

GENESIS

Serving Members and Friends of The First United Methodist Church of Homosassa

DECEMBER 2006

Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors

Volume 10 Issue 10

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Theresa Weber

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Christian Education

Patience Nave

Music Department

Mary Kay Messenger

Joy Potts

Dayna Middlebrooks

Parish Visitation

Sharon E. Smith

Night Security

Michael Rodgers

Custodian

Dale Evans

He will be called
Wonderful
MIGHTY GOD,
Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace

Early in November it is sometimes cold outside, but for the most part there is little feeling of Christmas in the air. Living in Florida we don't have snow or ice or heavy winter coats to help create the anticipation of the Christmas season.

Some of the stores have Christmas displays, but they haven't yet cranked them up to full "greed" mode, and, so far, I haven't heard a single rendition of "Jingle Bells."

So you can understand why it is hard to feel "in the mood" when writing an article in November about the Christmas season.

But Christmas isn't really about the weather, the holiday displays or the "jingle" tunes. It's not about gifts and Santa and red-cheeked children riding in a sleigh to

grandmother's house for the family Christmas dinner.

Christmas is about sharing the love God has for us--so much love that he sent his Son, Jesus, to live among us so we could learn how to live. Because of this great love, God planned for his Son to die for us and then rise from the dead to make forgiveness of sin and eternal life available for all who would believe in him.

So Christmas is not meant to be about songs, trees and presents but about the greatest gift ever given. Christmas is a time for sharing what is most important, the gift of Jesus Christ.

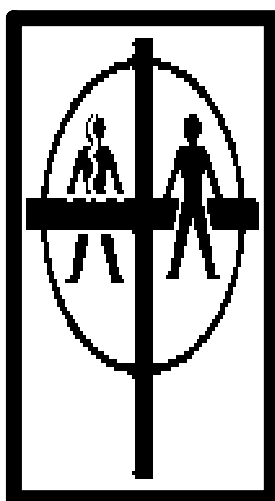
We share him through gathering together to celebrate his birth, through beautiful music, Christmas Trees and special opportunities to share the Good



News. Our gifts of Snicker bars to those in jail, our Angel Tree gifts, the food baskets and toys all reflect the reality of God's gift to us. The "Alternative Gift Fair" cards sent to family and friends speak of God's love--a love that gives to help others with no strings attached.

If we focus on giving and getting, on the "tinsel" of the season, then working ourselves into the Christmas mood will be a little hard and a lot frustrating. But if we see Christmas as a time to share Jesus, we'll know that Christmas joy isn't a mood to be gotten into but a lifestyle to be lived all year long.

Mark



We are a
Stephen
Ministry
Church

"Everyone Becoming a Disciple of Christ"

The purpose of an organization's mission statement is to give it direction, focus, and motivation. It clearly states why an organization exists and what it intends to accomplish in the future. This mission statement of the First United Methodist Church of Homosassa was adopted on January 27, 2005.



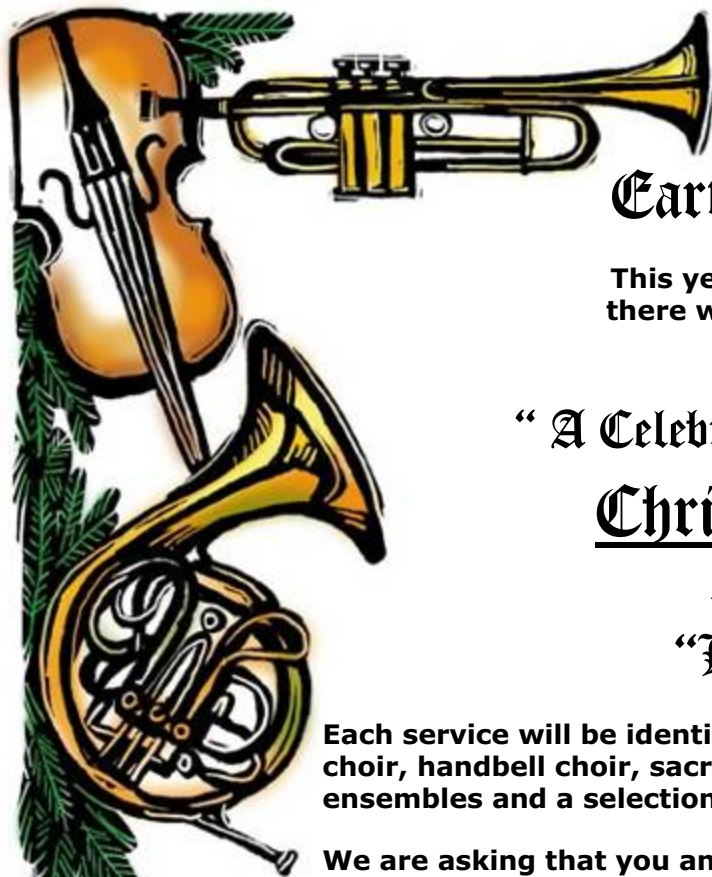
Within The Church

- Worship Services
- Music Ministries
- Men & Ladies Ensemble
- Children's Choir
- Handbell & Chimes Choir
- Christian Education
- Adult Sunday School
- Children's Sunday School
- Youth Ministry
- Lenten Soup Supers
- Fine Arts Program
- Disciple Ministry
- Prayer Ministry
- UMW Circles
- Tape Ministry
- Blood Bank
- Visitation Care Group
- Golf Outings
- Wednesday Night Dinners
- Disaster Relief Programs
- Small Groups Ministry
- United Methodist Men
- United Methodist Women
- Biblical Travel Ministry
- Counters
- Attendance Tracking



As Outreach

- Thrift Shop
- Food Pantry
- SHARE
- Holiday Baskets
- Nursing Home Ministries
- Cancer Survivors
- Current Affairs
- Healthy Body & Healthy Spirit
- Volunteers In Mission
- Habitat for Humanity
- PAWS (Pets Are Working Saints)
- Crop Walk
- Salvation Army Kettle Ministry
- Discretionary Giving Committee
- Brownies
- Boy / Girl / Cub Scouts
- Clown Ministries
- Missions Ministry
- Prison Ministry
- Children's Home
- Hospice Bereavement
- After-School Tutoring
- Angel Tree
- Stephen Ministries
- Angels With Wheels
- Prayer Blanket Ministry



On This Day The Earth Shall Ring !

This year, with Christmas Eve on Sunday,
there will be one service in the morning ~

9:30 AM

“ A Celebration of Children And Carols”

Christmas Eve Services

5:00 PM & 7:00 PM

“Lessons And Carols”

Each service will be identical and will once again feature our chancel choir, handbell choir, sacred dance group, harps, instrumentalists, vocal ensembles and a selection from our Jazz Gospel Group, “Jubilation”..

