



Pleasant News

Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church

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Worship Times:

- 9:00am Traditional
(Online – Website)
- 10:00am Blended Service
(Family Life Center)

Pleasant Grove United Methodist
Church
P.O. Box 681900
1915 Oakdale Road Charlotte,
NC 28216
704-392-2387
www.pleasantgrovecharlotte.com

Inspiration Point

One of the most prolific hymn writers in Modern times was Fanny Crosby! Fanny was born with sight, but in the first six months of her life was stricken with a disease, which caused her to become blind! She said she was not unhappy about being blind because when she got to Heaven, the first thing she would see would be the face of Jesus! Perhaps that became a blessing because during her life time she wrote more than 9000 hymns! She could play the harp, the piano, the guitar and many other instruments but she only put music to a few of her hymns. In 1858, she married Alexander van Alstine, who would go on to write music to many of her hymns. Dwight L. Moody and Ira Sankey began to use Fanny's hymns in their crusades and gave them wide publicity! Songs such as "Blessed Assurance", "All The Way My Savior Leads Me", "To God Be The Glory", "Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior", "Safe In The Arms Of Jesus", "Rescue The Perishing", and "Jesus Keep Me Near The Cross" are still our old favorites today!

"Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine! Heir of salvation, purchase of God, born of His Spirit, washed in His blood. This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long; This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long."

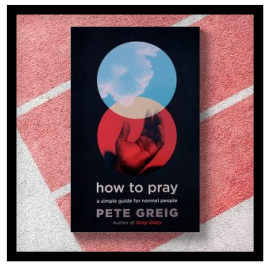
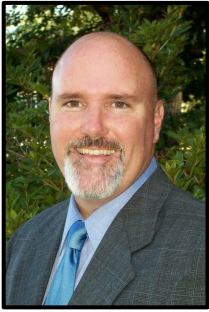
"Perfect submission, perfect delight, visions of rapture now burst on my sight; Angels descending, bring from above echoes of mercy, whispers of love. This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long; This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long."

"Perfect submission, all is at rest, I in my Savior am happy and blessed; watching and waiting, looking above, Filled with His goodness, lost in His love. This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long; This is my story, this is my song, Praising my Savior all the day long."

I do not know about you, but just reading such comforting words soothes my soul! These are confusing times and the issues of the day are difficult and complex. They cause us worry and concern about our future and our security! But Fanny has the right idea! The Bible teaches us that, "Thou will keep him in perfect peace whose eyes are staid on You!" Meet me in church this Sunday and approach me and I will pray that God will bless you with this wonderful peace and assurance as well!

(Some of these words are borrowed from the August 2008 issue of Christian History, and the words to the Hymn are from the Cokesbury Worship Hymnal.)

Brother Phil



Last year (2019) I attended a conference in Nashville, TN called “The New Room Conference”. It was a wonderful conference and I had hoped to take some of our church staff and lay folks with me this year, then COVID-19 hit and the conference was cancelled.

Hopefully in 2021, the conference will be able to take place once again. It is truly an uplifting and Christ-centered worshipping experience. One of the books that I purchased from this conference is titled: How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People authored by Pete Greig. Pete Greig is a writer and church planter. He cofounded and champions the 24-

7 Prayer movement around the world. A pastor at Emmaus Road in Guildford, England, he has written a number of bestselling books, including Dirty Glory and God on Mute.

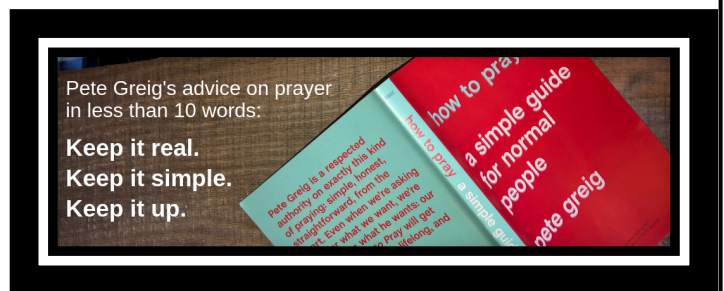
How to Pray emerges from Pete’s own struggles with prayer. He is convinced that prayer is essential in our walk with Christ. This book is an easy to follow practical guide of prayer for everyday life. In the book Pete says that “we are to sow seeds of prayer” and he tells us that prayer begins with presence. For him, 99% of prayer is just showing up.

