Pleasant News

Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church

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WORSHIP TIMES

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

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Inspiration Point

Is Your Attitude Holding You Back?

Genesis 39:1-6: Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the Captain of the Guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there. The LORD was with Joseph, and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. His master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did. Joseph found favor in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar put him in charge of his household, and he entrusted to his care everything that he owned. From the time he put him in charge of his household and of all that he owned the LORD blessed the household of the Egyptian because of Joseph. The blessing of the LORD was on everything Potiphar had, both in the house and in the field. So, he left in Joseph's care everything he had; with Joseph in charge, he did not concern himself with anything except the food he ate.

Would you say that Joseph became prosperous? Many times, we think we are prosperous if we gain a lot of money. Lots of people believe that all their problems will go away if they can just win the lottery! We here in America believe that we can solve any problem that comes up if we just have enough money to take care of it! Money, Money, Money!!! Indeed, one must have money if they are to be considered prosperous.

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In the end, Joseph did have a lot of money. I would say that Joseph's story is the story of a very successful man. But I would say being prosperous and being successful are two very different things! Personally, I would rather be a success than to be prosperous. (By the way, the dictionary is the only place you will find success comes before work!)

Now, here is a word that has a lot to do with our achieving success and prosperity! That word is "attitude!" Joseph's parents taught him to work hard, to be obedient and to do as he had been taught! Then, if he did so, he would be adequately rewarded. If he did not do so, he would have to pay the consequences of his disobedience. Now these are common sense values. They were important back 3500 years ago in Joseph's household just as they are important in your and my households. We need to love our children and to make them feel loved and secure. We need to teach them that if they work hard and are obedient doing as they have been taught then they will be adequately rewarded, and if they do not do so they will have to bear the penalty for their disobedience. Are not these life lessons for today? Yes, they are!

Now Joseph was a boy when his father sent him out into the fields to carry lunch to his brothers. He was probably in the late teens. He did not suspect what his brothers had planned to do to him! But they were jealous of him and his relationship with their father, so they threw him down a dry well and kept him there. Pretty soon, a group of Midianites came by on their way to Egypt. So, his brothers sold him as a slave to them, and they carried Joseph to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar as a houseboy. There, his job was to do the cleaning, marketing, mopping the floors and maybe even cleaning the toilets (I am sure they had some sort of toilet at that time!). Today's kids would have copped an attitude about all this, but Joseph did not. He recognized that the favor he had at home was not his here. But the principles that he had been taught at home would work just as well here! So, he decided to work hard, to be obedient, and to do as he was taught. As a result, God blessed him with favor! Now, there is nothing magical about this formula. It will work just as well for us here today as it did for Joseph so long ago! People call this loyalty and dedication. It is the product of good raising today just as it was back then. Potiphar saw this in Joseph and began to increase his responsibilities. Because of Joseph's attitude and follow through, he was learning to earn the trust of those over him! Trust is not automatically given. It must be earned through faithful performance!

Now, this story goes on in the Bible, but in the end, Joseph became the second in command for the whole nation of Egypt! Jacob, Joseph's father, had taught his son well! Work hard, be obedient and do as you have been taught! You may tell me that you have been doing this all your life, but you have but little to show for it! I am going to tell you that your definition of success is wrong! It is not how much money you make. It is how well you have managed what you have. When your neighbors, your friends and your family love and respect you and you are not in bondage over debts because you are living above your means, you have achieved success! If you love your spouse, and your children, and are teaching them to love others, to work hard and to be obedient to God and their seniors, and to do those things you have taught them then yours is a success story! It is something they will take with them all their lives and will pass them on to their children. Then you will find favor with God and with man. Others will come to you for advice and counsel because you have been blessed!

Brother Phil

From the Pastor's Desk

THE OLD OLD STORY 1 PETER 2:2

When comedian Bob Newhart stood in front of a live audience for the first time -- it was at the Tidelands Motor Inn in Houston -- he performed the only three comedy routines he had: one about Abe Lincoln, one about a Driving Instructor, and one about the Navy.

The crowd loved him, so as he exited the stage, the manager grabbed him and told him to go back out for an encore. "That's all the material I have, " he said. It didn't matter; the crowd was cheering, and the manager wanted him to do an encore.

Newhart went back onstage and waited for the applause to die down. Then he asked them, "Which one do you want to hear again?"

He had three routines; if they wanted to hear more, it could only be more of the same. The story goes that Newhart repeated part of one sketch and got laughs all over again.