We are asking that you and your family members please attend only one of the two services. We are presenting two IDENTICAL services due to the over-flow audiences we have had the last couple of years.

We are hoping this will give everyone who attends a good seat. We had several church members and their families sitting in the Narthex and even the choir room last year, and some felt it was too crowded to stay. We appreciate your support of this service for the past several years and look forward to presenting it to you again this year.

See you Christmas Eve!!

Mary Kay Messenger, Director of Music Ministries

11:00 PM

“Communion and Candlelight”

*There will be no
Christmas Day Services on Monday.*





THE CHRISMON TREE

by Donna Rayne

Back in the 1940's, Frances Spencer of Danville, VA, began using leftover scraps of materials and other items to create Christmas tree decorations for her church.

Instead of creating traditional secular ornaments, she thought it would be more appropriate to create ornaments that reflected traditional Christian symbols.

She chose to use only white and gold, as those are the liturgical colors of Christmas.

In 1957 she coined the work "Chrismon" as a combination of the words "Christ" and "monogram." So a Chrismon is a symbol of "Christ's monogram."

Many of the symbols are Greek letters (like Chi-Rho – the first two letters of the Greek word *christos*; Chi is the X portion of the ornament while the Rho is represented by the P).



Others are symbols associated with Christ – like various kinds of stars, fish, butterflies, crosses, lambs, crowns, doves, and even parable balls which tell a special story.

Each one of these symbols has a special meaning, some of which we'll try to describe in the remainder of this article.

Our Chrismon tree, located in the Narthex, has been decorated with Chrismons made by several women of First United Methodist Church.

All of us who have worked on making the Chrismons (Kim Bennett, Myrna Evans, Edy Shaffer, Lorraine Tollefson, Deb Metcalfe, Rosalie Haynes, Marguerite McClain, Linda Gordy, Ann Fasnacht, Iris Whittaker and Donna Rayne) have had a great time!

We have used several styles of Chrismons – beaded, painted, stitched, and crafted.

All, however, reflect the white and gold colors of the Christmas season.

The white symbolizes the innocence, purity, and perfection of our Savior. White is also the color of joy.

The gold color is a reflection of the glory and majesty of God.

Some Chrismons may also have a touch of red on them – a reminder of the blood of Christ by which we are saved.

Following are more detailed explanations of some of the symbols we have made for our Chrismon tree.

We hope that when you see our fully decorated tree, you, too, will be reminded of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

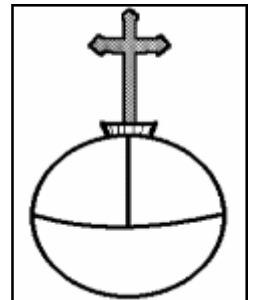


Latin Cross: this is the most widely used form today (like the cross on our altar in the sanctuary); this cross is a reminder of our Lord's saving work of redeeming mankind through His sacrifice for our sins, by which we receive forgiveness and salvation. The cross member is shorter than the vertical member.

Greek Cross: the meaning is the same as the Latin Cross; the arms of this cross are all equal.

Celtic Cross: the round circle in the cross suggests eternity through Jesus Christ.

Cross Triumphant: this is a cross sitting atop a round ball (the earth) showing the triumph and victory of the Gospel throughout the world.



Cross Potent: this cross represents the Savior's spiritual and physical healing powers.

5 Pointed Star: also called the Epiphany Star – the star of our Savior.

6 Pointed Star: also called the Creator's Star – symbolizes the six days of creation.

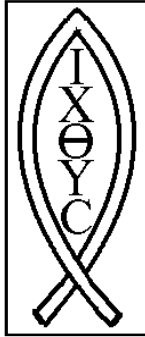
8 Pointed Star: also called the Star of Holy Baptism – symbolizes regeneration through Jesus Christ.

Fish: during ancient times the fish pointed the way to secret Christian worshipping places.

The Greek letters are

I X O Y C

which are the first letters of Greek words: Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior. It is a reminder to us that Jesus died for our sins, and that many of our brothers and sisters around the world today are dying or being persecuted for their faith, and some must even keep their faith secret. When we see the fish, let's pray for them.



Butterflies: symbolize our Lord's resurrection and transformation.

Scallop shells: symbolize baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; may also have 3 drops of water on them to symbolize baptism.



Crown of Thorns: remind us of the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Wheat: the body of our Savior; the bread of life.

Grapes: the blood of our Savior; the cup of salvation.

Lambs: Scriptural symbols for Christ.

Crowns: symbolize the Kingship of our Lord; His victory over sin and death.

Cornerstones: Christ is the cornerstone of our lives.

Monograms: XP or Chi-Rho is the most common based upon Greek words.

Sometimes each word is used alone, or it may even be turned to a different position to give it a different shape.

The Chi (X) may be turned on its side to form a manger; the Rho (P) can become a shepherd's crook/staff.



Letters & Words: Alpha and Omega (first and last letters of the Greek alphabet) used to describe our Lord (He is the beginning and the end); INRI found on the crucifixion cross means "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."



Descending Dove: An ancient symbol of Scriptural origin suggesting the Holy Spirit

(descending to reside within us).

Some of our ornaments depict a combination of several symbols.

A circle (eternity) in which an X (Chi) is inserted along with a Greek cross (resurrection) brings together several Christian concepts.

Our painted balls are also called parable balls – they tell a parable or story, just as Jesus preached in parables. Each ball will carry its own special story.

We hope you enjoy this year's Chrismon tree. It is our gift of love to you to celebrate our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



MERRY CHRISTMAS TO THE HOMOSASSA METHODIST CHURCH!!

You continue to uplift this ministry. Soon the atmosphere of our church will begin to reflect the coming of the Christ Child.

At your Children's Home Christmas will also arrive to greet the children in a special time for the boys and girls, who would likely not otherwise see a joyous Christmas.

The wise men sought the child of God and traveled a great distance to see this child.

When they arrived, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

We will today seek to find the "Christ Child" in all the faces the Children's Home serves and to bring gifts that will nourish and care for each child's needs.

Frankincense and Myrrh are always pleasing, but gold puts food on the table, a roof overhead and provides loving arms reaching out to touch the lives of boys and girls.

Thank you for your prayerful assistance and may you have a blessed Christmas!

The Florida United Methodist Children's Home



Touching the Future - One Child at a Time

~ Marsha Bader



Our Stephen Ministry

Retailers and other business owners try to assure us that we will all be happy if we just buy their products or services in preparation for Christmas.

But as we know, some people will experience sadness during the holiday season.

