

Morris Memorial



MORRIS MEMORIAL UM CHURCH

JANUARY 2019

CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA

OUR MORRIS ENRICHMENT CENTER IS TRULY AMAZING!!

In November Georgeanne Leake, MEC Director, challenged all of her classes to take part in a competition to see which class could collect the most food. She set a time-frame of two weeks and offered a party as the prize for the class collecting the most food. The competition began and the classes collected food and they collected food, and they collected food-----from children, parents, and teachers. It became a real competition all in good fun!

Two weeks later they counted their items and donated their collected food to Common Grounds. The winners were awarded their party. All in all they donated **1300 items**, at least 100 more items than last year!! Isn't that simply amazing?!! We at Common Grounds are thrilled-----and so very thankful for these donations. What is even more important is the "sowing of seeds" in these young lives of the value for caring for people who are hungry in their own neighborhood. That's such an important life lesson and it's never too young to begin to learn it! Georgeanne, Staff, Families and Children-----we thank you for sharing your resources to benefit those less fortunate in our community. We pray it impacted your family and the MEC family positively. Thank you from all of us at Common Grounds. May you be blessed----as you have been a blessing!

***Please remember to send a card,
visit or pray for these church members:***

Phyllis Hemetek, 2419 Greenbrier Street -Meadowbrook Nursing Home, Charleston, 25311
Phyllis Howell, 1 Timberline Place, Charleston 25311 304-345-5105
JoAnn & Kenna Judy, Chas. Gardens, 800 Association Dr. A 141, Charleston WV 25311
Mel & Ruth Lancaster, 21 Belcher Lane, Charleston, WV 25306
Sharon Martin, 5 Rolling Meadows Road, Scott Depot, WV 25560
Greta Skiles, 5 Bexley Dr. Apt. 212, Scott Depot, WV 25560 681-235-2403
Glenna Underwood, Chas. Gardens, 800 Association Dr. A 136, Charleston WV 25311
Mary White, Chas. Gardens, 800 Association Drive, B141, Charleston 25304 304-347-1033

Last month's Morris Community Dinner was another great one! The room was filled with lots of love, fellowship and good food. We served 199 meals (that includes 62 to-go boxes) and there were 123 people (that includes 1 policemen and 29 volunteers) present for this event. Many of our regular guests were present along with some new faces.



You have helped in so many ways. Thanks to all - whether you helped with the kitchen prep or clean up. We couldn't have done it without each and every one of you! Gloriann Caudill made some beautiful table arrangements that made our tables look very festive for the Christmas season. Thank you Gloriann!

Merry Christmas and May God Bless you all,
Debby Sokolosky and Wanda Hymes

Bible Study Group to Study Colossians

Our Wednesday morning bible study group will not meet on January 2, but on January 9 we will begin a study of Paul's Letter to the Colossians, with Pastor Steve leading us. We meet at 10:30 a.m. in the Conference Room. We plan to study the indicated chapters on the following dates: Jan. 9, chapter 1; Jan. 16, chapter 2; Jan. 23, chapter 3; Jan. 30, chapter 4.

The Scandals of Christmas

Pastor Mark's sermon series on the Scandals of Christmas will continue through January 6. On December 30, we will hear about the scandal of a Savior for All People. Many of the Jews thought that God only loved them, but old Simeon recognized that the baby Jesus had come to offer salvation to all people of all nations and all races. In order to prepare for our services on December 30 you are invited to study Luke 2:22-32 and Isaiah 49:5-7.



January 6 is Epiphany Day. This is the day on which Christians remember the coming of the Wise Men. This year, however, we will look at the dark side of the story. We will look at the Scandal of the Conspiracy to Murder the Christ Child. To prepare for worship on the first Sunday of the new year you are invited to read Matthew 2:1-18.



