



DISCIPLE EXPRESS

Vol. 25, No 1 January 2016 A Newsletter to Inspire and Celebrate Oakland United Methodists

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Worship Service Time:

10:00 Worship

11:00 Koinonia

11:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School

September thru Mothers' Day

9:00 Children's Sunday School

9:00 Choir Practice



A Prayer for the Coming Year

Lord, as the New Year dawns today
Help me to put my faults away.
Let me be big in little things;
Grant me the joy which friendship brings.
Keep me from selfishness and spite;
Let me be wise in what is right.
A happy New Year! Grant that I
May bring no tear to any eye.
When this New Year in time shall end
Let it be said I've played the friend,
Have lived and loved and labored here,
And made of it a happy year.

From: Beliefnet.com

Stain Glass Windows

Jesus Christ— Life portrayed in five panels

Loaves and Fish – representing the life and teaching ministry of Jesus – Luke 9:12-17

Fish is one of the earliest Christian symbols. The initials of the Greek acrostic phrase, meaning "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior" spell the Greek word for "fish."

The Fish symbol was used by persecuted Christians to avoid their persecutors. When it appeared outside a Christian home, it was a sign that the Lord's Supper would be celebrated there at night in secret.



"We seek to grow in Christ and to share our love of God in Word and Deed."

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As I was thinking about the coming of a new year, I recalled words I had read in a book titled *Joyful Living in the Fourth Dimension* by Charles L. Allen. Although this book has been on my bookshelf for as long as I can remember and has a copyright date of 1983, I believe it has words of wisdom for all of us as we begin a new year together as the family of God.

There is so much in our world that is out of our control. It is so hard to hear of the violence that has taken place in our country and around the world, often times directed at innocent bystanders. How we wish we could change the hearts of others.

The truth is a change of heart is possible through the power of God. Ezekiel 36:26 reads, "I will give you a new heart, put a new spirit in you. I'll remove the stone heart from your body and replace it with a heart that is God-willed, not self-willed." May we pray for all people to turn away from their sinful ways and turn toward the One who has the power to transform hearts and lives.

One of my favorite songs in our *The Faith We Sing* hymnal is *Change My Heart, O God*. Following are the lyrics:

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.
You are the Potter, I am the clay.
Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.
Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

While it is true we cannot change another's heart, we can ask God to change ours. As we seek to follow our Lord more closely by loving God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind and loving our neighbor as ourselves, our hearts will be changed.

In Allen's book *Joyful Living in the Fourth Dimension* he shares four actions a minister friend of his asks his congregation to think about each month. They are:

What do you plan to do this coming month to make you a better Christian?

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What do you plan to do this month to make your home life happier for all who live there?

What do plan to do this month to make your church a more effective witness in the community?

What do you plan to do this month to make your community a better place for all the people who live there?

As I read those questions, I thought what a difference we could all make in our own lives, the lives of our family, the life of the church, and our community life if we all worked toward making the world a better place. What plans are you making for 2016?

Wishing you a Blessed Happy New Year!

And All God's Children Said,

"Amen."

Pastor Karen

Treasure

On Sunday, January 10, we will begin a church wide study and worship emphasis called *Treasure: A Stewardship Program on Faith and Money*. The study will be based on Jesus' words, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21).

Over a period of four weeks, we will look at the many ways that our treasure (time, energy, money) affects our hearts. We will consider how financial challenges in our personal lives affect our relationships with people and with God. We will see how giving helps to determine the way we feel and act. If you have stress related to money or feel there may be more that God is calling you to do with your resources, this will be a helpful study.

At the end of the four weeks, we will have the opportunity to make personal commitments of giving to Oakland United Methodist Church for the coming year. All of us will receive commitment cards in the mail, and the cards will also be available on Sunday mornings. We can fill out these cards and bring them to worship on Sunday, January 31.

We look forward to an exciting month considering our treasure and God's treasure.

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Stewardship

Dear Friends,

This coming Sunday we will begin a church wide emphasis: *Treasure: A Stewardship Program on Faith and Money*. For four weeks we'll be discussing and studying Jesus' words about giving from the Sermon on the Mount, in which he said "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21).