Perhaps a loved one recently died.

A spouse or child may be overseas, serving in the military.

Families may be experiencing layoffs from jobs, transitions to new communities, or disheartening medical diagnoses.

Today, a song played by Bill during Morning Manna (91.9 FM weekday mornings from 7:30-8 a.m.) reassured listeners, "When nights are weary, when days are dreary, He will be with you."

Right here, in our own congregation, we have trained Christian caregivers who are ready to spend time with you, providing weekly one-hour visits and phone support when you are facing life's many challenges.

Call Diane (382-7242) or Kay (382-4908) for more information.

Walking on the Path **Patience Nave**

"[Jesus] said to His disciples, "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man is to be delivered up for crucifixion." (Matthew 26:2)

He spoke to them so clearly. I know they were hearing these hard words *before* his horrible death, but surely they heard Him speak them. In the margin of my Bible, I have written, "He even told them how he would die! Did they just not hear?" What was the matter with these men? How could they be so insensitive? Why didn't they understand?

As I sat quietly in my comfortable chair in the early morning thinking critically about their failure, a voice inside my head—or maybe inside my heart—said quietly, "And what about you? Do you understand?"

So I begin to ask myself questions about His question? Do I understand? Do I understand how grieved He was as He approached this death so degrading that it was considered unfit for a Roman citizen? Do I understand that only His atonement would make access to God possible for me? Do I understand He had to die so I could be set free from the power of death? Humbled, I felt much less critical of these men, and I mumbled, "Father, I too have not understood."

Prayer: Father, as the time approaches for us to celebrate Christmas, reveal to us afresh the wonderful mystery of Your coming. Help us to better understand the enormity of this miraculous birth 2000 years ago, so we may understand more clearly the price this tiny baby would someday pay, opening the door for us to have fellowship with You. Amen.

Unexpected Opportunities to Minister Grace **Patience Nave**

I have watched Wallace enjoying the people who come and speak to him on Sunday morning. One of you may roll him from one building to another or up the aisle as we leave. He seems to actually "perk up." When he was sick for a month in the summer, he missed church for several weeks. One day he asked, "Don't I ever get to go back to church?" Of course, I make every effort to see that he gets to church because it is so important to him.

As I thought about his desire to be in church and the impact you have on him when we are here, I realized that you are "ministering grace"—God's grace—to him. That's absolutely biblical, and isn't it wonderful! Let's not miss any opportunity to minister grace to each other. Each of us can use all the grace God wants to give, and it's great to realize how He often gives that grace through individuals like us.



**ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS
DECEMBER 3, 2006**

Please note the change of date. The Mission committee felt that there were too many distractions during the Thanksgiving weekend and hope this will be a more convenient date for you to do your Christmas shopping with us. We have gift certificates for:

**HABITAT OF CITRUS COUNTY
HEIFER INTERNATIONAL
SOCIETY OF ST. ANDREWS**

All you need to do is decide your gift list and then donate a gift in each name. Bring your checkbook and get all of your (adult) shopping done with one check to one or all of these ministries.

How nice for the recipients of these gifts to know that their gift from you is helping others to have a better quality of life. We can help fight poverty by supplying food delivered to local food banks, or we can help build a home for someone without a home of their own. For more than 60 years, Heifer International and friends like you have been proving that there's no better way to help families escape poverty and hunger than by providing them with a sustainable means of supporting themselves.

If you have a friend or family member who shares your concern about the less fortunate among us, don't miss out on the chance to give them a unique gift they're sure to appreciate. Our Alternative Christmas tables will be set up again this year, offering you an opportunity to purchase gift certificates for your loved ones.

~ Marsha Bader

**Give Life!
Find A Blood Drive!**

*"The life of the flesh is in blood"
Lev. 18:11*

We mortals can also minister with the precious gift of our blood.

LifeSouth Community Blood Center is desperately seeking donors in Citrus County to help make their quota required to meet the needs of both Citrus Memorial and Seven Rivers Regional Medical Center. Request that your donated blood be accredited to The First United Methodist Church of Homosassa, and it will be available for members of our church's congregation when needs arise.

We are proud to announce FUMC's Blood Drive Honor Roll for the year 2006

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Downs, Joan C. | Darby, Richard E. |
| Downs, Lynn M. | Watson, Janet D. |
| Shimp, Alan B. | Potts, James M. |
| Messenger, Edw. A. | Shaffer, Richard V. |
| Wells, Marilyn Mae | Blum, Margo B. |
| Wells, Leon Edward | Whittaker, Mark A. |
| Stoneman, James V. | Clark, Sherril |
| Hewitt, Shirley E. | McCrea, Mary C. |
| Speed, Vincent E. | Ryan, JoAnn |
| O'Gorman, Judith | Burkhardt, Shirley A. |
| Dilling, Marjorie J. | Will, Adam K. |
| Blockus, Helen | Gilbert, Barbara J. |
| Diedrich, Bernard | Brobst, Neretta T. |
| Kline, Karen A. | Whinam, Marie A. |
| Diedrich, Lois A. | |



Thank you for this precious gift of life.

Season's Greetings,
Barbara Jackson



Wonderful Wednesday Suppers

December 13, 2006 - As Christmas approaches and we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the children of FUMC will be performing a Christmas Drama for your enjoyment.

Wonderful Wednesday for 2007.

There will be a break during Lent - soup suppers will be held on Wednesday during the period of Lent.

- JAN. 3 - SGT. CHRIS EVAN
IDENTITY THEFT**
- JAN. 17 - DICK EVANS
GREECE TRIP**
- JAN 31 - BARBERSHOP QUARTET
SONGS TO REMEMBER**
- FEB. 14 - JIM & JEANNINE LOVE
A NIGHT FILLED WITH LOVE**
- APR. 11 - IRIS WHITTAKER
KEY TRAINING CENTER**
- APR. 24 - SHARON SMITH
OVERSEAS MINISTRIES**
- MAY 9 - DAVID BENTHUSEN
COMMUNITY BASED INSTRUCTION**

Keep an eye on the bulletin inserts for more information. We hope you can come and enjoy the delicious food and desserts prepared by your dedicated group of Wonderful Wednesday Volunteers. Plan to enjoy an evening of Christian fellowship and interesting programs.

Copies of "SENIOR MOMENTS," a book by Rev. Richard Evans, are available for sale in the church office for \$10 each. A copy is available in the church library for those who may wish to borrow it.

Education Corner

Patience Nave

Important Upcoming Event:

Between 25 and 30 people kept Tom Slaymaker busy for two solid hours, as they asked questions about their legal needs. He certainly explained well what we need to do.

