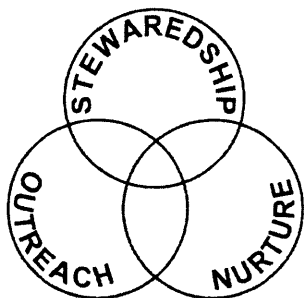


St. Matthew's UMC  
202 Hope Mills Rd.  
Fayetteville NC 28304



## St. Matthew's 25 Challenge



Office 910-425-0401 • Fax 910-425-9393  
Website [stmattnc.org](http://stmattnc.org) • E-mail [stmattumc@stmattnc.org](mailto:stmattumc@stmattnc.org)

*Jesus said, "When you did it to one of these my brethren, you did it unto me." Matt. 25:40*

Volume IV

DECEMBER 2004

Issue 12

# "HELP A 'BUM,' KEEP 'EM A 'BUM'"

This sounds like a statement you would expect to here from Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol", but its not. One of our faithful church members made this statement in my office as a response to their concern that on Laity Sunday our women in the Frayed and Frazzled Flock expresses their dreams of having a soup kitchen for the poor someday. They thought that too many of the people we help are not worthy of our help. The dictionary defines a bum "as a worthless loafer who wants something for nothing." I got to thinking that there are a lot of people in the church who feel this way about the poor. They might not use the same words to describe the way they feel, but their feelings are much the same.

Throughout scripture God seems to have a special love and protection for the widows and orphans, the poor and the oppressed. **Psalm 72:4 tells us how important it is for leaders to "defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and the oppressed."** Our Lord Jesus told us the poor would always be with us. Why is that necessary? Maybe it is because as long as we live in a sinful fallen world there always has to be someone on the bottom, the "Bums." We need this reminder.

In reality we are all "Bums" spiritually. Because of our sin we are all worthless loafers wanting something for nothing. We all want to go to heaven but don't want to pay the price of discipleship. We fail to honor God's commandments; we are unwilling to serve him in a meaningful way with our

gifts and talents; we don't want to tithe and give offerings beyond the tithe; we only attend worship when we feel like it; and we seldom go beyond our own needs when we pray. We want the keys to the kingdom without paying the price of admission. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German theologian who fought Hitler, calls this attitude "**cheep grace.**" In short we are spiritual "Bums," except for the grace of God. Jesus paid the price for us on the cross. That's real grace; costly grace.

Our motivation for helping the poor is a reminder of who we really are in God's sight without grace. Grace is undeserved love. Helping the poor or "bums" is an act of grace as well as an act of charity. When we give to the poor we do so whether they deserve it or not. Even if the parents really are "bums" their children certainly don't deserve to be ignored because of the actions of their parents

The same person who said "Help a bum, keep 'em a bum" also had an interesting comment on my sermon the Sunday I talked about "the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer" the last four years. I held up news articles to document the statement from the Fayetteville Observer to support my claim. He claimed that a number of people upon leaving the church said "You can sure tell he is a Democrat." I don't believe poverty is about any political parties. I made these same claims when the Democrats were in the White House. The fact that poverty, job loss  
*Continued on page 2*

The logo features a stylized cross with a flame-like shape on the left. Below it, the text reads "Children & Poverty" in a large, decorative font, with "The Bishops Initiative" in a smaller font below that.

Children  
& Poverty™  
The Bishops Initiative



and lower paying jobs have increased in the past four years is an unfortunate fact. In 1995 the Council of Bishops launched an Initiative on Children and Poverty with three goals:

1. **To reshape The United Methodist Church in response to the God who is among "the least of these" and the evaluation of everything the church is and does in the light of the impact on children and the impoverished.**
2. **To provide resources for understanding the crisis among children and the impoverished and enabling the church to respond.**
3. **To engage in evangelization: the proclamation in word and deed of the gospel of God's redeeming, reconciling, and transforming grace in Jesus Christ to and with children and those oppressed by poverty.**

