



EBENEZER

United Methodist Church

www.ebenezerum-church.org

April '16

Volume 12 Issue 04

Church's e-mail: ebenezerumc@yahoo.com

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Man worries about losing possessions, not the loss of his years; but his possessions can't help him, and his years will never return.

--- Rabbinic saying



Sunday Services

- 8:30a Worship Service (Contemporary)
- 9:50a Sunday School
- 11:00a Worship Service (Traditional)
- 6:00p Youth Group (Grades 6-12)
- 6:00p Adult Choir Practice
- 7:00p Every FOURTH SUNDAY United Methodist Women



Pastor's Corner — Rev. Eric Lane



Spring Cleaning

Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. --James 4:8

With the arrival of spring and the air beginning to turn warm, we tend to open the windows and let in the fresh air. We also start a ritual that is often referred to as "Spring Cleaning". I was curious as to where this term originated, so of course I turned to "google" to attempt to find the answer. Interestingly, it pointed me back to the festival of the Passover. It appears that in the Jewish culture, during the festival of the Passover, the people will only eat unleavened bread. "It's a humble bread, and during Passover, keeping leavened bread, which is any bread made with yeast, is considered arrogant and ungrateful. Not only is it considered wrong to have leavened bread in the home during the Passover, even the crumbs from leavened bread are considered to be insulting to God. So every year in preparation for the Festival of the Passover, the Jewish people would clean their homes to make sure that even the crumbs from the leavened bread were removed.

Now I don't know if this is really where the term "spring cleaning" originated or not, but we could learn from the story and perhaps apply the principles to our own lives. We have just come through the season of lent, a time to reflect upon our lives and our mortality; and the goal is that we do some "spring cleaning" of our own—meaning that we get rid of the crumbs of sin that are lying around in those hidden corners of our lives that only God knows about.

Unlike our homes we don't have to wait from the coming of spring to do "spring cleaning" of our lives. I have learned over the years that the best way to keep my home clean is to keep at it. If I spill something, wipe it up—don't wait until I simply can no longer stand the mess.

The same can be said for my spiritual life, if I clean up my messes when I make them, or should I say go to God and seek His forgiveness and repent of my ways at the time of my sin; then you might say that my life is easier to keep clean, or should I say *pure* for God.

As we enter spring with summer coming, we will begin to open our windows

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WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

- 6:00p Praise Band Rehearsal
- 7:00p Bible Study—Children & Adults.



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Mon.—Friday: 8:30—1:00 p.m.

Phone: (828) 396-2214



Meetings

Church Council Meeting

The Church Council will meet at **4:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 17**. If you have business to bring before the Council, please contact Boyd Johnson, Council Chairperson. All members of the church may attend, but only Council members may vote.

United Methodist Women

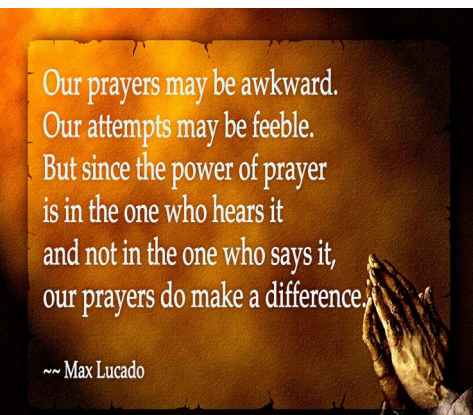
The UMW will meet on **April 24 at 7:00 p.m.** Dawn Yount will present the program. Marsha McRary is in charge of refreshments. All women of the church are invited to participate.

April Newsletter Items

Please have information and articles for the March newsletter in by **April 25**. Thank you. —Editor

Church Office Hours Change

The church office will return to the previous hours of Monday-Friday, 8:30-1:00 p.m. beginning on April 4th.



Something to Pray About

by Cindy Sears

IS GOD LISTENING?

Why are you so far away, O LORD? Why do you hide yourself when we are in trouble?

—Psalm 10:1 GNT

How much longer will you forget me, LORD?

Forever? How much longer will you hide yourself from me?

—Psalm 13:1 GNT

I've been reading a book that I found in the church library on prayer. In *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* by Philip Yancey, the author explores the concept of prayer and contemplates the reasons we pray and whether or not praying accomplishes anything.

As Christians, we believe that God wants us to pray, and that He is listening to us. Yet, how do we reconcile a loving and merciful God, and an all-knowing God and all-powerful God with the fact that many heartfelt and worthy, unselfish prayers go unanswered?

