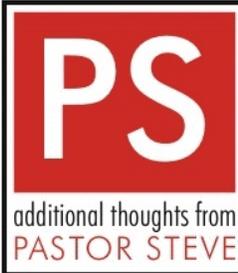


The Circuit Rider



First United Methodist Church, Harlan
Monroe Chapel United Methodist Church

DECEMBER 2021



Dear friend,
Are you in the mode of trying to figure out the perfect gift for everyone on your Christmas list? Maybe you're ahead of me and took advantage of Black Friday and Cyber Monday savings. Even if that's the case, I've got a wonderful gift tip that is perfect for everyone: *an invitation*.

All of us - no matter our age or years in the church - have people in our lives who need the hope and the salvation that only Jesus provides. This Christmas, reach out to friends and loved ones who aren't connected to or active in a church. Extend an invitation to one of the special Christmas events we have at the church or our special free movie event at the Harlan Theatre on Sunday, December 26. (If you haven't already heard, we're going to gather at the theatre that morning to watch "American underdog" the new faith-based, true story of pro football's Kurt Warner. The movie is free to church members and guests, though you'll want to bring some money for your popcorn and candy!)

In the midst of all of the season's trappings, pray for God to put someone in your path or on your mind that you can invite to church or the theatre. When you make that invitation, offer to pick them up.

In this season of commemorating Jesus' birth, be an agent of invitation that allows Jesus to "be born" in the life of someone you care for. There's not a better gift you can give this Christmas!

See you at church
(and the movie theater!)

PS: Merry Christmas!

Tis The Season

At Monroe Chapel
& Harlan First UMC

Christmas Presence
Annual Christmas Cantata
Sunday Worship, Dec. 12
MONROE CHAPEL & HARLAN FIRST UMC

Christmas Eve
CANDLELIGHT SERVICE
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24, MONROE CHAPEL 4:00 PM, HARLAN FIRST 7:00 PM

AMERICAN UNDERDOG
FREE MOVIE!
SUNDAY, DEC 26
10:00 AM INVITE A FRIEND!
AT THE HARLAN THEATRE



UMW'S ANNUAL COOKIE WALK & LUNCH

The annual United Methodist Women's Cookie Walk is **Wednesday, December 8th**, in the Fellowship Hall from 11:00am until 1:00pm. All are invited to come for lunch, browse through craft items for sale, and go through and pick your own cookies for the holiday season. The theme this year is "*The Reason for the Season.*"

The Soup, Sandwich, and Pie/Dessert Lunch is \$12.00. Cookies are \$12.00 per box. You may pre-order cookies for \$12.00 per box – just call the church office at 755-5172 or Beth at 755-7624. Pre-ordered cookies are to be picked up in the alley entrance hallway that Wednesday, December 8.

****We encourage any person in our church to donate small festive homemade cookies****

Cookies are to be brought to the room across from the Library on Monday or Tuesday, December 6 or 7.

We appreciate EVERYONE'S help with the cookies! We appreciate your donation!

OPPORTUNITIES TO GIVE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

We invite you to share your caring spirit with others who are in need this season.

†The Mitten Tree in the Sanctuary is available for your donations of hats, scarves, gloves and mittens.

†Our Adopt-A-Family tags are on the large bulletin board in the Education wing Sanctuary entrance. We have adopted 12 individuals in need this year and you are invited to take a tag and sign your name by the tag that you took. Gifts need returned, wrapped, by noon on Tuesday, December 14th.

†Always available are the containers by the entrances for your donations to the Food Pantry. Non-perishables, paper products, and toiletries are always needed. Food stuffs are in high demand in December, due to the added cost of gifts.



ALL SAINTS RECOGNITION



We celebrated All Saints at our November 7th worship service. We honored those listed below who have died during the last 12 months by giving thanks for their lives, their gifts, and their graces.

Charles Laverne Obrecht	11/25/20
Lola Johanna Marjorie Linton	11/28/20
Donnabelle John	01/10/21
Gretchen Ann Perry	02/01/21
LaJean Mae Steinhoff	02/26/21
Jo Ann Boltinghouse	03/19/21
Lee Gordon Nelson	03/31/21
Marcia Elaine Harper	04/07/21
Richard Charles Klitgaard	06/04/21

The memorials listed below were also dedicated.

† **Audio/Visual Equipment:** Shirley Guyett

† **Christmas Cantata Music:** Lowell Harper

INGATHERING TOTALS

Monroe Chapel: 34 personal dignity kits, 38 school kits, and donation for Church World Service Blankets. First UMC: 10 personal dignity kits, 16 school kits, 17 school kit bags, and donation for Church World Service Blankets. Thank you to all who contributed!

THANK YOU'S

❖ Thank you to those who helped decorate for the holidays. It's a joy to see the churches brightened up by both decor and people this year!

❖ Thank you to those who delivered meals at short notice last week.

YEAR-END GIVING

Contributions to be credited to your 2021 giving will be accepted through Wednesday, January 5, 2022. If you have a question on your pledge, call Anne in the church office.