This initiative was adopted by General Conference in 1996 and has been extended every General Conference since then including this years conference covering the next four years. The theme for the first four years was "A Church for all God's Children". The 2000 -2004 theme is "Community with Children and the Poor" and the 2005-2008 theme is **Our Shared Dream: "The Beloved Community."**

Methodism was born among the impoverished of eighteenth- century England. So significant was John Wesley's ministry with the poor that he affirmed, "And surely never in any age or nation since the Apostles, have those words been so eminently fulfilled, 'the poor have the gospel preached unto them,' as it is at this day." Studies document that the poor were the central focus of the early Methodist movement. Everything Wesley did in leading the Methodist revival was influenced by the impact on the poor--where and to whom he preached, the design of preaching houses, the availability of published material, the education of children, the leadership of the classes and societies. Wesley considered regular visitation of the poor as a necessary spiritual discipline. He would no more neglect regular visitation of the poor than he would miss partaking of the Eucharist.

The poor literally accompanied him to his grave. As directed in his last will and testament, he was carried to his grave by six poor people who were paid one pound each. The black drapings used in the Chapel for his memorial service were remade into dresses and distributed to poor women. Children and their total needs were of particular concern to the

early Methodists. Wesley was especially concerned that impoverished children not only learn "to read, write, and cast accounts, but more especially (by God's assistance) to 'know God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent'."

When asked in Matthew 19 how one obtains eternal life Jesus answered keep the commandments and love your neighbor and in verse 21 Jesus said to him, "If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me."

Jesus asked us to sell everything and give it to the poor and follow him. We are so comfortable with our things and have grown so dependant upon them that we are not likely to heed his call. But our Bishops have challenged us to build "a church for all God's children", even the "bums". Have we even attempted to be in "Community with Children and the Poor" at St. Matthew's.

We have taken some "baby steps" in this direction. Four years of preaching that the best road to personal and Church prosperity and financial health is giving to those who are not a part of our personal or church family. Why? You can't out give God. All the money we hold in our various bank accounts is a testimony that we trust ourselves more than God. The reason we hold on to it and begrudge spending it, is to take care of us.

When we give as much to others as we spend on ourselves we are beginning, just beginning to move to what our Bishops call "Our Shared Dream, The Beloved Community." I think a few people in this church share this dream with me. I hope others will join in this wonderful challenge to all United Methodists. Why not hug a "bum" and then help them? Help them become the person Jesus sees.

*Shalom, Mike*

## **THRIFT SHOP RESPONDS TO PRE-SCHOOL & AFTER-SCHOOL MINISTRY TEAM REQUEST**

We are so thankful for the people who work hard to make our thrift shop such a success. The pre-school & after-school ministry team received donations from the UMM and UMW for \$500 each and individual gifts of \$59 totaling \$1059 toward the cost of fencing around the south and west sides of the education building. Lynwood Griffin received a bid from ACME Fence Co. for \$2578.

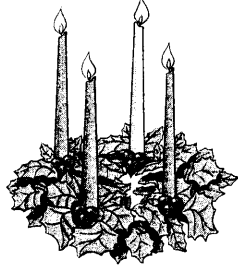
The ministry team ask the Thrift Shop if they would consider underwriting the remaining \$1519. Thanks to their generosity our children will be safer and we will be better prepared to start pre-school and after school programs in the future. Thanks for you help.



## SOUND SYSTEM WORKSHOP

If you are interested in receiving training to operate our sound system, **Mark Autry** from **Edwards Music** will be here Sat. Dec. 11<sup>th</sup> to train us from 9 am -12.

Mark is an experienced sound technician who sets up systems in churches and conducts workshops. Once he sets up and configures our system properly, only those who have been through the training will be allowed to adjust the system.



