

# 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)

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1915 Oakdale Road Charlotte,  
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704-392-2387  
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## ***Inspiration Point***

"Over the river and through the woods to grandmother's house we go!" It is November and time to begin counting our blessings for this past year! That little song must have taken place over 100 years ago. But then, I grew up in the South, and we had very little snow during our winters! Oh, we got 2 or maybe 3 snow falls every year, but if it reached 3 inches we felt lucky! How we loved those snowfalls! Of course, schools were let out, and being raised on a farm, we would go out looking for rabbit trails. We were told by our parents that if we would sprinkle salt on their tails, then we could catch them, so we certainly tried that! We found lots of rabbit tracks and we followed them all over the place, but truthfully, we never saw a rabbit! Now, looking back on it, if we could have gotten close enough to sprinkle salt on their tails, they would have been in reach to catch, but, we never did! Did you? My grandparents came to our house for Thanksgiving dinner because their little house was too small to hold us all! Then, we did not have electricity until 1951, or running water. Truthfully, we did not miss it because we had never had it! My older brother and I had the wood chopped and stacked to do the cooking, which began the day before! Mom and Grandma did the cooking, and we had a mostly traditional meal. We did not have turkey, but we roasted a big old hen, pies, sweet potatoes, green beans, stuffing and gravy, and hot buttered biscuits! Plus, we did have the cranberry sauce, and we had pumpkins. Sometimes, an aunt and uncle would come over from Greensboro to have dinner with us. These were good times and brought many good memories!

My older brother and I had the chore of cleaning up the pots, pans and dishes, and Mom would arrange the food on the table and cover it over to keep the flies out! (We had no electricity, so we had no refrigerator!) Come dinnertime, we would set the table, uncover the food, warming that which needed it, and the feasting would begin all over again! We were poor farmers, but we did not know that because everyone in our community was in the same economic place we were! We had a lot to be thankful for! Good health for one, plenty of food, our own farm, with the farm animals to provide those needs. We raised chickens, had a milk cow, a mule, two hogs and many woods to hunt rabbits, squirrels and quail in.

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We did not have many clothes, but we always had enough! The house was warm and dry, and the good smells of all those good things cooking rafted through out the house! God was good to us!

Psalm 95:1 to 7 says, "**Oh come, let us sing to the Lord! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our Salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with Psalms. For the Lord is the great God, and the great King above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth; The height of the hills are His also. The sea is His, for He made it; and his hands formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand.** This has not been an easy time for this country, nor for our church family! We have lost several members of our church family, we have been shut in at home to prevent CO VID 19 infections and we have had to shut down our worship services for a time. Some have lost their jobs, and as a result have lost their health insurance. Even so, Our God loves us and is watching over us! While many have died from the virus infection, I have not heard of anyone of our church family dying from it. Some have suffered through it! We have teamed up to be a praying church and are holding up to the Lord those who have done so! God has heard our prayers, and has answered them! That speaks well of us as a praying church! While our troubles continue and sometimes seem to be multiplying, Let us covenant to continue to be a praying and believing church! Let us continue to come before the Lord Jesus with our praise and our thanksgiving! He is with us and He will sustain us! Keep the Faith!

May God richly bless each of you!

*Brother Phil*

***A Prayer Meditation for All Saints' Day***

(written by Safiyah Fosua)

We give you thanks, O God, for all the saints who ever worshiped you,  
whether in arbors or cathedrals,  
wooden churches or cement meeting houses.

We give you thanks, O God, for hands lifted in praise:  
manicured hands and hands stained with grease or soil,  
strong hands and hands gnarled with age,  
holy hands.

We thank you, God, for hardworking saints,  
whether hard-hatted or aproned,  
blue collared or three-piece-suited.  
They left their mark for you, for us, for our children to come.

Thank you for the sacrifices made by those who have gone before us.  
Bless the memories of your saints.  
May we learn how to walk wisely from their examples of faith, dedication,  
worship, and love.

