



DECEMBER 2007

A Note From Our Pastor

Here we are! The end of the year! It is December, already. It seems like it was just yesterday that we were making New Year resolutions. If you are like me, there are many things that I said I was going to do this year, but they never floated to the top of my priority list. There were many things that should have been done, could have been done, but weren't important enough to me, for me to ever do.

As we enter this Advent Season, filled with expectation, anticipation, things that must be done, things that should be done; let us prioritize our "TO DO" list now, in the semi-quiet before the rush of the season is fully upon us.

My prayer is that at the top of your priority list will be your commitment to be in a new or in a stronger relationship with our Savior. I hope you will commit to reach out and touch Jesus – he is always there. Pray without ceasing. Read your Bible so you can know the God to whom you pray, hear his desire for you, and joyfully serve him as we build his kingdom on earth, as it is in heaven.

Enjoy all that this Christmas season has for you. See God's blessings all around you. Merry Christmas!

Know God's love, and especially know the joy of sharing that love with others.

Marc

UMM

The UMM met 0830 on Sunday 18 Nov 07. Calvin Rome gave the invocation. Bill, Demitries, Darius and Dominique prepared breakfast, it was delicious and plentiful. Thanks young UMM for doing such a great job and being so helpful. After breakfast Calvin gave the devotion, "Money and Meaning" Ecclesiastes 2:1-12. Thanks Calvin for the great devotional again. REMEMBER: Treat your earnings as treasures that God has committed you to manage and administer these resources in a way that pleases the Lord.

We hope to see all the men of the church at our next meeting, which will be Sunday, 16 Dec. 07 at 0830. Bring a friend, neighbor, co-worker or even a stranger to share in a great breakfast and fun fellowship. Just a reminder, we welcome the men of the church (member or not) to join us for United Methodist Men each month, even if it has been awhile since we have seen you. Come, fellowship and break bread (or a biscuit) with the other men of the church.

Happy 25th Anniversary Mr. & Mrs Troy Wiloughby. Congratulations and many more years together!

President Andy Hewitt opened the meeting by welcoming and thanking everyone again for their support of the UMM and for making his transition as President so smooth. Mr. Dave Norris announced that 727 Bar-B-Q plates were sold at the annual UMM B-B-q plate sale and thanked everyone again for their support. Thanks to all who made this event a great success.

New Business:

A motion was made and passed to renew the UMM Charter Membership for year 2008. A motion was made and passed that the UMM make a \$400.00 donation to the 1K for 1Kid program.

A motions was made to purchase more "Usher" pins for the church. After discussion , the motion passed.

There was discussion on the ARP Fund (Air, Roof, and Power) and how much financial support the UMM can and will provide. The matter was tabled until a later date and more information is available.

Mr. Tim Penny, the guest speaker, was unable to attend at this time. He will be re-scheduled as soon as possible. Check the UMM Board for further information.

Andy welcomes new and old ideas alike. If you would like to speak with him call him at 910-323-4444.

Thanks UMM for volunteering for the Communion Ministry. The feedback that is being received is overwhelmingly positive and it brings the UMM great joy in being able to provide this Ministry. If you know of anyone who would like to take part, please contact Calvin Rome of the church office.

December Communion members:

Bill and Maria Stackhouse	Lloyd Miller
Bob Lambert	Dave Norris
Charles Lucas	*Alt: Calvin Rome

December Ushers:

Robert Parker	Calvin Rome
Santos Pena	Jack Spakes

Alt: Dave Norris

Be sure and check out the UMM Board located in the front hallway for valuable information!

A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.

