

Neshoba Church- DECEMBER 2011 Newsletter

7350 Raleigh LaGrange Road
Cordova, TN 38018
901-266-2626 - www.neshobauu.org



The purpose of Neshoba Church is to provide a caring community that fosters spiritual growth through free thought and respect for personal beliefs. This church seeks the wisdom of many religious traditions and encourages the expression of our ideals in service to all people.

Neshoba Church: A Unitarian Universalist Congregation

December Worship Calendar

*Sunday Morning Worship begins at 11 a.m.
Other dates & times noted below.*

- December 4 ***Deeply Religious: Love is a Verb***
(Sunday) Pulpit Guest: Rev. Keith Kron
- December 7 ***Advent Vespers, 7pm***
(Wednesday) Service preceded by a light meal.
- December 11 ***Youth Religious Education: Taking Our Kids Seriously***
(Sunday) Sarah Osborne, *Director of Religious Education*
Christopher Douglas, Michael Johnson, *Pulpit Guests*
Deb & Chloe Walker, Doug Insch, Miska Shaw, Merilynn Rowan
and RE Children, *Worship Associates*
- December 18 ***The Sun in Exile***
(Sunday)
- December 21 ***Winter Solstice, 7pm***
(Wednesday) *Presented by CUUPS (Covenant of Unitarian Universalist
Pagans) and Bella Luna*
- December 24 ***Christmas Eve Service, 7:00 p.m.***
(Saturday)
- December 25 ***Music and readings for Christmas/Multi-generational***
(Sunday) The nursery and RE classes will be closed.

IN THE INTERIM:

Christmas Eve 2011: For So the Children Come
Saturday, December 24,
7:00 p.m.
Carol singing begins at
6:30



By Rev. Cynthia Prescott

Did you know that two favorite holiday songs, *Jingle Bells* and *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear*, were composed by Unitarian ministers? If you visit Savannah, Georgia, and ask directions to the “Jingle Bells Church”, most people will know the place you mean. (If you ask directions to the *Unitarian Universalist* church, maybe not so much.)

The Christmas Eve candle-lighting service at Neshoba honors the many rich sources of our faith tradition that Unitarian Universalism calls upon in celebrating this special time of year. This is a multi-generational service, although parents of young children anticipating an early start to Christmas Day are welcome, if they choose, to depart after the children’s story.

Good music, good stories, good company and lots of candles. What more can one ask of a good Christmas Eve? Bring family, bring friends, bring each other.

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Folks who attended Wednesday Night Live on November 2 were invited to assist members of the Social Justice Committee in brainstorming for 2012, Neshoba’s 20th anniversary year. Focus was on raising public awareness of issues affecting both local and world community. Ideally the chosen project/s would be multi-generational, interfaith, a good fit for Neshoba’s strengths, and designed to build lasting relationships within the greater Memphis area.

A summary of issues and ideas raised in the group:

Equal Opportunity. Marriage equality, economic justice for the working poor, immigration, reproductive rights; sexuality education (OWL); literacy/tutoring

Children and Animals: A Natural Bond.

Increase involvement with the Heifer Project. Branch into related areas, such as animal rights.

Youth and Young Adults. Forum series targeting issues relevant to youth and young adults; safe transitional housing and other help for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) youth. Send as many youth and young adults as possible to the 2012 UUA “Justice G.A. (General Assembly) in Phoenix.

20th Anniversary. Revitalize or expand upon a project important to Neshoba twenty years ago, i.e. the Bond Homes.

Further information and other opportunities to provide input will be coming to you soon from the Social Justice Committee.

Blessings,

Rev. Cynthia



Large Chalice, painted by Daniel Rickard

Nov/Dec Foyer Art Update

Thank you to everyone who attended the Wine & Cheese Reception for artisans Dan Rickard & Annelise Rostig on Nov. 13th. Please note: sold items are marked with a star sticker, but the artists will reprint or take orders for additional pieces. Please call the office for details, 266-2626.