We were still asking questions as 5:00 approached. He accepted our invitation to return in January to cover those unanswered questions and new areas of concern, such as how to maintain financial integrity if we have to go into long-term care.

Watch the bulletin for date and time.

A Children's Moment

Barring anything unforeseen, our children will present the program for Wonderful Wednesday on December 13 and will participate in the worship service on December 24. They are so precious! Plan to be at these two events if you can.



HAVE YOU WALKED TO EMMAUS WITH JESUS?

Have you been on a Walk to Emmaus, Tres Dias, or Cursillo? Or any other 3 day "Walk"? If so, please let us know by contacting the church office or by e-mailing Marilyn Watson at marilynww@netscape.com.

We think there are several more of you who have had this experience, and we would like to know who you are.

HOLIDAY CHEER THROUGH READING

The Church Library offers the following books with the subject of Christmas to help capture the season's spirit of love and blessing:

A special feature is Hannah's Hope" written by Karen Kingsbury.

Fifteen-year-old Hannah Roberts lives a lonely life with her grandmother. Her father, a U.S. Ambassador to Sweden, is cold and distant and too busy for her. Her mother has political and social ambitions of her own. However, as Christmas nears, Hannah learns a shocking truth that the man she believed to be her father is not her real parent after all. Thus begins Hannah's search for Air Force chopper pilot Mike Conner, her real father. When a local politician and the press catch wind of the story, everyone is caught up in Hannah's hope - that she'll find her father before the holidays.

"Manger and Mystery" by Marilyn Brown Oden brings a fresh and challenging perspective on the Advent adventure. It allows you to reclaim your understanding of the reason for the season and encourages you to make time for yourself during the holidays.

Max Lucado has written "The Christmas Child" which was formerly titled "The Christmas Cross." We have both books. A Chicago journalist finds himself in a small Texas town on Christmas Eve. He had received a small picture of a church in the mail and thought he'd find it. He does



and the story unfolds from there, bringing a big change to his life.

Lucado also wrote "Cosmic Christmas," a different slant on the birth of Jesus and events leading up to it. Taken from the book of Revelation, the story is the result of wondering about the "war in heaven," Michael and his angels fighting the dragon - Satan - who is fighting to retain his evil grip on the world. God loves the world so much that he sends Jesus to us.

Max Lucado brings us "The Christmas Candle," the story of a simple man living in a small English village who spends his days providing light to others through the candles he crafts. When a mysterious angel visits the humble man's shop, the holy and the human come together to release a blessing that could only be conceived by a grace-filled, loving Lord.

"The Christmas Bus" by Melody Carlson . It's nearly Jesus' birthday and Christmas Valley is in an uproar because the pastor's wife, Edith, has offered shelter to a bankrupt couple with a baby on the way - and they've parked their hippie bus right in front of the lovely Victorian parsonage. Edith's family isn't coming for Christmas this year so she invited strangers to fill the rooms reserved for family. But when the guest list shapes up to include some less than desirable characters, at least on the surface, Edith wonders if

she made the right choice. Will her idea blow up in her face or could she be entertaining angels unaware? You'll love the answer.

Donna Van Liere has brought us "The Christmas Shoes," a story that tells us that, if we're open to it, God can use even the smallest thing to change our life and us. Read this book and believe. She also wrote the sequel, "The Christmas Blessing," an inspiring story about hope existing in the darkest places and how love is always the greatest gift of all. Her latest novel is "The Christmas Hope." It's been five years since Patricia and Mark's son died, and they've given up hope of ever having a joyous Christmas. But when Patricia brings home a 5-year-old who's just lost her mother, God begins his healing through this very special little girl.

"Christmas Every Morning" by Lisa Tawn Bergeron. Ten years have passed since Krista Mueller admitted her mother to a care facility due to Alzheimer's disease. Krista stopped caring about her mother because of a painful childhood and desperate attempts to gain her mother's love. So Krista is unprepared for the transformation that takes hold of her heart as she struggles to seize her final opportunity for forgiveness and love. She knows it is no longer forgiveness for her mother that's needed but forgiveness for herself.

Merry Christmas from your
Library Staff,
Barbara Jackson and
Helen Lefave



Youth Ministry Schedule
Sunday School
 9:30 – 10:30
 on Sundays.
 In the Youth Room

Youth Fellowship
 12:00 – 2:00pm
 on Sundays.
 Meet in the Youth Room

FROM PASTOR STEVE'S DESK



CREATIVE WORSHIP WORKSHOPS
 New Meeting Times

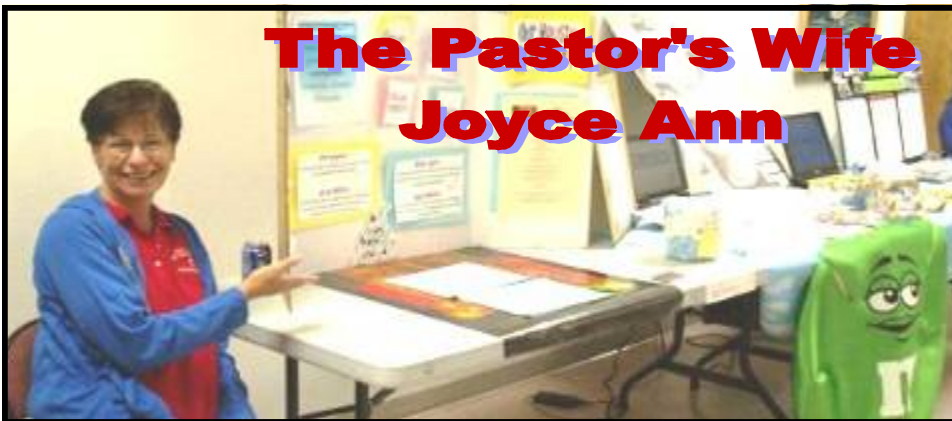
Our Creative Worship Workshops are now held on the 1st and 3rd Thursdays of each month at the church at 7 pm.

Creative Worship Workshops are led by Steve Skelley in conjunction with Rev. Whittaker.

The goal is to work as a team to support the gospel message creatively so that people of all learning styles can understand God's love for them.

Do you have talents in music, drama, art, decoration, or outside-the-box thinking?

Join us.



The Pastor's Wife
Joyce Ann

The new church website for youth is at:

www.CitrusCountyTeens.org

Check it out!

WHAT IS YOUR PASSION?

HOLISTIC SMALL GROUPS

New Group To Launch in January!

Lisa Specht is joining our talented list of Holistic Small Group Leaders! Lisa has completed her training sessions and will be leading a new group for people who battle chronic pain. This will be a valuable asset to many people in our community. Thank you, Lisa!

