

Gleaner

December/January 2024



From Pastor Tony

In 1 Samuel 25 David has been on the run from King Saul, spending a bunch of time in the wilderness of Maon south of Hebron in Judah, where a certain Nabal lives. This man had tremendous herds of sheep and goats, which David and his men have "protected", simply by living in the area and keeping Nabal's shepherds safe.

David sends 10 of his men to greet Nabal saying, *"Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have. I hear that you have shearers. Now your shepherds have been with us, and we did them no harm, and they missed nothing all the time they were in Carmel. Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore let my young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on a feast day. Please give whatever you have at hand to your servants and to your son David."*



In Hebrew, the English word "peace" is **SHALOM**. This is an all-encompassing peace that has a deeper meaning of wholeness, rather than just an absence of conflict. David and his men have contributed to Nabal's WHOLENESS, but his answer to David's men is curt and deprecating, which leads David to swear to cut off all that Nabal has. Keep in mind that in Hebrew "Nabal" means "fool". We all know that the story ends happily through the intervention of his wife Abigale, but had she not interceded, "shalom" would have been withdrawn from her husband's house and business.

This month we're focused on the Advent of David's grandson many time removed, Jesus. As we do so we have already looked at HOPE. We're looking at PEACE next, and will finish with JOY and LOVE, and then Christmas Eve.

Jesus said. *"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."* When Jesus utters these words to his disciples, they are afraid. They're afraid because the reality of Jesus' parting from them is finally starting to sink in. They feel they simply cannot have shalom without Jesus. When he leaves they will lose their wholeness.

All of us from time to time have worries. For most of us there have been times, perhaps many times in our lives, when PEACE and WHOLENESS seem elusive. But Jesus' words to his disciples are words to us as well. In Isaiah 9 Jesus is called (among other things) the Prince of Peace. He can GIVE peace because he IS peace; peace in all of it's God-blessed wholeness. After telling his disciples that they would have peace, Jesus says, *"You heard me say to you, I am going away, and I will come to you.' If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe."*

Yes, Jesus went away to take his rightful place at the right hand of God after he had accomplished his Father's will in securing salvation for all who would believe. But we know (something that the disciples didn't learn until Pentecost) that BECAUSE Jesus left, he could send his Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us the Peace Jesus promised, because where the Spirit of the Lord is, there peace dwells.

This is a marvelous thing to focus on in this Season that while wonderful in so many ways, can also be stressful and even sorrowful for many. As we go forward in our Advent journey, let's take a few moments each day to focus on the Peace that Jesus gives us. We can only be PEACEFUL by slowing down enough to be FULL of the PEACE that Jesus gives. Amen?

Pastor Tony

TPC will be shopping this year for a senior gentleman who is requesting some specific things for Christmas. There is a sheet at the back of the church with the items he would like. Please check it out and if you are able, let's give this member of our community a special Christmas. Questions? Ask Karen.

Psalm 33:20-22

20 We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. 21 In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. 22 May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you.

Sandy presents a thank you poinsettia to Pastor Tony for his support of OCC.



Toledo Neighbors

Great progress is underway at Neighbors. Concrete ramps were poured. The food trucks can now pull up to the building and whole pallets can be transferred more efficiently.

During the month of November the Board secured a new source of food and which is now providing dairy products, eggs, bread, and so much more. There were food collections in town, including food collected during the Lions Club sponsored Turkey Bingo and the pantry was overflowing with canned goods and other staples.

On November 23, 134 community members came through Neighbors Hall and stocked up for the Thanksgiving Holiday, providing for 290 men, women, and children. There was an Information Fair in the community meeting room. This fair was in partnership with ValleyView Medical and Molina Health Care. Amber and Heather provided homemade chili, lentil soup, and dinner rolls. Participants were encouraged to warm up, grab a bowl and visit with the resource people. Recipes, spices, vegetable peelers, etc. were shared. The first 50 people received crock pots. Included with these crock pots (for those who were interested) were whole chickens and a recipe on how to prepare the chicken in a crock pot. The Thursday Market is continuing to collect winter coats for distribution at Neighbors Hall. There are community members knitting toques and Molina Healthcare have been providing socks. There will not be a Pajama and toy distribution this year. Toledo Neighbors have a heart for the Poor. God continues to bless this ministry.