As Yancey points out, many of the prayers in the Bible, especially in Psalms, Job, Jeremiah and Habakkuk, are petulant, even angry. It seems that God expects us to pray with "blistering honesty." But how many of us do? Do we need to be more honest with God when we pray? Does He expect our prayers to be pious and perfect prose? Or does He want to keep company with us, and open ourselves to Him completely, with all our pettiness and self-pity on full display? Why not? He knows us better than we know ourselves anyway? Is prayer only a way to get what we want from God? Or is it "keeping company with God," and, therefore, a way of becoming more like God every day?

Following are a few quotes from this book about prayer. Take time to contemplate these statements and seek God's company today.

"Prayer is not a means of removing the unknown and unpredictable elements in life, but rather a way of including the unknown and unpredictable in the outworking of the grace of God in our lives."

--Theologian, Roy Anderson

"Each day is a kind of treasure hunt, looking for God's treasures, but it takes an intentional connection with God to awaken me, to make me aware." -- Harold, p. 82

"I see the Christian's life on this planet as a battle, too. We try to follow God on a place in active rebellion against him. I don't expect prayer to make that any easier, any less problem-filled. I do expect it to give me the inner strength to keep fighting. Persistence is my way of demonstrating faith."

--Harold, inset p. 83

Moses, Elijah, King David, and others in the Bible often seemed to be negotiating with God when they prayed. Maybe prayer is a training ground for learning to negotiate and fight injustice, etc. in the world.

A person prays "that he himself may be constructed, not that God may be instructed."

--Augustine

"I seek the gift, find instead the Giver, and eventually come away with the gift I no longer seek." (p. 154)

Concerning everyday prayer: "Sometimes your prayer may appear to come just from the lips and not from the heart. But isn't it better that at least the lips are blessing God than when the entire human being becomes mute? And isn't there more hope then that the sound from the lips will find an echo in the heart than when everything in man remains mute?" —Karl Rahner, *The Need and the Blessing of Prayer*, p. 160

"...prayer invites God into my world and ushers me into God's." (p. 167)

On public prayer: "The fewer the words, the better the prayer." "Pray from the heart. Think of the God you are addressing, and not of others who may be listening."

--Martin Luther

"History is a test of faith, and the correct response is persistent prayer." (p.148)

(Continued on page 6)



Special Giving

Ebenezer UMC and its members, gratefully acknowledge the following special gifts received in March:

In Memory of Boyd Fairchild by:

Delores & Gary Paul Campbell
Jo Nell Harrison
JoAnn Knepp
Judy McCrary
Cindy Sears
Heavenly Sonlighters Class
Ebenezer's UMW

In Memory of Ranny Frye by:

Cindy Sears

In Memory of Larry Huffman by:

Rene Huffman

In Memory of Boyd Fairchild by:

Rick & Toni Fairchild & Friends
Jim & Judy Mackie

In Memory of Bob Sears by:

Nancy Sears

In Memory of J. B. Coffey by:

Stephen & Linda Coffey

In Memory of Bonnie & Edward Roberts by:

Darrell & Harolyn Roberts

In Honor of Grandpa & Grandma Wayne & Kim Ellis by:

Bill Campbell

In Honor of Bill Campbell's 79th Birthday on May 5th by:

Delores & Gary Paul Campbell

In Honor of Peggy Jenkins by:

Betty McRee

In Honor of Delores Campbell's 79th, June 26th Birthday by:

Delores & Gary Paul Campbell

In Honor of United Methodist Men by:

Delores, Bill, & Gary Paul Campbell



Church Council Minutes – February 28, 2016

Attendees: Becky Clark, David & Sonya Crouse, Kim Ellis, Gerald Frye, Roy Hamby, Jo Nell Harrison, Bleaka Hollar, Cathy Huffman, Boyd & Emily Johnson, Connor Johnson, Keith Keener, JoAnn Knepp, Steve Kohnle, Eric Lane, Judy McCrary, Libby McRary, Scott Miller, Kevin Miller, Linda Moretz, Robert Mullinax, Cindy Sears, Jimmy Stone, and Anthony Austin.

Boyd called the meeting to order at 4:31 p. m., and asked Roy Hamby to open us with prayer. Boyd then read from Proverbs 3:7-8 with commentary. Only the Lord can protect us and save us. Don't be prideful.

January minutes read and approved as presented.

