



# Pleasant News

Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church

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## WORSHIP TIMES

- 8:45am Bible Study Groups
- 10:00am Worship in the Sanctuary

## CONTACT US

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## Inspiration Point

How many of you, with your spouses, planned to raise a family with the primary purpose for your children being to come and ask or beg for whatever they wanted? We would be very disappointed if that were the case, would we not? Yet that is the way we are with our Heavenly Father! He created us to worship Him and to have fellowship with Him, yet rarely do we speak to Him except to ask Him for something or another! The Bible is full of stories of people asking for and receiving answers to their prayers and Jesus Himself told us how to pray and expect our answers! But what kind of relationship would we have with our God and Father if all we did was to ask Him for things?

**Acts 13:1-4** *"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; Barnabus, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucious of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the Tetrach, and Saul. AS THEY MINISTERED TO THE LORD, AND FASTED, the Holy Ghost said, "Separate unto Me Barnabus and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." And when they had fasted and prayed, and layed hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus."*

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Please note, the people were not petitioning to God to do anything. They were ministering to the Lord and fasting. Ministering to the Lord is called Praise and Worship. Think about all the hymns that we sing! They are beautiful and we love them, but they are to minister to us in the congregation. Even our sermons, and I am guilty of this, are to encourage and minister to the congregation. Now there is nothing wrong with this at all, but remember God created man to have fellowship with Him and for us to love Him and praise Him! In the Scriptures above, they were not petitioning God for anything! They were worshiping the Lord! They were praising Him for His goodness and mercy! They were showing Him love! When we draw nigh to God, He draws nigh to us! The Spirit was all over them for the intensity of their praise! It was then and only then, that the Holy Spirit manifested Himself by speaking to them!

Over in Acts 16:25 “ ***And at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God....***” You remember the story, Paul and Silas had been preaching and the people rose up against them. The magistrates seized them, tore off their clothes and had them beaten. They threw them into the inner prison, locked their feet in stocks. So, there they were, cut up, sore and bruised and it was midnight! The two of them began to pray out loud, to sing and to praise God! Everyone heard them! As their praise rang out, God heard them and sent an earthquake that rocked the jail to its foundation, setting them free and opening all the doors! They sang praises and worshiped, and God heard them and moved!

There are many incidents in the Bible where the people praised and worshiped God and then He moved! I suspect the reason we might not have the power we expect in our church services is because we have not learned how to praise and worship our dear Lord and Savior with our whole being! That is something we need to work on!

## *Brother Phil*



## **Ash Wednesday 2023**

On Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, the church family at Pleasant Grove will once again observe Ash Wednesday. We will enter the Lenten season together during this most meaningful time of worship as we remember our human estate and our mortality as well as the need for reconciliation with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This will be accomplished by the imposition of ashes with the mark of the cross on our foreheads. This service of reflection and introspection will begin at 6:00 in the evening in our sanctuary. Please make plans to join your brothers and sisters in Christ for this very special time together.



# From the Pastor's Desk

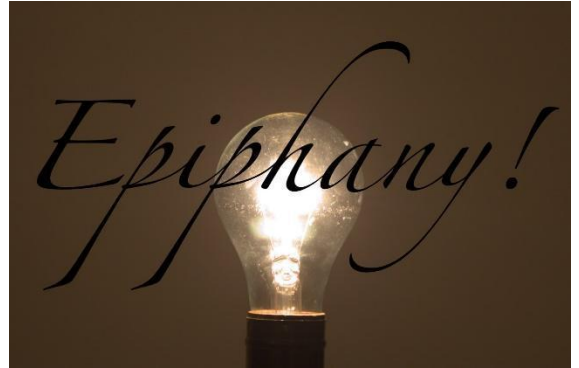
## God's Wake-up Call

*Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

It was a bold request to say the least! *"If only you would tear open the heavens and come down!"* pleads the Prophet Isaiah; and so, God chooses to show up in an unexpected way, and ever since then, we and our world have been grappling with the meaning of the Immanuel, God with us.

Now that the warm and fuzzies of the Christmas Season are once again packed away, the day and season of Epiphany once again become part of our Christian journey. Dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century in the ancient church, Epiphany celebrated an ancient encounter between travelers from the East and a baby who would radically transform the world.