Preachers feel this way sometimes, I think -- like we've got only a certain number of messages and we repeat ourselves too often. I feel this way especially when I'm preaching through a book that addresses the same topic chapter after chapter. I also feel it during December; how many ways are there to talk about Christmas?

In preaching, there are certain themes that I turn to again and again. Sometimes it feels as though I am saying what's already been said by countless others countless times. This is OK, to a certain extent. C.S. Lewis wrote in *Mere Christianity* that "people need to be reminded more often than they need to be instructed." Returning to the simple topics of how to pray and have a devotional, the importance of loving others and sharing your faith, accepting God's forgiveness, and forgiving others -- these are things we need to be reminded of again and again.



Peter told his readers, "Like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the Word that by it you may grow in respect to salvation." (1 Peter 2:2) Milk is food for beginners, but we never get past the need for milk. Neither do we get past our need for the basics of the Christian life.

While it is important for me as your pastor, to strive to always be fresh in my approach to presenting the gospel, I must also remember that you as the Body of Christ (and me as well) need to hear those same wonderful truths again and again -- they never lose their power.

Christ above all,

Byron AbyL



THE FOLLOWING GIFTS WERE MADE TO THE CHURCH IN MEMORY OF:

IN MEMORY	Judy Watts – Family Life Center
Dennis Adams	Roy and Margaret Parker
Disciples Sunday School Class	Double Ring Sunday School Class
	Pat and Kathy James
Myra Wright	Brenda Tinkham
Joanne Marz	Richard Vinson
	James Knox
Betty Guess	Don and Jeannie Upton
Daphene Silvey – Cemetery Fund	John and Susan Goins
	Duane Jones
Ben Blankenship	Beth Kushner
Joanne Marz	Don and Jane Adams – Family Life Center
	Brenda Watkins – Cemetery Fund
Anna Therrell	Nadine Williams – Family Life Center
Wayne Therrell	Pina Nance
Hazel Sanders	Larry Garner
Steve and Karen Dellinger	Don Brown
Steve and Maria McClure – Family Life Center	Robert and Coretha Ferrell
Bob and Bonnie Bridges – Family Life Center	Roger and Patti Beard – Family Life Center



The Recipe Box



Every now and then, someone shares a recipe with you that really hits home with you. You can't seem to forget exactly how it tasted. You loved the way the sweet and savory flavors came together to create a memorable and pleasurable flavor sensation. You went back for seconds, and really wanted to go back for thirds!!! You know you want the recipe and can't wait to make it yourself and share the dish with your people. Well, that's exactly what happened at the close of summer when our online Bible study group got together for some food, fun, and fellowship. Everyone brought some sort of pick-up food to share with the group and then the group shared recipes in the weeks that followed.

Ann Wilkerson, one of our own here at Pleasant Grove, brought two show stopping goodies to our gathering. This month, we would like to share one of those recipes with you. This recipe for Pecan Pie Bark uses only four ingredients and is very simple in its preparation. But the flavors that come together are anything but simple! It is rich, buttery, chewy, nutty, and finishes with an almost caramel consistency. In short, it is the perfect little treat to have on hand during the holidays as friends and family drop by for a visit. It can also serve as a great little dessert...think hand-held pecan pie! Most will find that it goes perfectly with a good cup of coffee. After you read through this recipe you are going to want to make it for sure! We hope that you and your guests will enjoy this offering...that is, if you decide to share!!!

Pecan Pie Bark

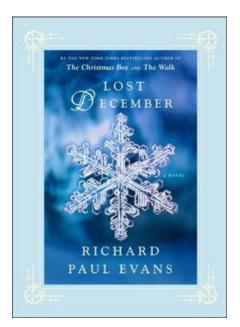
14 whole graham crackers1 cup pecans, finely chopped2 sticks butter1 cup brown sugar, packed

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil and spray with cooking spray. Place graham crackers on prepared baking sheet and set aside. In a small saucepan, over low heat, melt butter. Add brown sugar and pecans. Boil for two minutes, stirring constantly. Spread mixture evenly over graham crackers. At this point,



the topping will not completely cover all the graham crackers, but it will spread during baking. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Cut crackers into squares while they are still warm. For this, you can use the edge of a spatula or a pizza cutter. Allow to completely cool before removing from baking sheet. These will keep in an airtight container for about five days. Enjoy!





