

New Beginnings

Then the crowd asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"
Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."
John 6:28-29 N.I.V.

Bonfield Grand Prairie Parish

December 2017



Pastor's Corner

Pastor Mel Nielsen
pastormel1@hotmail.com
cell: 1-815-922-9161

9 You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 10 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 there will not be room enough to store it.

- Malachi 3:9-10 (N.I.V.)

Christmas Blessings

Not too long ago God gave me a vision of a local mission project. I came to all of you with God's plan to help a neighbor. I never felt more comfortable with a request from my Lord. My confidence came through knowing the generous hearts of my congregation and the community of Bonfield. God spoke to all of us and the money came in. We brought the whole tithe into the storehouse and blessings have flowed. The roofing project will be completed as soon as the weather allows. You are an answer to prayer.

I pray you see this as a tremendous Christmas blessing. I pray that you come to know that God is active in your life. Despite how ugly the news gets in the world around us, we remained blessed. Some may tell you to never let go of the blessings you have received, I say let them go. Continue sharing those blessings. Giving isn't giving if it isn't felt. That's why it is called a sacrifice, we give as God gave - sacrificially. Our eternal gain cost the Lord His life.

In the passage above God is not telling the prophet Malachi that the Lord will replace penny for penny with interest all that we sacrifice. God is telling us that if we are open, honest and generous in our giving we will be

blessed in untold, amazing ways. I imagine God has already begun sharing blessings with Bonfield citizens. I would like to hear those stories of blessings. Send your stories of Christmas blessings to pastormel1@hotmail.com and I will print them in this newsletter. Don't forget the numeral (1) after pastormel.

Another Christmas blessing for me is the completion of my first Advent devotional booklet. I love to write and writing takes time. Despite the time it took, I sacrificed to achieve this personal quest. If you are interested in a copy of The Advent Devotion Companion, stop by to see us in the office Mondays and Thursdays 8-noon. The devotions begin on November 26, but you should still have time to get caught up if you start late.

A third Christmas blessing was the turn out for the Tim Hannig show at the Bonfield Grade School. Nearly 170 people attended and were entertained with a very high quality performance. Mr Hannig thrilled the children with amazing tricks, sang a tune from Les Miserables for the adults and preached the Gospel to the everyone. It was a blessing to have him here with us. (see the photos inside this issue and on Facebook)

All of these blessings come with a cost. Some are financial and others are spiritual. Jesus taught us on Christmas that love is free but it also has a high value. A value too high for us to understand. The one who created this world and placed us on it, loves us. The Lord values this love for us so much he sent Jesus to live with us. The Christ child came to show us what love looks like and feels like. Talk about your blessings.

Love is a blessing to be both held on to tightly and also shared at the same time. Jesus held on to the love for God while sharing it with us, It is possible to keep and give away. God gave us Jesus and know it's our turn to give Him away as often as we can. Even if you are afraid to say it you can show it by the way you live your life. God loves me and you.

- Pastor Mel

Farewell From Phyllis

When I accepted the job of Parish Secretary I was told the job was to answer the phone and get the mail. 14 years later I realize there was much more to it than that. I have learned many things about being a church secretary since I began. The one thing I learned more than paperwork was how much I have enjoyed getting to know all of you. I also learned a stubborn copier, an unhelpful computer and even a good hearted pastor or two gave give you more than your fair share of white hairs.

I am retiring form the position of Parish secretary on Dec. 31, 2017. This farewell is not from my church, just from working for the church. I still have many things I would like to try and I want to get caught up on my family visits. I would like to thank each of you for your help and kind words you have shared with me. I will miss being in the office and the work but I look forward to what God has in store for me in the future.

–Phyllis Riegel

Prayer for My Family

submitted by Bart T. Durbin
author unknown

Loving God, I offer thanks for the gift of my family. Help us to work together for peace and harmony in our relationships.

