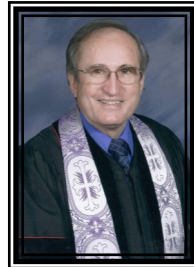


Good News

Issue 10

St. John's United Methodist
1800 Cypress Gardens Blvd
Winter Haven, FL 33884

December, 2011



As I See It . . . Rev. Dan Parrish

This was shared in a friend's newsletter, and I share it with you.

"With A Twinkle In His Eye"

"Twinkle" is one of those words for which my Webster's New World Dictionary fails me: *twinkle (twinkle) v.i. - to shine with quick, intermittent flashes of light ... to sparkle.*" The definition errs by omission. There is too much about a twinkling star or the twinkle in a person's eye that just isn't included in this definition. Maybe it can't be expressed in words. We do learn to make associations with words that are not a part of any explicit definition.

I have a feeling about certain words. "Twinkle" is one of them. My feelings tell me that "twinkle" and "sparkle" are not the same thing. "Sparkle" has a ring of fake and flashy feel to me, like sequins. "Twinkle" on the other hand connotes warmth, intimacy and joy. It is a Christmas word.

I remember one Christmas night when my sister was still small. I was 11 years old, and like my parents, one of the possessors of the "secret" about Santa's helpers. Therefore, I was to keep my sister in her bed while we awaited the arrival of Santa to do his merry work.

I had just about dozed off when my sister suddenly sat up in her

bed and said, "I think I heard something! I think there's a reindeer on the roof!" And I was all ears, too, because I realized that in my half-sleep state I had also heard something. Only to me it sounded more like a kick stand on a bike. I knew better, I told myself, because I knew it had been a terrible year for my father's business. Still, I had as much trouble getting back asleep as my sister.

I remember on Christmas morning, looking silently from my new, red Huffy bicycle into my father's face. As clearly as the bicycle, memory allows me to see the twinkle in my father's eyes. The twinkle might have been accented by a tear, although I never saw my father cry. I know, from the times when my own children have received a very special gift, that it was the kind of twinkle of the eye that comes accompanied by a lump in the throat. Christmas at it's best, is full of twinkle. Not sparkle. Twinkle! And when I think of the gift of God lovingly placed in the Bethlehem manger, I like to think of the Bethlehem star as the twinkle in God's eye. That makes me feel warm and happy and ... loved.

Yours In Christ,
MAY OUR HOLY SEASON BE
FILLED WITH THE REAL
"TWINKLE" OF GOD'S LOVE!

Pastor Dan

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**Where there is no vision,
the people perish.**

Proverbs 29:18

When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls and the city, he faced all kinds of roadblocks. First, he had to organize the remnant of people to do the work. The Samaritans then became enraged at the efforts of the Jewish people and tried to discourage them by telling them they could never accomplish the huge tasks from the heaps of stones and burned out rubble, and even threatened them. Nehemiah organized protection for the workers and gave them a pep talk.

Next the Jewish people complained that the work was too difficult, and they were neglecting their own work and borrowing money from the nobles to pay their taxes and buy food for their families. Nehemiah then had to persuade the nobles to stop the practice of requiring the pledge of land and family members as security on loans and to obey the law of not charging interest to Hebrews.

Nehemiah knew how to respond to the challenges. First, he prayed to God for he realized the rebuilding was God's work. Next he took practical action; he didn't expect God to do the work. He prayed as if everything depended on God and worked as if everything depended on him.

That is true stewardship.



"The dog ate our pledge card, but the veterinarian made him spit it out."

"The Secret to Our Finances"

Let me get very personal with all who attend St. John's United Methodist Church, and claim it as 'our' church. What if every person in this church took the Scriptures seriously? I have a very specific passage in mind. Let's share it together. That Scripture is:

"Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me.

"But you ask, 'How do we rob you?'"