## *Pleasant Grove Celebrates All Saints' Day*

United Methodist churches celebrate All Saints' Day on the first Sunday in November. This year, that day just happens to fall on November 1<sup>st</sup>. During our worship service we will be remembering those who have gone to their heavenly home since we last observed All Saints' Day.

The Christian celebration of All Saints' Day has its root in a belief that there is a powerful spiritual bond between those in heaven (the Church triumphant), and the living (the Church militant). This day gives us the opportunity to give thanks for those who have gone before us in the faith. From the early days of the Christian Church, there has been a sense that the Church consists of not only all living believers, but also all who have gone before us. For example, the author of Hebrews, in chapter 12, encourages us to remember that a "great cloud of witnesses" surrounds us. They are encouraging us and cheering us on!

On All Saints' Day we remember all – famous or unknown – who are a part of the "communion of saints" we confess whenever we recite The Apostles' Creed. Of course, we can remember Paul from the New Testament, Augustine, Martin Luther, and John and Charles Wesley. But we can also tell the stories of the grandmother who took us to church each Sunday. We can remember the pastor who prayed with us by the bedside of a family member fallen ill. We remember the neighbor who helped us with routine car maintenance or simple tasks around our home. We are thankful for the youth leader who reminded us that Jesus loved us with a fierce love, the Sunday school teacher who showered us with that love, and the church member who brought us groceries when we didn't know how we were going to buy what the family needed.

Retelling these stories grounds us in our history. Recalling these memories teaches us how God has provided for us through the sacrifice and generosity of those who have come before us. The stories of these saints encourage us to be all God has created us to be!

So, on this All Saints' Day we invite you to remember with us...



Pauline Melton	Lucia Wilkins
Troy Wilson	Horace Nixon
Judy Maples	Vivian Kiser
Kappy Canfield	Gail Moore
Kelly Roberts	Julia Faulkner
Virginia Pennington	Sandy Elliott
David McCallum	

*Thank You, God, for these saints of the faith and for all that they have meant to us in our lives!*



## OUR RICHES IN CHRIST

I wanted to pass along to you, an author that you might or might not be familiar with, Timothy Keller. Rev. Timothy Keller is the pastor of New York's Redeemer Presbyterian Church and *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Reason for God*. The Gospels are full of encounters that made a profound impact on those who spoke with Jesus Christ. He has written 10 essays that have been titled: "The Encounter with Jesus Series". These 10 essays show how those encounters can still have a deep effect on us today.

*Here's an excerpt from Tim Keller's (Encounter with Jesus Series.)*

Imagine you're a billionaire, and you have three ten-dollar bills in your wallet. You get out of a cab, and you hand the driver one of the bills for an eight-dollar fare.

Later in the day you look in and find out there's only one ten-dollar bill there, and you say, "Either I dropped a ten-dollar bill somewhere, or I gave the taxi driver two bills."

What are you going to do? Are you going to get all upset? Are you going to the police and demand they search the city for the cabdriver?

No, you are going to shrug. You're a *billionaire*. You lost *ten dollars*. So what? You are too rich to be concerned about that kind of loss.

This week, somebody criticized you. Something you bought or invested in turned out to be less valuable than you thought. Something you wanted to happen didn't go the way you wanted it to—these are real losses.

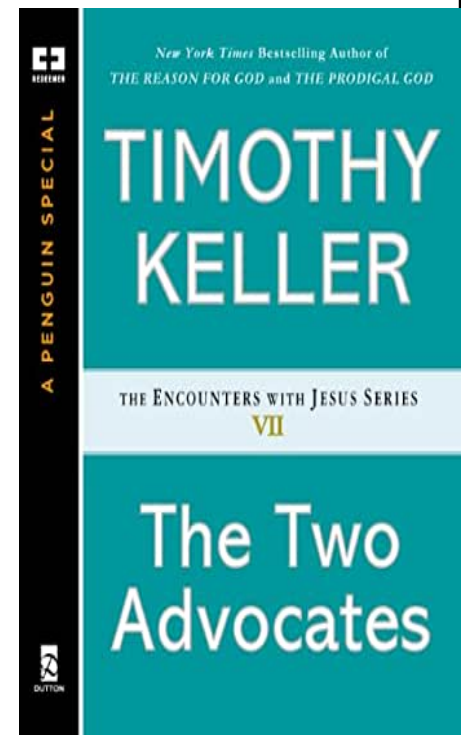
But what are you going to do if you're a Christian? Will this setback disrupt your contentment with life? Will you shake your fist at God? Toss and turn at night?

