those of us who are employed, it shouldn't come as much of a surprise that most of our time is spent working or at work. But for those of us who are not employed, we spend more time sleeping and watching TV. Now, I'm not knocking sleeping and watching TV...after all, I spend a significant amount of my time doing both! But what if we did something more productive with our time? Things like reading a book (maybe even the Bible!), or writing cards to people we know, or engaging with God through prayer, or for those of us who are able, getting out and meeting new people? These are just a few of the ways we could be spending our time, and I think God would be well

(Continued on page 3)

pleased, especially if the time we spent was in service to God and to others.

Now, again, I'm not saying we aren't doing a good job of serving God. I'm just saying that maybe one of our New Year's resolutions could be to do a <u>better job</u> of serving God by making better use of our time. Because from a theological standpoint, I believe that's one of the things the writer of Ecclesiastes is telling us. "For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose..." Later in Ecclesiastes, the writer also writes: "So be careful to live your life wisely, not foolishly." (Ecclesiastes 5:15, CEB)

Wise words, indeed...Happy New Year!

God Bless, *Pastor Jody* 

# **Upcoming Sermons**

During the months of January and February, we will be focusing on Jesus and his ministry. We will begin the year by taking a <u>Journey Through the Lectionary</u>, during which Pastor Jody will use the scriptures and sermon topics found in the Revised Common Lectionary – a calendar of topics and accompanying scripture readings that go along with the liturgical year.

For those of you who are not familiar with the Lectionary, it was originally developed by the Catholic Church, and is used by some preachers and religious teachers not only as a guide but as a way to maintain continuity between parishes. Not all preachers use the lectionary, but from time to time, it's not a bad resource upon which to rely.

Our Lectionary-based sermons will discuss Epiphany, Jesus' Baptism, and the calling of the Disciples.

Then, on January 22, Pastor Jody will begin a new sermon series called "Who Is Jesus." In this series, we will further explore Jesus' life, his ministry, and his impact on the world.

#### **Journey Thru The Lectionary**

- January 1: "Honored" (Epiphany Sunday)
- January 8: "Baptized" (Baptism of Our Lord Sunday)
- January 15: "Called" (The Calling of the Disciples)

#### Who Is Jesus?

- January 22: Searching for the Historical Jesus
- January 29: The Humanity of Jesus
- February 5: Did Jesus Really Say That?
- February 12: The Meaning of Jesus Death
- February 19: Who Do You Say I Am?



# **Chancel Choir & Handbell Ensemble Rehearsal Schedule**



Thinking you'd like to explore joining either the Chancel Choir or the Handbell Ensemble? The Chancel Choir, under the direction of David Topping, meets on Wednesday nights from 7:30 PM – 9 PM in the choir room, then from 8:30 AM each Sunday in the Sanctuary

before the service. The Handbell Ensemble, under the direction of Francine Stewart Martyn, meets in Room 1/2 on Sundays after the fellowship hour.

All singers and bell ringers WELCOME!

- ⇒ Choir Practice resumes Wednesdays, Jan. 4, 11, 18 & 25 at 7:30 PM
- ⇒ Handbells Practice resumes Sundays, Jan. 8, 15, 22 & 29 after fellowship

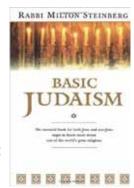


# FUMC's Midweek Adult Study Group continues its fall class called *The Basics of Judaism*.

The study, which is being developed by Pastor Jody, will help us all learn more about the faith tradition to which Jesus belonged

and is the foundation for our own Christian tradition.

All are welcome and invited to join this study group, which resumes meeting on Wednesday, 1/11 at 10:00 AM in Room 1-2.



## **Faith Lunch Bunch News**

by LaVonna Goudie

Faith UMC has an open monthly lunch for all wishing to enjoy a lunch out with friends.

We meet on the third Thursday of each month at 11:30 AM at a spot we decide on the previous month.

Due to December having many busy schedules, my last-minute call for reservations to the local Applebee's (which was fully booked!) resulted in Lunch Bunch being cancelled for the first time in memory!

On January 19th at 11:30 AM we will meet at JB's Family Restaurant located at 3567 West Northern Avenue off I-17 west of North 35th Avenue in Phoenix. Come on over and join in the fun, food, & fellowship!



#### **Sunday Post-Service Discussions**

Looking for opportunities to dig a little deeper after Pastor Jody's sermons? Please freely join one or both hour-long small groups.