Despite how much we cherish the ancient biblical stories and Christmases past, Epiphany always rings in with new possibilities; it is our Christian *"ah-ha" moment*, our *wake-up-call*. Epiphany is our opportunity for new insight and clarity around how Jesus coming to us in human form radically changes us and the way we encounter our world with God's grace.



As your new-Interim-Pastor, I'm looking forward to continuing our Epiphany journey together as God's Spirit moves us to recognize Jesus radically changing our church and world through peace, love, joy, and hope. As we approach Ash Wednesday and Lent, I can't wait to hear some of your own spirit-filled *wake-up-calls* and *"ah-ha"* moments!

*Blessings In Christ,*

*Rev. Sam Lewis*



## THE FOLLOWING GIFTS WERE MADE TO THE CHURCH IN MEMORY OR IN HONOR OF:

### IN MEMORY

**Susan Pringle**

Disciples Sunday School Class  
Steve and Maria McClure

**Kappy Canfield**

Jim and Tina Canfield

### IN HONOR

**UMW Circle #6**

Hazel Sanders

**Bob Canfield**

Jim and Tina Canfield

**Shirley McClure**

Rick and Lynda Elliott – Cemetery Fund



## Blessing Others As God Has Blessed Us

Our sweet church at Pleasant Grove has a long history of caring for those who find themselves in tough situations. One of the ways we do that is by supplying for the needs of our homeless neighbors. Through Roof Above, we are able to make the lives of those without stable housing a little more bearable. Reaching out like this, with the love that God has lavished upon us, lets others know that they have not been forgotten, that they are seen, and that they are loved. Out of our compassion we will be collecting the following items through February 12th. Please bring your donations to the collection bins in the sanctuary. Thank you for being a conduit of God's Love!!!

**Winter Hats • Winter Gloves • Men's Crew Socks • Men's Boxer Briefs (x-large and larger)  
Deodorant • Foot Powder • Laundry Detergent • Fabric Softener Sheets  
Black Trash Bags (30-35 gallons)**





## The Recipe Box

Some of us have, no doubt, tried to eat healthier and lighter after the first of the New Year. However, in February, a month of sweetness and love, we thought we would give you an easy recipe that allows you to treat those you love with a very special dessert! These little No-Bake Cherry Cheesecakes are portioned into single serving vessels...you can use wide-mouthed, pint canning jars, or make it even easier and just use short, small-sized, throw-away, plastic cups! Either way, these little desserts are certain to impress. Make them ahead of your meal and then just pull them out of the refrigerator to the oohs and ahhs of your guests! Or just serve them as a stand alone treat in the middle of the afternoon. And this recipe lends itself to your own brand of creativity. You can use any type of topping... strawberry, peach, crushed Oreos, caramel sauce... Just use whatever you think makes a great cheesecake topping! So easy! So beautiful! So tasty! Enjoy!!!

### No-Bake Cherry Cheesecakes

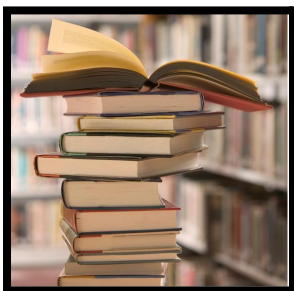
- 6 wide-mouthed jars, or 6 short, clear, plastic cups
- 1 ¼ cups graham cracker crumbs
- ¼ cup unsalted butter (softened)
- ¼ cup sugar
- 8 ounces plain cream cheese
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 can cherry pie filling



Combine graham cracker crumbs, butter, and sugar in a bowl. Mix until all of the ingredients are well coated in butter. Divide this mixture into six jars, pressing the crust to the bottom of the jar with a spoon. Use a mixer to beat together the cream cheese, powdered sugar, vanilla, and cream until fluffy and smooth. Divide the cream cheese mixture between the six jars and layer on top of the graham cracker crust. Refrigerate for 3-4 hours. Spoon the cherry pie filling on top of the cream cheese mixture, dividing it between the six jars. Refrigerate or serve immediately.