If so, I submit that **it's because you don't know how truly rich you are**. If you're that upset about your status with other people, if you're constantly lashing out at people for hurting your feelings, you might call it a lack of self-control or a lack of self-esteem, and it is.

But more fundamentally, **you have totally lost touch with your identity**. As a Christian, you're a spiritual billionaire and you're wringing your hands over ten dollars.

— Tim Keller

The Two Advocates / Encounters with Jesus Series





## *Happy Veterans Day to All of our Military Heroes!!!*



### **Honoring All Veterans on Veterans Day**

*We thank you for your service and sacrifices. We are forever grateful!*

On November 11<sup>th</sup>, our country will once again observe Veterans Day...as well we should. This special day is celebrated on November 11<sup>th</sup>, regardless of the day of the week. Keeping Veterans Day on the 11<sup>th</sup>, as opposed to celebrating it on the closest Monday, as we do with so many other holidays, preserves the historical significance of the date and also helps focus attention on the important purpose of Veterans Day. This day is set aside to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good. Veterans Day honors ALL who have served the

country in war or peace, dead or alive. However, it is largely intended to thank living veterans for their sacrifices.

Veterans Day is distinct from Memorial Day, which honors those who have *died* while in military service. It also differs from Armed Forces Day, which honors those *currently serving* in the U.S. military. Additionally, Women Veterans Day is recognized by a growing number of U.S. States that specifically honors *women who have served* in the U.S. military.

Another interesting fact of note has to do with the spelling of this holiday. While it is commonly printed as 'Veteran's Day' or 'Veterans' Day' in calendars and advertisements, The United States Department of Veterans Affairs website states that the official spelling has no apostrophe. This is because it is not a day that 'belongs' to veterans, rather it is a day for honoring all veterans.

Might we suggest that this year, on November 11<sup>th</sup>, we all take a moment to pause and reflect on the many lives that have been sacrificed for our freedom. Might we also seek out that veteran who goes to church with us or lives down the street from us and thank them for their service to our country.

Then, let's say a prayer for all who continue to serve to protect our freedoms. This is why we observe Veterans Day!





### ***It's Shoebox Season at Pleasant Grove!!!***

Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes are available for pick up now! Our bright red and green plastic shoeboxes are just sitting in the gathering room of the family life center waiting to be picked up. We do hope that you will pick up one or two, pick up the brochures to help you pack and label your boxes, and then fill it with fun and exciting items that will make a child's eyes light up with joy when they open it. Remember, these children will also be receiving the story of the Gospel, in their own language, along with your gifts. Be sure to return your filled boxes to the stage area of the family life center by Sunday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>. Even during these strange and difficult times, we can make a difference in the lives of children around the globe with the gift of a simple shoebox...the gift of LOVE!!!

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### **November Sermon Series**

1 Thessalonians is the Apostle Paul's oldest surviving letter, the oldest book of the New Testament. It was written to encourage early Christians to stay strong, to remain solid in their faith, and to learn to live a life of character...to be like a rock. I hope you will join us online or in person at 10 AM every week for this five message series during the month of November!

