

Mark your Calendars:

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- Friday, Dec. 7 & Sunday, Dec. 16 Caroling (see article)
- Sunday, Dec. 9 Noon UMW Christmas Party/Cookie exchange
- Friday, Dec. 21 6:30p Candlelight Carols & Meditation
- Friday, Dec. 21 7:00p "When Christmas Hurts" service
- Monday, Dec. 24 5:00p, 7:00p, & 9:00p Christmas Eve Services

Blue Ridge Blvd

United Methodist Church

The Home Envoy

December 4, 2012

Volume 57, Issue 12

Letter from the Pastor- Barry Freese

A Different Kind of Christmas

I'm thankful to be serving as a pastor here at Blue Ridge Boulevard United Methodist Church. Our tradition is deeply needed in our area and in the world. We offer the world a powerful balance of personal holiness and social impact, loving God and loving neighbor. Jesus thought this was so important he described this combination this way:

[Jesus] replied, "*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being and with all your mind.* This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: *You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.* All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands." Matthew 22.37-40 CEB

We're now in the Christian season of Advent. Advent is when we prepare our lives for the arrival of God's gift of Jesus and orient our lives to be Jesus' disciples, who passionately love both God and neighbor. My confession is that during the Christian season of Advent - what the world calls Christmas - I'm pulled even more than usual to live by the ways of the world instead of the ways of Jesus.

This Advent I wouldn't be surprised if you're pulled towards the ways of the world as well, instead of the ways of Jesus. What impact does what we all know as the "holiday crush" have on your devotional life? Think about the time you usually spend on "Christmas" decorations compared to serving the poor or the sick or prisoners or those who need clothing or shelter. Consider the focus of your generosity. What percentage of your generosity is directed to the poor or the sick or prisoners or those who need clothing or shelter? This question really resonates with me.

Scripture offers us God's encouragement in such times. Here are some words written to disciples of Christ in Philippi:

...Whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. Philippians 3.7-10 CEB

From scripture we know that we are to love God and neighbor, and that the path to faith in Christ is through losing our grip on "all things" in order to gain Christ through faith. This sounds pretty straight forward, yet if it was easy we could do this on our own, without the Holy Spirit, other disciples, or our church to help us. Among the many reasons I'm thankful to be the lead pastor here at Blue Ridge Church, is that we have the resources necessary to help people who are here now and people in our mission field with the transformation from focusing on earthly things to loving God and neighbor, and having faith in Christ. We have each other as disciples, we have an organization whose mission is to train new disciples, and we have the eternally subtle power of the Holy Spirit to teach us what we need to know when we follow Christ's commands. (John 14)

Through this Advent season and into the Christmas season following December 25, we'll be focusing in worship on "A Different Kind of Christmas." Five Sundays of transformational, scripture-based worship where you will be encouraged to move toward "Living and Giving Like Jesus." I pray that you'll worship with us!

Generosity Updates

Remember, Generosity updates are available for the asking. Contact Sarah Jarvis through the church office or at sjarvis@blueridgechurch.org for more information. Also, there's a Generosity notebook available in the church office anytime the office is open.

Children & Family Ministry

Samantha Woodward-Children & Family Discipleship Coordinator

swoodward@blueridgechurch.org

Children's Moment News

It would be really great to see some new faces ministering to our children. Sunday mornings are the perfect time for this to happen! The weekly Children's Moment is a way for our little ones to seek out new role models and develop connections with members of our congregation. If any one feels called to lead or assist with the Children's moment at one or more of our Sunday services please feel free to contact me.

In addition, if anyone would like to learn more about the Children's programs at Blue Ridge or would like to assist in any way please don't be afraid to ask.

I hope you each prayerfully consider being a part of this amazing ministry.

LOGOS

Just a few more nights left of our fall semester. Spring semester starts January 16th!

Cross Training- Sunday school

Open to ages 4 years thru 5th grade

Children learn different aspects of the same story thru drama in "Acts of Faith", art in "Creation Station", science and cooking in "Bread of Life, games in "Graceful Games, and videos in "Holywood".