Join a Holistic Small Group today or start your own group. Contact Steve Skelley at the church office for information on joining or starting a Holistic Small Group at 1st UMC.



Tiffany Garthaus
 November 5th, singing "Never Alone"

Recycle Your Empty Ink Cartridges

Bring in your empty printer ink cartridges and place them in the recycle box on the soda machine near the fellowship hall.

Recycling these cartridges saves the environment and earns us money to support ministry to local youth and to pay for food, clothes and schooling for Ralph and Adriana, our mission children in Central America.



Dear Friends,

Thank you all for such a warm welcome to this church. I am excited to be working for a congregation that is so loving and open. With that thought in mind, I ask for your patience as I am learning.

A few things to keep in mind. If you have any information you would like included in the bulletin, please be sure to get the information to me no later than **Noon on Mondays**. I will try my hardest to get all information in the bulletin, but I can not guarantee the information will make it in if I do not receive it by **Noon on Mondays**. While it can be helpful, I do not require the information to be "ready for print". As long as I have all the information, I can put it together for you. I would like to receive all information by email but if that is not an option for you, please feel free to call me and tell me what you need. I will take care of the rest.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give me a call. I look forward to working with and working for all of you! ~Theresa



2007

As the new year approaches, I would like to start filling out the **2007** calendar and need your assistance. If you are the chair of a committee, group or event, please take a few minutes to think ahead about the upcoming year and what dates you will need to reserve in the calendar. The sooner I know what you need, the better I can plan and schedule events. Also, as the year moves on, if you have any cancellations or changes in time, date, or location, please be sure to let me know as soon as possible so that I can keep the calendar accurate. This will also allow me to direct people correctly as they call or come in with questions.

Thanks for your help! ~Theresa



REPORTING IN

None of us likes to think about something happening to us so as to require hospitalization, but at some point that will probably be a part of life.

One of our members last week, at age 85, had her first surgery! That's some kind of record, I'm sure. Many of us don't tell anyone if something is going physically wrong with us, but, if we are on the other side of the coin, we do want to know.

If you are going to be hospitalized, please call the church office to let us know. It doesn't mean that we want the "gory" details, but appreciate knowing that you could use some extra special love and prayers from other Christians.

We can not extend or express our concern for you if we are not informed. If it is an emergency situation, we hope that a friend or family member will call the church.

Looking at it from another prospective, the parish nurse has the ability to answer many questions you might have about admission procedures, expectations during hospitalization, and post-operative concerns. She will be happy to work with you prior to the anticipated "event."

As we look forward to Christmas, we also think of what a wonderful gift our physical bodies are. All the integral parts function so miraculously for so long, and yet when one little part "malfunctions," we often get terribly upset. Rather, let us "accentuate the positive," and be truly thankful for what we have, what we are, and whose we are!

**MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM YOUR
PARISH NURSE,
SHARON E. SMITH**

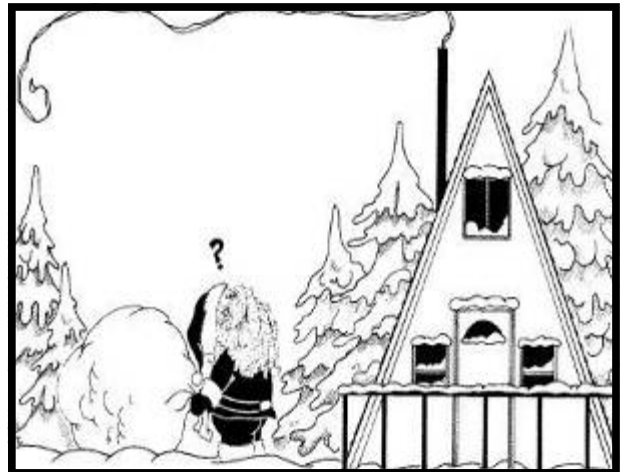
CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

The Cancer Support Group will not meet in December. We meet every fourth Tuesday from 1PM to 2PM in Room 203.

The next meeting is January 23rd.

We laugh, we cry, we share, we care.

Call Anna Cooley 382-4132 or
Merl Hoar 382-4555



SANTA'S DILEMMA



The MISSION COMMITTEE will be taking Snickers Bars (2.07 oz.) along with an inspirational message to Lancaster Correctional Facility in December.

Please bring your donation to the Sunday Services on **December 3rd & 10th**

All church members are invited to join the Missions Committee to wrap Snickers Bars on **Wednesday
December 13th
3 PM**

~ Joe Henry



PLEASE JOIN US IN PRAYER

A survey of our church needs (taken by 30 active members in our congregation) shows our greatest need to be an increased **Passionate Spirituality.**

We defined Passionate Spirituality as **An intense desire to know God - Not to just experience his blessings or know about him but to know God himself in a deeply personal way.**

Walt and I volunteered to work with this need in our church. We realize the desire to know God can only be brought about by the working of the Holy Spirit in each individual. We also believe that concentrated prayer is the place to begin.

So we are asking each group to make this a specific prayer each time you meet, beseeching God to bring a deeper spiritual hunger for himself to our congregation.

"You do not have, because you do not ask God." (James 4:2b NIV)

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of Him." (1 John 5:14-15 NIV)

Jan Wise and Walt Dilling
For the
Committee on Strategic Church Development



When using FUMC for small groups, meetings, etc., we ask for your help in making sure that the building is secure after you leave.

During the Holiday Season, keep the doors to your vehicle locked, especially when the car is loaded up with goodies. Keep what you can in your trunk. After dark (especially you ladies) have an escort to your car in the parking lot



Thank you!
Michael Rodgers,
Night Security
If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at:
ranch-hand@tampabay.rr.com

ARE YOU PASSIONATE?



~ **REMEMBER** ~

STOP!

After your meeting is over, **STOP** and check that all lights and fans are off.

LOOK!

LOOK to make sure that everyone has their belongings and has left the building before you...

LOCK!

LOCK the doors!