Rowdy Rooster / Winlock Vader Foodbank

Lots of Christmas items and goodies are available at the Rowdy Rooster. All proceeds go to support the Foodbank which is located in the lower floor of their building at 503 1st Street. Paulli



Christmas Bazaars and Bake Sales

This Christmas season our Church is participating in two Christmas Bazaars. We will be selling baked goods and our Cookbooks. Karen is heading up this outreach. All the proceeds will go to the Operation Christmas Child program. We also plan to have a display of Shoeboxes on the table to help encourage other community members to become involved. Please contact Karen for more details. Paulli

Worship Committee

Thank you Tony for an enlightening Series of Sermons on the Book of Acts. Your insight into traveling by boat in the time of Paul helped bring a new appreciation for the work of the Holy Spirit, during the storm in the final chapters. It always surprises me what new insight is gleaned from reading and study of Scripture. During Advent Tony will deliver a series on Hope, Joy, Peace, and Love concluding with a Christmas Eve Meditation on the Hymn "O Holy Night." In January the Sermon series will be from the New Testament Book of Hebrews. The Epistle of the Hebrews has been traditionally attributed to the Apostle Paul. Its essential purpose was to exhort Christians to persevere in the face of persecution. The Old and New Covenants are compared and contrasted. There is as much to learn. I am excited for 2025 and this new series. Paulli



Thanks for the beautifully decorated church! And a special thanks to Rebecca's family. More pics of them on other pages:0)

Dec/Jan Birthday

Esther 12/3
Lee 12/5
John A. 12/13
Steve K 12/19
Tom 12/22
Andrew 1/9
Rob P 1/15
Linda G 1/24
Laura Lee 1/25
Paulli B 1/26
Jen 1/31

Anniversaries

Chris & Harley 12/20
Mike & Sandy 1/20

Session Meets

12/10 6pm
1/14 6pm

Bake Sale 12/14
@Sr.Center to benefit
OCC - see Karen

Winlock Seniors Center
Christmas Bazaar 12/
20 &21 see Karen

Red Cross Blood Drive
12/20 see Kathy

Last Day for On Line
Shoe Box Orders 12/30

Christmas Eve Service
12/24 7:00 PM

Annual Congressional
Meeting & Potluck
1/26

History of the Archie Reeves Memorial Garden

A letter to the congregation concerning the garden was found in the **archives** by Paulli reads:

In May Session voted to name the landscape project in front of the church, “the Archie Reeves Memorial Garden”. The garden has a religious theme in that each plant’s placement, grouping, color or name was inspired by plants found in the Old or New Testaments. But you really need to put on your ‘imagination hat’ to see some of the meanings. The garden was designed for walking through and viewing from every angle and direction, so let me explain my thinking on this project.



Walk into the garden and stand between the reader board and the stained glass windows. Look around and you will see twelve ‘Mediterranean Pink’ heathers in front of the lower windows in groups of three. These could represent the 12 tribes of Israel or the 12 Apostles. Since all the events in the Bible took place around or near the Mediterranean Sea. The name fits the theme although the color does not. They looked purple to me so next time I will not wear my rose colored sunglasses. Now look to your right. On the east wall between the groups of Heather is a deciduous Dwarf Burning Bush. This shrub will turn fiery red in the fall. Imagine Moses as he speaks with and is saved by God. Turn around. On the west wall is a group of three arborvitae. These will grow into each other and form one entity composed of three individual beings. That's about as close to explaining the Trinity as I am ever going to get. To their left is a thorny Dwarf Barberry surrounded by red flowering Dianthus. Here is the crown of thorns Jesus was forced to wear at his crucifixion and the drops of blood that were shed from his wounds. Turn back toward the north and observe a Pieris mountain fire. Also call Lily of the Valley shrub placed between the stained glass windows. The new foliage is fire, red and spring. Imagine the Israelites waiting 40 days before the smoke flames and thunder Mount Sinai as Moses receives the 10 Commandments. Framing the north windows are three heavenly bamboo. The name fits the theme and I needed a low maintenance plant for those spots. In the right hand corner is a skyrocket Juniper think of Jesus into heaven not very biblical, but I need a single tall conifer to give dynamic balance to the three are on the west wall. Now turn around and you will find three purple flowering dwarf azaleas. These I chose for the color represent the imperial power of Rome as the soldiers through lots for Jesus is robe.

The session allowed \$300 for the plants and beauty bark in the garden. Unfortunately I went over budget and spent \$300.50 on the project. I apologize for the cost overrun but serious. No landscape project is ever finished and I would like to do more in the garden. Projects on my list include adding a concrete paver or stone pathway through the garden, an old rugged cross and a mural behind the reader, more plants in front of the classroom. I would also like to add plants with the colors, blue, purple, red, and gold. When you read through Exodus, there were the colors that God commanded Moses to use when making the tent and covering of the ark of the covenant.

These were my thoughts when I designed the garden. I did not create the plants. God did that. I just planted them and what I consider to be a logical order.
May God bless you all, Charlie Brown.