Current rotation is "The Prince of Peace"

Music Ministry

Director of Music—

Linda Mann 353-4826

lmann@blueridgechurch.org

The church orchestra will play in worship on Sunday, December 23.

Practice times are:

Sundays, Dec. 9 & 16th, 6:45-7:45pm

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 8:45-9:30pm;

Dec. 19 8:15-9:00

If you would like to light the Advent Candle on Sunday mornings or Christmas Eve, please contact Linda Mann.

"Enough" Stewardship Campaign Update

To date there have been 121 commitment cards turned in totaling \$279,358 for the 2013 budget. This is a good start to help us in planning our ministry together for next year and will allow us to accomplish about half of our ministry and mission of "making new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" in 2013.

If you have not yet completed your commitment card, there is still time to do so. Simply drop your commitment card in the mail, bring it by the church office, or put it in the offering plate during any worship service. If you need another card, extras are available at the information center or in the church office.

We are grateful for your financial support of our church. Your giving in the coming year will make a difference in the lives of children, youth, and adults in our church, as well as in the lives of people everywhere we are in mission and ministry in the world. May we all find a way to be a blessing to God and to others.

Generosity Team

Carrol Petre, Chair

Rev. Jan Bond, Stewardship Campaign Dir.

Advent Giving Opportunities

December Mission Focus & Christmas Eve Offering- Raytown Emergency Assistance Program

In an effort to help those in our own community, REAP will again be the mission focus for the month of December. There is an increased need for food donations during the holiday season with children out of school for Christmas break. We are encouraging extra pantry donations during the month of December. Suggested items include: peanut butter, jelly, ravioli, canned fruit and other lunch type items for children. Please leave pantry donations in the designated bins just south of the sanctuary entrance. In addition, REAP will be the local focus for the Christmas Eve offering. Your help in supporting our community by donating to REAP is appreciated.

Service & Mission Team

Alternative Advent Giving (Sunday, Dec 2 thru Sunday Dec 16) An opportunity to give beyond your usual Christmas giving.

June of 2013, 8 youth and 11 adults will travel to Guatemala and work with an organization called Kids Alive Int'l. We will be serving at a mission called "The Oasis" where they care for abused women & children and we will serve in a remote village of Zapote at a care center. As a part of our fundraising efforts, there will be a table in the Beatitudes with an opportunity to buy miles and help sponsor the 8 youth going on the trip (all 11 adults have committed to paying their own way). It's approximately 1,700 miles from KC to Guatemala and we are selling miles for \$8 a mile. How many miles can you send us?

Alternative Advent Giving for Guatemala can be made in cash or check to BRUMC and either dropped off at the display at the entrance or deposited in the offering plate. Be sure to note "Guatemala miles" on the memo of your check.

Please stop by the table to learn more about the international mission trip to Guatemala! And thank you for your support!

Welcome!

Join us in welcoming Samantha Woodward as the new Children & Family Discipleship Coordinator!

Samantha recently graduated from Baker University with a Bachelor of Science in Education & Religion with a Minor in Art.

She may be new to the position but Samantha has been a part of the Blue Ridge Family for almost 10 years. Be sure to say "Hi"!



From the Staff at Blue Ridge:

We pray that you have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

May God bless you.

<i>Pastor Barry</i>	<i>Pastor Charity</i>	<i>Pastor Jan</i>
<i>Linda</i>	<i>Mindy</i>	<i>Phyllis</i>
<i>Samantha</i>	<i>Anne</i>	<i>Sarah</i>
<i>Diara</i>	<i>Luisa</i>	

Advent 2012

WORSHIP

Sermon Series: "A Different Kind of Christmas"

Sunday, December 9th Advent II

Sermon: "Giving Up on Perfect"

Cornerstone Praise Choir: "The Three Kings"

Sunday, December 16th Advent III

Sermon: "Scandalous Love"

Service of Lessons and Carols

"Christmas Carols from America" with music by Chancel Bells, Chancel Choir & Men's Ensemble

Sunday, December 23rd Advent IV

Sermon: "Jesus' Wish List"

Chancel and Youth Choirs/Children's choir perform with Youth Bells and Processional and Orchestra

Monday, December 24th Christmas Eve

5:00-5:45 Family Christmas "March to the Manger" and communion.