The book talks about how prayer is a partnership with God, and prayer is particular and not just some general vague mumblings. Pete breaks prayer down into four stages which creates an easy to remember acronym:

1. **P**ause: learning to be still in God & putting down our wish lists.
2. **R**ejoice: our focus is on God not our needs.
3. **A**sk: our prayer life is most effective in the daily small things rather than just praying for the big worldly things. Our asking should be relational, vulnerable, & intentional.
4. **Y**ield or **Y**es: we listen to His Word (Scripture), and we surrender to God. We need to learn to practice the ordinary things in life, like praying throughout the day.

If you want a deeper prayer life, then you will find this book helpful and I would recommend it! NavPress is the publisher and the ISBN# is 978-1-64158-188-2. You can order the book online by typing in the ISBN#.

Christ above all,
Pastor Byron



Welcome October!!!



It's Time to Fill A Shoebox!!!



Even in these trying times, we cannot lose our heart to reach around the globe with the message of Jesus Christ through the simple gift of a shoebox. If you are comfortable filling a shoebox this year we encourage you to do so. Beginning Sunday, October 4th, we will have bright red and green plastic shoeboxes available in the family life center for you to pick up, along with the

brochure needed to properly fill and label your box. There is a limited supply of these boxes, so please make sure that you fill and return the boxes that you take. Remember to have your shoebox back to the family life center by Sunday, November 22nd so that we can get them to the processing center for shipping. As an alternative, you can go to the Samaritan's Purse website to make a financial donation in lieu of putting your own box together. Either way, we can, and will, make a difference in the earthly and eternal life of a child through this act of compassion and generosity.



Pecans, Pecans, Pecans!!!

The Double Ring Sunday School Class is once again selling pecans!!! But, this year, it is by pre-order ONLY! The class is able to offer broken pieces, halves, and chocolate covered pecans... YUMMY! And the price is \$12 per bag. Orders must be in by October 15th and you can place your order by contacting Margaret Parker or Judy Watts. Contact Margaret at 704.392.3028 or maggieparker0741@att.net. Contact Judy at 704.392.9175

Did You Know???



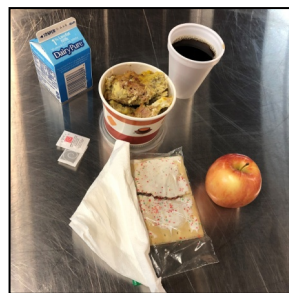
...that while some United Methodist mission and outreach efforts have had to curtail activities in the past six months, others have survived, expanded, succeeded, and even thrived? That is exactly the case and this month we would like to highlight one such ministry in the Holston Conference of the United Methodist Church, in Kingsport, Tennessee. Shades of Grace United Methodist Church was already providing hot meals for those in need from a full serving line inside their building before the pandemic occurred in the U.S. Many of their high contact ministries were forced to change or suspend their activities. But, the feeding ministry immediately went to providing brown-bag meals in an alley behind their downtown building. “We’ve never missed a single day of serving,”

said the Rev. Will Shewey, even as COVID-19 forced the church to completely change the way it does ministry.

Miraculously, the meals have kept on coming, rain or shine, six days a week, for 40 to 100 people daily. “The abundance of God sometimes strains our ability,” says Rex Hill, a full-time volunteer charged with keeping the food coming. What this means is that Shades of Grace experiences a “manna miracle” nearly every day. As ministry leaders make note of a particular need, a generous spirit will soon walk in the door with a perfect, need-fulfilling contribution. Rex says that these donations show up in such a timely manner that sometimes they are afraid to pray for the need out loud! As an example, the kitchen was recently running low on eggs and the kitchen staff put some thought to the need. And then, like manna from heaven, 60 dozen eggs showed up later that afternoon! After figuring out a way to store all those eggs safely, someone else showed up with 25 more dozen to donate!