*Director of Religious
Education (DRE)*

Sarah Osborne, DRE



“EVERYTHING we do is faith development. ALL we teach is Unitarian Universalism. Our CONGREGATION is the curriculum.” ~Connie Goodbread, acting UUA Mid-South Executive Director and religious educator

Attending my first RE conference almost 2 years ago, I learned the above words. They had a profound impact on my view of religious education. I realized that our faith is one where action and service are the core expression of our identity. A “RE program” is simply a systematic way or structure that intentionally sets time aside to develop the “how-to”. Faith development happens all the time at Neshoba. When we teach or attend a class, when we serve on a committee, when we speak the affirmation of covenant in the worship service, when we give a hug or ask someone how they’re doing—that is the curriculum of Unitarian Universalism.

Many hands play a part in faith development at Neshoba and I am so grateful to be a part of this community. Our Sunday school for children alone takes over 30 volunteers to operate each semester. Each Sunday, 8 people teach, assist, monitor, and care for our youngest Neshobans. I once heard someone say, if you want to learn what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist, you should teach a RE class. Truer words could not be spoken. Our actions, examples, and service are faith development.

On December 11th, I’d like for you to join me during the worship service to learn more about faith development. This lay-led worship will illustrate how service is our prayer at Neshoba. Talking about Neshoba’s recent Heifer field trip and fundraising experience, faith in action will be explored.

We will also give thanks for the many volunteers in Neshoba’s RE program. Come be inspired to enrich your own faith development and identity as a Unitarian Universalist.

In faith,
Sarah

Namaste,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah".

Director of Religious Education

Guest at Your Table

On Sunday, Nov. 20th, Rev. Cynthia, DRE Sarah Osborne, and the children of Neshoba handed out "Guest at Your Table" boxes. These boxes represent the UUSC (Unitarian Universalist Service Committee) project to bring awareness to such issues as safe & affordable water; protecting people affected by disasters; promoting workers' rights; and advancing civil liberties and democratic processes. (For more info, please visit : <http://www.uusc.org/guest>)

Neshobans are asked to set these boxes at their table and use these them to collect spare change. Please convert your change to "checks" made payable to UUSC and return to Neshoba on Sunday, Jan 8th 2012.

If you have any questions, please e-mail office@neshobauu.org or call 266-2626

It's that time of year again! RE Volunteer Recruitment

The Religious Education Program is seeking a few good volunteers to serve in the classroom as teachers or assistants, in the nursery as caregivers, and in the hallway as hall monitors. The spring semester runs January 29th through May 27th. If you are interested in volunteering or want to know more, please contact DRE Sarah Osborne dre@neshobauu.org

Taking Our Kids Seriously

December 11, 2011 11:00am

The December 11 Sunday Worship Service is tentatively entitled "Faith in Action." The service will be led by the Religious Education Department, along with people who participated in the Social Justice Committee's field trip to Heifer International Ranch back in October. This will be an opportunity to learn about the value of educating ourselves and our children about the needs of others, and then going out and taking action to make a difference. The service will feature reflections on the Heifer field trip and Neshoba's efforts to raise money for the organization. Currently, there is a long, vertical cylinder located outside of the RE classrooms in which quarters can be placed to support the purchase of a Heifer animal for a needy family. Gift catalogs will also be available in the foyer on December 11.



Neshoba HOMeschoolers Co-op:

Winter Around the World

Join the Neshoba HOMeschoolers co-op for a Winter Holiday Party on Tuesday, December 13th from 10am-noon! Our theme will be "Winter Around the World." This will be an opportunity for all to learn about different winter holidays, festivals and rituals around the world. All are welcome to attend. For more information, please contact DRE Sarah Osborne at dre@neshobauu.org

November Board Meeting

Summary of November 2011 Board Meeting

The Neshoba Board of Directors met on Tuesday, November 8. The meeting mainly focused on Neshoba's budget shortfalls over the past four years, and the following topics were discussed:

- The "guesswork" needs to be taken out of Neshoba's finances.
- To guide this process, a Finance Committee has been established consisting of Markus Rostig, Wes Mueller, Joe Schellenberg, Carolyn Clements, Tom Crutcher, and Will Batts.
- Southwest District finance consultant Gaye Webb has begun working with members of the Finance Committee, both individually and as a group.
- Finance policies and procedures will be developed so that responsibilities can be clearly delineated and delegated to the appropriate person.
- Prospective ministerial candidates should be presented with a financial plan that explains the steps Neshoba is taking to rectify the current budget shortfall.

