

**ARMA/GRACE/MULBERRY
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
JANUARY 2009 NEWSLETTER
8:00 am Worship Service -- Mulberry
9:30 am Worship Service -- Grace
11:00 am Worship Service – Arma
Church School – following Children’s Moment -- Arma
COME WORSHIP WITH US!!!**

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NEW YEAR – NEW BEGINNINGS

Philippians 3:7-16

Paul images a runner and he talks about his race toward perfections, his desire to be like Jesus. He said, “Not that I have already obtained this.” I know I am not perfect, “But one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind, and straining forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”

Obviously Paul was not primarily interested in a physical race. He was talking about a spiritual journey. He was talking about getting rid of guilt, getting rid of those things you have done or not done, and are continuing to do or not do, which cause you to miss the mark, not only of God’s desire for you, but of your own expectations.

A little four-year-old boy makes it very graphic. He said what he thought he had heard the people in church saying. He said, “Forgive us our trash baskets as we forgive those who put trash in our baskets.” I think that makes it pretty clear. That is what we are talking about.

How do you do that? First, you have to admit that it is there, and what it is. Most of us, when we are honest with ourselves and others, will acknowledge that we have done things we ought not to have been doing, and we have left undone things we should have been doing. Most of us acknowledge that we have missed the mark, which is the literal meaning of the word sine, not only of God’s expectation, but of our own.

When the Prodigal Son came home from the far country in Jesus’ parable, he did not try to justify what he had done. He did not try to explain it. He did not want to make excuses for himself. He simply said, “Father, I have sinned against you and before Heaven. I am not worthy to be called your son.” the father embraced him, took him in his arms, put a ring on his finger, and a robe about him, a symbol of sonship, and he threw a party, not only because the son had come home to the father, but because the son had come home to himself.

How could he do that? The only way the son could have chosen to be that honest, and to decide to leave his life in a far country eating with pigs, was because he trusted his father to live him as much after he had spoken the truth as he had loved him before. What happened was simply that the honest confession of the son was met by the unmerited, undeserved, unearned grace of a father, who was willing to forgive. When that happens, forgiveness is possible, and there is a new beginning.

That is what forgiveness is. Some people say forgiveness is forgetting. That is not true. Forgetting is not that easy. Forgiveness is remembering, but making a choice for things to be different. It is making a choice to focus on love rather than fear and hate.

The future can be different for you, because it is in the business of new beginnings.

Pastor Don Foster

GRACE NEWS

PRAYERS: Please keep Betty & Les Eurit, Vera Little, Evelyn Cole, Vivian & George Trebar in your prayers

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- Jan 1** Jimmy Mynatt
- Jan 5** Juanita Karnes
- Jan 18** Kay Bough
- Jan 24** Haylee Goodwin
- Jan 26** Eldora Dundee
- Jan 27** Kay Goodwin
- Jan 27** Greg VanBecelaere
- Jan 28** Eva Gartner
- Jan 31** Craig Levi
- Jan 31** Pat Cummings

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- Jan 17** George & Vivian Trebar
- Jan 19** Coetta & Earl Trahan

JANUARY GREETERS

- Jan 4** Mike Seely
- Jan 11** Shannon Lynn
- Jan 18** Betty & Les Eurit
- Jan 25** Barbara Engelhardt

TIME IS PRECIOUS EVERY DAY –
MAKE IT COUNT IN A SELFLESS WAY
IF THERE’S A DEED YOU’VE LEFT UNDONE
BEFORE THE SETTING OF THE SUN –
DO IT NOW!

Catherine Janssen Irwin

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ARMA NEWS

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Jan **Administrative Board at 7:00 pm**
Jan 21 **U.M.W.**

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Jan 1	Roger Doue	Jan 10	Jake Price
Jan 2	Frances Ryder	Jan 20	Nancy Forbes
Jan 2	Mildred Leamon	Jan 21	Brian Garrett
Jan 4	Susan Cole	Jan 24	Danielle Cole
Jan 5	Dominic Boley	Jan 24	Linda Roberts
Jan 5	Jim Jones	Jan 28	Phil Harris
Jan 5	Richard Ryder	Jan 29	Ian Culbertson
Jan 9	Danny Rogel	Jan 29	Roxy Cramer

JANUARY GREETERS

Jan 4 **Linda Manion**
Jan 11 **Naomi and Rachel Cameron**
Jan 18 **Youth**
Jan 25 **Michelle and Morgan Maransani**

U.M.W. NEWS

The next meeting of the U.M.W. will be January 21st. Meet at the church at 11:00 am to carpool to Sweet Greens (1620 S. Broadway in Pittsburg) for lunch. Phyllis Hay is hostess for the meeting, Nadine Jones is in charge of the lesson and Wilma Lollar will lead devotions.

U.M.W. will be collecting soup during the month of January for Wesley House.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

The coin collection for December totaled \$174.50 and are designated for benevolences. Thank you for participating in this worthy project for our church, and thank you to our children who so graciously collect the coins during the children's service.

FOCUS ON THE CHURCH FAMILY

As 2008 comes to a close, we wish to offer “thank you” to many who participated in the activities of the church during the month of December. Our church is one which really “knows the reason for the season”, as so many generously donated their time and talents to make this Christmas a joyous season for so many to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

First, we’d like to express our appreciation to all those who participated in the cantata – choir members, musicians, readers, candle lighters and all of those persons “behind the scenes” whose assistance made the event so successful. This tradition in this small community continues to amaze those who attend – many this year expressed the sentiment that the music this year was “one of the best they had heard”. Thank you to all of you.

Second, we’d like to express our thanks to those who gave the generous donations at the cantata. This money plus other sources of monies from both the Arma United Methodist Church and St. Joseph Catholic Church provided toys, clothing and food baskets for 40 local families and 88 children this Christmas.

Third, our thanks go out to the many persons who so joyously participated in Christmas caroling on a cold Sunday afternoon at the Arma Care Center and for shut-ins. Approximately 50 persons enjoyed the Caroling that afternoon.

Finally, we’d like to thank Diane Cameron and the children and youth (and Dave) who shared the Christmas story as part of the worship service on December 21st. It was wonderful!

We have so much to be thankful for in 2008!!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!

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**United Methodist Church
Arma/Grace/Mulberry
P. O. Box 489
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