2021 AUGUST MISSION TRIP REPORT

On Sunday, August 15, Rita Knights, Judy Knudsen, Jolene Lytle and Gary Moller headed on a mission trip to Rosebud Indian Reservation in Missions, South Dakota. The trip was through the Tree of Life Ministry. The trip got off to a rocky and late start due to vehicle problems. Once those were resolved, the team left at 2:00 pm. We arrived in Valentine NE to eat at our favorite restaurant; however, it was closed and we ended up at McDonalds! We arrived at our housing for the week, Kola Tipi. After unloading and making our bunks, Gary led devotions.

The next morning, the Tree of Life Director, Linda Garriott (who was very sick) sent her granddaughter, Trinity, to pick us up and take us to the main office for orientation. There were three interns (Justin, Kat, and Deanna) who were also doing mission work there. After orientation, Rita, Jolene and Judy were assigned to sort donated clothing at the warehouse. Gary and the interns went to a house, owned by Tree of Life, to build an apartment in the basement of the house. After a couple of hours of work, we were told Tree of Life was providing lunch (since the soup kitchen was being remodeled) from Taco Johns. We had to wait for over an hour for lunch because the line was so long at Taco Johns! After lunch, we went back to our respective work sites and, after an hour, our boss "Sunny" told us the warehouse was closing due to the extreme heat ~ it was over 100 degrees outside and there was no air conditioning in the warehouse, just a fan. We went back to our lodging and a short time later, Gary was sent "home" due to the heat. We took this opportunity to clean the filters in our window air conditioners. We also took the school supplies we were donating to the Lakota Immersion school. After supper, Gary led devotions.

After the staff meeting the next morning, we went to our assignments for the day. More sorting of clothes and construction on the basement apartment. Tree of Life provided Godfather's pizza for lunch. Due to the temperature again being over 100 degrees, we were instructed to go "home" around 2 pm. That evening, after supper, Duane Hollow Horn Bear, came to speak to us about his "journey". The three interns also joined us. Later, we had devotions and went to bed.

On Wednesday, our day off, Jenny Trail, a friend of Rita's, joined us for the rest of the week. After packing some snacks and water, we headed to the site of Wounded Knee; the Wounded Knee cemetery; and to drive through the Bad Lands. The Wounded Knee cemetery fenced in the remains of those killed in the massacre; however, on the monument stone, it only listed the names of the men. There were other Lakota buried outside the fence, as well. We spoke to a young Native there and he said down the road was the Lakota story of the massacre (the sign at the site of the massacre was the white man story). Interestingly, Duane Hollow Horn Bear had explained that prayer cloths, with tobacco in them, are tied to trees. At the Wounded Knee cemetery, the fence was covered with prayer cloths! In the Badlands, we saw lots of wild life – deer, antelope, buffalo, and prairie dogs. We stopped at the Cowboy Corner and ate our snacks outside on a big spool. We then stopped at Wall Drug and found pictures of not only Duane Hollow Horn Bear, but his grandfather (who was an intricate part of his "journey") and other family members! On the way out of the Badlands, Gary and Judy climbed on some of the Badlands hills. On our drive "home", we saw the site of the Lakota children's remains who had been buried in Canada but had just recently been returned to their homeland. After we got home, we ate and then had devotions.

After staff meeting on Thursday, we set off to our assigned duties with Jenny accompanying Gary and the interns to the basement apartment. That evening, we invited to interns to join us for an Iowa pot luck dinner (they were from the east coast). We made BBQ meatballs, celery sticks, carrots, sweet potatoes, biscuits, sliced tomatoes and green tomato pie that Gary had baked and brought! Mike Marshall, a local Lakota artist and instructor, came and shared his talents with the group. We could pick to make ear rings from rawhide, or make a Lakota game. Everyone had a great time! Then we had our nightly devotions and off to bed.

At our staff meeting on Friday, we were told that Yawni, Trinity's brother, had tested positive for COVID. We were all in shock as we had all been around him – especially Gary and Jenny who worked side-by-side with him in the basement. We were told that we could have a rapid test that afternoon. With heavy hearts, we departed for our assigned duties. We got finished in the warehouse, cleaned up the miscellaneous messes and then headed back to our "home". We got a text from Trinity saying we could not get a rapid test that day since you have to wait three days after being exposed. Gary and Jenny came "home" later and we decided to go out for ice cream. However, we stopped by our "home" from three years ago – which is where the interns were staying. They welcomed us in and we met other individuals who were also residing there. Everyone was nice and gave us a tour. We were surprised and impressed at how the house had been changed. While we were there, Trinity showed up and said her grandma, Linda, wanted to treat us to supper as a thank you for our hard work. Normally, we would have fry bread – a very special treat – but there was no one available who could make it for us. We met Trinity in Valentine NE at the Peppermill. The food was outstanding and Trinity was a great hostess! We had our last devotions together – it was bittersweet.

On Saturday, we showered, ate breakfast, cleaned our "home" and said good bye to Jenny, and then headed back to Iowa.

PROLOG: We got our rapid tests at Myrtue on Monday and we were all negative!