"In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse — the whole nation of you — because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it. "

Malachi 3:8-11 (NIV)

Our treasurer tells me that there are roughly 300 giving units in St John's. Let's look at our church and consider the possibilities if we were all serious about Scripture. What if every person in this church was at the poverty level? The Federal Government set that at \$14,710 annual income for 2011. If no one in this church was above it, and they all tithed, this church would meet two thirds of it's annual budget during the annual commitment drive, if everyone was at the poverty level.

What if everyone in St John's . . . was at the average national income with no one above that? I found this presented in two different ways: According to the US Census Bureau, the median household income is about \$51,425, and median income per person is about \$27,041. According to another authority (Dana Coast): The average income in the United States of America is currently \$27,500. So, lets say that everyone at St. John's UMC is above the national average income . . . and, we all tithe, what would it mean?

The Finance Committee asked that our budget for 2012, which is down from last year be set at our Fall Church Conference at roughly \$680,000. If everyone was at the National Average Income, our income for 2012 would be 825,000. Our Finance people would be working on what to do with that extra \$145,000 income. Some might say, "That is just silly thinking." I work with a church up north where they actually do have to deal with an extra \$670,000 annual income above their operating budget.

I say lets get serious about God, our relationship with God, our church, and our response to Kingdom Building.

Pastor Glenn Loy



Good News, Ladies!!!!

Plan to "retreat" with us and visit "The Great Cardiologist" at the annual Women's Retreat. It will be held Saturday, February 11, 2012, at St. John's UMC, 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Come get your "heart check up" and spend a special day with your sisters in Christ.

MORE INCOME AND A GIFT TO THE ENDOWMENT

A gift to the St. John's Endowment Fund could provide you greater income and save taxes. The following is an example of a Charitable Gift Annuity:

Charitable Gift Annuity: 6.5%

Cash gift: \$10,000

Beneficiary age: 75

Date of Gift: Nov. 2011

Donor's marginal income tax bracket: 25%

Donor receives a fixed payment: \$650 per year (\$497 of the payment is tax free)

Charitable deduction: \$3,839

Income tax savings: \$960

Out-of-Pocket cost : \$9,040 (\$10,000 – 960)

Rate of return: 7.2% (\$650 divided by 9,060)

Make a gift – save taxes – receive more income!!!!!!
Contact Dave Harner for more information.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

GENERAL MEETING

The **December General Meeting of United Methodist Women** will be held on **Tuesday, December 6, 2011, at 11:00 AM**. The meeting will take place in the **CLC - Rooms 108-109, with a Potluck Luncheon in the Rec. Lounge**. The **Program** will be **Christmas Music provided by St. John's Preschool** followed by the **installation of officers**. **Hostesses** for the meeting will be the **UMW Officers (this is a change)**.

ALL WOMEN ARE INVITED TO ATTEND!

ALUMINUM CAN RECYCLING PROJECT

The **Morning Circle** wishes to **thank** everyone who participated in our aluminum can recycle project this year. The money we get for the cans goes to Florida First Start which is located in Eloise. The program aids needy families in the area. Thanks to you all we have collected over \$400.00 this year and we have two months to go. If you are not familiar with this program let me explain: we have a collection container just inside the door from the back parking lot. If you have the time and energy to crush them it will be appreciated but don't let that deter you as we accept them not crushed also. If you don't know where to put them just ask at the office. Bring your clean cans to church and be a part of this mission project as well as helping the environment.

The Morning Circle meets every third Thursday of each Month at 9:30 a.m. in the Rec Lounge in the CLC . The next meeting will be on December 15th.

SORRY YOU MISSED IT

Several individuals who attended the Estate Planning Seminar conducted by Jim Traviss wanted you to know some of what you missed. Jim did an excellent job of introducing us to estate planning and explaining how it actually works.

Did you know that, if you have not prepared a will, the State has prepared one for you? Do you know what it says? We do.

We learned the positives and possible negatives of trusts and when they should be used. We learned trust assets do not have to go through probate.

Jim explained the use of the Power of Attorney and the proper way to do a Living Will and establish what you want for end-of-life care.

This was a great learning experience, and we received a free meal.