Grant us the grace to accept each other's faults and weaknesses. Protect us from harsh words and hurt feelings. Assist us to encourage one another's strengths and abilities. Lead us to mutual understanding and support.

May we always forgive each other's failings and rejoice in one another's successes.

Watch over my family, Dear Lord. Bless us with good health and happiness. Fill our hearts with love, patience and kindness for one another, now and always. Amen

New Parish Secretary Hired

With the retirement of Phyllis Riegel the Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee in conjunction with Pastor Mel have agreed to hire Hope Raymond as the new Parish Secretary. Hope will officially take over on Jan. 1, 2017. You may see her in the office before that during her training.

Hope is married to Eric and has two little girls, Lucy, 3 1/2 and Rowena who is 1. She currently lives in Cullom but the family is planning to move in the near future. Hope is the granddaughter of Pearl Evans and daughter to Susie Evans Clutter. She enjoys movies, reading books, cooking and baking. She invites all of you to stop in the office during her hours (see below) to say and introduce yourself.

Changes In The Office

Pastor Mel is asking for help during the transition in the Parish Office. He wants to increase the effectiveness of communication in gathering items for the bulletins and newsletters. He is asking that all information on meeting times, dates and locations be turned into the office via email bonfieldgp@sbcglobal.net or by phone 815-802-9805.

He appreciates that you think he can effectively transfer your information to the office but he requests that you contact the office directly to avoid miscommunication. Information shared with the Pastor during meetings or on Sunday mornings should not be considered a formal announcement for publication, please email or call the office with anything you need shared with your church or the parish.

The new Parish Secretary, Hope Raymond, will have NEW office hours begging on January 2, 2018. The office hours will be Tuesday afternoons 1-5 p.m. and Thursday 8 a.m. - Noon. There is a small, white mailbox outside the Parish Office, to the right hand side of the glass doors at Bonfield Evangelical to drop off items.

Fireman's Breakfast

The Salina Township Monthly Fireman's Breakfast will be held on Sun., Dec. 3, 2017. Don't miss out on a great breakfast and an opportunity to support their efforts. Breakfast includes eggs, pancakes, biscuits and gravy, bacon and more.

Youth Group To Meet Dec. 3

The Bonfield Grand Prairie Youth Group will meet on Sun., Dec. 3 from 6:30 - 8 p.m. at the Bonfield Evangelical Upper Room. All youth from 7th through 12th grade are welcome to attend. You do not need to attend this church or even be Methodist, all will be welcomed. This meeting will feature a Christmas Party with conversation geared towards what mission projects the group will work on in 2018.

Ryan Coffman, a Sophomore at Olivet Nazarene University, is the new leader of the group and is assisted by Jonna Cruse. They would like an opportunity to meet some new faces in December. If you would like more information on how your youth can participate in the Youth Group, please contact Pastor Mel at 815-922-9161.

Fellowship Breakfast

Tue., Dec. 5, 2017, 8:30 at IHOP in Bourbonnais. Come enjoy a great breakfast and even better fellowship with other church members and friends. This is a good way to get to know other people who worship God in the Bonfield area. You do not need to be a member to attend. Everyone is invited.

**Time
For
Church**



Bonfield First

172 Church Street

8:00 a.m. Sunday Services

9:15 Adult and Youth Sunday School

Bonfield Evangelical

348 Smith Street, Bonfield

9:15 a.m. Sunday Services

10:15 Adult and Youth Sunday School

Grand Prairie

Rt. 17 Bonfield

10:30 a.m Sunday Services

9:15 a.m Adult and Youth Sunday School

Upcoming Worship Schedule

*The following is a tentative schedule for
December 2017 worship.*

(Readings & message may change without notice.)

December 3

1st Sunday in Advent

“How Are We Doing?”

Altar Color - Purple

OT: Isaiah 64:1-9

NT: 1 Corinthians 1:1-19

Gospel: Mark 13:24-37

December 10

2nd Sunday in Advent

“What Are We Doing?”