We celebrate the ministries of the Oakland UMC this past year. We are thankful for our Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Youth, Confirmation, and Adult Ministries. We are blessed to have been able to support monthly mission projects. Together we are making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

At the end of the stewardship program, you'll be asked to fill out and return a commitment card. We do this for two reasons. First, it allows the church to plan accurately for ministries, since we can base our ministry budget on the dollar amount our members plan to give. Second, the act of filling out a card is a way of inviting you to set a goal for giving during the coming year.

In preparation for our stewardship program, please take a few minutes to pray about ways you can serve using your time, energy, and money.

Thank you for all you do to further the mission and work of Oakland United Methodist Church. You make a difference here!

In Christ,

Stewardship Committee

Un-decorate the Sanctuary

We will be un-decorating the Sanctuary on January 10th after Sunday Worship.

Last Sunday of the Month Potluck Meal

We hope you can join us for a potluck meal following the worship service on January 31. We will meet in the Fellowship Hall for a time of food and fellowship.

Oakland UMC Visioning/Dreaming

On Sunday, January 31, following our potluck meal together, we will have a time of visioning our mission and dreaming the future of the Oakland UMC. This is

an important time in the life of the church. Proverbs 29:18 reads, "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

Please join us, so together we can discern God's vision and dreams for the Oakland UMC.

We will conclude no later than 1pm.

Welcome

Noah Wayne Myers, son of Jared and Heather Meyers, was baptized on December 27 during the worship service. We celebrate this special time in the life of Noah and his family and in the life of the church. We welcome Noah in Christian love.

Thank You

Oakland UMC Congregation,

As we begin a new year together, I want to thank you for all your acts of love and generosity this past year.

Thank you for participating in the ministries of the OUMC by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service, and your witness. You are a blessing! In Christ's Love,

Pastor Karen



Thank You

Thank you for your giving to the Aid and Assistance Fund. In 2015 \$2080.35 was given. This past year funds from A&A were used to help people within the Riverside Community School District with needs such as rent and utilities.



College Addresses

If you have a student heading to college and they do not receive this newsletter, please forward their address to us. We would love to keep in touch. Or if they will have a change of address please let us know

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NURSERY

VOLUNTEERS

- 3rd Joan Shanno
- 10th Lindsay Bentley
- 17th Carol Wilson
- 24th Lisa Pierson
- 31st



KOINONIA

- 3rd Veva Larson
- 10th Lucia & Sandy
- 17th Rieken Family
- 24th Barb Schorsch
- 31st Pot Luck



Coffee Fellowship

USHERS,

GREETERS,

CANDLELIGHTERS

- 3rd Grant & Alison Henry
Sid & Tami Skank
Candle lighters
J J Wilson & Eric Duhachek



- 10th Mike & Kristy Bane
Bob & Beverly Beckendorf
Candle lighters
Allyee & Camryn Pierson

- 17th Mitch & Penny Anderson
Bernie & Norma Bolton
Candle lighters
Kyler Rieken & Kiley Bentley

- 24th Mark & Mischa Martens
Alan & Connie Gardner
Candle lighters
Keaten Rieken & Aiden Bell

- 31st Andrew Jones & Hayley Haines
Doc & LaVinna Blanchard
Candle lighters
Claire Harris & Elly Henderson

Remember those in
Nursing Homes with
cards and visits.



Oakland Manor

Margaret Alff
Lucille Bentley
Erma Cleaveland
Joan Turner



Oakland Heights

Janice Harris
Neunonia Timberman
Anita Killion



Pray for Our Military Family

Kristie Copenhaver, John & Mary Lou Copenhaver's daughter; **Jared Myers**, son of Robert Myers and Sid & T **Husz**, Niece of Butch & Velda Husz; **Lucas Smith**, Addie Mae's grandson; **Brian Thornton** from Avoca; **Tyler Clark**, Marvin & Carolyn Clark's grandson; **Brad Grosvenor**, Cathey Grosvenor's son stateside, and other area service men and women. **Landen Pedersen**, son of Tab and Lorie Pederson.