Rex uses past experience as a food service worker and a pastor to serve delicious meals in a prayerful setting for the community that Shades of Grace serves. On August 27, 2020, as the 10,000th meal since the pandemic became a reality in Kingsport was served, the meal included a hashbrown casserole made with freshly grated potatoes (from a large produce donation), along with corned beef and topped off with cheese. Each meal also includes a fruit and a dessert. August 28th had homemade oatmeal with all the trimmings as well as a hard-boiled egg on the menu. And then for the next week, plans were being made to serve a “burrito in a cup” with donated flour tortillas, salsa, veggies, and meat. However, all of these plans could change at a moment’s notice if someone calls to say that they have fried chicken available from a canceled reunion, or if a church family suddenly wants to deliver a load of fresh sandwiches.

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The trick is to remain flexible in ministry...Rex feels that this is one of his callings...flexibility! This flexibility is born out of a genuine sense of gratitude for the generosity of others. "I will try to map out a real menu, and God almost always has a slightly different direction or will throw me a wild curve ball," Rex says.

Every Monday through Friday meal is preceded by a brief devotion and time of prayer. On Sunday afternoon, the alleyway food pick-up area becomes the site of a short worship service with a simple altar table. Rex offers, "There's always a passion and love to create that meal. We share miraculous resources to show compassion to the least, last, lost, and lonely."

Isn't God just amazing!?! As so much has been canceled lately, loving others has not been canceled. Loving God has not been canceled. Seeing needs has not been canceled. Being the hands and feet of Christ has not been canceled. Serving the homeless has not been canceled. Feeding the hungry has not been canceled. Thank you, God, for empowering us all to continue in our service to You and to Your children!



Bible Study Opportunity

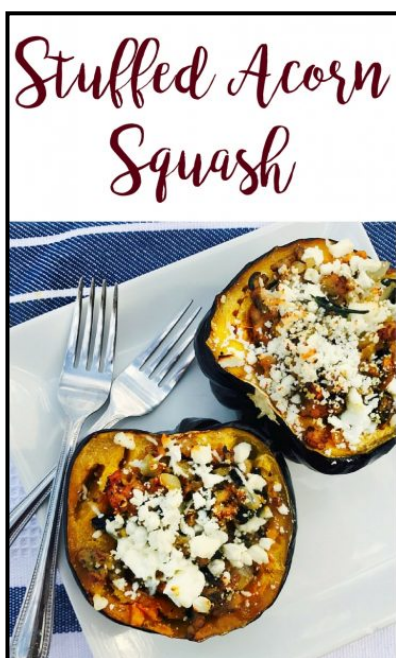
You are invited to join a new Bible study with Jana Alexander!

“Anxious for Nothing: Finding Calm in a Chaotic World” by Max Lucado.

Beginning Monday, October 12, 2020 (Five weeks)

The study begins each Monday evening at 6:30 pm via Zoom

Recipe Box



Are you tired of sandwiches? Do you find yourself dreading the next trip out to the grill? Are you looking for something new to bring some variety and pizzazz to your weekly menus? We may have just what you are looking for as fall approaches! **Stuffed Acorn Squash** is a perfectly portioned fall meal that really is easy to prepare and with a couple of add ins you can switch it up and have a little different taste while still using the same recipe. The basic recipe comes to us from confessionsofaprofitfoodie.com, but has been modified and enjoyed by Jessica Alexander and her family. If you haven't ever cooked with acorn squash, don't be hesitant! This squash is tasty, easy to work with, and good for you! Give this dish a try and we think you will be delighted!

Stuffed Acorn Squash

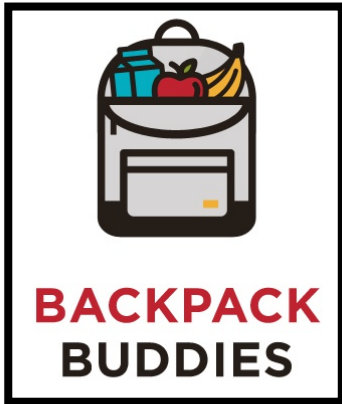
- 2 acorn squash
- 1 pound ground sausage (regular breakfast sausage or chicken sausage)
- 4 tsp. olive oil, divided
- ½ of a sweet, yellow onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups fresh spinach, chopped into bite sized pieces
- ½ cup feta cheese, or cheese of your choice
- 2 Tbsp. Parmesan, or Romano cheese, grated
- Salt to taste
- ¼ cup walnut pieces (optional)
- ¼ cup raisins (optional)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees and line a baking sheet with parchment paper (not necessary, but keeps the mess to a minimum). Cut each acorn squash in half, top to bottom. Remove the seeds and discard. Brush each squash half using two teaspoons of the olive oil. Then sprinkle each with salt. Place squash halves in the oven, cut side up, to roast for approximately 40 minutes, or until the flesh is fork tender, but the squash are still retaining their shape.