December Birthdays

1
Doris Kertesz

2
Martha Formender
Phillip Rittgers
Rusty Harry

4
Shirley Wardrip
Dorothy Nobles
Bess Hoes

5
Fred Casper
Zane Megos
Susan Dean
Holly Jordan

6
Elizabeth Gaines
Betty Huffstutler
Dorothy Jones
Charles Dixon
Vicky Post

7
Marybelle Baker
Howard Watson Sr
Willy Pouderoyn
Edwin White

8
Ruth Anderson
Abbye Jean
Richner

Jeana Stansbury
Jeremy White

9
David Pirkle

10
Glenn Seiler
Minnie Watson
Mary McCrea

12
Buddy Hansen
Carolyn Bright

13
Frank Harris
Imogene Burnett
Sue Kamphuis
Russell Kamphuis

14
Richard Shaffer
Delanne Parker
William Little
Barbara Shores
Wanda Ashley

15
Julia Wilkinson

16
Charlie Walker
Armin Marvin
Maureen Guthrie
Kenneth Will

17
Betty Davis
Sandra Dewart

18
Edith Keilt
Parker

19
Phyliss Dixon

20
Marilyn Wells

21
Malcolm
Whetstone
Lois Young
Don Hand
Mildred Mott
Jessica Cocking

22
Jim Potts
Sue Cloyd
David Kegley

23
Mary Ellen Wais

24
Ted
Archambault

25
Carolyn Huggins

27
Bill Gilbert
Fredee Pooley
Sasha Shuart
Natasha Dawson

28
Rene Dube
Judith Huffer

30
Audrey Johnson
Charlotte Gable

31
Dorothy Graham
Lloyd Pond
Sally Moore

December Anniversaries

8
Michelle & Ryan
Selby ~ 4 yrs

12
Joan & James
Eyster ~ 53 yrs

Joyce & Jim
Winder ~ 47 yrs

17
Isabelle & Ernie
Verge ~ 63 yrs

Judith & William
Busby ~ 23 yrs

Phyliss & Charles
Dixon ~ 18 yrs

18
Martha & Ernie
Dorrell ~ 46 yrs

19
Donna & Bud
Ludwick ~ 47 yrs

Marlene & Lloyd
Pond ~ 24 yrs

20
Laurie & Larry
Stainton ~ 47 yrs

Wilma & Walter
Stroud ~ 21 yrs

21
Jeannine & Jim
Love ~ 48 yrs

December 2006						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

December Anniversaries Continued...

22
Marge & Harold
Swinson ~ 61 yrs

Lee & George
Knerr ~ 51 yrs

Audrey & Roger
Johnson ~ 33 yrs

28
Kay & Lee
Bast ~ 50 yrs

Judy & Bob
Bunting ~ 46 yrs

Dee & Jim
Green ~ 11 yrs

Nursing Centers

Barrington
Ken McGuire

Brentwood
Evelyn Bash
Rene Dube
Betty Pettit
Ann Specht

Cedar Creek
Bill Marquis

Crystal River Health & Rehab
Robert Smith
Ralph Hudson

Cypress Cove
Jack Mallett
Ruth E. Smith
Willie Smith
Elta Whilden
Julia Wilkinson

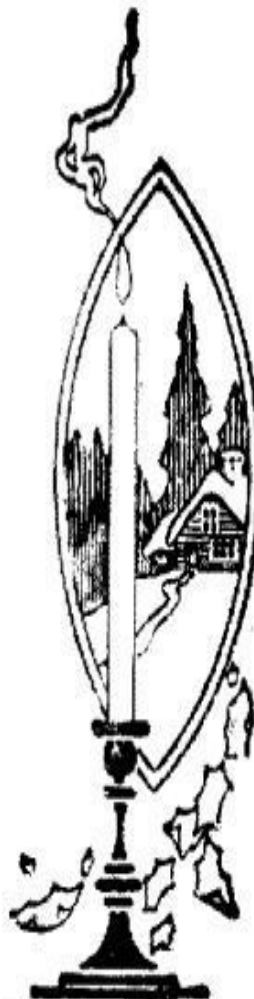
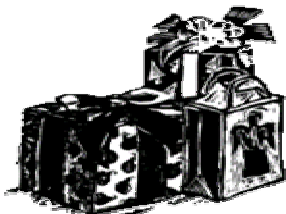
Life Care
Nan Lawrence
Evelyn MacDonald
Ginney Rese

Rehab.— Jacksonville
Florence Sledd

Sugarmill Manor
Del Parker
Grace Payne
Ray Short

Surrey Place
Marjorie Cook
Maddie Wallace

Please keep these shut-ins in your prayers.
~ Sharon E. Smith
Parish Nurse



WELCOME TO OUR CHURCH!

Kevin Brennan
 5187 Richland Lane
 Homosassa, 34448
 621-0636
 From Bergenfield, NJ

Donna Donaldson
 7045 W. Walden Woods Dr.
 Homosassa, 34446
 382-5829
 From Davidson, MI



Ann Eckman
 13 Rebecca Ct.
 Homosassa, 34446
 382-3671
 From Mundelien, IL

Be a Pal!
Wear Your Name Tag!
 Help make our new members
 feel at home quickly!

WHY WE WEAR NAME TAGS

It is a ministry--helping people to get to know one another by name as well as by face.

It is a gift--offering a personal touch of "who you are" to the people you greet.

It is a sacrifice--taking time and effort to put on your name tag so others can relate to you.

It is an extension of God's grace--spreading the warmth of God's love to others.

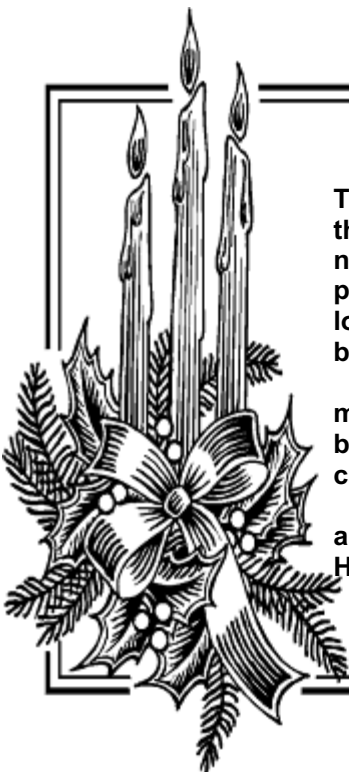
MINISTRY--GIFT--SACRIFICE--GRACE

Won't YOU participate in these expressions of discipleship and wear YOUR name tag?
 ~ Jan Wise

Several fellow members have noticed that we are wearing magnetic name tags and have asked how and where we got them.

We purchased them at Gulf Trophies, 4155 S Suncoast Blvd. #B. Phone number: 628-4760. The store is located between Misty River and the gas station, south of Walgreen's. The cost was \$5.00 each. When several are ordered, the cost is lower. They have the Methodist logo of the cross and flame available for FUMC orders. The name tags are very comfortable to wear and can be easily read.

~ Connie & William Barton ~



To my wonderful Church family:
 Thank you for your prayers, and for the overwhelming number of cards, notes, telephone calls and other expressions of concern and support following my recent quadruple cardiac by-pass surgery.

This was a great comfort to me and my family, and we are truly blessed to belong to such a warm and caring Church.

We are grateful to Pastor Mark and Iris for their uplifting visit to me in Hospital. Bless you all!