Children are invited to come forward and dress as a character in the nativity while the Christmas story is told and carols sung.

7:00 & 9:00 Candles, Carols and Communion

Sermon: "Personal Hope"

This service will end with the singing of "Silent Night" and lighting of candles

Sunday, December 30th

Sermon: "By A Different Route"

As we enter the holy season of Advent, we prepare ourselves to remember the baby Jesus, the gift our God sent to live on earth with us, teach us, love us, and die for our sins. We are able to thankfully respond through worship, and by caring for and giving to others.

OTHER WORSHIP TIMES:

Friday, December 21st 6:30pm

Candlelight Carol Meditation

Reflective, meditative violin, piano and organ music.

Jennifer Mitchell, violin; Linda Mann, piano and organ

7:00 pm Blue Christmas Service

"When Christmas Hurts"

Christmas can be a painful time for some. It may be the first Christmas without a loved family member who has recently died; it may be a time that has always been difficult. The constant refrains on radio and television, in shopping malls and churches, about the happiness of the season, about getting together with family and friends, reminds many people of what they have lost...loved ones, jobs, relationships....

We need the space and time to acknowledge our sadness; we need to know that we are not alone. We need encouragement to live the days ahead of us. This is a service of healing and hope.

GIVING TO OTHERS:

Caroling Opportunities (Questions? Contact Linda Mann at lmann@blueridgechurch.org)

Friday, December 7, 6:00-7:30 pm
Caroling for all ages at the Raytown Christmas Lighting Ceremony; meet in the church parking lot at 5:30.

Sunday, December 16, 3:00-5:00pm
Caroling for all ages at the Hidden Lake Care Center. Meet at the church parking lot at 2:30pm.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

On Sunday December 23rd we will be having a special Christmas Celebration during our Sunday school hour at 9:00am. We would like to invite all the children to Jesus' Birthday Party and the holiday festivities that will be taking place!

Please contact me at swoodward@blueridgechurch.org if you (an adult) would like to attend or make a donation.

Samantha Woodward

YOUTH MINISTRY

See page 4 for youth ministry activities during Advent and beyond.

Calling all Women!



Cozy
MOUNTAIN
LODGE

Where women find shelter in God.

WOMEN'S RETREAT IS COMING SOON. Mark your calendars for the weekend of February 22, 23 and 24, 2013. Cost is \$85.00 and it's a great price for a weekend away with women friends, bible study, worship and food! All in the beautiful location of Wilderness Retreat and Conference Center outside Lawson, MO.

If you did not receive an email letter or do not have an email please contact Deborah DeMoss at kennedydemoss@yahoo.com or 816-358-4321 for more info.

Women's Book Club

Women's Book Club will be meeting December 11th at 7 pm in the Library and discussing *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* by Barbara Robinson. This discussion will be led by Margaret Strader.

All are welcome.

Youth Ministry

Anne Norton– Youth Director anorton@blueridgechurch.org

Sunday's, Nov 25-Dec 23,

10:30am Middle school and Senior high Sunday school classes are studying "The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem". Last week was the first session and it proved to be very interesting!

Here's a little info: *It's a captivating story—one that has been told many times before, but never quite this way. Pastor Adam Hamilton guides teens on a journey to experience the anxiety and anticipation that Joseph and Mary felt as they prepared for the birth of Jesus. Youth will meet familiar characters, including Elizabeth, Mary's older relative; the lowly night-shift shepherds who were the first to hear the good news of the Savior's birth; and many others. They will spend time in the towns surrounding the Holy Land and will travel with Mary and Joseph on that unforgettable journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, where Jesus was born. This is a journey that is meant to be shared. Take your first step now.*

Sunday, January 6, 4:00-7:00pm

Youth Progressive Dinner Yep! It's AFTER Christmas year. We are looking for 3 host houses for mid-high and 3 host houses for senior high (appetizer, main course, dessert/gift exchange). Great opportunity to re-gift a gift you didn't like from Christmas! Just kidding. White elephant gifts should be \$5 value. Can you host a course?