## Recommended Reading



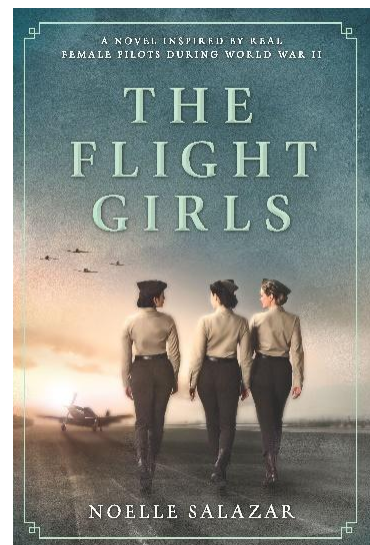
Each month, we try to recommend a book to the church family that is inspiring, informative, entertaining, or exciting. Sometimes our suggestion is a book that is simply an escape from the complicated nature of today's world. And there are times when the value of a selection is in the academic content...maybe something from history or the realm of science. Some of our recommendations have been put forth with the express purpose of deepening your faith walk. And at other times we have recommended a biography to inspire life-change, or activism within the community. Many times, you may find that the book we are recommending seems to come from the female perspective...and you wouldn't be wrong because (spoiler alert!) the person who writes most of the *Recommended Reading* articles just happens to be a female!

However, this month, while still written by a female, the *Recommended Reading* selection just may appeal to all audiences! The main character of the book is a female, but there is quite a bit of military history related throughout the story. The time period for this tale is World War II, and although fictional, many actual occurrences are woven within. [The Flight Girls](#), by Noelle Salazar, shines a light on a little-known piece of history. Through this sweeping portrayal of the Women Airforce Service Pilots program, the fearlessness of these volunteers in the face of adversity is brought front and center and taking the time to acknowledge the contributions of these heroes is long overdue.

Our story begins in 1941. Audrey Coltrane has always wanted to fly. Her overwhelming desire to take to the skies drove her father to teach her how to do just that at a little airfield back home in Texas. Her desire to fly was also the reason she signed up to train military pilots in Hawaii when the war in Europe began. And it's why she insisted that she cannot become involved in a romantic relationship...being as flight-focused as she is. The action in the story truly takes a spellbinding and heart-stopping turn though, when Audrey gets caught in the air over Pearl Harbor, on that fateful day, just as the bombs begin to fall. Suddenly, nowhere feels safe.

As a way to make everything she loses count for something, Audrey joins the Women Airforce Service Pilots program. The friendships that are formed within that group reignite a spark of hope in the face of war and give Audrey the strength to cross the front lines and fight, not only for her country, but for all that truly matters to her.

[The Flight Girls](#) is rich with historical detail and is a powerful tale of courage and sacrifice by the Women Airforce Service Pilots during WWII. This validating and exciting novel points directly to the traits of fearlessness, love, and the power of friendship to make us soar! It is sure to captivate you from page one and then propel you into a story of courage and sacrifice that will possibly have you thinking about the early roles of women in the military in a way that you've never considered. We encourage you to read [The Flight Girls](#). You won't regret it! It is available through many booksellers, your public library, and our very own Lending Library at Pleasant Grove. Check it out...and Happy Reading!!!



## After School Care Post



The staff and students at Pleasant Grove After School Care do hope that everyone in the church family had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! We had a great time together during Winter break. We were all so excited as Christmas grew closer and closer. Then, after all the excitement of Christmas, we looked forward to a new year! On December 30<sup>th</sup>, at twelve noon, we celebrated “Happy Noon Year!” We welcomed the new year with handmade crowns, a ginger ale toast, and some glow stick fun in the gym of the family life center. We all had a great time together!!!

Then, the first week of the new year was a struggle for us as Covid reared its ugly head among our ranks. Please keep us in your prayers as we recover and get back to normal.

Of course, February is the month for snow! And although we do hope for just a little so that the kids can enjoy this wintertime treat, we pray that we can escape the icy weather events that sometimes visit the Carolinas. February is also when we celebrate Valentine’s Day and focus on the incredible gift of God’s Love that is available to us, and for us to share!!! So, we will be sure to work on some crafts that point us in that direction.



And you know us...we will definitely have a party to celebrate this wonderfully fun time of year!!!

We hope everyone will stay safe and well as we wind down the winter months! Thanks for always keeping our program in your prayers. And thanks for providing us with a space to be together after school, as parents work to provide for their families. We appreciate being in ministry with Pleasant Grove!!!



## News from United Women in Faith



Some may consider something that happened in 2022 to be old news by now! But, here at Pleasant Grove, we think it's always the right time to celebrate one of our own who works hard for the Kingdom of God.