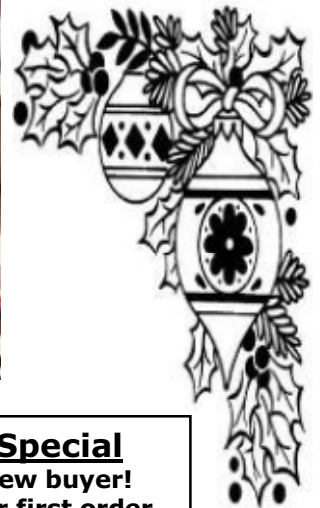
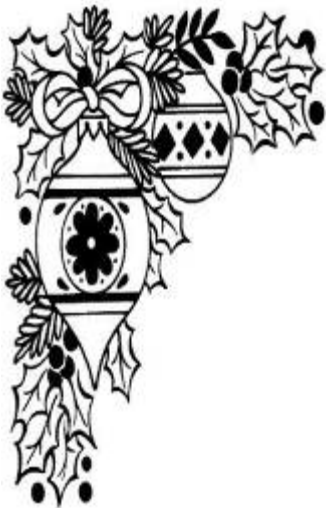
~ John Mayles ~



Help Wanted:

- People to provide transportation for persons wanting to come to church.
- Someone who feels "called" to assist with visitation in Crystal River.

Please call the church office.
Sharon Smith
 Parish Nurse



**SHARE of Florida
by Tom & Nancy Pearo**

SHARE Special
Bring in a new buyer!
\$2.00 off their first order.
\$2.00 off of your order.

- **SHARE Sign-up Dates**
November 29th
&
December 2nd
- **PICK-UP**
December 16th

**CONSIDER BUYING
A "DONATION."**

There is always need
for extra food-packs
for needy families
at Holiday Time.

DECEMBER BASIC
Basic Package guaranteed retail value of \$36
or more....You pay only \$18!

- 1.7 lbs Chicken Drums
- 1 lb. Chicken Breast Fillets
- 1 lb. Tilapia Filets
- 8 oz. Sliced Hard Salami
- 12 oz. Turkey Breakfast Sausage Links
- Plus a variety of vegetables*

DECEMBER SPECIALS

HOLIDAY PACKAGE \$23.00
3.5 lb. Pork Roast
1 lb. Egg Noodles
1 lb. Winter Blend Vegetables
Rolls
12 oz. Strawberries
8" Apple Pie
PLUS
Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

SPIRAL HAM \$21.50
(8 TO 9 lbs. average)

BUTTERFLY SHRIMP \$ 15.00
3 lbs. Breaded Tail-on Shrimp

Volunteer Service Receipt

Your participation makes SHARE work. For each month you order food, you are required to contribute a minimum of 2 hours of your time toward community volunteer activities. Coming on Pick-up Day and assisting in the dispersal of food for 2 hours is an acceptable volunteer participation service.

(Your Name)

Has completed _____ hours of volunteer service for:

(Name of Recipient) _____

Description of Service Rendered _____

Signature of Recipient _____ Date _____

Discover what thousands are enjoying every month – savings of 50% and more on quality, wholesome foods. Anyone who volunteers just 2 hours a month performing acts of kindness or community involvement is welcome to join the SHARE Florida Food Network.

For more than a decade, SHARE has proven that helping others can save you money and improve your health. When you SHARE you are guaranteed savings. When you lend a helping hand to others, you are guaranteed to feel good about yourself and your community.
Be a part of it. You'll love to SHARE.

Dear praying friends,

We are excited that the new church is moving forward so well and ready to hold its first service on the 19th of this month. Praise God! We pray this time will be honoring to the Lord and that He will use this new body well into the future.

Praises

Joe preached at church, shared at cell group, and taught four mornings at Bible school last month. It was a privilege to be able to share the Bible so many times in Thai, and since nobody had that deer-caught-in-the-headlights look, we'll accept that people successfully understood!

Joe and Pastor *Ogaat* were able to secure a townhouse for the new church, which has been officially named "Cool Shade Church."

Trust us, in Thai it has a lot more meaning. (It's คริสตจักรร่มเงา for those who can read Thai.)

For instance, in one hymn that says "in the shadow of the cross" in English, the Thai says "in the cool shade of the cross."

It evokes ideas of salvation, joy, rest and protection, among other things, for Thais (or so we're told!).

With a week off from school, the Grace International School (GIS) contingent (that would be everyone except Joe!) had a good break.

This is a photo from a trip we took to a limestone waterfall during the break.



Here is Brittany and our dog having a relaxing day. (Actually, she was trying to run away...the dog, that is.)



Caleb and Brittany wrapped up their swimming seasons well at separate meets.

Caleb won one of his heats, finished 2nd in two others and 3rd in one more. He received a 2nd place medal overall in the butterfly in his age group.



Now, Brittany and Justin have moved onto track, while Caleb and Jamie are doing soccer.

Prayers

Elaine's health continues to be a problem. Elaine currently has a kidney infection for the second time since August and is on IV antibiotics. Please pray for healing and improved overall health. (As a result of Elaine's illness, we likely will not be able to attend a Thai church camp scheduled for this weekend. Please pray for wisdom in deciding whether to attend or not.)

Joe and Pastor *Ogaat* have to make some final purchases and plans for the new church. Pray for wisdom, for a good opening, and for the Nov. 30th open house

for about 12 Thai pastors, missionaries and others from around Chiang Mai to be a blessing.

Continue to pray for Elaine's teaching work at GIS. November is a big month in 2nd grade. The students study economics and put on a "country fair." Please pray for energy for the teachers. Also, pray for Fer, who is one of Elaine's students. She is Buddhist and has begun to show interest in the stories of Jesus. Pray for her heart to be open.

The new church still needs about \$4,000 in startup funds. We can do without the items for awhile, but eventually we would like to have these things on hand (Bibles, songbooks, kitchen items, sound system, etc.). Please pray for the Lord to provide in His timing.

Our personal finances continue to struggle. Praise God that we have received almost \$200 a month in new/added support, however we remain about \$1,400 short of 100% support each month. Also, the dollar is slumping badly in Asia. It has lost 12% off its peak of a year ago and is expected to fall at least another 5% by year's end. In addition, our mission account remains about \$2,000 in deficit. Please continue to pray for the Lord's provision.

Until all have heard, Joe, Elaine, Brittany, Justin, Caleb & Jamie



P.S. A September 22, 2006 photo of the boy's birthday.



Wooster Update



Graduation Day 2006

Josh and Corey are doing really well with school. They seem to be settled into a routine but they have both talked about how much they miss their friends from the school in Moscow. Neither is playing any school sports at the moment, but they are both playing basketball for fun! Please continue to pray for new friendships and a desire to seek the Lord in all things.