All church members are invited to attend the monthly Board meetings, which are held at the church at 7:00 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month.

From the President...

Dear Fellow Neshobans,

Per our church by-laws, the Board requests that all members recommit to their membership to the church by March 1, 2012. This is for purposes of reporting to the UUA and to keep our records up-to-date prior to the pledge drive.

Please contact the office by e-mailing office@neshobauu.org or by calling 266-2626.

Thank you,

Cathy Chapman
Neshoba Board President



Neshoba Church

A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

Pathway to Membership Luncheon Sat., Dec 10th, 10am-1pm

We invite all those interested in becoming members of Neshoba Church to join us in this informative discussion and exploration of what it means to be a Unitarian Universalist and member of Neshoba Church.

Learn more about our Social Justice efforts, adult and family RE programs and community building opportunities here at Neshoba.

Welcome & Introduction

The History of Unitarian Universalism

The History of Neshoba

Lunch & UUA video "Voices of a Liberal Faith"

The Value and Voice of Membership

Stewardship - Investing Your Time, Treasure and Talent

How do I get involved?

Questions

For more information, or to RSVP (so we can prepare enough food) please call the church office at 266-2626, or e-mail

membership@neshobauu.org

Chalice Lighter Program

The Chalice Lighter Program helps churches in our district with special projects. We did receive help from this program when we bought our land. Churches have received grants for help for churches damaged in the severe storms, for churches that needed to expand a building, for start up funds for a new church. We would like to apply next year for a grant to help with some of our big ticket items. In order to apply we need 25% of the membership to participate in the program. Chalice Lighters puts out a call no more than 3 times per year and asks the participants to send in a \$10.00 donation.

We received over \$10000 when the call was to help Neshoba. So if you participate in this program please let a board member know so we can see how close we are to being able to ask for a grant.

Ministerial Search Committee

The search committee is officially “open for business.” After months of meeting with you, evaluating all the data and input from the congregation and preparing everything that was required of us from the UUA, we are now authorized to exchange information with ministers in search. Our congregational record is on file with the Transitions Office.

Ministerial candidates look at our information and indicate an interest in Neshoba. At that point, we are able to view their ministerial record. If we are interested in further discussion, we will forward to him or her our Neshoba packet.

The packet is full of valuable information about Memphis, Neshoba and who we are. It has many pictures of our congregation, our campus, our Shelby Farms neighborhood and points of interest in Memphis.

We will also schedule a telephone interview between the candidate and the committee. This process will be our priority for the next month or two. When we find a candidate that we think we can possibly see as our minister, we will take the next step and invite them to Memphis for a pre-candidating weekend.

Stay tuned for more on that process. Light your candles and send all your wonderful Neshoba energy out into the ministerial candidate universe and stay on the ride with us.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact one of the members of the committee at search@neshobauu.org

Beyond Categorical Thinking

Workshop & Luncheon

Sunday, Dec 4th, following the service

Neshoba will participate in the **Beyond Categorical Thinking** workshop offered by the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) for congregations involved in the search for a new minister. The Neshoba Search Committee invites all congregational leaders, MEMBERS and friends to participate in this workshop.

Join us and participate in this UUA-sponsored workshop led by Keith Kron, UUA Director of Transitions

WHEN:: Sunday, December 4, 2011 following services

WHERE: Neshoba Church Sanctuary

WHY: (1) **Free Lunch** (provided by the Search Committee) (2) To consider the hopes, expectations, and concerns you may have for a new minister (3) To learn more about the ministerial search process (4) To explore how thinking categorically about people sometimes interferes with choosing the best candidate. For more info, please e-mail search@neshobauu.org

Poinsettia Arrival

If you purchased a Poinsettia last month during the RE Fundraiser, they have been delivered to the church and can be picked up Wednesday nights or Sundays until Christmas. For more info, please contact Sarah at dre@neshobauu.org

WOW

The Neshoba Women of Wisdom will meet for their annual holiday gathering on Wednesday, Dec. 7th at 6:30 p.m. We will meet at the home of Janet Rosenthal in Bartlett. Come and share a potluck dinner, a white elephant gift exchange and great holiday cheer. Please contact Linda Woodbury at wow@neshobauu.org or Merilyn Rowan for address and more information.