Military Families

If you have a loved one in the service and wish to have them listed on our prayer list, please contact the church office.

ST. CROIX[®]

HOSPICE

Date 12/11/15

RE: Volunteers wanted for St. Croix Hospice

Dear *United Methodist Church,*

St. Croix Hospice has volunteer opportunities available! We are serving terminally ill patients in your community. Our mission is to provide *Radical Loving Care* to bring healing to those when their hope has changed from a cure to comfort. We do this by offering comprehensive hospice services including medical care, homemaker services, emotional and spiritual support, respite services, medication management, music therapy, bereavement care, and volunteer services. St. Croix Hospice will raise the standard of quality care provided to the patients and families that we serve by our commitment to the growth and development of the team.

St. Croix Hospice volunteers provide support, comfort and companionship for patients and families during a vulnerable and sacred time in their life. Volunteers are trained to listen to patients and support families in patients' homes, assisted-living facilities or nursing homes.

Beyond patient care, there are integral roles in behind-the-scenes support of this agency that volunteers can fulfill. Each volunteer is provided with a job description relevant to their assigned position, fully trained and integrated as a team member of their office. Most hospice volunteers find it personally gratifying, stimulating, and emotionally meaningful to assist those in need. Volunteers generally work flexible hours based on their individual goals and interests.

We would love for you to share that we are looking for volunteers with your congregation: young, elderly, and all in between. You can post an announcement in your bulletin or hang one of our flyers on a bulletin board. Please share my contact information for anyone interested or call our office if you have any questions about St. Croix Hospice and our services.

God bless you,



Katie Boeckholt, Volunteer Coordinator

1851 Madison Ave. Suite 490

Council Bluffs, IA 51503

P: 712-318-2120

F: 712-396-2008

kboeckholt@stcroixhospice.com

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Update from Mutare Vol. 29, No.2
November 2015
Larry and Jane Kies

Africa University
Box 1320
Mutare Zimbabwe
email- LKies@Africau.edu

Give thanks to God the Father always and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Galatians 5:20

Dear friends and family,

Greetings from Mutare, Zimbabwe!!

We have recently been enjoying the friendship of a young Korean woman, Hye Sun, who is both learning English and teaching Korean here at Africa University. What a challenge! Around the dinner table, she has been teaching us some "Korean" words that seem to be almost universal in what they represent **ice cream** (*aiseukeulim*); **CocaCola** (*kokakolla*); **pizza** (*pizza*); **Amen** (*Amen*); **Alleluia** (*halleluya*)!!

One name that is almost universally known and that does not change is Jesus. It brings Christians together from different nations and unites us in a common purpose - that of making His name and mission known throughout our unsettled world.

Some of our own students come to us from time to time and ask for advice about how to become involved in mission. It is exciting to see their passion. Among others, twelve former AU students were commissioned in August as U.M.C.



Global Mission (Generation Transformation) Fellows to countries such as South Africa, Germany, Estonia, Belgium, Japan after a training period in our very own Harare! It was so moving to see how Africa is taking 'that name that does not change' to the rest of the world!!!

In a powerful message given during the commissioning by Bishop John Yambasu of Ivory Coast, the young

people were reassured that as God takes them "across unknown waters", they are never alone, and that when they get to 'the other side' His grace and power enables them to 'transform' people and situations.

Of course, most of our students do not travel so far. Most go back to "transform" their own countries in small ways and large. Some even return to AU and give back to the university that shaped their lives. A former AU Agriculture student (and scholarship recipient), Kudzai recently returned from the US where she earned her PhD at Michigan State and is now teaching Agribusiness as Dr. Mukumbi.



Africa University Farm News

The investment in expanded irrigation capacity continues to pay dividends... a record wheat harvest was harvested in October. Praise the Lord and thanks to those who helped support this project!