## ADVENT

We hope you received your mailing with a letter which also included a devotional guide for you for the Advent Season to strengthen your spiritual journey. Also enclosed was an Advent card which can be folded to form a miniature Advent Wreath by placing a votive candle inside. The third item was an Advent coin folder you can use to place a quarter a day in the folder when you do your devotionals. We invite you to bring your Christmas Offering to one of our church services during the Christmas season or mail in your offering. You can bring your offering to our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on December 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. or our Christmas Sunday Worship on December 26<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. All offerings will go to the outreach mission portion of our ministry to benefit others. We pray God's rich blessings upon you as you prepare for Christmas 2004.



## SHARE BOXES FOR 50 FAMILIES

While eating lunch the Sunday we were decorating the sanctuary a few of us talked about the joy of giving out Thanksgiving Share boxes was to those who received them. We decided that it was a better outreach than preparing a meal here at the church. I said I had faith that could find the money for 50 share boxes for Christmas if they could deliver them. Volunteers emerged who would recruit others in the ministry. Boxes will be picked up December 17<sup>th</sup> and distributed by December 20<sup>th</sup>. This will deplete our Emergency Fund resources, if you can help make a

donation or call the office to volunteer. 50 families will share a great meal because you cared this Christmas.



## Angel Tree

As is our tradition, Julie Griffin has provided names for our tree from Cumberland County Mental health. People came down last Sunday and took angles. My daughter grand-daughters and Jane really enjoyed shopping for gifts for those who need our help. There are still angels on the tree. Get one, shop and return your gifts by December 13<sup>th</sup>

## CHRISTMAS MUSIC

December 19<sup>th</sup> -7:00 p.m.

by the combined choirs of  
St. Matthew's UM &  
Mt. Pisgah Baptist Churches



Another great tradition of St. Matthew's is to work with the folks at Mt. Pisgah Baptist Church to present our special Christmas Music. An exciting program has been designed to bless you. We will perform at Mt. Pisgah Baptist on December 12<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. and here December 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. Join us!



## Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion

7:00 p.m.

We want you to be with us for this special worship experience on Christmas Eve. We will share in singing carols, in prayer, in holy communion, and inspiration for living the Christian life. What better time to worship God and give thanks for the gift of the Christ to us and the world? Invite you family, friends and neighbors to worship with you. We will end or service with each person lighting a candle to push back the darkness and celebrate *a Promise Fulfilled*.

## FRAYED & FRAZZLED FLOCK:

FFF has two major projects for the month of December. We will be hosting the “**Happy Birthday Jesus**” party on **December 5th at 2:00 p.m.** On **December 18th**, we will be hosting the “**People Without Partners**” dinner by invitation only.

We would like to say **THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH** for we could not have accomplished everything we have done this year without your help. We are so grateful for all the support that is given to us for the ministries that we do.

Next year, we will meet on **January 15th at 8:30 a.m.** for cooking and visitation. After that, we will head over to the **Pizza Palace at 11:30 a.m.** for our discussion of our new book. Our new book is titled “**The Five People You Meet in Heaven**” by Mitch Albom. We hope you will join us in January.

We have finished one year of our Book Club. We have managed to read eleven books. For those who also like reading, here is a list of everything that we read this year.

Lori Wick - The English Garden Series  
(4 Books)  
A Time to Dance  
Skipping Christmas



The Hawk and the Dove (Trilogy)  
Bamboo and Lace  
A Time to Embrace

## WHY GO TO WORSHIP?

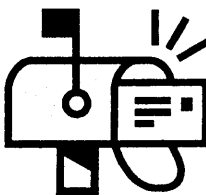
**A churchgoer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every week. “I’ve gone for 30 years now,” he wrote, “and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me I can’t remember a single one of them. So I think I’m wasting my time...” This started a controversy in the “Letter to the Editor” column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:**

**“I’ve been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this...they all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me those meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!”**

*“Thy words were found, and I did eat them;  
And they word was unto me the joy and  
Rejoicing of mine heart...” Jeremiah 15: 16*

## CHRISTMAS CARD MAILBOX:

THE CHRISTMAS MAILBOX IS  
TO GIVE CHRISTMAS CARDS  
PLACE CARDS IN THE BOX  
FIRST LETTER OF



NOW AVAILABLE FOR YOU  
TO YOUR CHURCH FAMILY.  
ALPHABETICALLY BY THE  
THEIR LAST NAME.