While the squash is roasting, brown the sausage in a skillet until fully cooked. Next, add in remaining olive oil, onion, and garlic. Cook until onion and garlic are soft. Mix in spinach and sprinkle with a little salt. Cook until the spinach wilts. If desired, throw the walnuts and/or raisins into the skillet for these last few minutes.

Once squash is finished cooking, use a fork to gently mash the inside. Then, divide sausage mixture evenly into the squash halves. Top each with the feta and parmesan cheeses. Place squash back in the oven for a few minutes to melt and brown the cheese. Enjoy!

Backpack Buddies Begins Its 11th Year in Ministry!



The volunteers with our Backpack Buddies Ministry are so excited to begin our 11th year in partnership with Oakdale Elementary School! This ministry seeks to serve families in our community who find themselves in a food insecure situation by providing weekend food for their Oakdale School students. Through the efforts of our own congregation, as well as the efforts of Pleasant Grove Presbyterian Church, we are able to send two breakfasts, two lunches, two dinners, and two snacks home with each student.

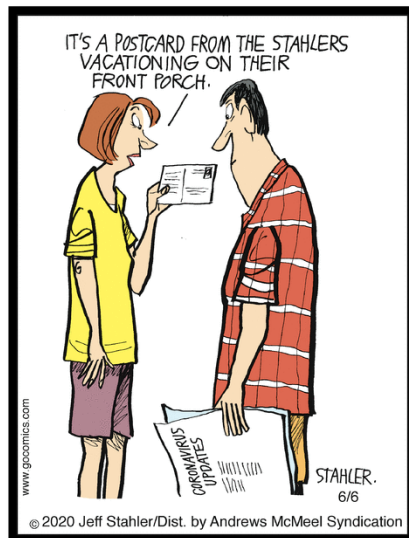
As the pandemic began back in March, our ministry was able to pivot to a “pick up distribution” pretty easily. Each family picked up their student’s bag of food from our parking lot each Friday morning. We were also able to help the families out with a small grocery store gift card most weeks, as well as some of that hard-to-find toilet tissue. The gratitude that these families expressed to us was so humbling and a bit overwhelming. It was so evident that what we were able to do, with God’s help, mattered to these precious families.

And so here we are, in a very different school year, ready to continue with this ministry! Our target date for beginning this year’s efforts is Friday, October 2nd. Because school is operating in a remote learning structure, we will once again have our families pick up the food on Friday mornings. Our packing teams will pack the bags each week and leave them ready for distribution. However, that’s the only thing that has changed. Our monthly sponsors here at Pleasant Grove are still contributing specific food items. Our packing team members are still giving of their time once a month. And the financial needs of this ministry remain. Every item is not supplied through donations and some items are bought each month.

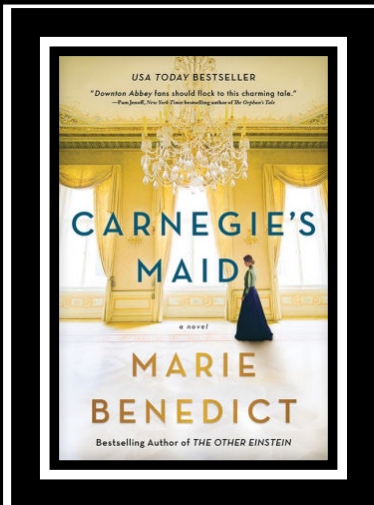
Even though it seems as if this program just operates itself from year to year, you need to know that Backpack Buddies needs you! Could you volunteer for a packing team? Could you volunteer for a Friday pick up? Could you become a monthly sponsor by committing to pick up 20 fruit cups, or 10 cans of chili beans, or 15 cans of beef stew each month? Could you be a financial donor to support the ongoing needs of this ministry? If you feel the tug to be involved in any way, please contact Sherri Brown at 704.562.3914 or sbrown6924@aol.com. Being able to be the love of Christ with skin on, is one of the most rewarding experiences you can ever have!!!