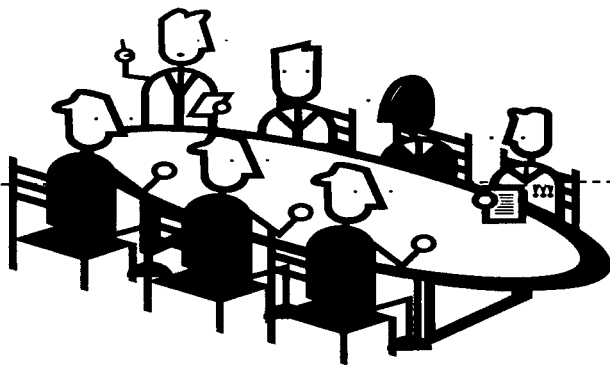
Respectfully submitted

Bill Stackhouse, UMM Secretary

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Greetings from your new Outreach committee chairperson. I am excited of this new adventure, especially reaching out to our community to show the people what our Lord is all about. The outreach of our church is always busy with projects, especially now with the holidays. We will be participating in the Angel Tree from November 25 to December 9. This is a project that the whole church participates in. On Sunday, November 25 we will all pick an angel off of the tree. Each angel contains the information of a needy child in our community. Then you buy a gift for your angel and return the gift to the church by Sunday December 9. This is a fun activity that brings joy to little ones this Christmas season. St. Matthew's continues to provide food baskets to the needy in our community through our food pantry. I would like to thank everyone who participated in our November canned food drive. We filled the hallways with food, and it was a blessing to see people giving back because they said they had been blessed. The food pantry is yet another outreach activity that the whole church can participate in. St. Matthews is also reaching out to one of the local grade schools. We have partnered with JW Coon Elementary for what we call our Hand-in-Hand project. We still need volunteers and prayer partners to make the Hand-in-Hand project a success. We have about 10 volunteers at this time. Even if you can not volunteer, sign up to be a prayer partner--it is as easy as adding JW Coon to your prayers! There again is another project that the whole church can participate in. Outreach of the church is for the whole congregation to participate in, not just the Outreach committee. I have heard several times how other churches are impressed by how much St. Matthew's gives to the community. I figured that all churches do as much as we do, but I guess not. I was very proud to be part of a congregation who cares and gives back so much to the community. I wish everyone a happy holiday season and a Merry Christmas as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In God's love,
Amanda Call



NOTES FROM THE NURTURE COMMITTEE

A special thank you to all who graciously helped with the Harvest Dinner. We were all truly blessed by the service which was led by Lynnwood and Julie Griffin.

Our hallways are filling up with canned goods. Please consider contributing to this ministry.

May you be blessed during this Christmas season.

**Hanging of the Greens
Saturday,
December 1st at
5:00 pm**

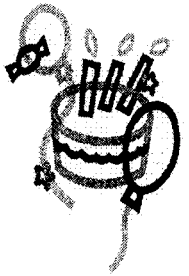
**CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
DECEMBER 9 @ 5:00 PM**



Present by the
**Halleluiah Choristers
and
the Chancel Choir**

Come witness and be apart of the beautiful transformation of our Sanctuary in preparing for the glorious celebration of our Saviors' birth. Refreshments will follow this very special service.

*Birthday Party for Jesus
2:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Sunday, December 9th
ALL children 0 to 21 are invited.
Plan to stay for the Christmas
program!*



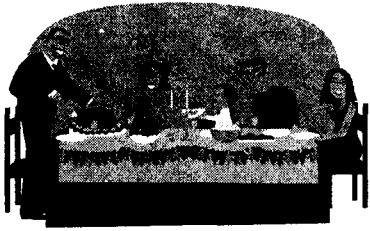
CHRISTMAS IS COMING

I want to draw your attention to a very special event coming soon, to a house of worship near you. We will have a Christmas Day service here at 10:00 a.m. We will welcome the baby Jesus with Christmas carols, prayer, and a short meditation.

Too often, our culture tells us that Christmas Day is just for families and football. This cultural bias often blinds us to our responsibility to worship God on this second, yes second most holy day of the Christian year. I remember when our children were young, they got up before 6:00 and by 9:00 everybody was looking for something to do. When the children finally spent Christmas Day at their own home, Donna and I slept in later but were still ready to do something by 9:00 or so. This year, be selfish, make this Christmas Day a day just for families and football – and Jesus. Come casual – flannel shirts and jeans, or whatever. Let the kids bring a toy if that's what it takes. Come.