Cookie Swap – Dec 7th

7pm (at the church)

Join us for this inspirational time together and exchange of holiday treats. We will also be signing and personalizing cards for the Bond Homes.

The cookie swap is lots of fun, but you must RSVP for this event by Sunday December 4th.

Guidelines for participating in the cookie swap:

1. You must bring 6 dozen cookies and an empty container to transport you swapped cookies home.
2. We prefer cookies to be homemade (but you can stop by a bakery if you're too busy to bake.)
3. Participants will go home with 6 dozen assorted cookies (If we have 12 people participate, that means you have 6 of each kind of cookie).
4. What do I do with all these cookies? Well, you could eat them or you could give them as gifts during the holiday season.

After the swap, we will serve hot cocoa and coffee and make holiday cards for the residents of the Bond Homes.

Contact dre@neshobauu.org for more info.

January Newsletter Deadline:

Friday, December 16th at 4pm

If you would like your article included in next month's newsletter, you must submit "cut-and-paste-ready copy" of 100 words or less to office@neshobauu.org by 4pm on the 3rd Friday of each month. If you have any questions, please call 266-2626.

Book Club

The Neshoba Book Club meets the second Thursday of each month in the Neshoba kitchen. Our book selection for December 8th is the highly-recommended, "These is My Words," by Nancy Turner. Potluck dinner starts at 7:00, followed by fun book discussion. Please see the bulletin board for a list of upcoming Book Club selections.

Wednesday Night Live

Join us every Wednesday night for social time, inspiration, and learning opportunities from 6-9pm Childcare is available. Dinner is served from 6-7pm with a \$5 per person or \$15 maximum donation. Programs, games and a movie are available each week. Please call the office at 266-2626 or e-mail office@neshobauu.org for more info.

December Events:

December 7, 7:00 PM - Adult Vespers holiday service. Join us for this special evening service with Rev. Cynthia Prescott as we welcome the winter holidays. Whatever your path or heritage the winter holidays bring a time of reflection, celebration, family and community. Join us after service for our holiday cookie exchange and hot beverages.

December 14, 7:00 PM Qigong Workshop. Qigong is a practice of aligning breath, movement, and awareness for exercise, healing, and meditation. With roots in Chinese medicine, martial arts, and philosophy, qigong is traditionally viewed as a practice to balance qi (chi) or intrinsic life energy. Typically a qigong practice involves rhythmic breathing, coordinated with slow stylized repetition of fluid movement, and a calm mindful state. From a philosophical and spiritual perspective qigong is believed to help develop human potential, to increase access to higher realms of awareness, and to awaken one to one's true nature. Qigong instructor Daniel Myers will lead us in this workshop in the sanctuary.

December 21 7:00 PM- Neshoba Sacred Circle CUUPS Join us for our Winter Solstice and Yule Ritual. We welcome the return of the light half of the year and birth of the newborn God. Join us in this celebration of light and rebirth. Feel free to wear your robes, cloaks or holiday garb. We will be meeting in the Sanctuary.

December 28 - No activity this evening.

Bonds Care Homes Project

By Linda Holmes

Please join our annual Neshoba event: adopt a resident at the Bond Care Homes this holiday season. **Our goal is to purchase new twin size sheets and comforter for each resident.**

There is also a sign up sheet in the hallway with other optional items to purchase for the residents.

Bring wrapped gifts to Neshoba by 12-11-11.

There's also a need for people to sign up to bring "party food/soda" and to attend the celebration at the Bond Homes from about 2:00-4:00 on Sunday, 12-18-11. Sign up sheets are located in the hallway.

In addition, please bring a teddy bear to donate to the Child Advocacy Center. Bears can be placed under our X-Mas tree until they are delivered. There will also be a Good Will box for kids to donate a stuffed animal or doll from their collection.

Your participation in these events is greatly appreciated!!! Contact Linda Holmes at 266-2626 with questions.