"It has been said that sometimes the greatest hope in our lives is just a second chance to do what we should have done right in the first place. This is the story of my second chance." --- Prologue of Lost December

For the month of December, we are recommending a book to you that sounds like a "Christmas" book. You could mistakenly believe that, because of its title, it will only be appealing to you around the holidays. However, you would be mistaken! <u>Lost December</u>, by Richard Paul Evans, is a book that can be read and enjoyed any time of the year!

Author Richard Paul Evans is the #1 bestselling writer of <u>The Christmas</u> <u>Box</u>. He has had more than eighteen novels to appear on the New York Times bestseller list and there are more than thirteen million copies of his books in print. He has won numerous awards for his writing including the Religion Communicators Council's Wilbur Award and two first-place Storytelling World Awards.

In <u>Lost December</u>, another of Evans's feel-good, inspiring stories, we learn the backstory of Luke Crisp, as he is on the verge of graduating from business school. His father, CEO and co-founder of a Fortune 500 company, is ready to turn the family business over to his son. But Luke has other plans. Taking control of his trust fund, Luke leaves home to pursue a life of reckless abandonment and self-indulgence. But when his trust fund is emptied out, he finds that his "friends" have run out too! Through loneliness, hunger, homelessness, and humility, Luke begins to understand the greatest source of personal joy. He also begins to understand the true meaning of sacrificial love and the lengths that one goes to in order to show that love.

Does this story sound familiar? It should! <u>Lost December</u> is a modern-day version of the biblical story of the prodigal son. It is a powerful tale of redemption, hope, and love. Evans's masterful writing and retelling of this biblical illustration gets to the heart of friendship, family relationships, betrayal, and acceptance, making <u>Lost December</u> a heartfelt tale that is sure to stay on your mind long after you turn the last page.

We think that everyone at Pleasant Grove would enjoy reading this little book. It is available at many bookstores, both online and brick-and-mortar. However, you can also find it on the shelf of our own Lending Library here at the church. It is such an engaging story that it can truly be read in one or two sittings. Because of this, we just ask that you return it upon finishing it, as we are sure that many will want to enjoy reading it. We hope that you will enjoy Lost December and that you will

be blessed by the lessons revealed in this touching and heart-warming story!!!

"Some mistakenly believe that "prodigal" means lost or wayward. It doesn't. It means "wastefully extravagant." No matter, both definitions are true of me." ---- Luke Crisp's Diary



Country Ham Sale



Christmas morning...tree lights glistening, a little Christmas music playing in the background, a few friends or family members over for breakfast...sounds beautiful, doesn't it? There's just one thing missing! Country ham sizzling in the cast iron frying pan and a pan of biscuits in the oven!!! (Guess that's technically two things!)

Well, we can't help with those biscuits, but we can help with the ham!!! UMW Circle #6 is once again selling one-pound packages of Alexander's center-cut country ham slices. Each package is \$8, and you can order from now through December 7th. The ham will then be available for pick up in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, December 12th, before and after our worship service. If you are unable to pick up on December 12th, we will also have your ham available on Wednesday,

December 15th, from 4-7 PM, in the Fellowship Hall. You may place your order by calling the Church Office, contacting any member of Circle #6, or filling out an order sheet in your Sunday school class. You can pay when you order or when you pick up your ham. Make checks payable to Karen Dellinger. Proceeds from this effort will go to support the work of our church in the community and around the world.



As Seen at Pleasant Grove

On Sunday, November 21st, things were hopping here at Pleasant Grove! We dedicated a total of 149 Operation Christmas Child Shoe Boxes and delivered them to a local drop-off location. These gifts of love, from the heart of Pleasant Grove, have now begun their journey to the children that God has specifically chosen to receive our boxes. Isn't that simply amazing!!!? God is so good!!!





Then, that afternoon, a group of volunteers came together in our sanctuary to prepare this sacred space for the Advent and Christmas

seasons. The wreaths went up, the garland went up, the tree was put in place, the candles were put in the windows, the Nativity scene was placed on the table in the

vestibule, and the Advent candles were readied for lighting. It is our hope that these preparations will draw us all closer to the Christ Child as we worship together during the month of December. Merry **CHRIST**mas to you all!!!





News from the United Methodist Women

On Sunday, November 14th, Pleasant Grove celebrated UMW Sunday. The day started with a successful bake sale to benefit missions. We raised approximately \$600, which will be used for future UMW-sponsored mission projects. Our members then provided leadership in many different ways during our worship service. Martha Honeycutt offered a special musical selection on the harp and Jana Alexander was presented with a UMW pin in recognition of her service to our sweet church. Our UMW was well-represented with twenty-eight members present for this very special Sunday!