Finance Report

Jo Nell Harrison went over the budget report. Jo Nell will send \$1,000 to the Caldwell Habitat House.

Back to School Bash t-shirts not paid for totaled \$80. That will be written off and taken from the Evangelism fund. Rainbow Class debt to church was also written off to Evangelism: \$135.03.

Jo Nell will write a check for \$111.00 to the Pairs and Spares Class, where funds have come directly to the church instead of to the class.

The Costa Rica Fund will be closed out. The Rainbow Class is taking over the biscuits for the ART fund (Area Response Team).

We have taken in more than we have spent up to this point. Very good!

Old Business

CLC corner of building was worked on, but is not completed. Guttering still needs to be put up.

Eric brought up that every time it rains, water pours in at the glass doors in the foyer of the CLC. The Trustees will be looking into a way to alleviate that problem.

New Business

Bleaka Hollar: We need a phone tree system. Phone tree system will cost \$1800. It might require a separate phone line. After discussion, Scott Miller made a motion to purchase a phone tree system. Scott Kohnle,

second. Motion passed.

Motion was made to purchase a hard drive and automatic back-up system. Cathy Huffman second. Motion passed. Jimmy and Cindy will determine what to buy. Cost is about \$200.

Kim Ellis said the playground equipment needs to be looked at, because some is wobbly and needs to be repaired. She let us know that Vacation Bible School is scheduled for the week of July 10-15.

Bleaka Hollar mentioned the Layman's Revival going on during the first week in May. Please be thinking about it. We will need speakers and singers, etc.

Connor Johnson said that Tasha Haas is stepping down from the Youth program. We need to pray and figure out what to do about having a good youth program. Boyd brought up that this should be a high priority item. We need ideas and a plan to keep the program going and growing. There was some general discussion, but no firm plans emerged.

Anthony Austin asked for permission to put the church name on the Power Show t-shirts again this year. The Austins are paying for that. Cindy made a motion to allow; second by someone. Motion passed to give him permission to do so.

Gerald Frye closed the meeting with prayer.

—Minutes by Cindy Sears, ☆

How do I hide God's word in my heart? Memorize it!

The LORD says, "Now, let's settle the matter. You are stained red with sin, but I will wash you as clean as snow. Although your stains are deep red, you will be as white as wool.

—Isaiah 1:18 GNT



Merrill Orphanage Update

Dear Brothers and Sisters at Ebenezer Methodist:

Luke 18:16

"But Jesus called them to him, saying, 'Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.'"

This verse goes through my head each time I step into a state-run orphanage. I am always reminded how much God loves these precious little ones. He has intricately formed each one of them, seeing them as precious jewels beyond compare!

In other news:

Other than the remodel on the orphanage, we continue with our normal day to day ministry activities. We share the Lord with the kids at the state-run orphanages on a weekly basis. Anca meets with the adult orphan girls every Saturday for Bible studies. I do medical clinics for the poor, and we spend time with and spreading the Gospel to the street people (street kids & street families).

A big thank you

We want to thank you very much for your prayers and very generous financial support. We could not continue our mission work - preaching the Gospel to the lost souls here in Romania - were it not for you who pray and give so generously! We hope that one day soon some of you may be able to come over here and visit us here on the mission field. Pastor Eric speaks of possibly organizing a construction team in the future. That would be a huge blessing indeed! God Bless all of you.

Sincerely,
Nathan, Anca, Nehemiah, and Isaiah
Merrill

For a longer update from Nathan, please see our website.

Church Council Minutes – March 20, 2016

Attendees: Sonya Crouse, Kim Ellis, Gerald Frye, Jo Nell Harrison, Bleaka Hollar, Cathy Huffman, Boyd & Emily Johnson, Connor Johnson, Keith Keener, Marilyn Kohnle, Steve Kohnle, Eric Lane, Judy McCrary, Cinda McCrary, Libby McCrary Long, Linda Moretz, Jeff Smith, Alice Hill, and Jerry Kohnle.

The meeting was started at 4:30 p.m. Gerald Frye opened with prayer. Boyd opened by sharing a devotion from Leviticus 14:5.

Boyd asked for everyone to review the minutes. Gerald made the motion and Sonya seconded the motion to receive the February meeting minutes as read; motion passed. Eric mentioned that the CLC building work was completed.

Jo Nell Harrison presented the financial report. She stated that we are in a better financial situation than we have been in the past. She reviewed the report details and covered the budget. The Under Grace Class needs to follow up on their account. The Costa Rica Fund will be changed to ARTS (Area Response Team). On the building fund, we took in approximately \$500 over our need. Great Job! JoNell has already made the March payment.

