

THE CRUSADER – FEBRUARY 2022

Christ United Methodist Church

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Open Hearts. Open Minds.

Open Doors

Mark Your Calendars

February 13

Sweetheart Potluck

Food and fellowship with love in our hearts will be held following church service in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring a dish to share.



March 26

16th Annual Soup Supper & Cake Auction

Please sign up to enter your soup.
Contact Lynn Dixon for more information.

God In the Difficult Times

Pastor Braden Parks

A few weeks ago, we had a prayer breakfast. And in this time of prayer, God placed on my heart to lead those gathered in a time of silent reflection upon Scripture. All that morning, I had been reminded of the story of Elijah and the still small voice of the Holy Spirit. God came and spoke to the Prophet in the stillness not in the noise nor busyness of his life. God quieted Elijah, so that he could communion with God in the set apart place.

For the past two years, Decatur Christ Church has felt the sting and powerful effects of death. Death has a way of making our lives busier. We must make proper arrangements for the burial, set up services, inform family and friends, and the list is endless. On top of this, death has a way of reminding us of those whom we have just lost; there are no more phone calls or visits or... anything. Death is difficult, to say the least.

This is the one of the reasons for this article-- to encourage during a season of death and difficulty. Even in the midst of death and its power, there is good news. We have a healer who longs to comfort us during our times of despair. I am reminded of two verses that I continue to learn from, especially during challenging times. The first comes from the

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Psalm 46:10. The Psalmist writes these words:

“Be still and know that I am God.”

Be still. This is not easy for me; I like to keep myself busy. God invites each one of us, like he does David and Elijah to take a break and rest awhile in his healing presence. During your times of stress and busyness you might be asking yourself these questions: God, how can I be still when my responsibilities keep piling up, when those I love are no longer with me here on this earth? God, how can I just stop?

Jesus' voice speaks to us these words:

***“Blessed are those who mourn
[are in mourning] because they
will be comforted.”***

God's healing presence comes to those who are in great grief, mourning and sorrow and speaks to them in words of beauty, patience, kindness, peacefulness, and love. The Spirit comes and comforts us and guides us into journeys of healing. And Decatur Christ family, this is where we are. We are a people who needs to know the comforting and healing presence of the Spirit.

God is inviting us to be still and continues his work of comfort through the Spirit. For our God is the God who loves us and knows us and walks with us during difficult times. And if you need someone to help you during this time, please speak to me. Know that I am praying prayers of healing on your behalf.



Pastor Kelly Remembered

Rev. Kelly Gene Cox

8/15/1951 - 1/23/22

Served at Christ 2/1/2010– 6/30/2018

Funeral arrangements pending

Today

Lynn Dixon (1/23/22)

*Today is his day..Pastor Kelly Cox.
Today he gets to meet our Savior.
Today I loose a friend, in deed.
Today Kelly gets to feel a True Rest!!!!
My friend!!!!*



Reflections

Karen Rivera

When someone I know passes away, it really affects me. I think about all the happy times we shared and also about how many things I should have said to let them know how much they meant to me. This year, 2022, seems to have brought at least one death each day. Some of them were celebrities who I did not know personally, and others were friends or relatives of my friends. When each of them went to bed on their last night on earth, they might have been thinking about what they would do the next day, or they might have

reflected on the blessings they received on that last day.

I wonder who I will see in Heaven when it is my time to go. My vision is that the first being I will see is Jesus with his arms stretched out to welcome me. I am sure that Pastor Cox had that experience today, 1/23/22.

When my mom died in 2009, all the nurses and CNA's lined up on both sides of the hallway. as the driver took her to the funeral home, there was complete silence and expressions of sadness as her physical body left the building. It is my belief that her soul had already gone to Heaven immediately after her death.

I feel that my family and friends will be lined up in a similar way like the staff assembled as my mom left. I have known so many people in my life, so the greetings and hugs may take a long time. "With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day." 2 Peter 3:8. Think about all the people who are a part of your family, church, education, workplace, and friends. What a joy

it will be to see all of these people and to be able to see Jesus.