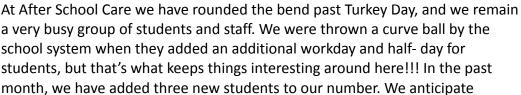






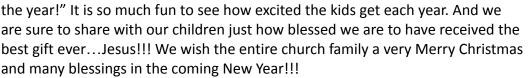
After-School Care Post





continuing to add students as more and more parents head back to in-person workspaces. As always, After School Care provides snacks, fellowship and fun, small-group games, and individual opportunities for creativity. And of course, we offer support for our students as they work on their homework each afternoon. We have enjoyed working on our Thanksgiving crafts but now we look forward to "the most wonderful time of







Helping Our Neighbors at Oakdale School

Aren't we so thankful for the desire to serve, the ability to serve, and the opportunity to serve?!!! Just this past month, we were given the opportunity to bless twelve families from our neighboring Oakdale School with a generous helping of Thanksgiving Love! We delivered gift cards to the school to help each of these families with groceries for their Thanksgiving celebration and now, we want to do it again!!! Because God blesses us all in different ways, it is important for us to realize when we can help someone else with something as simple as groceries. If you want to help these families with their Christmas grocery needs, simply turn in your donation to the church office or place your donation in the offering on Sunday



morning. Just be sure to mark your donation for Backpack Buddies so that it can be directed appropriately. And then, as you sit down to a sumptuous meal with your loved ones, just take a moment to thank God for blessing others through you. Because you have allowed His love to flow through you, the world is a brighter, more joy-filled place to be!!! Thanks be to God!!!

Youth News

Hey there church family!

Recently Pleasant Grove had an incredible honor to take part in an exciting time in our UMC district. This year we welcomed our new District Superintendent Dan Pezet into the Metro District. During his installation service held on November 7th at University City UMC Pleasant Grove's very own Youth Group participated in the ceremony! Kaylan Brown and Raymond Rhines both stepped up to help with the presentation of the elements and we are so incredibly proud of them! The Youth in our church may be small in number, but they're an awesome bunch who represented the Methodist youth from all over the district! It was a wonderful ceremony and we were so honored to be included. Be sure to mention to our youth how proud of them we all are, it may not seem like much but I know it means the world to them! Thank you for your continued love and support for our future generation of leaders!

As always I am your humble servant, and I'll see you soon!





~Colin Winslette



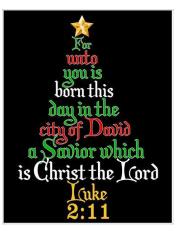
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!



The volunteers at *Pleasant News* want to wish our precious church family the sweetest of Christmas seasons and a joyous New Year!!! At this most holy and sacred time of the year we hope that you will be able to slow down, consider the gift of the Christ Child, embrace the love of the Father, and receive all that is offered to you through the desires of God's own heart. And may the joy that

filled the world at the birth of Jesus Christ be found in your home throughout the holidays. Let's all remember that Christ brings light into what can seem to be such

a dark and desolate world, just like Christmas brings light into this dark and wintry season. Our wish for you is that your Christmas, and the coming year, will be brighter than ever...with God's Love and Joy!!!



Blessing Others as We Have Been Blessed!!!

Again, this year, Pleasant Grove will use the Advent Season as a reminder of how very blessed we are and how we are called to bless others! It's so very easy...and so very festive!!! Just get a good-sized box, wrap the empty, open-topped box in some beautiful holiday paper. Then, each day, follow the schedule above to fill the box with good things to eat. Also, read through the book of Luke throughout the season as a way of staying grounded in the reason for the season. The boxes are due back by Christmas Eve, to the Family Life Center, and will then be delivered to Huntersville UMC Food Pantry for distribution. What a beautiful way to love our neighbors with the Love of Christ in a real and tangible way!!! Let's put the "Merry" in Christmas by sharing out of our abundance!



On The Road With The PG Travelers

The PG Travelers will be hitting the road again in December with a day trip that is perfect for the Christmas season! Please join us as we ride up the hill to Asheville for a day of holiday fun and festivities!