Feb 8-10 (Friday afternoon-Sunday afternoon) Dare 2 Share Conference - Lincoln, NE

This will be the first year we have participated in this conference. So here's a little info.

Through Dare 2 Share conferences, teens are reconnected with the ultimate cause – Christ's cause to make disciples who make disciples. It's a Cause worthy of their very lives and one in which they can find the ultimate adventure, fulfillment and purpose that they're seeking. At Dare 2 Share, your students will spend the weekend with thousands of other teens in worship, training and outreach. They will feel God's heart for them and for the lost and will be called into the adventure of a living faith as they witness the power of the gospel. Cost for the conference is \$50 for the 3 days. This cost includes food, travel, lodging and cost of the conference ticket. **Registration fees will be due January 15.**

Early Spring 2013 Confirmation

Class Open to 7th graders and older. More details to come soon.

Blue Ridge youth mission trips

June 22-July 6 9th grade and up.
Traveling to Guatemala; working with organization called Kids Alive International.

July 21-27 6th-12th grade Colorado Springs, CO

Hospitality/Ushers

There will be a meeting after the 10:30 service on December 9th for all who are currently ushering and anyone who may be considering ushering.

It's a great opportunity to serve monthly as well as meet and greet people as they enter the sanctuary.

And there's no better time to start than now!

Golden Key News

The Golden Key Club will celebrate Christmas early with a catered luncheon in the dining room at noon on Thursday, December 13. The menu features smothered steak with all the trimmings for \$7.50 per person. Reservations must be made with Roy Irwin when he calls. Following lunch the Raytown High School Chorus will present "Merry Christmas"

Notifications

Hospitals no longer notify churches of member's hospitalization because of HIPAA rules; so if you would like your pastors or your church family to know of your surgery or hospitalization, please have someone call the church office or one of the pastors. (church office 816-353-1435)

Family Christmas Concert

A Homestyle Family Christmas
featuring Phil & Pam Morgan & Family with special guests

Come home for the holidays as gospel recording artists Phil & Pam Morgan take you on a magical journey through favorite songs and stories of the season...with a few surprises on the way! FREE ADMISSION (a Love Offering will be received)

Friday, Dec. 7 7:00pm First Baptist Church Lee's Summit
2 Northeast Douglas Lee's Summit, MO 64063

Sunday, Dec. 9 3:00pm Blue Ridge Blvd Christian Church
3625 Blue Ridge Blvd Independence, MO 64052

Saturday, Dec. 15 6:30pm Susquehanna Baptist Church
17800 E Susquehanna Ridge Independence, MO 64056

A Note from Pastor Jan

As your Stewardship Campaign director this fall, I would like to share a summary of what we discovered over the last 5 weeks. It is my prayer that all of us have grown in our faith and in our commitment to God and our generosity to others. I invite you to read over these teachings and be prayerfully reminded that God is in control and that when we put our trust in God that is "enough".

You may want to use this as a devotion time in the coming days. The way to do this is to spend time reflecting on the teachings and how they apply to your life and faith journey. Then spend time in prayer using the prayer that follows each teaching.

#1 = God is our refuge and strength and God's sustaining power is not tied to the stock market; rather it is tied to what I believe in. ("I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.")

O God, the earth and everything in it is yours. All that I have is a gift from you. When times are uncertain and my finances are hurting, forgive me for panicking and listening to the wrong voices rather than looking to you and your Word. Forgive me for giving in to fear and allowing anxiety to keep me from being the wise steward you would have me to be. Daily may I be open to your reproof, your instruction, and your guidance for my life. Help me to learn to be a better manager of my resources. May I put my complete trust in you. I trust you, Lord, with my life and with all you have given me. Amen

#2 = God's vision of financial management bring joy that the American Dream never can and never will bring.