"Just For Giggles"



Recommended Reading ...



Many of us, when choosing our next book to read, are drawn to historical fiction. Why is that? Could it be that we know a little bit about the particular times used as a setting and therefore, it is easy to immerse ourselves in the storyline right from the first chapter? Could it be that we yearn for simpler times, times gone by, times when the important things in life really were seen as the important things in life? Or, could it be that we know that while enjoying a fictional story, we just might learn a thing or two about the past? To each of those questions, we all might answer with a resounding, “YES!”

While keeping in mind that the characters presented in a book of historical fiction are just that...fiction...we can all be transported to another place and time and we can all learn just a bit more about a certain time or place, or a certain person or family. These people, these families, might well have been just a name in our history textbooks before. But, with the reading of a well-crafted work of historical fiction, these characters can come alive in our imaginations.

Such is the case with this month's *Recommended Reading* selection. *Carnegie's Maid*, by Marie Benedict, is a fascinating story of historical fiction that asks the question, “What kind of woman could have inspired an American dynasty?” Clara Kelley, the title character, is not who the Carnegie household thinks she is. She's not an experienced Irish maid who was hired to work in one of Pittsburgh's most affluent homes. She is assumed to be so, but assuming this identity just might provide Clara with the means to send some money back home. Without the skills needed to serve as a lady's maid in the home of Andrew Carnegie, she is also tasked with answering to an icy mistress who rules over her sons and her household with an iron fist. Clara relies on a fierce resolve that is as strong as the steel that Pittsburgh is becoming famous for, and her uncanny understanding of business. These qualities quickly gain her Carnegie's confidence but she can never let her guard down, not even when Andrew Carnegie becomes something more than her employer. Doing so just might ruin her own future as well as that of her entire family. *Carnegie's Maid* is a book filled with captivating insight and true heart. By reading this work, we can all discover the tale of one brilliant woman who just may have driven Andrew Carnegie to become the world's first true philanthropist, instead of the ruthless industrialist that he seemed destined to become. We sincerely hope that you will enjoy reading *Carnegie's Maid*!

What Do You Say When Asked...

Why is it that the average prayer goes begging for an answer?

The millions of unanswered prayers are not to be solved by the mystery of God's will. The whole explanation is found in our wrong praying. We ask and do not receive because we ask amiss.

'If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you.' (John 15:17)

“The Following Gifts Have Been Made In Memory Or In Honor Of”

IN MEMORY

Nancy Brown

Don Brown

Vivian Kiser

Betty Allen

Don Brown

Kappy Canfield

Pina Nance – Family Life Center

Betty Allen – Family Life Center

Covenant Sunday School Class – Family Life Center

Tim and Terri Honeycutt – Family Life Center

Genesis Sunday School Class – Family Life Center

Roy and Margaret Parker – Family Life Center

PRA Facilities – RDU – Family Life Center

David and Dora Smith – Family Life Center

Emily Adkins – Family Life Center

Don Brown – Family Life Center

William and Martha Brown – Family Life Center

Raymond and Mary Jane Hinkle – Family Life Center

Bev Guyton – Family Life Center

William and Teresa Cowan – Family Life Center

Glenn and Karen Dedrick – Family Life Center

Roger and Patti Beard – Family Life Center

Steve and Maria McClure – Family Life Center

Wayne and Anna Therrell – Family Life Center

Don and Jane Adams – Family Life Center

Anonymous – Family Life Center

Eric and Karen Brown – Family Life Center

Todd and Windy Holcombe – Family Life Center

Brenda Watkins – Family Life Center

Anonymous – Family Life Center

Hazel Sanders – Family Life Center

Willie and Nadine Williams – Family Life Center

Bruce Gwendolyn Barnes

Tim and Terri Honeycutt – Family Life Center

Genesis Sunday School Class – Family Life Center

Gail Moore

Wayne and Anna Therrell

Double Ring Sunday School Class

Roy and Margaret Parker

Hazel Sanders

Willie and Nadine Williams – Family Life Center

Brenda Watkins – Family Life Center

IN HONOR

Praise Band

Pina Nance

2020 Graduates

UMW - Circle #3 – Family Life Center

Are We Praying For Peace?



Are you praying for peace? That might seem like a ridiculous question! Of course we all pray for peace, don't we? But, the better question is this, "Are we praying for Biblical peace? Are we praying for shalom peace?"