# **HOPE= Honest Open Perspective Exchange**

This lively discussion group meets after the service during Fellowship Time on the second and third Sundays. Our January meetings, led by Karen Clark, will take place on 1/8 and 1/15 from 11 AM. So bring your coffee and snacks to Room 4 and join the conversation!

Our HOPE group is interested in the essential part of our democracy, voting. We consist of nonpartisan, intergenerational, old and new Faith members.

#### 4SWBS = 4th Sunday Women's Bible Study

On Sunday 1/22, the 4th Sunday Women's Bible Study will meet to discuss a selected devotional from *The Upper Room*. We'll focus on 1 Thessalonians 4: 1—3 and a short reading, "Not Giving Up". We'll also hear the scriptural passage read in 3 different languages.

Led by Shane Taber and Eunice Moreno Moses, all FUMC women are invited to join our faith-filled discussions.

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

#### **Faith United Methodist Church**

Faith United Methodist Church is an inclusive\* Christian congregation dedicated to the care of its constituents in order to serve the local community; and in co-operation with

other faith-based organizations, to reach out to all persons\* who seek personal acceptance, require sustaining assistance, or yearn for a meaningful life purpose beyond self.



# Many Thanks to Our Faithful Friends!

As part of our Advent Season celebration, during which we heard in worship about the different Gifts of Christmas, some of us also celebrated by participating in the Faithful Friends (aka Secret Santa) Gift Exchange...and those of us who gave and received gifts had a wonderful time doing so! In fact, one of our homebound members was so grateful that she wrote us the following *Thank You Note*:

To Friends of Faith:



It is nice to be remembered – a Christmas gift (a scented candle) was delivered to me today (signed from a "Faith Friend"). It just happens to be my 98<sup>th</sup> birthday. I appreciate seeing or hearing from any of you. Hopefully you will have an enjoyable Christmas and may the new year be a blessed one to all.

Thanks for caring, Gerry (GiGi) Garwood

In addition to the above thank you note, I personally received many "thank you's" from the individuals that I was asked to deliver to on behalf of their "Faithful Friends" (aka Secret Santas). Many of those people are friends who haven't been able to attend worship for a while, and they greatly appreciated being remembered by us, just as Gerry indicated in her note.

I want to say a special thank you to all who participated in this exchange. I think it was a great way to share in the Gifts of Christmas as a church family. I pray the coming year is blessed for all of you. Let's make it a good one!

Blessings, Pastor Jody

## Joshua's Journey

To my Faith family:

Earlier this week, I was asked to submit my call to ministry. This is a paper which is 3-4 pages long talking about all the factors that caused me to sense God's call to ministry.

As I was pondering this assignment, I was reviewing the calling that I had written for the District Committee on Ordained Ministry back in 2014 when I was first certified as a candidate for the ministry of the



elder. It caused me to question - how did I get from there to here - from the calling as an elder to the active engaging ministry as a deacon candidate for ministry? It came back to the concept of the "Spirit's leading."

In the first part of 2015, I shared with those guiding me along the path towards vocational ministry that I felt I was being led away from my career at American Express to a more active ministry in the world. Having some background in human services as a foster parent, I understood the great need in the behavioral health field here in Arizona. I also understood that leaving my "cushy" job at American Express to a more uncertain role in this new field would require risk and trust - risk in following God's call and trust in God's providence as I make these moves.

Six months, 40 applications, and 15 interviews later I was hired to be part of a new program serving high-needs adults in our community through the services of La Frontera. Since beginning

(Continued on page 6)

in June 2015, I have taken new roles as a liaison to the UMOM (United Methodist Outreach Ministries) campus and most recently as a clinical liaison for hospitals. I have learned much along the way, and have committed to furthering my growth by training in DBT skills in 2017. Throughout all this process, my trust in God has equated to God's providence in my life and family. Through all these experiences, I have further cemented my calling to this specific field - public behavioral health.



I believe each of us has a calling - called to minister to God's world and bring God's shalom to earth. We are called to be a foretaste of heaven to those in our midst - to show them the genuine love of Jesus Christ. This is what is called the "priesthood of all believers" - a common theological concept found in the early beginnings of the Protestant movement. Through our baptism as believers, we are called to show God's redemptive love through our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness.