No date was discovered as to when this was written or who the mysterious “Charlie Brown” was.

Nominating Committee

Session is comprised of Ruling Elders that feel called and agree to serve the Church for two year terms. Every January at the Annual Congregational Meeting we present a list of Session Members. At the time of this writing our Committee is in discussion with two church members who we hope will serve in the new Session. Returning Session Members are: Tony - Moderator (non voting) Tom - Clerk (non voting) Diane - Outreach Rebecca - Finance Paulli (me) - Worship & Missions There is much work to do on the business side of Church. We are a small and aging Congregation. Please consider if the Spirit is talking to you. We need your participation. Please pray for this necessary work. Paulli

Operation Christmas Child 2024

Once again our faithful Lord, Jesus Christ, has blessed our efforts in the building of our 84 physical shoeboxes. We surpassed our online goal of 50 by 11 more boxes which brings our total to 145 Gospel opportunities going out into the dark places of the world. The Bible tells us that God is able to do more than we can ask or think. Praise the Lord!! To me as your project leader, this is certainly true this year. It also reminds me that it's



easy to underestimate what God can and will do if we are faithful. Many thanks to all who supported this endeavor in what ever way that you can. It takes many hands to accomplish this project. Thank you to the Session who has offered to pay the processing fees. Thank you to each one of you for your prayers, please keep praying for the recipient of each box that God will touch his/her heart and become real to the child.

Also remember that The Greatest Journey discipleship program will follow up each shoebox delivered. This is the most important aspect of this program. Please pray for the success of these classes. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be your project leader and your responsiveness. As soon as the inventory is completed, we will start working on supplies for the 2025 boxes. Some shopping has already been done. It's exciting to look forward to what God will accomplish next year. May God richly bless each one of you as we serve him through this outreach. Sandy

Treasurer's Report for October/November 2024

I want to remind you that there is always a current financial report on the bulletin board in the elevator lobby. There you'll find detailed information that I can't provide in this report. And of course, you can always contact me for specifics if you have questions.

That being said, I can say that the finance committee has been looking at a budget for 2025. At this point, using extrapolations from this year to date's numbers, we can expect a slight decrease in income and a leveling out of spending. Time will tell.

Session has approved a request from the finance committee to open a 10 thousand dollar CD which will yield 3.5% interest each eleven month period. That CD will continue to "roll over" until early 2028, at which time we'll use it to pay for the next five year maintenance agreement plan with Mobility Concepts. Yikes!

As you may know, our bookkeeper Jess (she helped with the difficult parts) was killed in a collision earlier this year. Rest in peace, Jess. We've recently found a local bookkeeper, Glenda Holbrook, to continue the work Jess was doing for us.

At the time of this writing, Dean Meilke from the Mission Development Certificate Program of the Synod is reviewing the TPC Books. Above mentioned Glenda was able to provide Dean with the needed files by email, saving him a trip from the Seattle area where he lives.

You'll have a chance to look at rows and columns of numbers at the Congregational Meeting the last Sunday of January. You'll also vote on Pastor Tony's recommended compensation package. In case you aren't aware, Tony is paid as a half time Commissioned Ruling Elder. It is the opinion of the finance committee that we can't pay him enough! But we can at least try.

If you have questions about anything financial, please contact Tom or Rebecca.
Yours in Christ, Tom

A huge thank you to Rebecca's family for helping with the decorations.



You Never Know Who is Watching:

(And it ain't Santa)

These words were spoken by a member at our last Women's Bible Study last Thursday.. An experience of another member who was struck by these words is as follows: The day before Thanksgiving my husband had a procedure to repair a stent in his abdominal aorta. The procedure was over and he had asked for his wife to be with him. The RN told the wife she was concerned about his confusion. He did not recognize his wife nor recall her name. Suddenly, abdominal pain and swelling developed. The room suddenly was flooded with 5 nurses all looking very worried, and frankly scared. The first thing the wife did was to bow in prayer. When she looked up, the eyes that had been previously watching monitors were now on her. The crisis had passed. Later, the physician said it was not uncommon for a reaction following this procedure. Regardless, there was an answer to prayer. The answer was in the faith and grace from the Holy Spirit calming the storm in the woman's heart and those who witnessed it who were visibly affected. This woman is only an ordinary person and except for that moment of faith, mostly unremarkable. The message from these few minutes is to believe our God gives us such moments as a witness to someone else who need it, that prayer works, that faith is powerful in sometimes small ways that impart joy, love and peace. May we all accept the grace that is free for us, given by the baby in the manger. Wishing all who read this to have a joyful, peaceful and loving Christmas.