Kevin and I (Laura) are taking a biblical counseling class each week, and, even though the homework can be overwhelming, we have been greatly blessed from something learned in each lesson. We're continuing to visit with our supporters/churches to bring them up to speed on what's happening in Russia and what we see as our next step in ministry.

Please pray for our meetings to be God-led and our words to be His. Our desire is to share God's heart, not our ideas and dreams.

Here in Florida it's sometimes hard to realize its winter. Aside from the increase in population (we love you snowbirds!) and the "cooler" temperatures (not having 98% humidity), it's just another day in paradise.

How blessed we are to live in such a place, and how blessed we are to have a Savior that is waiting for us in *the paradise!*

I (Laura) love this time of year. I love the smells, sights, and sounds of Christmas. They bring back childhood memories and the memories of watching our boys waiting for Christmas day with great anticipation.

We have a tradition in our family each year on Christmas Day. Before any gifts are opened or any cookies and candy canes are eaten, we sit together and read the story of a birth that changed the world — the story of His humble beginnings yet he was born to be the King that came for each and every one of us, even today. What a powerful and loving God we serve!

How often do we get caught up in the business of what the season has become and forget what it truly means to us as Christians? I'm guilty and I'm sure many of you have been too, but don't despair. There's still time to share the reason for the season....Jesus!

Luke 2:11 *"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."* Christ came for all so that we could spend an *eternity* in His presence. Share the news so that we can all worship the King in paradise!

Kevin, Joshua, Corey and I want to thank all of you at Homosassa for standing with us over the years. It's such an honor to serve God and a privilege to stand among brothers and sisters who have a heart for the lost in Russia.

We have been abundantly

blessed with words of encouragement, godly advice, prayers, finances, and more prayers. THANK YOU! Our time so far has been a wonderful experience of sitting under sound teaching and being a part of study groups and courses.

We are encouraged to "press on" and are beginning to look at our future work and time in Russia. The work there continues, and the home study in Moscow is still faithfully meeting each week.

The work in Siberia is bursting out across the region and new home groups and small churches are in their infancy - all under the leadership of the nationals, not the foreigners. Please keep praying for the area, for the churches and their leaders.



Finally, we thank you for the prayers that have been poured over the boys as they transition back to American life. It's been hard and challenging at times but a blessing to watch where they turn for their strength and encouraging words. We love you church, and want to wish you a very blessed and joyous Christmas!

"Until the World Hears..."
Kevin, Laura, Joshua and Corey

*Serving with Pioneers
in Russia*

The New Columbarium

By Rev. Richard Evans

Our new church Columbarium is located against the exterior east wall of the Worship Center. The cabinet contains 108 niches with polished granite fronts. Future expansion will bring the total to 216 niches. (A columbarium is a permanent cabinet-vault containing niches to provide for the storage of the cremated remains of deceased persons).

Each niche accommodates up to two urns and each granite niche front will have a bronze plate containing the name(s) of the deceased, along with the year(s) of birth and the year(s) of death.

Our Columbarium is surrounded by a landscaped and fenced Memorial Garden—an ideal setting for meditation and prayer. The Garden and Columbarium are a modern counter-part to the ancient church burial ground—an appropriate resting place for faithful members of Christ's Church.

Members of First United Methodist Church, and members of their families, may purchase niche spaces and reserve them until their time of need. The current price is \$1,200. Niches may be purchased by individuals for single inurnment or by couples for double inurnment. The price is inclusive of either one or two bronze urns and one or two engraved bronze nameplates. There will be no additional charges beyond the original purchase price.

Over half of the purchase price covers our actual costs at this time. \$500 of each purchase (considered a tax deductible charitable contribution) is held in reserve for future expansion to create an endowment fund for perpetual care.

Persons interested in purchasing a niche may obtain an application packet from the church office. Upon completion and full payment, purchasers will receive a Certificate of the Right to Inurnment of their cremains.

If you have not seen the new Columbarium and Garden, stop by soon and spend a few minutes in this quiet setting.

The Charitable IRA

A New Way to Give

By Rev. Richard Evans

Last August Congress passed the Pension Protection Act of 2006. One feature of this new law provides a two-year "window of opportunity" for tax-free giving from IRAs for persons who are 70 ½ or older. For the 2006 & 2007 tax years, persons may make tax-free gift transfers directly to qualified charities of their choice—including United Methodist Churches and agencies. Donors may make gifts of up to \$100,000 per year from Traditional or Roth IRAs.

Why is this a tremendous opportunity? Because it addresses the financial concerns of many seniors. Individuals who are 70 ½ must make Required Mandatory Distributions annually from their IRA accounts. Failure to do so results in a 50% penalty of the RMD amount. These traditional IRA distributions are taxable and, in many cases, will push the retiree into a higher tax bracket.

Often donors want to take their required IRA distributions and make major charitable gifts during November and December. Under the new tax law, they may make a gift of all or a portion of their required distribution, thereby fulfilling both the requirements of the IRS and their charitable intentions—and excluding the gift amount completely from their income.

For many individuals and families, the largest non-real estate assets are their IRA accounts. The new law presents an opportunity to be generous with IRA assets by:

- Making a gift to a capital campaign.
- Creating a "matching gift" to challenge others to help meet a campaign goal.

Establishing an endowment.

Caution! Donors must make the transfer directly from their IRA accounts to the charity! If the IRA distribution is made to an individual it will be reported as income on a 1099 form, and it will be subject to tax. And the new law applies to IRAs only, not to 401(k)s and 403(b)s. To be in compliance you must complete the gift transfer prior to December 31 of the calendar year in which you make the gift (2006 or 2007).

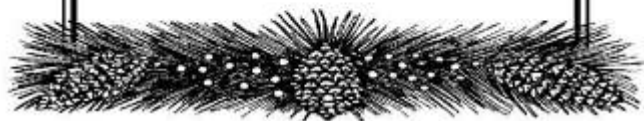
**First United Methodist Church
of Homosassa**

8831 W. Bradshaw Street
Homosassa, FL, 34448



**A Stephen Ministry
Church**

**www.1umc.org
Neil Kline, Webmaster**



**First United Methodist Church of Homosassa
"Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors"**

**Rev. Mark Whittaker
Pastor**

Sunday Schedule

Morning Worship: 8, 9:30 and 11AM

Nursery at all services

Sunday School for all ages: 9:30AM

Methodist Youth Fellowship: 12-2PM

Office Hours: Weekdays

8:30AM to 4:30PM

Office Telephone: 628-4083

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