Altar Color - Purple

OT: Isaiah 40:1-11

NT: 2 Peter 3:8-15

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

December 17

3rd Sunday in Advent

“How Do We Stand?”

Altar Color - Purple

OT: Isaiah 61:1-11

NT: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-28

Gospel: John 1:6-8 & 19-28

December 24

Christmas Eve - 4th Sunday in Advent

“Why Does God Need Me?”

Altar Color - Purple

OT: 2 Samuel 7:1-17

NT: None

Gospel: Luke 1:46-55

December 31

First Sunday after Christmas

“Jesus Journey Begins”

Altar Color - White

OT: Isaiah 61:10-62:3

NT: None

Gospel: Luke 22:22-40



There is POWER in PRAYER

Pastor Mel invites you to join in praying for the following names and causes.

Friends and Family Close to Home

Heritage Village

Vi Morse

Butterfield

Mel Brinkman family

Don Mau

Bernice Schultz

Harvest View

Warren Cochran

Roscella Piper

Randy Riegel

Manteno Veterans

Bob Grob

Byron Warren

At Miller Rehab

Jackie Wagner

At Home

Jan May

Westwood Oaks

Fostine Schwark

From Our Church Bulletin

Bill Chittenden, Kurt Boesen, Shirley Brunner, Shirley Coffman, Sue Coons, Ron Cordes, Jean Dunn, Dennis Hertz, Linda Johnson, Butch Lambert, Janice Logsdon, Allen Messer, Sheila Neuby, Dorene O'Connor, Merle Penrod, Kevin Reiniche, Rob Reiniche, Randy Riegel, Jackie Wagner, Richard Wildman, Pam Wilking, James Vilt., Sr.

Compassion International Kids

- Latif Korogo.....Burkina Faso
- Maria Clara Maciel Da Silva "Clara".....Brazil
- Dayava Sanchez.....Columbia
- Witney Juarez.....Guatemala
- Shan Toppo.....India
- Junior Okwii BarasaKenya
- Genesi Marisol Martinez Vasquez.....Honduras
- Samuel Juda Lopez Miranda.....Mexico
- Mohini Ahirwar.....India
- Cinthia Yolany Carranza Aguila.....Honduras
- Sonaton Soren.....Bangladesh
- Yeferson David Ortiz Cortez.....Colombia
- Nevada Eric.....Rwanda
- Anielka Carolina Garcia Roque.....Nicaragua
- Schekinah Jean Louis.....Haiti
- Salome Vicente Melo.....Mexico
- Benjamin Sewu.....Ghana
- Lucky Hubiagbe.....Ghana
- Rebeca Callapa.....Bolivia
- Saray Morales.....Columbia

The Great Date Debate

In Lessons of Christmas (Xulon Press), Daniel Armah notes that ancient scholars expressed more than 130 opinions about Jesus' actual birthdate, covering every month of the year. "Even with a debatable date," he concludes, "the blessing of Christmas is obvious."

Likewise, our Christmas celebrations aren't diminished by the possible timing of Jesus' birthday with secular festivals. "If December 25th was chosen to rival other pagan worship activities ... for want of a real date," Armah writes, "then that decision has been successful. Indeed those ancient pagan festivals have all been swallowed up, and Christianity has been growing since."

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Next Ladies Book Club

The next Ladies Book Club will meet Tues, Dec. 19th, 6:30 pm at the parsonage. 225 Country Lane, Bonfield. The book they will be reviewing is, "An Echo In The Darkness," by Francine Rivers. All you need to do to participate in this club is purchase or rent the book, read it and then come to the meeting ready to discuss different aspects of the reading that you found interesting. You do not need to be a member of the United Methodist Churches to participate. All Ladies will be welcomed.

Thank You

Thanks to the all 3 congregations for the parish gifts I received at Grand Prairie on Sun., Oct. 29. There were even some really cute cupcakes for all to share.