Each year, our local unit of United Women in Faith recognizes someone with a Special Recognition Mission Pin, who serves as an example to us all of what it looks like to be engaged, both here at our church, and beyond, in ministry...serving others with the love and grace of Jesus Christ. This person can be a male or female, doesn't necessarily have to be a member of United Women in Faith, and doesn't even have to be a member of our church. The group just wants to shine a light on someone who embodies the qualities of living into God's purpose for their life.

This year, we recognized Jeannie Upton!!! Jeannie serves as the president of United Women in Faith at Pleasant Grove. She also works with our After School Care program...in fact, she was the "first teacher" for many in our community as she led our four-year-old kindergarten program for many years. She is active in a



senior exercise program which benefits many in the surrounding area. Jeannie is a faithful member of our Chancel Choir and is an active participant in the Double Ring Sunday School Class. Jeannie serves on our Family Life Committee and is also involved in Cook's Community Meals just down the road. We know that this is not an exhaustive list of Jeannie's activities, but we think you get the picture...Jeannie is a worker!!!



We are blessed to have Jeannie as a member of our church family! We know that we are better for having her walk this faith journey beside us. And we thank you, Jeannie, for being an example for us all!!!





## United Women in Faith Sunday 2022

In November 2022, the United Women in Faith at Pleasant Grove showed up in a big way! They hosted a bake sale to benefit missions and provided leadership for our Sunday morning worship. This just happened to also be the day that we dedicated 123 Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes and sent them on their way! Enjoy the photo gallery below to relive some great memories of our Church Family in action!!!

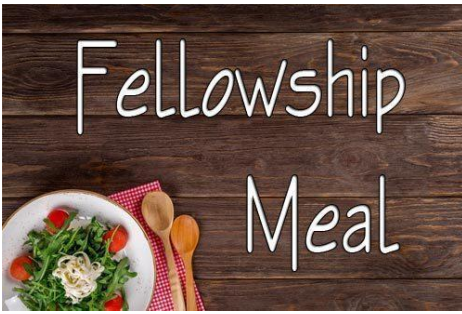


## Our Reverse Advent Offerings... Wrapped, Boxed, and Delivered!!!

During the month of December, the church family participated in a Reverse Advent Offering. Through this opportunity, families and individuals wrapped a large box, filled it with essential foods, and brought it to the family life center on Christmas Eve. A big thank you goes out to Jeff McCallum for coordinating the delivery of our boxes to the Food Pantry at Huntersville UMC. Also, thanks to Rick Elliott and Steve McClure for accompanying Jeff on the delivery run. With the help of these dedicated volunteers, we were able to reach beyond the borders of our campus to help those who find themselves in a food insecure situation. And...drum roll please...they delivered 765 pounds of food on behalf of Pleasant Grove!!! Once again, we remember what a blessing it is to have the desire to serve, the ability to serve, and the opportunity to serve!



## Let's Break Bread Together!!!



One of the best ways for the Family of God to fellowship together is over a shared meal at the table. In fact, in the second chapter of Acts we find this description of the early church: *"So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."* (Acts 2:46-47)

On Sunday, February 5<sup>th</sup>, we will gather as a church family immediately following our morning worship, to share in a fellowship meal together. The menu will be lasagna, salad, and bread. We are asking everyone who is able to bring your bestest, yummiest dessert to share with others. This will be a great time to visit with one another, share God's love with one another, and maybe have the chance to spend a little snatch of time with Pastor Sam Lewis. We know that everyone will appreciate this time together and that Pastor Sam will appreciate the chance to put a few more names and faces together. There is no charge for this after-worship meal. However, we will be accepting donations to help offset the associated cost.

So go ahead and plan to stay after church on February 5<sup>th</sup> and let's break bread together, eat with gladness and simplicity of heart, and praise God together!!!