Many times, as we lift our concerns to the Lord in prayer, the language might look something like this: "Dear Lord, I ask for peace around the world, for peace in our nation, for peace in our homes and in our families. I pray that you would bring an end to war and injustice. I pray that turmoil and senseless killing would come to an end. I pray Lord, for the absence of malice, greed, oppression, and hatred. Amen." Now, there is absolutely nothing wrong with this prayer. Asking God to intervene in the world to stop the evil forces that seem to be winning the upper hand is certainly not a bad thing! The problem is that we are stopping just short of the peace that God desires to impart to us, and to every part of His creation. There is so much more that God plans to give to us. There is so much more that God can, and will do, within the created world that He loves so dearly. Let's take a minute to consider the true meaning of "peace".

When we translate the Hebrew language into English, the word we use as "peace" comes from the word "shalom". Shalom, in its Hebrew context does not mean to feel calm. It doesn't mean the absence of conflict. Shalom peace is instead the result of right relationships with God, each other, and with creation. The concept of peace is actually wholeness in all of life.

The United Methodist Council of Bishops, in its 2016 Book of Resolutions, described the Biblical foundation of peace as follows:

"At the heart of the Old Testament is the testimony to shalom, that marvelous Hebrew word that means peace. But the peace that is shalom is not negative or one-dimensional. It is much more than the absence of war. Shalom is positive peace: harmony, wholeness, health, and well-being in all human relationships. It is the natural state of humanity as birthed by God. It is harmony between humanity and all of God's good creation. All of creation is interrelated. Every creature, every element, every force of nature participates in the whole of creation. If any person is denied shalom, all are thereby diminished."



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In the New Testament, Paul's letters announce that Jesus Christ is our peace. It is Christ who "broke down the barrier of hatred that divided us," creating one humanity, overcoming enmity, so making peace. (Eph. 2: 14-19)

And in both the Old and New Testaments the Bible makes justice the inseparable companion of peace. When considering both justice and peace, each points to sustainable and right relationships in human society. Both point to the integrity and well-being of creation. To try to separate justice from peace is to compromise the hope that justice and peace shall once again embrace (Psalm 85:10).

We recognize that the earth, and even we ourselves, are aching for peace. As we witness domestic struggles, violence and abuse, civil conflict, ethnic atrocities, poor race relations, problems within our communities of faith, terrorist attacks, war, the threat of chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, and even the uncertainty of our current times, we are prevented from coming to a place of God's shalom peace.

So, what does this shalom peace look like? When peace is present no one suffers from hunger. When peace is present, no one is abandoned without resources. When peace is present, we support and celebrate another person's thriving. When peace is present, our differences are celebrated as gifts from a good God for the good of all. When peace is present, external threats (though they may be present as well) cannot prevent us from living the full life that God intends for us. When peace is present, joy abounds! And when we pray for this shalom peace, and offer one another the peace of Christ, we can be channels of this never-ending peace from God that reorders the world toward wholeness. When our actions are a reflection of the spirit of Christ, we can offer the world love, pardon and light. As His instruments of peace and justice, we can help to repair the brokenness that shatters the wholeness of shalom, as we replace discord with harmony.

In Colossians 1:20 Paul offers us the assurance that this peace is not something we have to wait for in some far-away, distant future. God is pouring out shalom peace on us right now. No matter how bad things seem, God's creative work continues. God's spirit is always and everywhere at work in our world fighting against poverty, restoring health, bringing people together, and renewing His creation. This assurance should be a consoling presence in our Christian lives. However, never lose sight of the fact that we are to be His instruments. He seeks to use us, every day, day in and day out, to bring shalom, true peace through His presence, into this world!!! Let's all pray for shalom and then work to see it come to pass just as God desires!!!

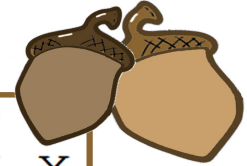
(The content of this article was produced by Ask the UMC, a ministry of United Methodist Communications and appeared on the United Methodist website on August 11th, 2020.)



Autumn



WORD SEARCH



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



SCARF
TREE
ACORN
HAY

APPLE
FALL
PUMPKIN
SWEATER

BOOTS
RAKE
PIE
LEAF