As a Deacon in the United Methodist Church, I am called to word, service, compassion and justice. I use this calling to guide the actions I take in my career - everything I do in vocational ministry must fulfill one of those needs. I continue to discern my actions in light of that calling.

On January 18th, I will have the opportunity to meet with the Board of Ordained Ministry to be considered for provisional membership and commissioning in June. Understandably, I am in the midst of preparation - preparing my mind and my body by getting enough rest, preparing my heart as I express my calling and preparing my spirit as I answer the theological questions that will be posed to me during my interview. I know that God is present in this and that God has called me to this point in time. I covet your prayers as this day approaches - that God will be glorified throughout this process.

I am humbled that I have been called to this servant ministry. I am blessed that the people who I serve and those with whom I serve allow me to be part of such a great movement of God's love in the midst of very challenging life circumstances.

I continue to praise God for your love and support. Faith UMC is truly a place where people are caring for people!

- Joshua L Warner, M.Ed. '10; M.Div. '15

# Connecting with Faith UMC Website:

faithumcphoenix.org

**Videos of Sunday sermons:** 

faithumcphoenix.org/sermon-videos/

**On Facebook** 

facebook.com/FaithUMCPhoenix

facebook.com/groups/

**FaithUMCPhxGroup** 

Deadline for the
February 2017
issue of the Koinonia will be
Thursday, January 26th.
Please submit all articles,
information, and photos to
Shane Taber, editor.
(sctaber56@gmail.com)

## Things Are Really Happening on 19 North!

Over the last several months, Pastor Jody has represented Faith UMC as part of the 19 North Interfaith Council, a subset of the 19 North Alliance. Together we've been exploring new

ways we can engage with people who live and work in this neighborhood with the ultimate goal of revitalizing the area between Dunlap and Montebello, 15<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenues.

Last October, the 19 North Alliance held an introductory forum during which those on the Steering Team shared their vision for the initiative. Members of the Steering Team include residents, pastors, business owners, city government representatives, and others who are eager to make improvements in this area. The introductory forum was very well received, and sparked some new ideas for ways we can move forward.



At the end of November, a number of us involved in the 19 North Initiative came together to hear a presentation on Understanding Homelessness. Some of the information that was given out was most helpful, and in the coming weeks, Pastor Jody will be sharing some of that information with all of you.

What's really exciting, though, is an event that is coming very soon! **On Saturday, February 11**, we will hold an event called "Love Our Community" during which we will come together to do a "clean sweep" along 19<sup>th</sup> Avenue, then enjoy some time in fellowship with one another. Look for more information about this event in upcoming newsletters, but in the meantime we hope you will "save the date" and plan to attend this exciting event coming soon!

# **Help Us Welcome Our NOMAD Friends!**

As we mentioned last month, we are so excited to have another NOMAD work team coming to Faith United Methodist Church to help us with a number of facility-related projects. We're so glad they are coming to help us and look forward to getting to know them.

The NOMADS are a group of United Methodists, many of whom are retired, who travel from place to place in their RVs and do work at United Methodist churches, UM camps, and other United

Methodist locations. In return for agency provides them with the mafor them to park their RVs during

In addition to providing the and utility connections (including -ups and disposal), we'll also proweeks (Monday through Thursday)



their free labor, the sponsoring terials they need, as well as a place the time they are working on site. NOMADS with RV parking space water, electricity, and sewage hook vide lunches for them during the 3 they are with us. If you'd like to

volunteer to provide or serve a meal or two, please contact Pastor Jody or Carol Getting so you can be added to the volunteer schedule.

We hope you will take the opportunity to get to know our NOMAD work team while they are with us from January 9—26.

# Faith UMC and the "How to Reach New People" Initiative

Last October, several members of Faith UMC joined Pastor Jody at the Desert Southwest Conference-sponsored workshop called "How to Reach New People." At that workshop, which was attended by a number of churches from both the East and West Districts, we learned about several new and different ways we can reach new people in our community and ultimately grow our churches. As a result, the "How to Reach New People" team made the commitment to work with the consultants at Griffith Coaching over the next 12 months to put these new strategies into place.

One of the strategies involves the way in which our pastor spends her time in both the office and out in the community. What this means is Pastor Jody will be spending less time in the office and more time "out and about," meeting new people and building relationships with them. This also means she will have less time for other tasks, which will be picked up by other people in the congregation. This DOES NOT mean Pastor Jody will neglect you during your time of need, but she may need to ask someone else on our team to handle some of the things she's been doing for the members of our church.