## WHAT DOES THE CHRISTMAS CAROL "TWELVE DAY OF CHRISTMAS" MEAN?

This is one Christmas Carol that has always baffled me. What in the world do leaping lords; French hens, swimming swans, and especially the partridge that won't come out of the pear tree have to do with Christmas? Today I found out, thanks to the Internet. From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: The surface meaning, plus a hidden meaning known only to members of their church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality, which the children could remember.

The partridge in a pear tree was Jesus Christ.

Two turtledoves were the Old and New Testaments.

Three French hens stood for faith, hope and love.

The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke & John.

The five golden rings recalled the Torah or Law, the first five books of the Old Testament.

The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.

Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit: Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.

The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.

Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self Control.

The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.

The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful disciples.

The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in the Apostles' Creed. So there is your history for today.

This knowledge was shared with me and I found it interesting and enlightening and now I know how that strange song became a Christmas Carol...so pass it on if you wish.

Submitted by:



Lola Smith



The UMM met on Sunday, November 21st at 8:30 a.m. There were **18** men present and several members absent. If you see Perry Smith, Rock Merritt, Fred Rozier, Joe Bledsoe, Bob Galliera, Jack Byrne, Ike Huffman, John Pauk, J.A. Sessoms, and Raymond Gray, let them know they were missed. A Breakfast of Burritos and Grits with all the trimmings was prepared by Randy Caldwell and Doug Stone.

Calvin Rome gave a devotion from Proverbs 8:12, "**Knowledge of God**". If you know God, he will lead your life and it will always be productive. Dr. George Washington Carver's life was given as an example. Receive God's word and understand what He is saying.

Lyle Spidle gave the Treasurer's Report on the Barbecue Sale. The UMM had a net profit of **\$2,800.00** after all the expenses were paid. This fund raiser was headed by Charles Lucas who did a good job organizing the event. Thanks again Charles for all you did.

As the finances were finalized, we began to spend the money. A request for additional money for fencing in the Day Care area was made and funds were made available. The FFF asked for financial help in the preparation of the "**Happy Birthday Jesus Party**" which will be held on December 5th. We gave them \$150.00 for their work.

The UMM were proud to have provided the Turkeys & Hams for our annual "**Harvest Thanksgiving Dinner**" which was held on November 14th. Thanks to Wayne Everts and Doug Stone for their help in the kitchen, and also to the ladies who cooked 5 turkeys. A special thanks to Phyllis Jordan for the music provided by the "**Fayetteville Christian School Choir**".

Respectively,  
Troy Willoughby, UMM Secretary

### DECEMBER FLOWER CHART

- 5 - In Honor of Marvin Hiner's birthday
- 12 - In Honor of Jackie Jamison's birthday
- 19 - In Memory of Bill Knight by Connie Knight & In Memory of Victor Zielinski & Lelia Meckling by Hank Zielinski
- 26 - In Honor of Carol Clark's birthday by Cathy Edwards & in Memory of Lawrence Christian by Joyce Christian

The "2005 FLOWER CHART" is now available for you to sign-up and give recognition to a loved one. Flowers are only \$20.00. Make your check out to St. Matthew's UMC and put flowers in the memo section and place in offering plate.



## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



- |                          |                        |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 2 - Adella Pray          | 18 - Donna Dorwart     |
| 3 - Rebecca Ramirez      | 20 - Meghan Dominie    |
| 6 - Steve Fleetwood      | 25 - Lorene Biggs      |
| 7 - Phil Ogden           | 30 - Virginia Bachelor |
| 12 - Robin Shields       | Marie Strub            |
| 16 - Heather Shackelford |                        |
| David Gibson             |                        |



The Youth have been very busy. We joined **6,347** people during the experience of **Pilgrimage**. We had **21** youth and adults participate in this event from our church. Also, many of us showed up on November 21st to

help decorate the Christmas Tree. We need to start preparing for **Summer Breakaway, ACS and Conference Souper Bowl**. We also have discussed participating in a new Conference event called **Footprints**. It is a week long work mission experience of helping someone other than yourself. As you can see, we have a lot of planning to do in our missions coming up. In December we have many things planned:

- 5 - Mandatory meeting immediately after church
- 18 - Help with the "People Without Partner" Dinner
- 23 - Caroling & Dinner to Church Members
- ??? - Lock-In or Fun Evening

God bless, The Youth Group

### ONE-BY-ONE:

One-By-One has gotten off to a slow start, but with the Lord's help, the program will take off in the New Year. We have students coming from **Massey Hill High School, John Griffin Middle School, Home Mills Middle School, and C. Wayne Collier Elementary School**. Please be in prayer that the Lord will call you to be a mentor to a child. It's more rewarding to help a child throughout the school year than just once a year. You will be deeply moved at how much you will teach each other.

### ONE-BY-ONE 2005 SCHEDULE:

- January - 10, 24, 31
- February - 7, 14, 28
- March - 7, 21
- April - 4, 11, 18, 25
- May - 2, 9, 16, 23 (Last night)



## SPECIAL OFFERINGS WERE GIVEN TO THE FOLLOWING FROM:

### ARP FUND

- ◆ Wayne & Elaine Everts

### CHURCH POWER BILL

- ◆ The Thrift Shop

### EMERGENCY FUND

- ◆ Ruth-Ethel Smith Circle
- ◆ The Thrift Shop
- ◆ Sunday Morning Bible Study Class
- ◆ Paul & Jewel Sharpe
- ◆ Mary Sue Grady's Secret Pal in honor of her Birthday on November 25th
- ◆ James & Joyce DeBruhl
- ◆ Wayne & Elaine Everts

### SCHOLARSHIP FUND

- ◆ Wayne & Debbie Hager

### YOUTH FUND

- ◆ Mary & Linda Webb IMO Gray Rozier & Betty Zielinski

### CARD MINISTRY

*On behalf of the Card Ministry Team, I thank each of you for your prayers and all other support that you have given us this year. We mailed approximately 500 cards to people who had celebrations or concerns. We especially want to thank the Thrift Shop Ministry Team for furnishing most of our postage. May God bless you throughout the Christmas Season and into the New Year (2005)! We will meet on Dec. 1, 8, & 15. We will take a break on Dec. 22 & 29, & resume on Jan. 5th.*

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!**





## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

As another year draws to a close in our work with the United Methodist Women, I would like to point out a few of your accomplishments in the field of Missions. With the help of the Thrift Shop, you provided **Sewing Kits** for at least 18 women, **Twelve Thanksgiving Share Boxes** which provided Thanksgiving Dinner for at least 18 families, and you were able to feed a child for a year with your help through the **Ambros Foundation**. These are three things that were done besides all those that were done by the Circles and the FFF. Thank you very much for your participation in these projects. By your participation, we were able to become a **"Basic Mission Today Unit"** as well as a **"Seven Star Member"**. At the December 6th General Meeting, you are asked to bring a wrapped gift (not more than \$2.00) and finger-foods to share. This meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. **PLEASE NOTE:** Our **Christmas Cantata** will be held December 19th at 7:00 p.m. Please plan accordingly for your refreshments. **Cumberland/Hoke Sub-District Meeting** will be on January 15th at 9:00 a.m. at Hay Street UMC. Please make plans to attend. As you complete your holiday plans, please remember to pray for each other and the United Methodist Women's work throughout the world. I trust all of you will have a **"Happy Holiday Season"**.  
Adella Pray, UMW President