*Please remember in prayer these members
of our church family on their special day*

Barney Frazier	January 4
Beth Hall	January 5
Haley Williams	January 6
Melissa Eskew	January 7
Katy Smith	January 9
Mildred Bledsoe	January 11
Angelo DeRaimo	January 14
Jim Waggy	January 17
Gill Heasley	January 19
Jerry Ballard	January 19
Elouise Leadbetter	January 20
Marie Cole	January 20

Judy Flynn	January 21
Tami Reed	January 24
Betty Ramsey	January 24
Adam Batty	January 25
Kimberly Hess	January 25
Daniel Baker	January 26
Julianna Alley	January 26
Cathie Brown	January 30
Michael Dalporto	January 30
Kailyn Haddox	January 30
Sharon Byrd	January 30



Angie and Jay Townson	January 6
Roger and Betty Ramsey	January 24
Bill & Thelma Ann Wandling	January 25

Annual Adult Sunday School Dinner and Auction a Real Success!

On Saturday, December 12 our Sunday School classes held an auction to benefit Common Grounds, our local mission outreach. We had a nice turnout. We began the evening with a short devotional time by Pastor Mark followed by a tasty potluck dinner.

Then the auction began-----with auctioneer Mark Hatfield and his helper,

Anthony Turley who not only helped with distribution of the gifts but became the "official" judge of the weight of the gifts. They both did a super job! We had a delightful time bidding on "good gifts" and "gag gifts"-all for a good cause! The evening was filled with fellowship, laughter, and joy knowing we were helping our needy neighbors too. When all was said and done, the auction brought in over \$1000.00. Needless to say, this will go very far in helping us be Christ's hands and feet to those families coming to our mission outreach for help.



Truly, a good time was had by all. Do plan on joining us next year and be a part of all the fun. A very special thank you to the Julia Kendall Class for hosting the dinner/auction and thank you to all who participated in the evening's events. May God bless you all!

Pray for General Conference Delegates

February's special General Conference of the United Methodist Church could make significant changes. One plan being presented to the general conference would change our standards on marriage and sexuality. Another proposed plan would make radical changes to our structure. A third plan would maintain our standards on marriage and sexuality and would put new accountability measures in place. Please lift our West Virginia Conference delegates to General Conference 2019 up in prayer, not just during the days of General Conference, but every day leading up to the special session. The West Virginia Conference has 3 clergy (Mary Ellen Finegan, Sharletta Green, and Ellis Conley) and 3 lay delegates (Judi Kenaston, Erin Sears, and Rich Shaffer). We have 3 clergy alternate delegates (J.F. Lacaria, Lauren Godwin, and Mark Flynn) and 3 alternate lay delegates (Connor Kenaston, Royce Lyden, and Fred Kellerman) who will also be attending.



Christmas Is Not Over

Do you remember the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas"? In Christian tradition Christmas really is twelve days long. Once all of the excitement about Santa has begun to die down we need some days of quiet reflection on what a marvelous gift God has given us in His Son Jesus. So, don't be in a hurry to put away your Christmas decorations. Don't stop saying "Merry Christmas." If you say it and someone gives you a funny look, that gives you an opportunity to say that the gift of a Savior is too great a gift to celebrate for just one day.

COMMON GROUNDS NEWS AND NEEDS

As we enter this brand new year, we at Common Grounds would be amiss if we were to forget to complete our “thanks” to those who were so helpful to us near the end of last year. In our December article we shared with you about the Thanksgiving boxes we distributed to our needy families. When the day came to distribute those boxes, we were thrilled to welcome those volunteers from our church who came to help. Heartfelt thanks goes to David Byrd, Barney Frazier, Pam Higgs, Mark Miller, Bill Vieweg, and Susan Vieweg. We also were pleased to have two people who were visiting our church the Sunday Pastor Mark announced our need for additional help for distribution day. They were Jamee Barkmann and Wilma Lake. Special thanks to each and every one. What a blessing you were to us all!

Near the end of November the Morris Enrichment Center held a friendly competition between classes for two weeks to see which class could bring the most items to be donated to-----you guessed it-----Common Grounds. Please see the separate thank you article to them in this edition of the Morris Memo for additional information. They “came through with flying colors.” They are amazing!!