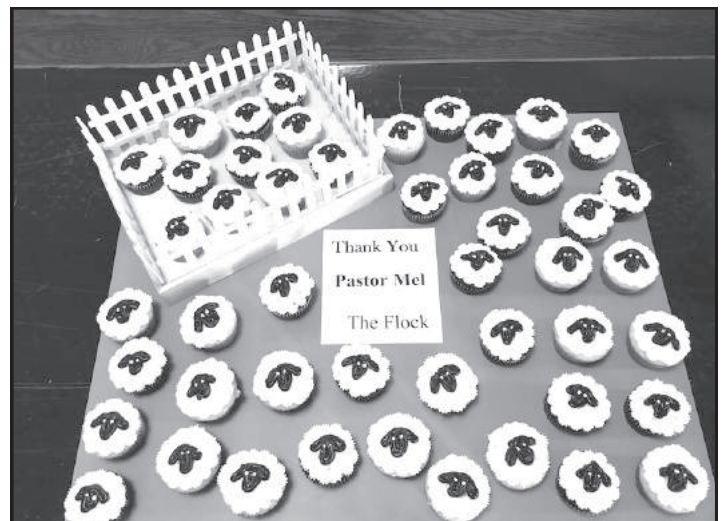


Photo by Pastor Mel

Bible Quiz

After Mary learned she was pregnant with God's Son, what relative — also miraculously pregnant — did she go visit?

- A. Esther
- B. Elizabeth
- C. Anne
- D. Anna

See answer below

December Memory Verse

People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.
—1 Samuel 16:7

+ Christian Symbols +



Branch (Tree) of Jesse

Isaiah used the image of a new tree growing from what appears dead to foretell God's redemption of Israel: "A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit" (Isaiah 11:1, NIV). During Advent, this prophecy assures us of the coming of the Messiah, descended from King David, and thus his father, Jesse.

Quotes Of The Month

"The only blind person at Christmastime is he who has not Christmas in his heart."

—Helen Keller

"Jesus took his place in a manger so that we might have a home in heaven."

—Greg Laurie

"The most incredible thing about miracles is that they happen."

—G.K. Chesterton, by way of Father Brown

"One of the most glorious messes in the world is the mess created in the living room on Christmas Day.

Don't clean it up too quickly."

—Andy Rooney

Answer: B (See Luke 1:39-40.)

Greatest Worth

He came a babe of lowly birth.
He was God's Son of greatest worth.
We, like the angels, sing with mirth
because God sent his Son to earth
to ransom us and claim our worth.
Praise God this babe of lowly birth!

—MaryAnn Sundby

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Hawaiian Pineapple Spam

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can Spam
- Red bell pepper
- Green bell pepper
- Tomato
- Can pineapple cubes
- Cornstarch (for thickening)
- Rice (As much as you want)
- Soy sauce

DIRECTIONS

Remove the Spam from the can and rinse. Cube the Spam. Place in a skillet with a small amount of vegetable oil; brown the Spam. Cut up red bell pepper and add to skillet. Cut up green bell pepper and add to skillet. Cut up tomato and add to skillet. Add 3/4 of the juice from the pineapple. Add cornstarch to make a roux. Prepare your rice. After the roux and above mixture is hot, add the rest of the pineapple, cover and steam for about 4-5 minutes. Now serve this concoction over rice. Flavor with soy sauce.

Recipe courtesy of
Bart T Durbin

Please send your recipes to Bonfield/
Grand Prairie Parish, Box 66, Bonfield
or email them to
bonfieldgdp@sbcglobal.net