-Pastor Byron

## ***Wishing Our Church Family a Very Happy Thanksgiving!***



It just about seems unreal that we are already wishing one another a Happy Thanksgiving! It seems to have come upon us very quickly. But, what *has* been normal about the year 2020? Nevertheless, we have much to be thankful for and we should indeed give thanks. We have our family. We have our church family. We have faith, hope, and love. We have our loving God, who continues to pour out His blessings on us each and every day. Even when we are going through tough times, He is right there with us and will never leave us or forsake us. And most importantly, we have the salvation that

comes from knowing Jesus and inviting Him to be Lord and Savior of our lives. So, even if your Thanksgiving celebration looks different this year from previous years, even if the gathering is smaller, even if the menu isn't what you're used to, don't forget to give thanks for all that God has given you, for all that He is to you, and for the privilege of being His ambassador in our world!



### ***What do you say when asked...***

When asked what his plans were for the following day, Martin Luther answered, "Work, work, from early until late. In fact, I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer."

It is only when the whole heart is gripped with the passion of prayer that the life-giving fire descends, for none but the earnest man gets access to the ear of God; and that is the purpose of prayer.



## **Backpack Buddies is Up and Running!**

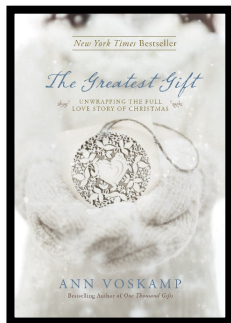
Our Backpack Buddies ministry is going full speed ahead right now with our families picking up their student's bags here at the church on Friday mornings. It is quite evident that the food that God enables us to distribute is truly needed by these families. Thanks to all who have donated food items already this year. If you are wondering what you might purchase to give to the Backpack Buddies ministry, we thought we would let you know a couple of items that are not currently being donated. Consider this your shopping list, so to speak:

- Shelf Stable White Milk
- Instant Macaroni and Cheese Cups
- Canned Chili Beans
- Make Your Own Tuna Salad Kits
- Chicken Salad Kits

Thank you in advance for donating one or more of these items. Together we are putting food on the table in neighborhood homes that struggle to do so.

Thanks for being Jesus in the life of a child!!!

## **You are invited to join an Advent study with Jana Alexander and Sherri Brown!**



**The Greatest Gift: Unwrapping the Full Love Story of Christmas**, by Ann Voskamp is a beautifully designed and exquisitely written reminder that it is Christ and Christ alone who endows Christmas with meaning. Beginning with Jesse, the father of David, The Greatest Gift retraces the epic pageantry of humankind from Adam to the Messiah, with each devotional reading, prayer, and reflection leading you one glorious day at a time toward the magnificent promise of Christ.

Study begins on Monday, November 30<sup>th</sup> (Four weeks)  
6:30 PM via Zoom

If you would like to join in, please notify the church office or Jana Alexander ([janaalexander09@gmail.com](mailto:janaalexander09@gmail.com)) so that we can be sure to send you the Zoom link.

You will need the book (\$12.99) for the group meetings and for your personal reflection and study. You can order the book from Amazon.com, or we can order it for you. **Please let us know by November 16<sup>th</sup> if you would like to be included in the group order.**

“I don't want a Christmas you can buy. I don't want a Christmas you can make. What I want is a Christmas you can hold. A Christmas that holds me, remakes me, revives me.  
I want a Christmas that whispers, Jesus.”



## *The Recipe Box*



For this month's recipe we thought we might give you a simple twist on a side dish that has been a staple for many of us for a very long time. With Thanksgiving coming up, one can never have too many ideas for good side dishes to accompany that main dish. Whether you are staying traditional and having the roasted turkey, or are branching out to something different, in this very different year, this side will go along with just most anything. This recipe didn't just come into view for the upcoming holidays. It actually came to our attention in the early months of the pandemic. With so many of us eating at home so much more and then getting tired of the same old, same old, a fresh take on an old standard was welcome, to say the least. Lynda Elliott shared this recipe, and we are so glad she did. She said it was delicious and she was right!