The second Saturday in December the Julia Kendall Class sponsored a joint Sunday School Dinner/Auction. What a fun time we had eating and enjoying the fellowship together! Please see the separate article in this Morris Memo to learn more about this interesting Christmas party held “for a good cause.” You can probably guess what the “good cause” is!!

If you would like to help us this month, please bring **BOXED MACARONI AND CHEESE, CANNED SOUPS, AND/OR CANNED CHICKEN OR TUNA FISH**. Your donation(s) may be placed in the woven trunk in the Closet in the Narthex. If you would like to give a donation by check, please make the check out to **Morris Memorial Methodist Church** and in the bottom left-hand corner write Common Grounds. If you are supporting Common Grounds with food, with money, by volunteering, and/or by praying for this mission outreach of our church, **YOU are MAKING A DIFFERENCE** in our own neighborhood.....guaranteed! Bless you!

If you are interested in learning more about Common Grounds, have comments to share, or would like to volunteer here, please contact Susan Vieweg, our Morris Memorial Common Grounds Coordinator, at (304) 344-2617 or (304) 549-6155.

A Word From Pastor Steve

“Which Way, Lord?”
(Some Keys for Discerning God’s Will)

A new year is upon us with new possibilities, new opportunities, new decisions, and perhaps in some ways, a new direction for our lives. And as Christians, as followers of Jesus, we certainly want to follow His leading regarding the goals and priorities for our lives. We want to express all our gratitude for His mercy and love by seeking to honor Him by our attitudes, words, and actions that are in obedience to His will. The Apostle Paul often emphasized this in his letters. For example, in Colossians 1:10 he said, “We pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way.” So it’s very important that, in any given matter or situation, we remain certain and confident that we are in the center of God’s will. If you are like me, sometimes that is very clear and easy to see. However, at other times, it simply isn’t. There are times when there are an awful lot of clouds, fog, and confusion....

So when the way forward is unclear and there are perhaps a variety of options before us, how should we decide which prompting is correct, which idea is best, and which direction is in fact the one God wants us to take? Here are some of the issues and questions that help me stay on the right course.

1. VOICE

Whose voice is this that I hear? Is it God’s voice? Does what this voice is saying align with God’s character and will?

Deuteronomy 30:20 “Love the Lord your God, listen to His voice, and hold fast to Him. For the Lord is your life...”

John 10:4 “His sheep follow Him because they know His voice.”

2. SCRIPTURE

Is this prompting, this idea, this cause, this goal, this desire, this practice, etc., is it in agreement with scripture? (God’s Word reveals God’s mind, God’s design, God’s way and God’s will.)

Psalms 119:105 “Your (God’s) word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

James 1:25 “But the man (person) who looks intently into the perfect law (scripture) that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it, he will be blessed in what he does.”

3. WISDOM

Is this truly the best, for the most people, from the most perspectives, especially God’s? Will it really produce the results that it promises? Is this the kind of thing that Jesus would do? That Godly people would do?

Ephesians 5:15-16 “Be very careful, then, how you live, not as unwise, but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.”

James 1:5 “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.”

(continued)

4. WIRING

Does this idea, voice, direction, etc. align with how I am “wired”? Is it consistent with my gifts, skills, personality, interests, and abilities?

Psalm 139:13 “You (God) created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother’s womb.”

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

5. FRIENDS

What do my closest Christian friends think about this? Does this prompting align with their perception of me and God’s will for me? (Ask them to pray about this and report back to you what they “hear” from God.)

Proverbs 15:22 “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.”

Proverbs 27:9b “The pleasantness of one’s friend springs from his earnest counsel.”

My friends, if you will utilize these considerations and questions, I am confident that, together, they will go a long way toward helping you to stay in the center of God’s will....May 2019 be an especially satisfying and productive year for you and your family!!

Play and Pray on New Year’s Eve

Morris Memorial will offer both fellowship and worship on New Year’s Eve. Several members have asked us to have a game night followed by a Watch Night Service. Beginning at 9 p.m. we will have snacks, board games, and conversation. You are invited to bring a favorite snack to share, or a favorite board game, or both. At 11:30 we will have a quiet, prayerful, contemplative worship service to pray in the New Year.



