



# THE GATEWAY

First United Methodist Church, Sheridan WY

Jim Barth, Pastor

(307) 672-9779

Kortney Muir & JennaRae Akers, Editors

December 2018

---

One of the first things I do when I come into the office is check my email. This last week my email has been cluttered with “Black Friday” and “Cyber Monday” deals. It seems as though we are inundated with buy, buy, buy this time of year. Christmas is coming and you need this or that to put under your tree. It is very clear that we live in a consumeristic culture. In this culture we have developed this idea that to have more stuff is somehow better. “He who dies with the most toys wins”. Christmas is the time that we can collect it. However, are we called to be consumers? The definition of consume is to “use up, completely destroy, or to absorb”. Every year I struggle along with my friend Charlie Brown; is this what Christmas is really all about? Is this why God came to earth in human form?

Jesus shows us over and over what Christmas is all about. It is not about what we can get. Jesus tells us in Mark 10:43b-45 (CEB) “Whoever wants to be great among you will be your servant. 44 Whoever wants to be first among you will be the slave of all, 45 for the Human One didn’t come to be served but rather to serve and to give his life to liberate many people.”

It is interesting to me that the way that many of us celebrate the birth of the One who came to serve, to give, and to liberate; is to consume. What would happen if we would change the conversation with those around us this Christmas season? Instead of talking about what you want for Christmas, let’s talk about how we will serve or give to others. Jesus did not come to consume, but to give, and invites us to as well.

This Christmas season, how can you serve others? By this we demonstrate the birth of the One who came to serve, to give, and to liberate.

Merry Christmas,  
Pastor Jim



### PRAYERS ~

- ...for **Diane Hall.**
- ...for **Barbara Braided Hair**
- ...for **Jim & Carol Swartz.**
- ...for **Debbie Williams.**
- ...for **Those hurting over the holidays.**
- ...for **The United Methodist Church.**

## Gingerbread Cookie & Candy Sale



Come One! Come All! To the Gingerbread Cookie House!! Let us do your holiday cookie baking & candy making. On Saturday, December 8, from 9:00 am to Sell Out, is our Annual Cookie & Candy Sale in the Gingerbread

House (basement fellowship hall).

This fund raiser helps us continue our goal of making God's Love Accessible through Building Modernization.

We will be doing the baking and making of goodies for the holiday season for ourselves, our friends, neighbors, co-workers, and others from our community. There will be over 5,000 cookies and candies, including gluten-free and sugar-free varieties. Homemade cookies and candies will be sold for \$6.00 a pound. Come choose your assortment from many different kinds available.

***Bring a friend!***

Are you providing homemade cookies or candy to sell at the Gingerbread Cookie House? If so, please bring your 3-4 doz. (or more) cookies or candy on a tray to the church basement on Friday, Dec 7<sup>th</sup> between 9 am and 6 pm. ***Remember to put your name on your tray/container.***

Have you signed up to work at the cookie sale? You will be further instructions about your 'assignment' by Kim Hein or via an e-mail prior to the sale.

If you need to make other arrangements, please call the church office (672-9779) or Zell Derryberry (674-4686/751-5577). They don't have to be "decorated Christmas cookies," they can be your favorites.

***Remember to invite your friends, neighbors, and others to buy cookies Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup>!***

## Circuit Charge Conference

On Saturday, December 8 we will be having our Circuit Charge Conference. We will be meeting at Sundance UMC this year. Sundance will be having a light lunch from 11:00-noon with our Charge Conference to follow. If you would like to carpool to this event please call the office.

## Vet's Coffee

The Annual Veterans Coffee and Shopping Spree (free Closet shopping) will be held **on December 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> in the Fellowship Hall.** Come out and support our Vets with your discussion and service. More to follow.

## Christmas Caroling- Sunday, Dec. 16!!!



The Annual Christmas Caroling for our treasured elders will be this Sunday. Everyone is invited to come make a joyful noise belting out the favorite, timeless Christmas Carols. The bigger the group, the bigger the joyful noise unto the Lord!!

Meet at the church around 2:30 pm. Pastor Jim will have a list of who and where we will go. The caravan will leave the church parking lot at 3:00pm! You will be back at the church around 5 where a light supper will be waiting. Supper will be a pot of Sweet Lou Bennetts' chili and all the fixings. There may even be some cookies left over from the cookie stroll!!