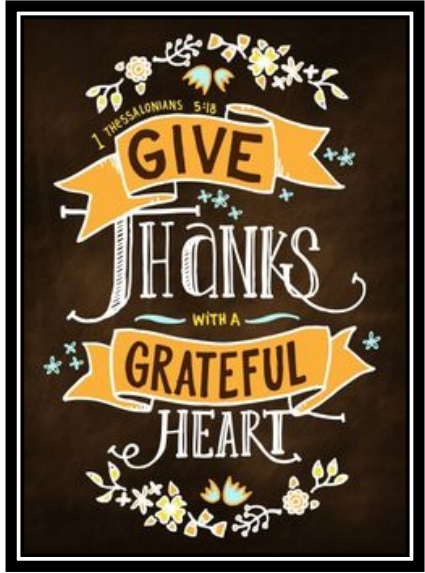
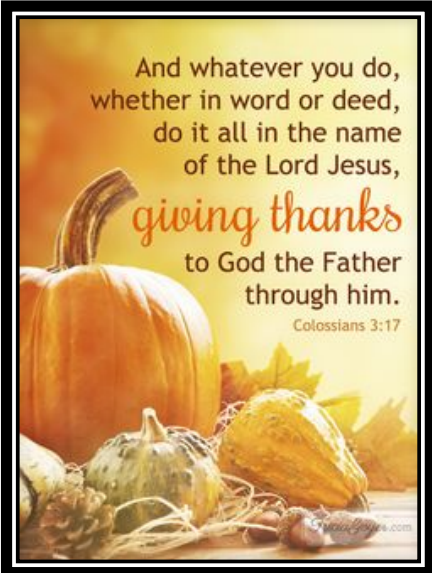
*Simple Roasted Cauliflower* is one of those recipes that uses simple ingredients and takes very little time. In fact, after it is in the oven you can go about getting the rest of the meal ready for the table and come off looking so prepared...so organized!!! Many of us love raw cauliflower and steamed cauliflower...heck! We have probably enjoyed deep fried cauliflower as well! But we can assure you that you will not be disappointed with this roasted version. So, give it a try! It just might become one of your favorites!

### **Simple Roasted Cauliflower**

1 head of fresh cauliflower  
½ cup (or maybe a little more) of grated parmesan cheese  
2-3 T. of olive oil  
Salt and pepper to taste

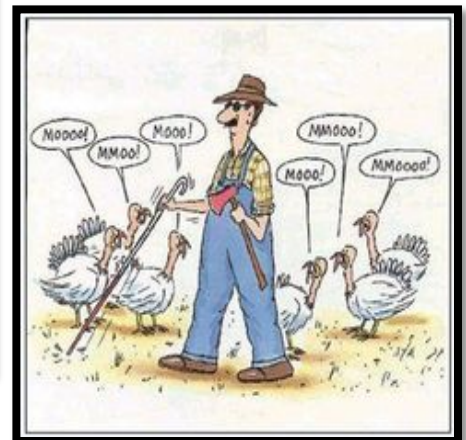
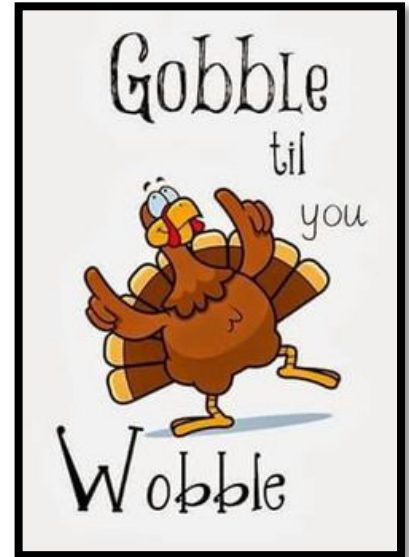
Wash the cauliflower and allow to drain. Break the cauliflower into medium sized florets. Slice each floret in half. Combine the cheese, olive oil, salt, and pepper in a large zip top bag. Place cauliflower into bag and shake until cauliflower is well-coated. Spray your baking sheet with cooking spray. Arrange the coated cauliflower in a single layer on the baking sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for about 20 minutes, or until it begins to brown. (For easy clean up, you might want to line your baking sheet with aluminum foil and spray the foil lightly with cooking spray.) Enjoy!!!