Yesterday, I watched "Heaven is for Real", a movie based on a true story about Todd Burpo and his son, Colton. The rest of the family includes the mom and a sister. It was released in 2014, and it has a wonderful message. The father is a minister with a thriving congregation; his son becomes ill after his appendix ruptured. While he is in the operating room, he goes to Heaven and meets Jesus, his grandfather, and a sister who died before she was born. He is able to relate many of the things he saw and the people he met. The congregation doubts these experiences, but Colton's dad becomes convinced about the things his son tells him. Even though Colton is never declared dead in the OR, his observations are similar to others that two friends have told me about their near death experiences.

I pray for the Cox family, and I know that all of us will be together some day. What a day of rejoicing that will be!

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (KJV)

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

Remembering Pastor Miley

Rev. Miley Embry Palmer

3/20/1937 - 1/24/22

Served at Christ 1/1/2020– 6/30/2020



Miley was born in Fort Worth, Texas, the son of Guy E and Guion Palmer. He grew up in Hartford, Illinois. He graduated from McKendree University in Lebanon, Illinois, earned his master's in theology at Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary, and doctor of ministry degree at Christian Theological Seminary. He married Janet Elaine Kuhlmann of O'Fallon, Illinois on June 27, 1959.

From 1955 until 2021, he served United Methodist congregations in Central and Southern Illinois, including Normal Calvary, Champaign Faith, Charleston Wesley, six years as Peoria District Superintendent, and nine years as directing pastor of Wesley UMC and Wesley Foundation Director at U of I. He came to Decatur as pastor of Grace UMC in 1994. He retired as a full-time pastor in 1998.

After retiring he became a full-time chaplain at Decatur Memorial Hospital, where he also served for 20 years on the Institutional Review Board and Medical Ethics Committee. He was involved in interfaith activities and enjoyed preaching across denominations

from Unitarian to Roman Catholic. In retirement he served interim pastorates in seven churches, both United Methodist and Presbyterian. He most recently served as Minister of Visitation for First UMC, fully retiring on December 31, 2021.

Throughout his ministry, he was particularly involved in social justice initiatives. He fought for open housing ordinances in Bloomington-Normal. He was an advocate for peace, working in draft counseling during the Vietnam War. He has been a familiar face across Central Illinois for those engaged in social actions concerning race relations, troubled youth, civil rights, drugs and gun violence. In 2017 he received the Cramer-Heurman Social Justice Award from the IGRC.

Miley will be remembered not only for his service to various communities but for his dedication to his family, his keen sense of humor, superior preaching skills, and his endless empathy for all people.

He is survived by his wife Janet; children Elizabeth Best (James); Mary Kay Mace (Eric); Michael (Teresa); and Patricia Wegeng (David); four grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; two great-great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents and a granddaughter.

Private burial services for the family will be January 29. A memorial service will be held at First United Methodist Church on Saturday, February 12 at 2:00 pm, preceded by visitation from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. Due to Covid restrictions, limited seating is available for in-person worship and masks are required. Live streaming information and links can be found at decaturfirstumc.org. The family requests that in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to First United Methodist Church in Decatur or McKendree University.