Hope to see you there!!

### All-Church Meeting

We will be having an all-Church meeting on **Sunday, December 16 following the worship service**. We will be celebrating this last year together along with giving a charge conference report. The budget for 2019 will be presented and voted on as well during this meeting. We hope you will be able to join us.

### A Blue Christmas Service (Longest Night)



When we consider all of the holiday traditions and events that we participate in every year that usually bring joy. We need to remember that Christmas can be a painful time of year. Maybe you have faced the loss of a loved one, employment, relationships, health, or feeling alone. Whatever it might be, we will be holding a quiet, meditative worship service on December 19th at 7:00 PM. On the longest nights of the year, we will find ways to look to the Light of Christmas to heal our wounds.

### Christmas Eve Services



On December 24th there will be **two Christmas Eve worship services**. The services will start at **5:00PM and 7:00PM**. Both of these services will include special music, Christmas Carols, scripture lessons, and candle lighting. The 5:00PM service will have an impromptu Christmas pageant and 7:00PM service will include Holy Communion. Please invite your friends to come and celebrate with us as we celebrate the coming of our Light!

### The Impromptu Christmas Pageant

During the 5:00PM Christmas Eve Service we will be having an impromptu Christmas pageant. If you have white sheets, bath robes, rope, or cloth strips that you would like to donate, please drop them off at the church office. Put your name on the clothing tag if you would like the item returned to you. Thank you for your help!

### A Way Forward

In 2019 a special session of General Conference will be held to discuss the Commission on a Way Forward. The 32-member Commission was authorized by General Conference 2016 and appointed by the Council of Bishops to examine paragraphs in The Book of Discipline concerning human sexuality and exploring options to strengthen the unity of the church. The special session will be taking place on February 23-26, 2019 in St. Louis, Missouri. You can find information about the Commission on the UMC.org website as well as a printout of the final report in the office. There are also videos available from some of the individuals that participated in the Commission available online. If you have any questions about the commission please call the office.

## Communication Team

The **Communication Team** has been working this past year in trying to enhance the look of all type of communication that comes from the church. Areas of this year's enhancement are:

- Daily Devotions/Announcements have taken on a new attractive look switching to "Mailchimp" to include colorful visuals aids, links to our Streaming video and other important information, plus a new Sunday Devotional.
- Greater social media presence to help our brand and logo be more recognizable and have cost effective advertising for church events.
- Switching to consistent name identification with our website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and email accounts.
- Improved our FUMC welcome brochure.
- Name and logo identification with church shirts and caps for sale with the proceeds going toward helping to pay off the building remodel debt.
- Streamlining the monthly Gateway to be more interesting and cost effective.
- Website enhancements to include posting the Gratitude videos, promoting church events and committee happenings. Posting the "Church Google Calendar" on the Events tab on the web site along with our print-friendly monthly calendar.

We look forward to continuing to improving communications to meet the needs of all ages and committees. Feedback is always welcome.

*Your Communications Team*



**The Bells of the Bighorns** will present a program of Christmas music at Kendrick Mansion on Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm with a repeat performance at 4:30 pm. The Bells of the Bighorns is an ecumenical group of ringers from First Congregational, Grace Anglican, St. Peter Episcopal, and First United Methodist Churches. Please come join us and celebrate this joyous season!



The Holiday Season is here! Groceries need to be purchased for **baking and for holiday meals**. Gas needs to be bought for holiday travel. **Gifts** will be purchased for Christmas. **Please think of the Men's Group Gift Cards for these purchases.** They make great gifts to send to children or grandchildren. They eliminate using a credit card for purchases and risking your credit information being stolen, and you help the church at the same time! If you are flying to your holiday destination there are several airlines on the retailer list also.

**Here is how it works.** Order forms are at the church office or I have them with me every Sunday at church. You mark the denomination and number of cards you want per retailer. Drop your order off at the church office with payment (check or cash only please) or give it to me. I place an order every Monday with the cards being here by the following Friday. **The church website also has a link that will take you to the order form.** The order form also has a column that tells you how much of a rebate that particular retailer will give to the Men's Group. There are over 700 companies enrolled in this program and you can browse through all of them at [shopwithscrip.com](http://shopwithscrip.com). I have customized the Men's Group order form to our geographic region of retailers. You can use the cards to place catalog orders or shop online. If you have any questions about whether or not a retailer is on the list ask me.