What Can We Do about the Opioid Crisis?

The National Institute on Drug Addiction has said that West Virginia has the highest rate of opioid-related overdose deaths in the United States. In a year’s time more than 700 of our fellow West Virginians died from such overdoses. We are not just talking about numbers. We are talking about people, and these people are our neighbors. Jesus said that the greatest commandment is the commandment to love our neighbors. What can we do?

We at Morris Memorial are going to take a serious look at this question. On Jan. 27, plan to stay after worship for a meal and a presentation by the Rev. Barry Ball. Barry is our bishop’s husband. He has a remarkable way of helping people with non-scientific minds to understand the science behind addiction. He also has some ideas for Christians who want to make a difference. Our own Dr. Ed Eskew works in addiction medicine, and he is willing to help us to continue the conversation and to discover how we can help our neighbors. Please join us on Jan. 27.

USHERS

THIS MONTH

<u>DATE</u>	<u>START</u>	<u>POSITIONS</u>
January 6	8:30 am 11:00 am	Ushers ----- Nancy Duncan and Beth Hall Ushers ----- Matt & Ashley Skiles and Ann Davis
January 13	8:30 am 11:00 am	Ushers ----- Teddi Smith and Karen Smith Ushers ----- Ann Davis and TBA
January 20	8:30 am 11:00 am	Ushers ----- Mildred & Ted Bledsoe Ushers ----- Cathie Brown, Tim Basford and Ann Davis
January 27	8:30 am 11:00 am	Ushers ----- Gael & Doris Morris Ushers ----- Ann Davis and TBA

Bishop Steiner Ball to Meet with Laity



Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball is inviting the laity to a gathering to acknowledge the anxious times we are in as the United Methodist Church prepares for the Special General Conference in February 2019. She will meet with the laity of the Midland South and Western Districts on Sunday, Jan. 6 at Forrest Burdette UMC in Hurricane from 3:00 to 5:00 pm. The tentative agenda will include: Devotional time, bringing us up to date on the conversation about The Way Forward, sharing how this General Conference will do its work together and interpreting the Judicial Council decisions and how they impact the work of the General Conference. This important meeting will also attempt to address misinformation and frequently asked questions. This time together will be an opportunity for the laity of our District to hear directly from the bishop on the current work being done as The United Methodist Church navigates a way forward that would honor our Lord and help us fulfill our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

How Many Kings Came to Bethlehem?

We all know the hymn about the three kings. It is a beautiful and moving hymn. Yet, the title is based not on scripture but on tradition. Matthew is the only New Testament writer who mentions the mysterious visitors from the East who bring gifts to the Holy Child of Bethlehem. He does not call these men kings. He calls them *magi*. This word has often been translated into English as *wise men*. The term refers to an ethnic group from Persia (modern Iran). This group is known for experts in astronomy who were advisors to some of the most powerful leaders in their part of the world.

These men were not kings, and Matthew does not say how many of them there were. The popular notion that there were three men probably grew out of the fact that Matthew tells us of three gifts which they brought. An older tradition suggested that there were twelve of these men who came to Bethlehem. Because the journey from Persia to Bethlehem was so difficult and so dangerous, it seems unlikely that a group of only three would make such a trip.

Don't write off this hymn, however. In stanzas 2-4 John Hopkins, Jr. helps us to understand the significance of the gifts which were brought by the wise men.

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain, gold I bring to crown him again,
King forever, ceasing never, over us all to reign.

Frankincense to offer have I; incense owns a Deity nigh;
Prayer and praising, voices raising, worshiping God on high.

Myrrh is mine; its bitter perfume breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying, sealed in the stone-cold tomb.

January 6 is Epiphany, the day when we remember the coming of the wise men. The word Epiphany means a manifestation of a divine or supernatural being. The gifts of the wise men show us that the Christ Child is indeed divine—a divine King Whose death has special significance.



Thank You!

Pastor Mark and Judy would like to thank the many members and friends of Morris Memorial who have given them gifts, sent them cards, and shown them love in other ways during this Christmas season. You have done much to make the season bright for us. Thank you and God bless you.