Hope you will take advantage of the next seminar on February 19 when we will have another expert in to discuss money management and financial planning.

SJUMC Opportunities



I hear bells. Do you? Handbells need a few more people to fill out all 5 octaves of bells. Come join us on Tuesday evenings from 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. in the Handbell room (Rm. 224). Also, if you can't make the weekly commitment, but would like to ring bells, we need substitutes. If you have any interest in either of these opportunities, please e-mail me at beth@sjum.org.



Chancel Choir! Don't they sound great! We would love it if you would come and join us on Tuesday evenings from 6:45 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. in the choir room. The more the merrier! We are learning new music and rejuvenating the old classics. Come and worship with us during rehearsals and help to lead the 11:00 worship services. Feel free to "drop in" and give us a try or e-mail me if you would like more info at beth@sjum.org.



If you play an instrument and would like to share your gift with the 11:00 service, please let me know and I will get you scheduled to play for a future service.

In His Service,
Beth Jurovcik
Organist/Pianist/Chancel Choir and Handbell Director



Christmas Open House
Friday & Saturday evenings
Dec. 9, 10, 16, 17 7:00 – 9:00 PM
465 Liberty Lane
Winter Haven

St. John's family and friends are cordially invited to the annual Christmas Open House at the home of Sue Umstead . There will be 20 decorated trees along with villages, trains and animation. If you can't come one of these evenings, you can call Sue (324-3171) for another possible time. There will be maps in the office.

Annual Christmas Presentation

Sunday, December 11 at 6 PM.



Featuring Celebration Singers, Worship Team, Praise Kidz, Soloists, and YOU!

PRESENTATION

Be sure to invite your friends and family for this joyous Christmas worship event!

Also...

Be sure to come to the 5PM Christmas Eve Service



and enjoy the musical,

.....



Poinsettias will be available soon. Please place your order and attach payment in the amount of \$7 per plant. Please bring your order and payment to the church office by noon Tuesday, December 6, 2011.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

No. of Plants requested: _____

Would you like to Donate: _____

I will pick plant up: _____

Mission Opportunities

Thank you SO MUCH for your love of children around the world, your generosity and your faithfulness. You know who you are. Give yourself a big smile of gratitude, that's what you are giving to hungry, sometimes starving children.



Some members of the congregation asked if we could begin to send the pocket change to needy children in our own country and suggested Alabama since the tornados have taken such a huge toll there, causing homelessness and loss of many services. UMCOR has agreed to transfer present monies to that area and will designate it to the children experiencing homelessness and poverty. Thank you again for your big hearts. You are loved and appreciated.

THE POCKET CHANGE TEAM



TOILETRIES

Around the holidays needs increase, so The Mission always needs toiletry items for shower and bathing needs. Please bring any toiletries to Room 105 and place in the red plastic tub. Soaps, Shampoos, Deodorants, Lotions, Toothpaste, Toothbrushes, Shaving Cream, Laundry Detergents, etc. All are needed on a daily basis. Any help you can provide will be VERY much appreciated.

HEARTFELT THANKS

PEANUT BUTTER SUNDAY

Thanks to the faithful supporters of PB Sunday, we filled 46 bags last month. We need paper bags to fill and distribute to individuals, the Salvation Army, The Mission, and Project Love. There are many hungry and needy families right here in Winter Haven, so the groceries are surely needed and well appreciated.

We keep a small food pantry in the old kitchen for anyone who might come to the church seeking emergency food. Please be advised, this pantry is available to our church members. If a neighbor, friend or relative has a need; or if one of our own church family has a need, please go to the old kitchen and fill a paper bag or two from the cupboard. It is a privilege to have received these abundant groceries from our congregation and an even greater privilege to give back to those who could use a little temporary assistance. God is the ultimate provider. What a gift that we at St. John's are a part of His work.