## The JOY Group is on the Road Again!!!

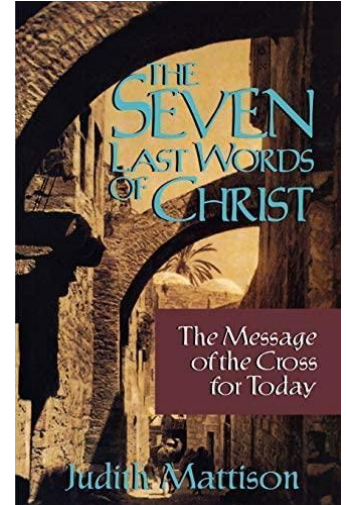


Mark your calendar for Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> because the JOY Group will be on the road again! You are all invited to join us as we travel to Hiddenite, NC. We will have lunch at the Yellow Deli, spend some time in the Amish Country Store, and, if time permits, we will take in the Hiddenite Museum. We plan to meet in the church parking lot at 8:45 AM and will have seating available on the church van. If you prefer, you can caravan with us in your own vehicle. This is sure to be a time of sweet fellowship and good food and you don't want to miss out! So make your plans now and we will hit the road again...together!!!

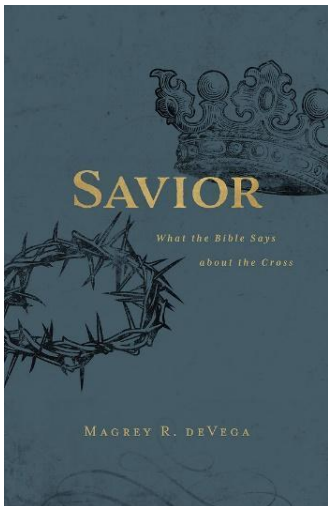
## Lenten Sermon Series and Study

As we worship together during this coming Lenten season, you are invited to engage with a book by author Judith Mattison, entitled, The Seven Last Words of Christ: The Message of the Cross for Today. Gathered from the accounts of Good Friday in all four Gospels, *The Seven Last Words of Christ* provides us with an opportunity to focus on the cross and how Jesus' atoning sacrifice speaks differently within each Gospel writer's perspectives. Most importantly, engaging *The Seven Last Words of Christ* helps us explore our own Christian journey, by placing us somewhere within the greatest event our world has ever known, causing us to see ourselves together at the foot of the cross.

This sermon series will begin on the first Sunday of Lent, February 26<sup>th</sup>, during our 10:00 worship service. You are encouraged to purchase a copy of the book and read along each week, on your own, as a way of diving deeper into the message of the weekly sermon. This book is available from many online booksellers, including Amazon.



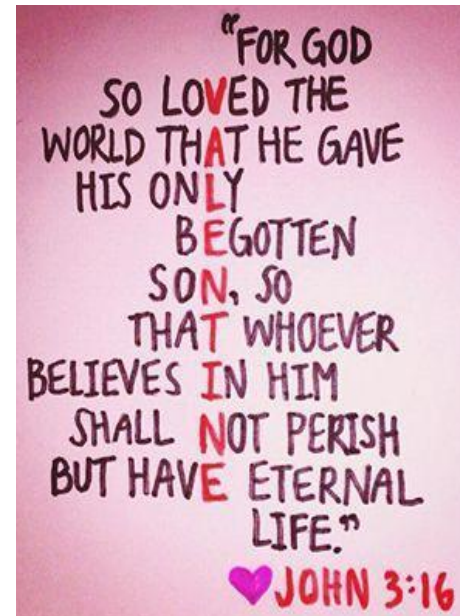
## Thursday Night Lenten Study



You are all invited to participate in our Thursday night Lenten Study!!! As a guide for our time together, we will be using the book Savior...What the Bible says about The Cross by Magrey R. DeVega. The study begins on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and will be co-led by Pastor Sam Lewis and Colin Winslette. This is a five-week study that will take place in the family life center. Each evening begins with a light supper at 6:00, with a time of study and sharing to follow. Interested participants should sign up on the clipboard on the table at the front of the sanctuary. The deadline to sign up is February 19<sup>th</sup>. The cost of the book is \$13 and if you are able to cover the cost of your book, please make your check out to the church and turn it into the office or place it in the offering plate. Just be sure to mark it for the Lenten study book. We do hope that many of our church family will be able to take part in this study as spending time together in God's word strengthens the body of believers. We look forward to being together!!!

## Happy Valentine's Day

As we observe a very sweet day this month, a day that brings thoughts of flowers, candy, and hearts, the people of Pleasant Grove want you to know one thing for sure! You are loved!!! This greeting may not come with all of the trappings of the "Hallmark" day that it has become...but it is heartfelt in a genuine and authentic way. You are loved by your church family. You are important to your church family. You matter to us! But, more importantly, you are loved by Jesus. You are important to the Savior. You matter to God. So, as others remember this day with gifts and trinkets, you can rest in the knowledge that you have already received the best Valentine's Day gift you could ever receive!