We were able

The Farm Manager and his team.



to buy the vibrating cultivator mentioned in the March newsletter thanks to a very generous donation by an Indiana couple! The next target is to buy a small, fuel-efficient tractor for trailer work to supplement the several larger (and thirstier) tractors needed for the heavy field operations.



The fields were white waiting for the combine.

Africa University classroom news

After a lesson in simple poetry writing on the topic of 'homesickness', one of Jane's students from the DRC wrote:

*Sometimes I feel like tea without sugar
Sometimes I feel like a blanket without a bed
Sometimes I feel like a Christian without faith
A long way from home. A long way from home.*

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In a class of a record number of 97 Intensive English students, each one is a long way from home; each one of them is special; each one brings gifts and experiences from a diversity of countries in Africa (and this year from South Korea!)

Larry too has been especially enjoying his final-year class, the most diverse Agriculture class he has taught- ten different nationalities. What a wealth of perspectives! Both of our classes have many students (including refugees) who can only be here because of

poem, we are 'sorry that we can't travel both roads and be one traveler'. With supporting churches on both coasts and many in-between, we have a lot of travelling to do... Please let us know of any special events we can try to work into our schedule. We would love to be with you and will do our best to include you in our visits.

Family News

Michael will be hugely relieved to finish his very important 'O-level' exams just before Thanksgiving - a big step toward finishing high school. Shortly after his

last exam he will fly to the US, and will be with Ben, Pule and Carly for Thanksgiving. Major family milestones- all four kids having a holiday gathering together without us, and Larry and I our first Christmas with no kids' stockings to fill. Sniff, sniff.

Early in January Michael will return to start high school again at the next ('A') level.



scholarships ... thanks to all who are making that difference in someone's lives (and in AFRICA!).

Black Friday and Giving Tuesday

Here in Zimbabwe we are spared the Black Friday shopping frenzy. We hope that you will consider getting involved with Giving Tuesday the following week. GBGM will be matching contributions made on-line (up to the first \$1 million), starting at mid-night Tuesday 1 December (Central Time, not Eastern). So your gift might go twice as far! Please see the Advance Special numbers at the end of this letter. For more details, please see the website.

<http://www.umcmission.org/Give>.

Even if you miss Giving Tuesday, the website is always available for receiving on-line gifts.

Back to the USA in 2016

We will be visiting supporting churches from late May through October. Like the sojourner in Robert Frost's

Please pray ** for all the young missionaries being sent out that they may be effective messengers

** that the rainy season starting in late November will be fruitful
** for joyful celebrations of the coming holiday season, and safe travels for all (especially Michael, flying on his own for the first time)
** in Thanksgiving for those who find new and creative ways to reach out to others

Many thanks for your prayers, thoughts, emails, cards and support!

Yours and His,
Larry and Jane Kies

U.M.C. Advance Special numbers:
Africa University Farm Development: 3021027
Africa University Scholarships: 3021028
Salary support: 09572Z (Larry) 10739Z (Jane)



is pleased to recognize

Oakland United Methodist Church

for its covenant support of
the Global Ministries
missionary community.

*Declare God's glory among the nations,
God's marvelous works among all the peoples.
Psalm 96:3*

Thomas Kemper
General Secretary
General Board of Global Ministries

012002*21

MAY THE BEAUTY OF THE SEASON BRING YOU PEACE.
MAY THE SPIRIT OF THE SEASON BRING YOU HOPE.

Merry Christmas

*Thank you for your support during
this year of 2015.
Merry Christmas -
Oakland Senior Center*