Boyd mentioned that the Methodist Men held their 3 on 3 Tournament and it was a success. We have received a credit from Pay Pal. David brought up concerning pads for AED? Emily Johnson suggested that the speaker at the nursery be repaired and also changed to closed circuit. A motion was made that we explore the possibility of closed circuit television. The motion was made and passed that the Trustees looked into this.

Emily mentioned that 6 ladies got together several months ago concerning prayer. She stated that instead of simply saying they will pray about it, Emily mentioned that the council commit to prayer, standing in a prayer circle to commit to praying the debt off on the CLC. Emily made a motion that the entire Council begin by taking 1 minute, and this 1 minute to be used to pray that God opens our hearts and that we retire the debt. The entire council, by a show of hands, voted to support this prayer request.

A motion was made that the SPPRC meet and make a recommendation as to

a youth leader. A motion was also made that the SPPRC look into the possibility of hiring a part-time or a full time youth director. The Committee should develop a job description and a proposal of salary. Roy Hamby will be contacted.

There was discussion about splintering of funds, such as the van fund, that is cash that could be used to pay down the debt of the building.

There is a workshop Sunday April, 17, at Mt. View UMC, Statesville, on the implementation of Safe Sanctuary policies. Sunday school teachers and assistants, and nursery workers are encouraged to attend the workshop. Please let Libby Long know by April 2 if you would like to attend.

Motion was made by Conner that we adjourn, and Bleaka closed the meeting with prayer.

Meeting adjourned 5:43 p.m.

--Minutes by Eric Lane

Quotable Quotes

If your only option in choosing a friend is between a foolish person who is humble and a bright person who is arrogant, choose the fool. Folly may indeed be harmful, but arrogance is lethal.

--- **Maalos Hamidos**

God's word said it first.

Pride leads to destruction, and arrogance to downfall.

—Proverbs 16:18 GNT

The LORD hates everyone who is arrogant; he will never let them escape punishment.

—Proverbs 16:5 GNT



April Celebrations



Happy Birthday!



- 1st—Brian Sears
- 7th—Andrew Scott Miller
- 8th—Kevin Lane, Judy McCrary
- 9th—Sandy Miller
- 11th—McCall Creaseman
- 12th—Tammy Adams, Sonya Crouse, and Samantha Stone
- 19th—Nancy Sears
- 21st—Emily Haas
- 23rd—Annette Burson, Dakota Helton
- 25th—Terri Miller
- 27th—Wyll Baker
- 28th—Cinda McCrary
- 29th—Seth McCrary
- 30th—Jeff Smith, Rex Teague

Happy Anniversary!

- 12th—Jerry & Loretta Helton
- 12th—Russ & Jo Ann Knepp
- 17th—Steve & Samantha Kohnle
- 23rd—Buck & Margaret Spencer



Phone Tree System Installed

We have now purchased the Phone Tree System as a messaging center for our church. This will be used to keep our members and affiliates informed of prayer requests, scheduled meetings and events, and other important information. For this system to work, we will need accurate and current phone numbers and e-mail addresses. Please provide our office with this information as soon as possible if you wish to be connected to Ebenezer with this system. It will be operational in April.



Acolyte Schedule - APRIL

3rd Andrew Miller

10th Cole McCrary

17th Bethany Huss

24th Kevin Miller

We do not have a nursery schedule here, because we do not have enough volunteers to make a viable schedule. Please see Kay Gilbert or Nancy Sears if you are willing to step up and help. Thank you.

Youth Leader Needed!

We are looking for a person to help lead our Youth program. Our young people deserve and need to be provided with good, solid Bible teaching. They also need help in learning about how to live as followers of Christ in a world that is increasingly hostile to people of faith. Please see Eric Lane or Roy Hamby if you would like to have more information or volunteer to work with our youth.

Our Military

Please pray for the men and women who protect our freedoms.

Nick Austin
Kyle Blair
Anthony Coffey
Paul Coffey
Joey Deal
Dakota Fox
Ethan Fox
Andy Gaillard
Ricky Garland
Jason Gibson
Trey Hefner



Chris Kaisenski
Shane McCrary
Travis Miller
Joey Moore
Jamie Mullinax
Michael Potts
Alex Shealy
Hunter Tolbert
Josh Yount

Pastor's Corner, con't

(Continued from page 1)

and doors, and enjoy the fresh air and the warmth of sunshine. Likewise, if we open up our lives to God's grace, we, too, can bask in the freshness and warmth of God's presence.