Lord, I confess that in many ways I have bought into the lie of the "American Dream," which says that success is defined by profits, portfolios, possessions, prestige, and pleasure. I struggle with the yearning for more, and often I try to satisfy this yearning by pursuing material things rather than pursuing you. Forgive me, Lord. Change my heart, and correct my vision. Give me your perspective on money and possessions. Help me resources you have given me so that when you prompt me to help those in need, I am free to do it. Enable me to live simply, to be content, and to give generously. Amen

#3 = Biblical wisdom and basic money management principles are essential if we are to achieve financial peace and accomplish God's greater purposes for our lives.

Generous god, all I have comes from you, yet I am not always a wise steward of what you have so graciously given me. I have listened to the lure of the world, buying and consuming compulsively and excessively. Forgive me for leveraging my future in order to have pleasure in the present. As I live my life today, help me begin to put into practice the biblical and practical wisdom I have learned so that I may become a good manager of all you have given me. Teach me to be generous and willing to share – to be Kingdom-minded and focused on accomplishing your purposes for my life. Amen

#4 = Our lives do not consist in the abundance of possessions.

Dear God, you have wired my heart so that I long for you, yet so often I try to satisfy this longing with other things. Forgive me, Lord. Teach me to find my true satisfaction in you alone. Give me wisdom and understanding so that I may learn how to cultivate contentment in my life. Fill my mind and heart with truth and the power of self-control so that from now on, I may stand firm against the temptation to seek instant gratification, choosing instead a higher and greater good. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen

#5 = We experience true joy when our lives are defined by generosity.

Dear God, you designed us to be generous. You actually gave us the *need* to be generous, which is why we experience such joy when we give selflessly and sacrificially to you and to others. Forgive us for listening to the voices of the world. Forgive us for choosing to hoard rather than to give. Forgive us for giving in to self-gratification rather than practicing delayed gratification. Teach us, Lord, to give generously of all you have so graciously given to us, so that we may bless both you and others and experience the abundant blessings that come from living for you. Amen

Blue Ridge Blvd Methodist Church

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Office Hours
Mon-Thurs 8:30a-4:30p
Office closed on Fridays

POSTMASTER: Send address changes
to: THE ENVOY
5055 Blue Ridge Blvd
Kansas City, MO 64133-2547

Check out our website for more info

www.blueridgechurch.org



Service Times:

Sunday mornings 9:00 and 10:30

Pastors:

Barry Freese, lead pastor
barry@blueridgechurch.org
direct: 816-835-2545

Charity Goodwin-Rosario, pastor
pastorcharity@blueridgechurch.org
direct: 816-695-2644

The article deadline for the next issue is January 3rd.

Did you Know???

- The church has a website at www.blueridgechurch.org
You can listen to Sunday's sermon and see your Home Envoy and Youth Newsletter online under "Messages".
- You can get your Home Envoy by email. Call the church office to let us know if you would like to receive it this way.
- You can sign up for altar flowers on the calendar across from the office. Cost for the flowers is \$40. Just put your name and phone # on the desired Sunday. Callie Ballenger will contact you a few days before the chosen Sunday to ask your preferences of flowers. After the Sunday services you may take home your flowers.
- You can sponsor the Home Envoy for just \$30. Three spots are available each month. Sign up or call the church office if you would like to sponsor an Envoy in honor of, in memoriam or in celebration of an event. By sponsoring the publication, you can help to offset printing and mailing costs.
- Pantry Sunday is always the first Sunday of the month.
- The youth at Blue Ridge continue to collect and recycle aluminum cans. Please drop off your cans on the youth house patio. (No tin, aluminum foil or other)
- The Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts benefit from your recycling. Bring your papers to the green and yellow recycling bins on the east side (back) of the parking lot. No cardboard or phone books, please.

Church Family News

Thank you to the youth and members of the Covenant class who put together and decorated the beautiful tree in the Narthex!

Prayers

For the family of John & Mary Lou Camp who's daughter, Linda, passed away on Nov. 4th.

For the family of Richard Elliot who passed away Nov. 6th.

For the family of William (Bill) Jennings Boswell, Jr. who passed away on Nov. 12th.

For the family of Dolores Hocking who passed away on Nov. 30th.

~ Home Envoy is sponsored by ~

Mike & Gay Tarr in celebration of their 60th wedding anniversary.