Ink Jet Recycling

Neshoba can earn \$3 for each undamaged **HP, Dell or Lexmark ink or toner cartridge**. The cartridges can be dropped off in the green box on the shelf immediately to the left of the entrance by the office. Neshoba has received several hundred dollars of benefits from past donations so keep those cartridges coming. For more info, please contact Markus at markus.rostig@neshobauu.org

Mental Health Art

The Mental Health Art Group is for anyone with a mental illness who likes to draw or paint. Members provide their own art supplies. This is an opportunity for mental health consumers to socialize and expand their art skills. It is not a class, just a group of artists who like to share. We meet at Neshoba Church on Mondays from 2pm to 4pm **ONLY WHEN IT IS NOT RAINING**. Space is limited, so please contact Ellen at 758-3130 if you plan to come.

Parent's Time Out (PTO)

Parent's Time Out is a great opportunity to catch a movie, have a quiet bite to eat, or run errands while your kids pester someone else for a change! You deserve a break, and your kids deserve a chance to create lasting relationships with other mini-Neshobans.

Participants are expected to volunteer to watch the kids for an afternoon in the near future & might need to chip in for lunch/snacks (this might be up to \$5 per child & not more than \$10 per family).

We will alternate between Sunday afternoons & Saturday late afternoon/evenings. The next event is December 10th 12-4pm. Please sign up at least one week in advance of each event. For more information, contact Melissa Mann at Tatatowanz@gmail.com

Note: Volunteers without "wee ones" are encouraged to volunteer for the December event so that all of our PTO participants can sneak away and holiday shop. Please call the office if you'd like to volunteer, 266-2626.

Family Friendly

Circle Suppers!

Interested in getting to know other families at Neshoba with young children? Starting in January Neshoba will begin a trial period of Circle Suppers geared towards people with elementary school aged kids and younger. Gatherings will still be on 3rd Saturdays, however the start time will be earlier to allow parents to get their kids in bed at a reasonable hour. The first gathering will be on Saturday, January 21st from 4 - 7 at the Keane-Douglas home. Signup on the bulletin board across from the church office.

For more information or to sign up to host a Circle Supper please contact Trish MacCabe at circlesuppers@neshobauu.org. Thank you!

Starry Nights Volunteers

Starry Nights' at Shelby Farms contacted us recently. They are looking for volunteers! Volunteers (min age 15) needed

Duties include ticket collection, program distribution, merchandise sales, directing traffic, parking assistance, etc.

Shifts are as follows:

Sun. 5-9p

Mon. 5-9p

Tues.-Thurs. 5-9p

Fri. & Sat. 5-9p & 7-10p (2 shifts)

Sat. & Sun. 1-5p merchandise sales only

Contact Irene Montanez, Volunteer Coordinator at (901)767-7275 or imontanez@shelbyfarmspark.org

Grocery Connection

Do you shop at Kroger? If your answer is yes, and you don't have a Neshoba card, please see Victor Lendermon after church or call the office at 266-2626.

Communication Committee Update

Please save the date: January 29, 2012

The Communications Committee is sponsoring a Social Media Workshop. All Committee chairs, Staff, & Board Members are encouraged to attend, but everyone is welcome! Please e-mail communication@neshobauu.org for more info.

Our next meeting is Sunday, December 18th@ 12:15pm. If you have any questions about the Neshoba Communications Committee, please contact Lorena Rostig at communication@neshobauu.org

Thank you!

- Thank you to everyone who came out and served food at the Soup Kitchen on Sun, Nov. 27th
- Thank you to everyone who has brought baked goods and flowers to Neshoba. We appreciate you!
- Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to teach RE (Religious Education) and thank you to our DRE Sarah Osborne.
- Thank you to Andrea Smith who has tirelessly watched our babies in the nursery week after week.
- Thank you to everyone who has headed up, joined, or pitched in on a Neshoba Committee in the past year.
- Thank you to everyone who has served as a Worship Service Volunteer or pulpit guest.
- Thank you to everyone we have forgotten to thank. We appreciate you most of all!