December Birthdays

- December 1.....Suzanne (Berghouse) Graham
- December 2.....Shane Robert Buente
- December 3.....Laura Hanson
- December 4.....Mark Meyer
Jerry Wells
Larry Hansen
Bill Kohl
- December 5.....Kylie Lockwood
Greg Graham
- December 7.....Donna (Baylor) Osenga
Braden Cordes
- December 8.....Gina Hansen
- December 9.....Judy (Orwig) Hansen
Barry Messer
Lee Bauer
- December 11.....Dale Schroeder
Matthew Martin Loyd
- December 12.....Danielle Norton
- December 13.....Steve Buente
- December 14.....Justin Fritz
Joshua Fritz
Dave Osenga
Brittany Ricketts
- December 15.....Brian Clemans
Ed Buente
Shirley (Hanneford) Hertz
Alex R. Berghouse
Pat Vilt
Tom Shimmin
- December 16.....James Moody
Mandy McMurray
Glenn Wulff
Bruce Philips
Kaylynn Renee Buente
- December 17.....Ryan Charter
Vicki (Buza) Brinkman
Brock Wenzelman
- December 18.....Mila Osenga
Ralph Rice, Jr.
Miria Lee (Lehnus) Hester
Shelly (Gates) Messer
- December 19.....Gary Wood
Susan (Vilt) Mickelson
Brian Wells
- December 20.....Daisy (Johnson) Rice
Michele Wilson

- December 21.....Kathi Nichols
Angela (Diefenbach) Kirk
Christian Hansen
Tina (Miskiewicz) Pitkin
- December 23.....Rick Overacker
- December 24.....Keith Bauer
Jeff Nottke
Francis Rice
- December 25.....Greg Hertz
Johnny H. Schultz
Tara St. Germaine
Jessica (Dixon) Gagnon
- December 26.....Rory Havener
- December 27.....Madison Turner
Lester Lambert
- December 28.....Daniel Meyer
- December 29.....Cindi Young
Aamira Dato
- December 30.....Sarah Rieke
Jamie Diefenbach
Dale Schreffler

Please notify the church office of any names and birthdays which need to be added, removed or corrected. Office number 1-815-802-9805.

Christmas Wonder

I want to see into the heart of a thing
... I want the God-given way of
seeing life, not to possess and to
control, but to stand back in wonder
and gratitude.
—Esther de Waal
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Oct. 2017 Attendance

	<u>10/1</u>	<u>10/8</u>	<u>10/15</u>	<u>10/22</u>	<u>10/29</u>
Evangelical	49	55	54	38	46
First	16	10	10	18	15
Grand Prairie	26	28	31	29	28
TOTALS	91	93	95	85	89