## Our Lending Library is Here for You!!!



Don't forget that Pleasant Grove has its own lending library! If you are looking for a good read...something that will inspire, inform, entertain, or help you along on your walk with the Lord...then we just may have what you need. We are located in the Gathering Room of the Family Life Center. Simply choose your title, take it home, enjoy it, and return it for others. Simple, isn't it? The books await. Let's get reading!!!



**Men's Fellowship Breakfast**  
**Every Tuesday at 7:30 am**  
**Lowesville Cafe**  
**1610 NC-16**  
**Mt Holly, NC 28120**



**LUNCH TIME**

**PG Prayer Lunch**

The PG Prayer Lunch meets every Thursday at 11:30 a.m. at The Stockyard Restaurant. Everyone...men and women, church members and friends, are welcome to join us. We would love to have you with us for this time of food, fellowship, and prayer as we come together seeking God's power and presence in our lives and in the world around us.

**Thursdays - 11:30 AM - The Stockyard**



The church family recently received these notes of thanks:

Dear PGUMC Family,

Thank you so much for the wonderful reception that you gave us! It is bittersweet saying, "so-long," but I know that God will take care of us as we continue to serve Him. May the Lord bless each and every one of you in 2023. Thank you for being an influence in our lives and loving us. Also, thank you for your very generous gifts of love and appreciation. Again, to quote the Apostle Paul, "I thank God for my remembrance of you." God bless you all.

---Love, Jana and Byron

Dear Friends in Christ,

Please find the enclosed check for the ministry budget in honor of Bob Canfield and in memory of Kappy Canfield. The Pleasant Grove Church Family has been an important part of our family for many, many years, and we appreciate the kindness and support shown to Dad since Mom's passing. Happy New Year!

---Jim and Tina Canfield

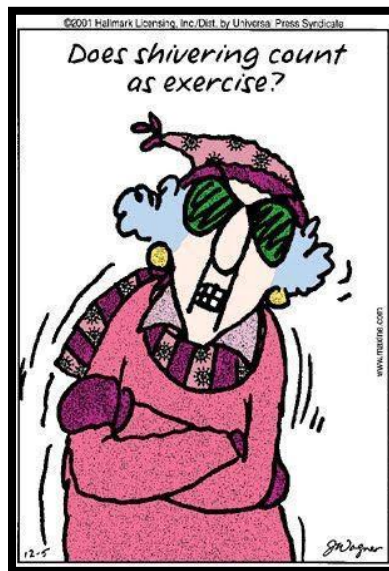
The Huntersville UMC Food Pantry wishes to thank Pleasant Grove UMC for their provision of 765 pounds of food recently donated through the Reverse Advent Calendar Offering. The Pantry wants to thank Jeff McCallum for coordinating this delivery and is very appreciative of the love and consistent support that Pleasant Grove continues to provide. Thank you, Friends, for caring for the physical needs of others in our larger community.



The church family extends our deepest sympathies to:

Lynne Tadlock and Lisa Dutton, and their families, on the recent passing of Lynne and Lisa's father, Bobby Torrence.

# Just For Giggles!!!



# Winter Word Search

S K I I N G S N O W B O O H T  
S F I R E P L A C E I N G E O  
L I E A R M U F F S C N Y T S  
E W S B C O L T R A E S T A C  
D I M L R O W S N O U G H E A  
D N U I A U L O W P S H T O R  
I T F Z E S A D E H A T A O F  
N R B Z B A E R O W P L Y I I  
G C O A T O T L Y D M W L C R  
I T O R H A F R O T A S U I E  
P O T D E C E M B E R I L C L  
L A S N C R O V I N C L O L R  
O A D H J K T C E S H O V E L  
W J A N U A R Y O E S A H S T  
M I T T E N S W E A T E R E L

BLIZZARD  
BOOTS  
COAT  
COCOA  
COLD  
DECEMBER  
EARMUFFS  
FEBRUARY

FIREPLACE  
FROSTY  
HAT  
ICE  
ICICLES  
JANUARY  
MARCH  
MITTENS

PLOW  
SCARF  
SHOVEL  
SKIING  
SLEDDING  
SNOW  
SWEATER  
WINTER