*Welcome November!*





*"Just For Giggles"*



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

**IN MEMORY**

**Gail Moore**

Tom and Julia Grey  
Pina Nance – Family Life Center

**Kappy Canfield**

Shawn and Jennifer Phillips –  
Family Life Center  
Tom and Julia Grey – Family Life Center  
Bob and Bonnie Bridges –  
Family Life Center  
Robert and Coretha Ferrell –  
Family Life Center  
Steve and Karen Dellinger –  
Family Life Center  
Laura Gilleland – Family Life Center  
Sue Phillips

**Virginia Pennington**

Robert and Coretha Ferrell  
Robert and Deborah Lockler  
Pina Nance  
Sue Phillips  
Willie and Nadine Williams

**David McCallum**

Roy and Margaret Parker  
Steve and Karen Dellinger  
Robert and Coretha Ferrell  
Pina Nance – Family Life Center  
Willie and Nadine Williams

**Kelly Roberts**

Hazel Sanders  
Steve and Karen Dellinger  
Steve and Maria McClure  
Brenda Watkins  
Roy and Margaret Parker  
Rickey and Lynda Elliott –  
Cemetery Fund  
Tim and Terri Honeycutt  
Robert and Coretha Ferrell  
Pina Nance – Family Life Center  
Willie and Nadine Williams –  
Family Life Center

**Julia Faulkner**

Steve and Karen Dellinger  
Brenda Watkins  
Roy and Margaret Parker  
Robert and Coretha Ferrell  
Pina Nance – Family Life Center  
Willie and Nadine Williams – Family Life Center  
UMW Circle #3 – Family Life Center

**Sandy Elliott**

John and Barbara Finney  
Pamela Livingston  
Cathy and Matthew Liles  
Vivian Parrish  
Pina Nance  
Brenda Watkins  
Mark and Elizabeth Liles – Bereavement Fund  
Disciples Sunday School Class  
Steve and Maria McClure  
Susan and Rick Kessell  
Willie and Nadine Williams

**Nancy Brown**

Sue Phillips

**Bill Watts**

Willie and Nadine Williams

**Horace Nixon**

Loreen Barnes

**IN HONOR**

**Bereavement Committee**

Virginia Pennington Family



### ***Did You Know???***

...that young people can be a powerful force for good in this world? Of course, you did!!! Many of you probably have one of these amazing young people in your life, either as a part of your family, as a neighbor, or as a friend. This month, we thought we would bring to light a recent effort spear-headed by young Methodists on a quest to relieve suffering, alleviate want, and share the love of Christ with those in need.

An impoverished community in the suburban town of Pulilan, in the Philippines, was already struggling with the COVID-19 pandemic when a fire destroyed 28 of the 108 homes in the neighborhood in early September. Larren Jo Basilio, the national president of the United Methodist Youth Fellowship, was in an online discussion with Bulacan-based volunteer teacher, Jazel Resurreccion Lustre. While chatting, Lustre noticed smoke and dust were blurring the screen of her smartphone. She quickly learned that a fire was raging in the dumpsite area known as “Looban” in Barangay Village Longos. Hearing this news made her heart sink. Most of her scholars, as well as children in the Supervised Neighborhood Play program live in Looban. The school and play program are operated by the United Methodist Church. The families of these children survive by sifting through what others have thrown away and selling whatever they can salvage.

Lustre hurried to the location and was able to take several photos which she then posted to social media. She witnessed panicked residents trying to save whatever they could from their burning shelters, which were made of plywood and thin, galvanized iron roofs. “They were only able to carry a few clothing items, their treasured small televisions, and whatever they could pick up along the way as they ran to save themselves, Lustre said.”

