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Wehrly's World

"In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered."

(Luke 2:1 NRSV)

The story – you probably know the rest. The story – the story of the birth of our Savior. I'll bet most of us know this story. We know how Mary and Joseph went from Nazareth to Bethlehem. How the town was crowded, so they ended up staying in a stable and Mary gave birth there. How the angels sang to the shepherds out in the fields and the shepherds came into town to see what the angels were singing about. We know the story.

But do we really KNOW the story? We might know the events, maybe can even recite them. But do we really KNOW the story? Do we know the story to the point that it has impacted our lives?

I guess the question I'd like each of us to struggle with is this: Has the birth of Jesus taken control of your life to the point that Jesus is THE focal point of your life? In other words, is the fact that God sent his son (John 3:16) to you so that you might have life changed your life from what is used to be? Or is the story just a story?

I'm beginning a new series on the 11th of January. I'm calling it *The Proof is in the Pudding*. I'm exploring the Gospel of Mark, looking at how the life Jesus lived proved he was the Messiah. I urge you to start 2009 with a commitment to be in worship and Sunday school every week so that you might really know the story.

See you in church.

Calendar (check the web site for updates)

December

- 18 Sr. High Youth Group, 6:30 pm
(No Youth Group Dec 25 or Jan 1)
- 24 Christmas Eve Service, 7 pm

January

- 4 Wesley Covenant Service
- 8 Sr. High Youth Group, 6:30 pm

Church to celebrate Christmas Eve with service of "Candles, Carols & Communion"



Be sure to make plans now to join your friends and family at the Signal Hill UMC Christmas Eve service at 7 pm on Wednesday, December 24. Those who were present on

Christmas Eve 2007 said that the service was one of the most moving they had ever attended at Christmas time – come and see why!

The service will include Scripture readings, familiar carols, vocal and instrumental music solos, and a somber celebration of the sacrament of Holy Communion. At the end of the service, Pastor Peter Wehrly will lead us in singing *Silent Night* by candlelight.

"Christmas is an ideal time to invite your family members, friends and neighbors to come to Signal Hill UMC to experience our Christian fellowship," said Pastor Wehrly. "Let's fill the church for a joyous celebration and recommit ourselves to God's service in 2009."

All-church Advent Adult Sunday School class to conclude December 21

For the four Sundays of Advent, all adults have gathered in Fellowship Hall for an Advent study. Pastor Wehrly led the class of almost 35 persons every week, urging us to dive deeper into our relationship with God.

On Sunday, December 28, adults will return to their regular classes (note room changes):

Signal Lighters – Fellowship Hall,
 Seekers – Asbury Hall, and
 Faithlink – Memorial Hall.

Also, the pastor will lead a membership class in mid-January.

"I urge every adult to be part of a Sunday School class," Wehrly said. "The future of our church depends upon our willingness to learn and study and be in touch with God's call on our lives."

UMW elects 2009 officers, celebrates seasonal giving

Early in December, the Signal Hill United Methodist Women welcomed officers for 2009. Camille McCaskill, Mississippi River



District UMW vice-president installed president Velma Thompson, vice-president Diana Hill, secretary Janet Hollinberger, treasurer Barb Ford.

The group discussed their annual cookie distribution, prayer quilt ministry, families to receive Christmas gifts, and boxes for military personnel.

"The true meaning of Christmas has been very evident in my life this year," explained member Barb Brannan. "I had the opportunity to speak to someone who will be receiving one of the UMW gifts. Just talking to her for a few minutes has changed my life.

"She is in such need and is not greedy at all. She just wants to make Christmas for her three children a little nicer than it would have been. She asked for shoes for her baby and jeans for her sons. We had already decided to buy an outfit for the children, but I wanted to get a toy for them also.

"This has really snowballed – my grandmother heard of this and she is buying flannel sheets for the boys. I cannot wait until the presents are all delivered. I just want to help someone who needs the help this time of year and throughout the new year."

Liturgists trained for worship



Recent training sessions by Pastor Wehrly have prepared eight members to be liturgists and communion servers at worship services: John Hackmann, Diana Hill, Dowell Holdgraf, Fairy Meek, Susan Meister, Velma Thompson, Kanda Vallina, and Paul Vallina. Liturgists lead the call to worship, first hymn, psalter, and call to prayer. In addition, they serve the bread and juice at communion. The new liturgist schedule began at the start of Advent, Sunday, November 28.

"I am thrilled that so many have stepped forward to be an integral part of our first service," Wehrly said. "I trust that the excellence that they will bring will encourage all our laity to be in the ministry to which they feel called."

Thanks to all who helped make our participation in "Holiday on the Boulevard" on December 14 a success!

New Cross & Flame adorns entry way



A gorgeous new cross and flame plaque, the symbol of The United Methodist Church, has been hung in the entry way. Pastor Wehrly approached the Trustees to ask to purchase the plaque, because there was no visible sign of the denomination inside the church building. The plaque was purchased at a very good price with memorial funds.

Church sends food, funds to LBDNH

The cornucopia of food collected during the *Our Three Gifts* fall stewardship campaign was delivered to Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House in time for Thanksgiving meals for needy families. Missions chair Marge Buser was able to send a check for over \$1,000 for the purchase of turkeys and hams.

Christmas gift opportunities



The Finance Committee has decided to not designate a particular Christmas offering this year. However, you are encouraged as God directs to Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House or to the church building fund for roof repair. (To date about half of the \$50,000 needed has been given.) God bless your continuing generosity!

Prayer Quilt ministry reaches many

Joyce Burnette has gathered a group of women to piece and sew prayer quilts for this new ministry. To date, six have been given to individuals and families in need of intentional prayer: Phil Auner, Richard Smith, Shirley Callison, Bob McBride, Georgia Stroud, and Tony Conrath. Quilts are displayed at the front of the church, and congregants come forward to tie a thread and say a special prayer for the recipient.

If you know of someone who would be blessed by receiving a quilt, please call the church or Joyce Burnette.

For more information about the ministries of Signal Hill United Methodist Church, contact

Rev. Peter J. Wehrly, Directing Pastor
Eda Hackmann, Director of Music Ministry
Kim Hutchison, Secretary

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Check out the web site frequently for news & information: www.signalhillumc.org