On Thursday, December 16th, we will board a chartered bus in our church parking lot at 8:00 in the morning and head on up to Asheville. While in Asheville, we will go to the Grove Park Inn to see the Gingerbread House display, go to lunch at the Moose Café, and then enjoy one last stop at the Asheville Farmer's Market. Everyone is encouraged to wear Christmas colors, maybe even your ugly Christmas sweater, for a group photo. Feel free to invite your friends, family, and neighbors to join us. Space on the bus is on a first-come, first-served, basis. The cost of the trip is \$25 plus the cost of your own lunch and any shopping you might do. This covers the cost of the bus and the gratuity for our driver. Contact Lynda Elliott at 704.399.7381 for more information and to make your reservation.

Now, you may be wondering why the Gingerbread Houses at Grove Park are such a big deal. These aren't just any gingerbread houses. These are the entries in the National Gingerbread House Competition, which has been taking place for nearly thirty years. Here you will see the nation's most creative and intricate gingerbread creations as they are on display to the public. There are gingerbread houses of every size, shape, theme, and level of complexity. You will see quaint rustic cabins and castles adorned with gumdrops alongside sugar spun landscapes. All this beauty just might inspire your own creative side...or at the very least, it will get you into the Christmas Spirit, with a song in your heart, a sparkle in your eye, and a special joy in your heart!!!



Now, you know you want to go!!! So, go ahead, give Lynda a call and secure your spot for this day of beautiful church family fellowship and Christmas cheer! It's going to be fun!!!



Holiday Office Hours



Please take note that the church office will be closed on Friday, December 24^{th} , and then the week of December $27^{th} - 31^{st}$ in observance of the Christmas and New Year's holidays. We hope that as the church staff enjoys some much-deserved time off with their families, you will have time with your loved ones as well.

Also of note, the last day to make a contribution to the church for the 2021 year will be Sunday, December 26th. If you would like to see your contribution on your 2021 record of giving, make sure to get it to the church on or before this date.

We look forward to beginning the new year with you as we continue to serve God together right here at the corner of Oakdale and Pleasant Grove Roads! Merry Christmas and a Very Happy 2022 to you all!!!

December at The Grove



December can certainly be a busy time of year...for each of us personally, and for our church family. Please take note of the following schedule for this festive and fun time of year!

<u>Friday, December 3rd, 6:00 PM:</u>

Sunday, December 5th:

Thursday, December 9th, 11:00 AM:

Sunday, December 12th:

Tuesday, December 14th, 11:00 AM:

Tuesday, December 14th, 6:00 PM:

Wednesday, December 15th, 12:00 Noon:

Wednesday, December 15th, 6:00 PM:

Thursday, December 16th, 8:00 AM:

Sunday, December 19th:

Friday, December 24th, 4:00 PM:

Sunday, December 26th, 10:00 AM:

Genesis Class Christmas Gathering, Family Life Center

Sunday School and Worship, Second Sunday of Advent

Staff Christmas Lunch, off campus

Sunday School and Worship, Third Sunday of Advent

Circle #3 Christmas Lunch, Fellowship Hall, bring your bag lunch and an item for our auction

Circle #6 Christmas Dinner, Covered Dish, at the home of Hazel Sanders

on: Covenant SS Class Christmas Lunch, Gathering Room

Disciples SS Class Christmas Gathering, Family Life Center

Church Family Trip to Asheville

Sunday School and Worship, Fourth Sunday of Advent

Christmas Eve Service, with Carols and Communion, Sanctuary

Abbreviated and Casual Worship Service, Sanctuary (This is the last date for 2021 contributions to the church.)

We look forward to seeing you at each and every opportunity we have to be together. There's nothing sweeter than being with Family at Christmastime!



Pleasant Grove's Little Lending Library



Just a friendly reminder that our Lending Library is open and available to each and every one of you. We are small in the number of books that we have at this early point in our existence. However, we have an excellent selection of books ranging in category from Christian formation and discipleship, to Bibles, to small group resources, to daily devotionals, to

Christian fiction, to historical fiction, to non-fiction. Some of your favorite authors are on our shelves as well as some of the newer authors that you might not have read yet. Our system is quite simple...just take what interests you and when you are finished with it, bring it back for others to enjoy! That's it!!! Also, we are always accepting donations to enlarge our collection. If you have some really great books at your house that you have already enjoyed, you may place them in the donation bin beside the library in the Gathering Room of the Family Life Center. We just ask that they be clean, unmarked, and in new or like-new condition. Our Lending Library is a great resource for the church family, and we do hope that you will take advantage of the reading opportunities that are available to you!



Just For Giggles!!!