“The fire left almost nothing,” said resident Archie Miralles, as he sifted through the burnt rubble of his home, attempting to find something that could still be used by his family.



Jazel Lustre, a volunteer teacher in Bulacan province, helps a child from the Longos neighborhood, which was devastated by fire. The blaze destroyed 28 of 108 homes in the impoverished community.  
Photo by Emily Sison.

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Basilio then mobilized the United Methodist Youth groups in the province. The members of these youth groups immediately began calling for relief goods. The next day, a vehicle arrived at Looban loaded with milk, diapers, canned goods, clothes, and toiletries donated by group members from local churches. These amazing young people also talked with and prayed for the residents of Barangay Longos, especially those who had fallen victim to the devastating fire.

The Youth Fellowship's district officers had recently seen a play by the United Methodist theater group which depicted the realities of the Looban dumpsite. This play sowed a desire in the hearts of the Youth Fellowship members to share what they had with the people who lost their homes in the middle of a pandemic. Conference youth leaders posted the following to their Facebook page." Let's continue to spread the love of Jesus Christ through helping our neighbors in times of need." Other United Methodist churches in the province, particularly Living Water UMC, the local government units, civic groups, and private businesses also donated food, clothes, diapers, sanitary goods, and cash for the fire victims.

These young people saw a need and responded. Sometimes it is just that simple. As seasoned adults, we sometime think that we must look at a situation from all angles, plan the heck out of it, rethink those plans, and then look at all of the potential regrets before we focus on all of the positives! And this all goes on before we even begin to truly help! Now, there is nothing wrong with good planning...in fact, it is sometimes paramount to the success of a group effort. But there are just times when help needs to arrive, and it needs to arrive quickly! That's what these young people realized. They became the hands and feet of Jesus just as quickly as they could. How wonderful! May we all take a lesson from the United Methodist Youth Fellowship in the Philippines...when we see a need, let's just do whatever we can to serve God's children. Not only will we be a blessing, but we will be blessed in the process!



Residents of the Longos neighborhood watch as smoke billows over their community. Photo by Jazel Lustre.

*(The information within this article was originally written by Fort Nicholas and appeared on the United Methodist website on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020.)*

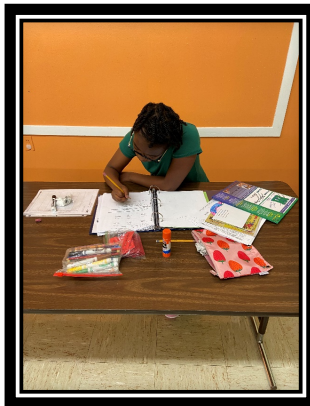
## ***Preschool Post and After School Additions***

Preschool and After-School Care are important programs at Pleasant Grove. As we reach out to the community to serve families with young children, we seek to show Jesus' love to each child and their family. Because we think it is important for the church family to know what is going on with these two ministries, we would like to provide you with this update.

Unfortunately, our Preschool program is closed at this time. As sad as this decision was for us, the safety and well being of our students and staff always comes first. We sure do miss those beautiful smiling faces and we eagerly look forward to seeing them again soon!

Our After-School group is small this year, but we are very grateful that we can be operational and available for our parents who need us. At this writing, Mountain Island Charter School is our only school. They are attending school on a full-time schedule, five days a week. These students have been doing great and we are glad to see them each day after school. We have no Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools students as they are still on a fully remote learning schedule. These students will start back to in-person learning on a rotational basis during November and we expect to hear nothing but great things from these students upon their return!

The After-School students and staff continue to pray for everyone's health and safety and want you all to stay safe!!!



# HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

APPLE PIE  
BEANS  
BREAD  
CORN  
CRANBERRY SAUCE  
GRAVY  
HAM  
MASHED POTATOES  
MILK  
PUMPKIN PIE  
ROLLS  
SQUASH  
STUFFING  
SWEET POTATOES  
TURKEY



Chicken Scratch NY

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