### NIGHT OWL CIRCLE:

We met on Thursday, November 11th with 10 members and 2 visitors present. We were glad to have **Mary Morrow** and **Barbara Fleetwood** visit with us and hope they will join us at our next meeting which will be December 9th at 6:30 p.m. at the home of Roberta Brown. This will be our **"Christmas Covered-Dish Celebration"**. Those who wish to participate in a Gift Exchange should bring a wrapped gift. Thanks to **Rebecca Ramirez** for the program and **Mary Rozier** for providing refreshments. We participated in the **Shoebox Ministry** for our November project, and sent towels, wash cloths and toiletry items to the **Homeless Coalition** for our October project. Our December project is to collect money for the **St. Matthew's Emergency Fund**. At the Harvest Dinner, the very happy winner of the quilt drawing was **Linda Webb**. May God bless each of you with His love, peace and joy.

Submitted by: Linda Webb

### RECIPE OF THE MONTH

#### "DOUBLE-DECKER CONFETTI BROWNIES"

3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) Butter or Margarine, softened	1 cup Granulated Sugar
3 Large Eggs	1 cup firmly packed light Brown Sugar
2 1/2 cups All-Purpose Flour, divided	1 tsp Vanilla Extract
1/2 tsp Salt	2 1/2 tsp Baking Powder
1 Tbs Butter or Margarine, melted	1/3 cup Unsweetened Cocoa Powder
	1 cup "M&M's" Semi-Sweet Chocolate Mini Baking Bits, divided

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease 13x9x2 inch baking pan; set aside. In large bowl, cream 3/4 cup butter and sugars until light and fluffy; beat in eggs and vanilla. In medium bowl, combine 2 1/4 cups flour, baking powder and salt; blend into creamed mixture. Divide batter in half. Blend together cocoa powder and melted butter; stir into one half of the dough. Spread cocoa dough evenly into prepared baking pan. Stir remaining 1/4 cup flour and 1/2 cup "M&M's Semi-Sweet Chocolate Mini Baking Bits" into remaining dough; spread evenly over cocoa dough in pan. Sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup "M&M's Semi-Sweet Chocolate Mini Baking Bits. Bake 25 to 30 minutes or until edges start to pull away from sides of pan. Cool completely. Cut into bars. Store in tightly covered container.



**DECEMBER ST. MATTHEW'S UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 2004**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			<b>1</b> Card Ministry – 5:00pm WNA & B.Study-6:30pm Choir Practice-7:30pm	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5</b> Happy Birthday Jesus Party – 2pm	<b>6</b> UMW Mtg. – 6:30pm One-By-One – 7:00pm	<b>7</b> Prayer Group – 6:30pm	<b>8</b> Ruth-Ethel Smith Circle - 11:00am Card Ministry – 5:00pm WNA & B.Study-6:30pm Choir Practice – 7:30pm	<b>9</b> Night Owls meet at Roberta's – 6:30pm	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Sound System Workshop 9 am – 12 pm
<b>12</b> Cantata at Mt. Pisgah – 7:00pm	<b>13</b> One-By-One – 7:00pm	<b>14</b> Prayer Group – 6:30pm	<b>15</b> Card Ministry – 5:00pm WNA & B.Study-6:30pm Choir Practice – 7:00pm	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> UMM Breakfast Mtg. – 8:30am	<b>20</b> NO One-By-One	<b>21</b> Prayer Group – 6:30pm	<b>22</b> NO REGULAR SERVICES	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7:00 pm	<b>25</b> Christmas Day  <b>HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS!!!</b>
<b>26</b> Cantata at St. Matthew's – 7:00pm	<b>27</b> NO One-By-One	<b>28</b> Prayer Group – 6:30pm	<b>29</b> NO REGULAR SERVICES	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	
	<b>NO One-By-One</b>	<b>Prayer Group – 6:30pm</b>	<b>NO REGULAR SERVICES</b>			