Newsletter Update

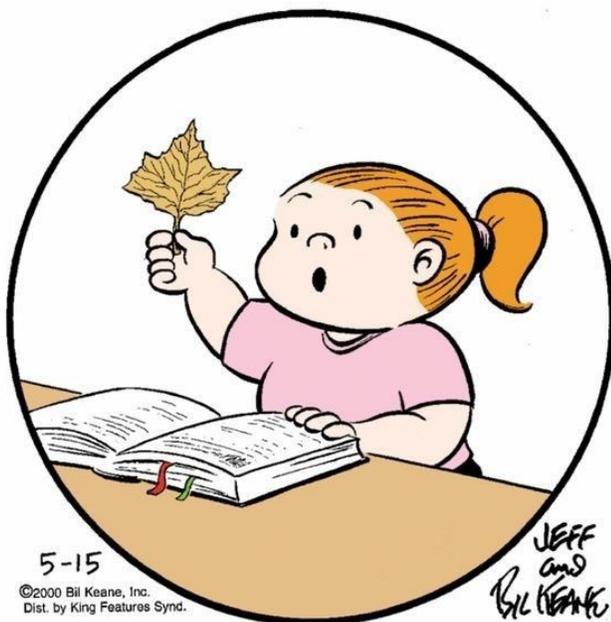
by Jenny Garver

Over the last few months, we have seen a few changes in the church newsletter. Karen Rivera retired as editor at the end of December. Thank you Karen for all of the years that you put into this newsletter. Pastor Braden and Michelle Parks got the January edition published. Hooray! I had several conversations with Pastor Braden and Michelle in December and January. We are going to divide up the workload. I will collect information, edit, and create an electronic copy of the newsletter. Pastor Braden and Michelle will take care of posting the newsletter on the website, printing, and mailing. Yay! For teamwork!

I have created an email address just for the newsletter: NewsletterChristUMC@gmail.com. The email address would be the easiest, fastest, and most accurate way to get information to me. You can also send me a message on FB Messenger or drop me a letter via the US post office.

The newsletter represents our whole church, so I encourage you to submit ideas, articles, and items to put into the newsletter. This is everyone's newsletter, not mine, not Pastor's. If there is a recipe that others love that you would love to share, send it to me. If you want to take a moment to give a shout out or thank someone, I would love to add that to the newsletter. If you have a church memory that you would like to share, that would be amazing and will help us cherish the years that came before in our church. If you have a favorite Bible verse or find a church funny, that just adds an extra touch to the newsletter. Sharing allows us to have a greater appreciation for each other. If you want to write an article, go for it. I think it would be amazing to see the vast knowledge hiding within our church. Thank you for helping us to keep everyone connected as we go into 2022.

Psalm 23 (KJV)



“This leaf was in the Bible. Maybe it’s the one Adam wore!”

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

What's Cooking?

Wow! The annual soup supper will be held on March 26. Can you believe it? Recently, I unearthed the 2019 Soup Supper Cookbook. Here is the soup that was the crowd favorite in 2017.

Beef Vegetable Soup

Lisa Carr



- 1 pkg stew meat (cut up if pieces are large)
- 1 pkg frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 large can beef broth
- 1 potato, peeled and diced
- 1 can tomato sauce
- Approx. 1/2 pkg angel hair shredded cabbage

Using a large pot, brown beef in small amount of vegetable oil. Add the remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Simmer for at least 1 hour. (The longer you simmer it, the better it tastes.) The amount of liquid may need to be adjusted. Bon appétit!



Prayer List

George and Mila
Malvia Sherwood
Erma & Donovan Lewis
Barbara Boyd
Don Wall
Matthews & Sisson Family
Carr Family
Carls Family
Family of Joanne Austin
Family of Pastor Kelly Cox
Family of Pastor Miley Palmer



Today's To-Do List:

- WORRY ABOUT NOTHING (Philippians 4:6-7)
- PRAY WITHOUT END (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- FOLLOW HIS LEAD (Jeremiah 29:11)
- EXCHANGE MY WEAKNESS FOR HIS STRENGTH (2 Corinthians 12:9)
- LOVE MY NEIGHBOR (Matthew 22:39)
- SPEAK KINDNESS (Proverbs 15:1)
- ACCEPT HIS GRACE AS A GIFT (Lamentations 3:23)
- FULLY TRUST IN HIM (Proverbs 3:5)

GRACEFULLY WOVEN BY ELIZABETH SPENNER

Birthdays

February 2	Evelyn Garver
February 5	Jacob Garver
February 13	Monte Thornton
February 15	Imogene Shepherd
February 23	Karen Rivera
February 24	William Parks
February 26	Trey Garver

Anniversaries

February 20	Murray & Jean Preston
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Articles for the March issue of the Crusader will be due on February 21. Please email articles to NewsletterChristUMC@gmail.com or turn in to Jenny Garver. Thank you.