THE PEANUT BUTTER TEAM

Recycling PAYS at St. John's



We've found a way to help you supplement church finances and support the church, while at the same time helping to reduce the waste that ends up in landfills. eCycle group will reimburse us for the print cartridges and cell phones that we collect. Your help is vital in collecting them. The cartridges and cell phones can be brought to the church office. For more information contact Claudia Willoughby at 324-6347.

RECYCLING PILL BOTTLES



Prescription and non-prescription medication bottles for Talbot House in Lakeland. The bottles (minus any personal RX information please) are sterilized and re-used for medication distributed by the medical staff at Talbot House. They also accept prescription and OTC medication that you no longer need. There is a box for collection in the CLC, Room 105.

Thank you,

Betty Soble



Good News

It's coming back again!!
"Taste of St. John's" is coming Sunday, January 15, 2012. This is a great opportunity for you to see and "taste" all the wonderful ministries here at St. John's. Plan to attend during the Fellowship Hour, 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. in the CLC.

TASTE OF ST. JOHN'S MINISTRIES

The Stewardship Committee of St. John's is planning a special event that we invite you, and need you, to participate in. To coordinate with our 2012 Stewardship Campaign, we want to give our congregation a "taste" of the many wonderful ministries--- we are asking each ministry to set up a display/table/booth to show what your ministry does, and what opportunities are available to get involved and volunteer. This will be during the Fellowship Hour, on **Sunday, January 15, 2012**, in the Christian Life Center. Please have someone from your ministry available to talk about what you do and answer any questions. We are also asking each booth to have some kind of **finger food ("a taste")** to offer all those who come to your display. This can be something creative that goes along with your particular ministry, or just cookies, crackers, candy, fruit, etc.—the idea is to just get a taste at each display. If you cannot get something, let the Stewardship Committee know, and they will get something (call Larry/Janey Powell). We will plan to have all tables set up on Friday so you can set up your area ahead of time (let us know so we can get the building open if needed)—or you can set up Sunday morning by 9:00 a.m.

We want this to be a special time for all of our congregation to "taste and see that the Lord is good." (Psalm 34:8). Then, together, we can move forward in "making fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ". **Thank you for being such a very important part of serving God and His people!!!** For more information or questions, call Larry Powell at 324-5264, or email at lapow@verizon.net.



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Angels Care Center of Eloise,

a free, faith-based medical clinic and care center, thanks you for your continued help and support — you are truly some of God's special angels!

Along with our deep gratitude, there are 2 specific needs we have now that we would like to share with you. We have served over 500 patients since we opened the end of March, and because of even greater need, we are hoping to add another night each week to see patients. To do this, we need more volunteer doctors, nurses and translators. We only ask that you come once a month (of course, more if you want). If you, or someone you know, would want to serve God this way, please contact us (875-5595 or angelscarecenterofeloise@gmail.com).

Another very special part of our mission (which everyone can help with) is to be able to give each person toiletries, a first aid kit and a Jesus Kit to the children. Thank you to those who have already been donating items---the need is ongoing, and we are asking for your continued support. We will be serving even more families who come here between now and April. We especially need small soaps & anti-bacterial gel, deodorant, toothpaste and brushes, band-aids, shampoo and other toiletry items from hotel stays. We also need items for children's kits — stickers, erasers, small books, things that share Jesus and His love. Please bring your donations and drop in the Angels Care Center box in Room 105. If you would like to help put these kits together, we meet the first Wednesday afternoon of each month, at 2:00 p.m. at Angels Care Center — we would love to have you join us!

Thank you so much for your prayers — this ministry could not operate without that foundation. If you have any questions, you can also call Larry/Janey Powell at 324-5264. Thank you for being part of "God's People Caring for God's People".