**PEOPLE WITHOUT PARTNERS
ANNUAL DINNER**

Sponsored by the FFF
Saturday December 8, at 4 pm.



St. Matthews will go Christmas Caroling

December 23rd at 3:00 pm

Everyone is invited!

UMYF will go to Smokey Bones afterwards!



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE AT 6 PM

With Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE AT 10 AM

Singing all your favorite Christmas songs





The Christmas Orange

Jake was nine years old with tousled brown hair with blue eyes as bright as a heavenly angel. For as long as Jake could remember he had lived within the walls of a poor orphanage. He was just one of ten children supported by what meager contributions the orphan home could obtain in a continuous struggle seeking donations from townsfolk.

There was very little to eat, but at Christmas time there always seemed to be a little more than usual to eat, the orphanage seemed a little warmer, and it was time for a little holiday enjoyment. But more than this, there was the Christmas orange!

Christmas was the only time of year that such a rare treat was provided and it was treasured by each child like no other food admiring it, feeling it, prizing it and slowly enjoying each juicy section. Truly, it was the light of each orphan's Christmas and their best gift of the season. How joyful would be the moment when Jake received his orange!

Unknown to him, Jake had somehow managed to track a small amount of mud on his shoes through the front door of the orphanage, muddying the new carpet. He hadn't even noticed. Now it was too late and there was nothing he could do to avoid punishment. The punishment was swift and unrelenting. Jake would not be allowed his Christmas orange! It was the only gift he would receive from the harsh world he lived in, yet after a year of waiting for his Christmas orange, it was to be denied him.

Tearfully, Jake pleaded that he be forgiven and promised never to track mud into the orphanage again, but to no avail. He felt hopeless and totally rejected. Bedtime came, and worst of all, Jake couldn't sleep. How could he say his prayers? How could there be a God in Heaven that would allow a little soul such as his, to suffer so much all by himself? Silently, he sobbed for the future of mankind that God might end the suffering in the world, both for himself and all others like him.

As he climbed back into bed from the cold, hard floor, a soft hand touched Jake's shoulder, startling him momentarily and an object was silently placed in his hands. The giver disappeared into the darkness, leaving Jake with what, he did not immediately know!

Looking closely at it in the dim light, he saw that it looked like an orange! Not a regular orange, smooth and shiny, but a special orange, very special. Inside a patched together peel were the segments of nine other oranges, making one whole orange for Jake! The nine other children in the orphanage had each donated one segment of their own precious oranges to make a whole orange as a gift for Jake.

Our Heavenly Father gave us His beloved Son. May we, like the children in the orphanage, find ways to share His love with others less blessed.



Our Mission in the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church is

“Healthy congregations and effective leaders in every place, making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”

At the Annual Conference session in June, 2007, lay and clergy members were given a packet that contains a Bible study, an assessment tool and a ministry action plan for the purpose of making our congregations healthier for the disciple-making task that is before us. We do not regard congregational health as a standard to be attained, but rather, as a direction for growth. We may grow healthier as we understand God’s desire that we become more like Jesus. We may become stronger as we recognize the resources of faith available to us in scripture and by God’s Holy Spirit.

What does a healthy congregation look like? How do we become healthier?

On January 5, 2008, the Fayetteville District will offer a workshop for pastors and church leaders who are asking these questions. From 9-11 a.m. at Lillington UMC, we will consider the 4 marks of congregational health that are identified in Acts 2: Radical hospitality, Passionate worship, Intentional spiritual formation, and Risk-taking mission and ministry. These are not the only marks of health we might consider, but you will notice that these are not measured in numbers, and they have nothing to do with the size or location of a church. We will hear from church folk who are demonstrating health in these very areas of their life in Christ.