Prayer for the day **By Michelle Peel**

Heal our spirits!
Help us reach those who need us.
Guide us back to each other
with love and understanding.
We are not perfect. We only need to
try.
It is all we can do.
Help us hear with new ears. See with
new eyes.
Today is the day.
Now is the time for forgiveness



“This I Believe” October 16, 2011

By Jason Moody

I believe in Truth. Yes, that's "Truth" with a capital "T". I'm not speaking of some vague, spiritual notion; I mean the one objective, demonstrable reality. I don't deny the importance of more subjective, lower-case "truths", the stories and metaphors we tell ourselves and each other to make sense of our world, but I firmly believe in the primacy of the Truth we share. I have often heard it said that "there is more than one way of knowing", but I disagree. There is only one way of knowing, and that is through experience. It doesn't have to be our own, but it is only through experience, and through deliberate reflection on experience, that we can come to understand the universe and our place in it. Anything else is nothing more than wishful thinking, or, dare I say, delusion. That's not to say our delusions don't have their place, but I believe it's vitally important to remember that's exactly what they are. We should never turn our backs on what is true and real in favor of what is comfortable and convenient. I will always prefer an inconvenient, unpleasant Truth over a comforting delusion.

I believe the universe is comprehensible. Everything that happens happens for a reason, and that reason is nothing more than the accumulation of causes and their effects, stretching back in an unbroken chain to the very dawn of time. We live in a universe of great mystery and wonder, and mystery should be sought out and celebrated. But mystery and ambiguity should never be preserved for their own sake. Mystery is an opportunity to learn, and to grow, and to discover something more about our reality.

Mystery is born of ignorance, not of ineffability. There are certainly questions we don't have the answers to, and there are questions to which we'll never have the answers, and there are questions we *can* never

answer. But there are no questions *without* answers. And there certainly aren't questions we aren't *meant* to answer, or things we're not meant to know. Such a notion presupposes the existence of an "arbiter of meaning" in the cosmos, and I believe there isn't one.

I believe in accidents. The universe never had us in mind, because the universe doesn't have a mind. Our world and our lives are the result of a string of quantum events, cosmological circumstance, and basic chemistry. There is no design. We might say we're insignificant in the Grand Scheme of things, but even that is inaccurate. There is no Grand Scheme. We are accidents; but we are not mistakes.

And our existence is made all the more precious because of it. I believe the universe has no ultimate meaning or purpose or reason for our existence. And that means we're free to create our own. We do so, not within the boundless infinity of a cold, indifferent universe, but within the social sphere of our relationships, both with each other and with our world. It is within this much smaller arena that we find purpose and meaning and consequence. We may never have real, lasting impact on our universe-at-large, but the impact we have on individual lives, and on our world, can be profound. That's where I look for meaning and purpose.

Because I believe in people. We are all gentle, hopeful, noble creatures. And we are all selfish, greedy, savage beasts. Which aspect of our dual nature we choose to embrace and nurture is forever our choice. We have a shared responsibility for our world, our future, and for each other, and we can do far more together than we could ever hope to alone. What we do today may not resonate beyond our own insignificant little mudball, it may be forgotten in 1000 years, or in 100. So what? It may be remembered tomorrow. It may make a difference today.

Editor's note: During the October 16th service, four members of the Adult RE Class titled, "This I Believe" (led by Bill Siler) shared their statements with the congregation. For the next few months, we'll print these statements. Thank you to Jason Moody for sharing his statement this month.



7350 Raleigh-Lagrange Rd.
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December Wednesday Night Live

Join us every Wednesday for Wednesday Night Live. Childcare is provided from 6:00 - 9:00 PM and we share a simple meal from 6:00-7:00. The meal is just \$5.00 per person or \$15.00 family or come join is at 7:00 PM for fellowship and activities.

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Rev. Cynthia Prescott

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**Neshoba
Church**

A UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION

Do you receive the 10-Day Forecast and Monthly Newsletter by email? If not, please visit our website to sign up. The 10-Day Forecast is our most comprehensive reminder of events coming up at Neshoba. A hard copy is posted each Friday on the Communications Committee Bulletin Board in the hallway (near the nametags.) For more info, please call the office (266-2626) or e-mail Lorena at communication@neshobauu.org

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To keep our newsletter mailing list updated, please call the church office, 901-266-2626, to let us know if you wish to have your name deleted, added, or your address changed.