Weekly Calendar

Full Monthly Church Calendar can be accessed on the web site (www.sjum.org), just click "Calendar"

Christmas Eve
 5:00 p.m.
 Family/Children Program Service

7:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.
 Communion and Candlelight Services

Christmas Day
 Normal Service Hours

Sunday		Wednesday	
Contemporary Service	8:30 AM Sanctuary	Wearhouse	9 AM - NOON Thrift Store
Hospitality	9:45 AM CLC Gym	Testament Practice	3:30 PM Wesley Hall
Sunday School	10:00 AM	Intentional Dining	5:00 PM CLC Gym
Traditional Service	11:00 AM Sanctuary	Wee Praize	5:30 PM Asbury Hall
Praize Kidz	5:00 PM Choir Room	Wednesday Night Warriors	6:00 PM Asbury Hall
ReaLife Church	6:30 PM Wesley Hall	Wonderful Wed. Worship	6:00 PM Sanctuary
Monday		Celebration Singers	7:00 PM Choir Room
Bears	10:00 AM Library	ReaLife Bible Study	7:00 PM Room 212
Bridge	1:00 PM Rec Lounge	Thursday	
Disciple I	7:00 PM Room 205	Tai Chi	6:30 PM CLC Gym
Tuesday		Friday	
UMM Bible Study/Breakfast	7:30 AM CLC Gym	Wearhouse	9 AM - NOON Thrift Store
Handbells	5:30 PM Room 224	Saturday	
12 Steps (Men Only)	6:00 PM Rec Lounge	Wearhouse	9 AM - 3 PM Thrift Store
Volleyball	6:00 PM CLC Gym	12 Steps (Men & Women)	NOON Rec Lounge
Chancel Choir	6:45 PM Choir Room		

Youth Activities

REALife Sunday Service: Join us for a time of fellowship, worship and a word from God! This is a contemporary service intended to encourage, equip, strengthen and empower all who join us! Everyone is welcome! Nursery provided. Hope to see you there Sunday nights at 6:30 PM!

ReaLife High School and College Bible Study Fellowship: Wednesday Nights at 7:00 in the 'Upper Room'

Food, Fellowship and way too much fun.

The Study: "Who really has the last word?" The Book of Revelation – Led by Pastor (coach) Mike

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Calling all kids to either 8:30 am or 11:00 am church services. We have children's church offered at both services so families now have the option of which service to attend! Children will be a part of EVERY service in the "Children's Moment" before they leave for children's church. It will reflect what the children will be learning; which will mirror the adults' sermon. The goal is to reinforce our lessons and church time as one big family in Christ.

Always look for something new and exciting here! You never know what will be next!

Please join us for our activities:

Wednesday nights at 5:30 pm Wee Praize (Asbury Hall)

Wednesday nights at 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm Wednesday Night Warriors (Asbury Hall)

Sunday nights at 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm Praize Kids

Come and Worship with Us!

Sundays

(Nursery will be provided)

8:30 Contemporary Service

9:30 Hospitality

10:00 Sunday School

11:00 Traditional Service

6:30 REALife

Wednesdays

6:00 Wonderful Wed. Worship

Look for awesome activity days every other Wednesday beginning in January of 2012, Wed. nights at 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm! Get on board with us because the fun train is coming to St. John's!

Good News Deadline

To place an article in the December newsletter please e-mail your article to home@sjum.org by December 15th.

Church Office Hours:

Monday - Thursday
8:00 AM- 5:00 PM
Friday 8:00 AM- Noon
863-324-6347

..... We're on the Web! www.sjum.org

Staff Directory

Ministers	All the Members of the Family of God	home@sjum.org
Rev. Dr. Dan Parrish	Senior Pastor	dan@sjum.org
Dr. Pat Bennett	Worship Arts Pastor	pat@sjum.org
Patty Boska	Preschool Director	patty@sjum.org
Sharon Garrett	Office Administrator	sharon@sjum.org
Dave Harner	Stewardship Education/Ministry Resourcing	dpharner@gmail.com
Beth Jurovcik	Organist/Pianist	beth@sjum.org
Mike Lambert	Youth Pastor	teaministries@aol.com
Rev. Glenn Loy	Adult Discipleship Pastor	glenn@sjum.org
Sumer Rohrs	Children's Pastor	sumer@sjum.org
Claudia Willoughby	Financial/Office Administrator	claudia@sjum.org