Join us for a time of prayer and preparation for a new year of growth in health as faithful congregations in the Fayetteville District.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 2 Adella Pray
- 7 Phil Ogden
- 12 Robin Ogden
Tina Welch
- 13 Jay Thompson
- 14 Jose Pena
- 16 Heather Shackelford
- 18 Donna Dorwart
- 25 Lorene Biggs
- 30 Virginia Bachelor



The Bible has for too long been read for information. It ought to be read for transformation.

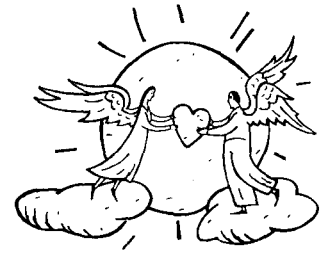
KNOW THE GOD YOU PRAY TO

December 1-8

Psalm 95
Isaiah 2.1-5
Matthew 3
Colossians 1.9-23
John 18.33-37
Isaiah 43.1-21
Hebrews 10.11-25
Zephaniah 3.14-20



Work for the Lord. The pay is low, but the retirement benefits are out of this world



December 9-15

Psalm 138
Luke 1.5-25, 57-80
Matthew 4.106; 28.18-20
Matthew 3.1-12
Isaiah 62
John 1.6-34
Mark 1.1-8



December 16-22

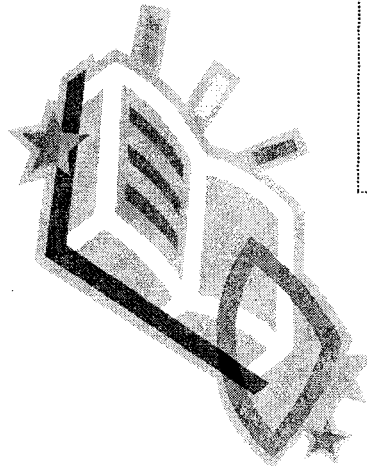
Psalm 85
Mark 13.1-13, 24-37
Luke 21. 25-36
Revelation 1.1-8
Ezekiel 34.1-10
Luke 12.35-48
Acts 1.1-11

EVENING HYMN
I hear no voice, I feel no touch,
I see no glory bright;
But yet I know that God is near, In darkness
as in light.

He watches ever by my side,
And hears my whispered prayer:
The Father for His little child
Both night and day doth care.

December 23-29

Psalm 77
Isaiah 7.10-17
Matthew 1.18-25
Isaiah 40.1-11, 28-31
Ezekiel 34.11-16
Isaiah 9.1-7
Philippians 4.4-9

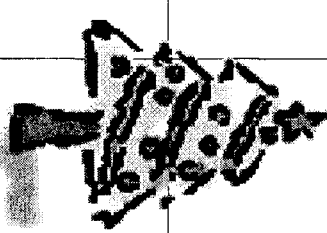


December 30-31

Psalm 65
Isaiah 43.1-13

December 2007



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 Hanging of the Greens 5:00 pm
2 First Sunday in Advent	3 10 a Disciple I 6:30 UMW	4 6:30p Intercessory prayer Service Bible Studies 7p	5 5 p Card Ministry 6p Disciple I 7:30 Choir Practice	6 6:30p Night Owls At Roberta's	7	8 4p People without Partners
9 2-3p Birthday Party For Jesus 5p Christmas Program	10 10a Disciple I	11 6:30p Intercessory prayer Service Bible Studies 7p	12 5 p Card Ministry 6p Disciple I 7:30 Choir Practice	13	14	15
16 8:30a UMM Breakfast 5p Council Meeting	17 10a Disciple I 6:30p Nurture	18 6:30p Intercessory prayer Service Bible Studies 7p	19 5 p Card Ministry 6p Disciple I 7:30 Choir Practice	20	21	22
23 3p Christmas Caroling	24 6p Christmas Eve Service	25 10a Christmas Day Service	26 	27 11a Help-N-Hands	28	29
30 6p Fifth Sunday	31					