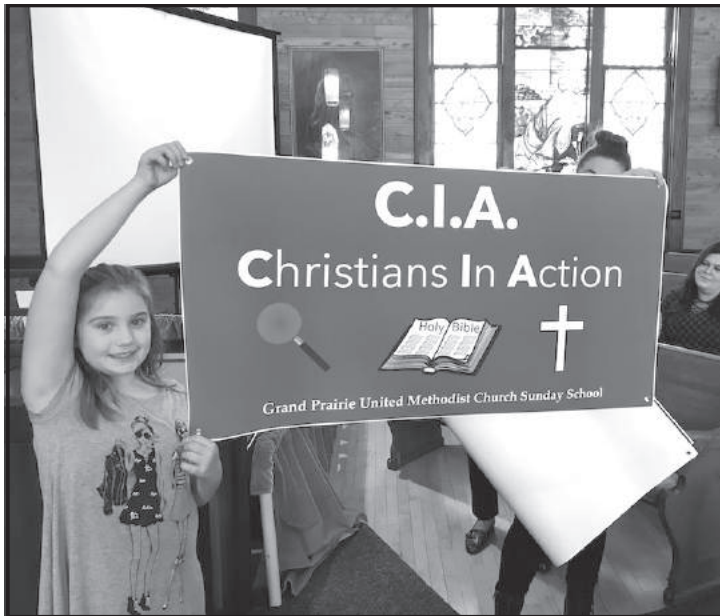
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									Fri., Dec. 1	Sat., Dec. 2	
Sun., Dec. 3	Firemen's Breakfast @ Fire Dept. Bonfield Youth Group 6:30-8 p.m. @ Bonfield Evangelical Upper Room	Mon., Dec. 4	Journey Prayer Group @ Evan UMC, 10 a.m. Advent Bible Study @ Bonfield Evangelical's Upper Room 1 & 7:00 p.m.	Tue., Dec. 5	I-HOP Fellowship Breakfast 8:30 a.m.	Wed., Dec. 6	Men's Prayer @ Evan, 6:30 a.m. Martha Circle 6:00 p.m. @ Ohrt's Party Shed	Thurs., Dec. 7	Evan UMW ??	Fri., Dec. 8	Sat., Dec. 9
Sun., Dec. 10	Grand Prairie Sunday School Christmas Program 7:00 p.m. @ Grand Prairie	Mon., Dec. 11	Journey Prayer Group @ Evan UMC, 10 a.m. Advent Bible Study @ Bonfield Evangelical's Upper Room 1 & 7:00 p.m.	Tue., Dec. 12		Wed., Dec. 13	Men's Prayer @ Evan, 6:30 a.m. Community Lunch @ Lion's Hall	Thurs., Dec. 14	Sunshine Circle @ ??	Fri., Dec. 15	Sat., Dec. 16
Sun., Dec. 17	Bonfield Evangelical Christmas Program 7:00 p.m. @ Evan	Mon., Dec. 18	Journey Prayer Group @ Evan UMC, 10 a.m. Advent Bible Study @ Bonfield Evangelical's Upper Room 1 & 7:00 p.m.	Tue., Dec. 19	NOW Committee Evan, 6:30 Parish, 7:00 p.m. @ Bonfield Evangelical	Wed., Dec. 20	Men's Prayer @ Evan, 6:30 a.m.	Thurs., Dec. 21	Jan. 2017 Newsletter Deadline	Fri., Dec. 22	Sat., Dec. 23
Sun., Dec. 24/31	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service @ Bonfield First, 7:00 p.m.	Mon., Dec. 25	Journey Prayer Group @ Evan UMC, 10 a.m. Advent Bible Study @ Bonfield Evangelical's Upper Room 1 & 7:00 p.m.	Tue., Dec. 26	Fold Newsletters	Wed., Dec. 27	Singing @ the Vet's Home??	Thurs., Dec. 28		Fri., Dec. 29	Sat., Dec. 30

Grand Prairie Announces New Sunday School Vision

Sunshine Circle Report

Nine members and three guests attended the



Photos by Pastor Mel



The Grand Prairie United Methodist Church's Sunday school recently announced the new vision for the future of the educational mission. Top picture is the banner announcing the new adult Sunday school theme of Christians in Action and the bottom photo shows the theme for the youth Sunday school, Jesus Patrol. Sunday school is 9:15 a.m. at Grand Prairie. All adults and children are welcome to give the new school a try. Emma Gryz and Brianna Dayton are holding the banners in both photos.



Photos by Debbie Nielsen

Kids of all ages found the 90-minute Tim Hannig show magically wonderful. Bottom 3 photos show some of the parish children who got called onto the stage to 'help' Tim with some of his tricks. Matthew Loyd help soda appear out of nowhere, Emma Gryz and her Grandma Becky Cruse demonstrated how hard it is to keep hold of ten dollars and Mackenzie Paetsch tried to mix up a Rubik's Cube behind her back to fool Tim.

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December 2017

The Bonfield Grand Prairie Parish Invites you and your family to enjoy the Christmas message by attending one of their Christmas programs.

Grand Prairie
Sunday School
Christmas Program

Sunday, December 10
7:0 p.m.

Grand Prairie
United Methodist Church
Rt. 17, West of Herscher
Blacktop

Bonfield Evangelical
Youth Sunday School
Christmas Program

Sunday, December 17
7:0 p.m.

Bonfield Evangelical
United Methodist Church
348 E. Smith Street
Bonfield

Bonfield First
Christmas Eve
Program

Sunday, December 24
7:0 p.m.

Bonfield First
United Methodist Church
172 N. Church Street
Bonfield

Merry Christmas!