January Calendar of Events

- Wed, 2nd 6:30 p.m. Youth Groups
- Sun, 3rd 9:00 a.m. Choir Practice
10:00 a.m. Worship/Communion
11: 15 a.m. Adult Sunday School
- Wed, 6th 6:30 p.m. Youth Groups
- Sun, 10th 9:00 a.m. Sunday School/Choir Practice/
Confirmation
10:00 a.m. Worship
11:00 a.m. Koinonia
11:00 a.m. Take Down Decorations
- Wed, 13th 6:30 p.m. Youth Groups
- Sat, 16th 7:00 a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast (tentative date)
- Sun, 17th 9:00 a.m. Sunday School/Choir Practice/
Confirmation
10:00 a.m. Worship/3rd Sunday offering
11:00 a.m. Koinonia
11: 15 a.m. Adult Sunday School
- Wed, 20th 6:30 p.m. Youth Groups
- Thu, 21st 7:00 p.m. Ad Board Meeting
- Sun, 24th 9:00 a.m. Sunday School/Choir Practice/
Confirmation
10:00 a.m. Worship/
11::00 a.m. Koinonia
11: 15 a.m. Adult Sunday School
- Tue, 26th 5:30—6:30 p.m. Tasty Tuesday
- Wed, 27th 6:30 p.m. Youth Groups
- Sun, 31st 9:00 a.m. Sunday School/Choir Practice/Confirmation
10:00 a.m. Worship
11:00 a.m. Koinonia
11:15 a.m. Adult Sunday School

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Community Meal

A TIME OF FELLOWSHIP

Bring a friend
Come join us for a light meal.

January 26

5:30—6:30 p.m.

Last Tuesday of the month



Getting to Know You

Human Relations Sunday (January 17) is the Sunday before Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance. Donations help to overcome injustice and empowers those struggling. 90% of the monies go to General Board of Global Ministries for the **Community Developer's Program** and the **United Methodist Voluntary Services Program**. 10% goes to General Board of Church and Society for **Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program**.



Habitat for Humanity of Council Bluffs works with community partners, volunteers and donors to eliminate poverty housing in Council Bluffs and around the world. We rely on **volunteer labor**. No experience necessary!

The ReStore is open Tuesday thru Friday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Call or email Glennay 712-396-2475 or glennay@habitatcb.org to volunteer with us today!

GODLY HUMOR

God's plan for aging

Most seniors never get enough exercise. In His wisdom God decreed that seniors become forgetful so they would have to search for their glasses, keys and other things thus doing more walking. And God looked down and saw that it was good.

Then God saw there was another need. In His wisdom He made seniors lose coordination so they would drop things requiring them to bend, reach & stretch.

And God looked down and saw that it was good.

Then God considered the function of bladders and decided seniors would have additional calls of nature requiring more trips to the bathroom, thus providing more exercise. God looked down and saw that it was good.

So if you find as you age, you are getting up and down more, remember it's God's will. It is all in your best interest even though you mutter under your breath.

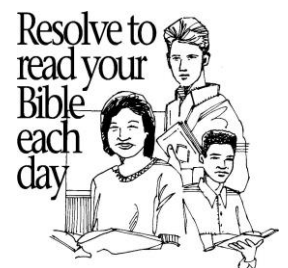
- 2 Ashley Way
- 3 Emily Johnson
- 4 Kristy Bane
- 5 Jamie Ewalt
- 5 Brent Applegate
- 8 Gerald Wilson
- 9 LaVinna Blanchard
- 11 Cale Roller
- 12 Evan Gleaves
- 13 Larry Danker
- 14 Brad Cleaveland
- 15 Jessie Shiffer
- 15 Marv Thompson
- 15 Dave Woodward
- 15 Kim Gambaiana
- 15 Claire Harris
- 17 Greg Bentley
- 17 Ethan Vlcek
- 19 Ryan Danker
- 19 Eric Duhachek
- 20 Fred G. Henry
- 21 Craig Hummel
- 21 Jacob Schwarte
- 23 Rachel Allensworth
- 24 Isabella Gute
- 25 Justine Cleaveland
- 27 Claire Palmer
- 27 Brody Kinnison
- 28 Judie Danker
- 28 Lindsay Bentley
- 30 Don Hildebrand
- 31 Tammy Forrester
- 31 Dick Cleaveland
- 31 Jadyn Price