"...remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Peace





April Fundraisers & Events

UMW Yard Sale

SATURDAY

APRIL 9TH

7-3:00 PM

Sponsored by Ebenezer's United Methodist Women

The Ladies will be selling delicious and hot breakfast biscuits in the morning. After you eat, stay awhile and look for a bargain and pick up a little treasure!

Proceeds will be used to help pay off the Christian Life Center mortgage.

Donations of yard sale items can be dropped off at the church during regular office hours.

Special Funds Update

The stack of money is growing!

As of March 28, we have—another drum roll, please!

\$12,293.99!

in the Van Fund.

We thank you for your help in building up this fund. It is beginning to look like we are going to make it this time.

Habitat for Humanity House

We continue to receive gifts for the next house we plan to help build. As of March 28th, this fund has:

\$1,281.53.

Biscuits Sales

The *Rainbow* Sunday School Class has taken over the biscuit sales. They will be selling ham, sausage, egg and gravy biscuits on **Thursday, April 14th.** (Sorry, no pies.)

Kitchen will be from **6:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.** You can eat in or we will continue to deliver orders of 10+ to area businesses, etc. Please **call early or pre-order large orders on Wednesday by calling: 396-2214** (church office; Mon.-Fri. 8:30-1:30 pm).

Proceeds will now support local missions. Please make your checks out to ART, which stands for *Area Response Team*.

Yum! Yum!



Compassion Sunday

**Sunday
April 24th**

Sarah McCrary and Natasha Haas will have information set up in the narthex and hallway about *Compassion International* and their own stories of sponsoring a child through this organization.

We encourage you to talk to both of them and find out about this worthy cause that helps children around the world survive and prosper in areas of extreme poverty.

Are you ready to consider sharing some of your great wealth (compared to most people in the world) with those less fortunate?

Visit *Compassion Intl's* website at www.compassion.com or <http://compassionsunday.com> for more information.

Something..., con't

(Continued from page 2)

On how to pray: "If you are praying, you are already 'doing it right.'" --Roberta Bendi, p. 190

"Keep it honest, keep it simple, keep it up." (p. 191)

And last but not least: "God is not silent; we are deaf." --Teresa of Avila, p. 203 (paraphrase)

A few final questions: When you pray, do you ask God for what you really want, or only for what you think He wants you to ask Him for? Do you ever just sit and wait for God to speak to you? Do you praise and thank God for his many blessings in your life, or only present a list of what you believe is lacking in your current circumstances? Can you trust God even when He seems to be silent and unmoved by your tearful and urgent requests? Do you only ask for material and physical things, or do you beg God to strengthen your faith, open up opportunities for service and witness, and give you the courage to tell others the Good News found only in Jesus? Do you pray specifically for people to be saved, or to grow more mature in their faith and service to the Lord?

You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.

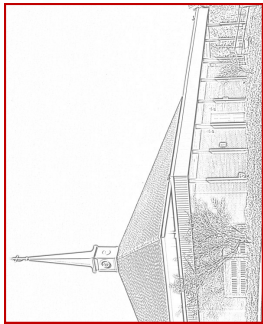
—James 4:3


Whatever your response to these quotes and questions, one thing is needed: pray often, pray honestly, pray joyfully. The Lord God Almighty and our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, want to hear from you! That's why we have the Holy Spirit within us to help us communicate with the Lord.



**EBENEZER UMC***Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.*

April 2016

**Ebenezer United Methodist Church***Open hearts. Open minds. Open doors.*

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>Every Sunday:</i> 8:30 a.m. Worship 9:50 a.m. Sunday school 11:00 a.m. Worship	<i>See p. 3 for Acolyte Schedule</i>		<i>Every Wed.:</i> 6 pm: Praise Band 7 pm: Children and Adult Bible studies		1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9 <i>UMW Yard Sale—7-3 PM, see p. 6</i>
10	11	12 <i>Senior Citizens Meeting—11 AM</i>	13	14 <i>Biscuit Sales—6-9 AM, see p. 5</i>	15	16
17 <i>Church Council—4:30 PM</i>	18	19	20	21	22	23
24 <i>Compassion Sunday UMW—7 PM, see p.2</i>	25	26	27	28	29 	30 <i>Relay for Life at South Caldwell High School</i>