Another strategy that's important to our success is called a "Member-Guest Activity" and this is where you can help. A Member-Guest Activity is a social gathering to which you invite 2 or 3 people from the church along with 2 or 3 people you know from your other circles, for example, from work, school, your neighborhood, or assisted living community. The purpose of these gatherings is to simply have a good time while your guests build relationships with each other in a way that is not intimidating. Your Member-Guest Activity might be an evening playing cards or board games, enjoying a meal together, or watching a movie. The main thing to remember is these activities are meant to be FUN! In the near future, members of our "How To Reach New People" leadership team will be setting up Member-Guest Activities to which you may be invited. The team also hopes YOU will consider hosting one as well!!

Watch for more information about the How to Reach New People Initiative and ways YOU can become involved.



### It's a Wonderful Thing to Have Faith in the Future!

Last November during our *Seven Habits of Effective Christians* Sermon Series, we also launched our 2017 Stewardship Campaign called *Faith in the Future*. It was a time for us to consider the ways God has blessed us with time, talent, and financial resources, and at the end of the campaign, we made commitments as to how we would share our spiritual and financial gifts.

The results of our Stewardship Campaign are finally in, and we are pleased to report that we received Spiritual Gifts Commitment Forms from 35 individuals, and Financial Commitment Cards from 40 families, for a total of \$116,360 pledged for 2017, which is an increase of about \$5,000 over what was pledged for 2016.

We know that not everyone makes a formal commitment when it comes to their giving of their time, talent, and financial resources, but we want to especially thank those who did, as it helps us

(Continued on page 9)

with our financial budgeting for the coming year, and also helps us identify people who can help with the various ministries we offer. So many thanks to all who submitted their Spiritual Gifts and Financial Commitment Forms!

If you intended to submit your Commitment Cards and either misplaced them or forgot to bring them to the church, fear not! We have extra cards available in the church office and they can be submitted at any time.



We here at Faith United Methodist Church have so much faith in the future!

It's not too late to make plans to help with the Un-Hanging of the Greens on Saturday, January 7th from Noon in the Sanctuary of Faith UMC!

## Holy Land Pilgrimage

As most of you know, Pastor Jody is coleading a Holy Land Pilgrimage with her friend and colleague, Rev. Dr. Vernon Meyer, a UCC Pastor who is also an incredible biblical scholar and experienced international theological tour guide.

The dates for the pilgrimage are May 15 – 24, 2017 and we will be visiting all of the important biblical sites, including the region in and around the Sea of Galilee, Cana, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Masada, Jericho, and more.

The cost (based on a minimum of 20 participants) is \$3716 per person, double occupancy, traveling from Phoenix, and is virtually all inclusive (a few meals are not included). There is also an option for a Post-Excursion Extension to Jordan and Petra from May 24-26 for an extra \$812 (based on a minimum 10 participants).

This is a great opportunity to participate in what might be a once-in-a-lifetime trip for

many folks, and both Pastor Jody and Pastor Vernon are looking forward to making this a memorable trip for all. We hope you will join them.

For more information about the Pilgrimage and to register, please ask Pastor Jody for a printed brochure, or visit our tour website at https://maranathatours.com/product/holy-land-tour-dr-meyer-rev-topping-may-2017-from-phoenix/



Next Family Promise Hosting Dates: The week of Sunday, January 29th— Sunday, February 5th. Please contact FUMC Family Promise Coordinators Jane and Gary Kriege (623-931-9970 or gkriege@yahoo.com) if you can volunteer or need further information about how you can help with this important outreach ministries mission project.

## Giving Thanks at Faith UMC 2016







Pastor Jody blesses the annual pledges.



























Advent Fun at Sidewalk Sunday School







# 2016 Advent Season and Christmas at FUMC













































# January 2017

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1:00 pm Samoan Worship	6:00 pm Quilters - Rm 4 6:00 pm TOPS - Rm 1-2	5:00 pm Grief Group - Lib		5:30 pm Weigh Less to Feed More		1:00 pm Recovery-Rm 1-2
			7:30 pm Choir Practice-CR			
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1:00 pm Samoan Worship	6:30 pm Scouts - K		7:30 pm Choir Practice-CR			-
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15 Human Relations Day	16 Office Closed	17	18	19	20	21
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