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January Birthdays

Daily Bible Readings for January

- 1. Romans 1: 1-17
- 2. Romans 2: 1-16
- 3. Romans 3: 19-31
- 4. Romans 5: 1-21
- 5. Romans 6: 1-23
- 6. Isaiah 60: 1-22
- 7. John 5: 1-29
- 8. John 6: 1-24
- 9. John 6: 25-59
- 10. John 6: 60-71
- 11. Luke 7: 1-17
- 12. Luke 7: 18-35
- 13. Luke 7: 36-50
- 14. Luke 8: 1-21
- 15. Luke 8: 22-39
- 16. Luke 8: 40-56
- 17. Luke 9: 1-17
- 18. Luke 9: 18-27
- 19. Luke 9: 28-45
- 20. Luke 9: 46-62
- 21. John 8: 1-20
- 22. John 8: 21-47
- 23. John 12: 20-36a
- 24. John 17: 1-26
- 25. Acts 9: 1-25
- 26. Acts 9: 26-43
- 27. John 10: 1-21
- 28. John 10: 22-42
- 29. John 11: 1-27
- 30. John 11: 28-44
- 31. John 14: 1-14



January Trivia with Hints

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. What did Jesus eat after his resurrection to prove he was not a mere phantom? (Luke 24) | 6. What meat was eaten at the Passover meal? (Exodus 12) |
| 2. Who fasted for 40 days on Mount Sinai? (Exodus 34) | 7. Who sold his birthright for a bowl of soup? (Genesis 25) |
| 3. Who had a Pass over meal with his followers in the upper room? (Matthew 26) | 8. Who humbled himself and fasted when accused of Naboth's murder? (1 Kings 21) |
| 4. Who received meals at the hands of birds? (1 Kings 17) | 9. Who fasted until his child b Bathsheba died? (2 Samuel 12) |
| 5. Who was raped after bringing a meal to her supposedly sick brother? (2 Samuel 13) | 10. How many men had bound themselves by an oath to fast until they had killed Paul? (Acts 23) |

From *The Complete Book of Bible Trivia* by J. Stephen Lang
Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Copyright 1988

December Trivia Answers

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Who suggested that stones could be turned to bread? (Luke 4:3) <i>Satan</i> | 6. Who erected a large pillar of stone and called it Ebenezer? (1 Samuel 7: 12) <i>Samuel</i> |
| 2. Who used a stone for a pillow? (Genesis 28: 11-22) <i>Jacob</i> | 7. What shepherd boy went into battle with a bag of stones? (1 Samuel 17 : 49) <i>David</i> |
| 3. What enemies of Joshua were pelted by stones from the Lord? (Joshua 10:11) <i>The Amorites</i> | 8. Who built an altar of stone that was consumed by fire from heaven? (1 Kings 18 : 31-38) <i>Elijah</i> |
| 4. In what humiliating way was Abimelech murdered? (Judges 9: 53) <i>A woman dropped a millstone on his head</i> | 9. What patriarch and his father-in-law heaped up stones as a sign of their covenant together? (Genesis 31: 34-35) <i>Jacob & Laban</i> |
| 5. Who had a vision of an angel casting an enormous stone into the sea? (Revelation 2: 17) <i>John</i> | 10. Who sat on a stone while the Amalekites fought the Israelites? (Exodus 17 : 8-12) <i>Moses</i> |

Faith is trusting God even when you don't understand His plan.

*C.S. Lewis quote - Life with God is not immunity from difficulties,
but peace in difficulties.*

When we pray, GOD hears more than we say, answers more than we ask, gives more than we imagine...in His own time and in His own way.

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OAKLAND, IOWA

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Rev. Karen Hoff, Pastor

Sheryl Sindt, Secretary



"We invite all persons to be a part of our Community of Faith by participating in worship, education, fellowship and Christian service."

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Sunday school Christmas Program



Haley Hummel graduated from Simpson College December 9, 2015 with a Bachelor of Arts degree.



Baylour Claire was born December 19th, joined brother Maverick, sister Oakkley and parents Jesse and Nichole Kalb.



Noah Wayne Myers was born March 13, 2015 and baptized December 27th. Parents are Petty Officer Second Class Jared Christopher Myers and Heather Leigh Myers.