



# EBENEZER

United Methodist Church

www.ebenezerum-church.org

## DECEMBER '21

Volume 17 Issue 12

Church's e-mail: [ebenezerumc@yahoo.com](mailto:ebenezerumc@yahoo.com)

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### Special Note

#### Newsletter Subscribers

Please see p. 4  
For special notice.



### Sunday Services

- 9:00a Worship Service
- 10:15a Sunday School
- 6:00p Adult Choir Practice
- 7:00p Every FOURTH SUNDAY United Methodist Women

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” *Matthew 28:19*



### Pastor's Note



When I was a hospice chaplain, I also pastored a little church out in the country. It was literally over the river and through the woods. It met in a double-wide mobile home.

Due to my seminary training I tried to hold off on singing Christmas carols during Advent. We do have some nice Advent songs in our hymnal. However, one of the members wanted to sing the Christmas carols. Her name was Bethyl Knox. She came to me and shared how she wanted to sing the carols. I remember her saying, “Preacher, we only get to sing them one time a year.” Since then, I have worked to include more carols in the service at this time of the year.

I have also become mindful of how our culture approaches Christmas. It is fair to say that there is a secular Christmas and a Christian Christmas. Secular Christmas has radio stations that play Christmas music 24 hours a day from Thanksgiving to Christmas day. The songs are about Frosty, Rudolph, and Santa. We hear about Christmas Shoes, and how we dream of a “white Christmas.” We remember the Grinch, and how grandma got run over by a reindeer. It is Hallmark movies, and Scrooge in a variety of tellings of the Christmas Carol. It is also about giving the right gift; and this year the concern is about supply chain disruptions.

Christian Christmas is about a little town called Bethlehem. We ask ourselves “What Child is This?” who is laid “Away in a Manger” surrounded by three Kings and the friendly beasts. We sing of “Joy to the World” found during a midnight clear. We hark to what the herald angels sing. We remember a silent night that came in the bleak midwinter. We hear angels sing on high as they sang about the first Noel. We “Sing We Now of Christmas” as we “Go, Tell It On the Mountain.” We do this now and all year long. Thankfully, Christian Christmas is not about gifts we can give. It is about the gift that has been given. There are no disruptions to God’s supply chain. Grace and peace are always abundant and available to God’s people. Thanks be to God.

I wish all of you a blessed and happy Advent and Christmas!

In God’s grace, Pastor Alan.

### 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, Events, etc.

### Prayer Group

**Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m.** our weekly prayer group meets. You may call the office or email us prayer requests at [ebenezerumc@yahoo.com](mailto:ebenezerumc@yahoo.com).

### Wesley Class Meetings

Classes are suspended until January 2022.

### Food Ministry

*The Lord's Supper Ministry* will not deliver any meals in December. Meals will start again in January.

### Seniors Gathering

Our Senior citizens are invited to another morning of fellowship with meal on **Tuesday, December 14th at 11:00 a.m.** Please bring finger foods to share.

### Called Charge Conference

There will be a **special called Charge Conference meeting on Thursday, December 9th at 7:00 p.m.** to vote on proposed plan with the Boy Scouts of America.

### United Methodist Women

The UMW will not meet in December. Their holiday meeting will be on **January 2nd at the home of Kim Ellis**. More details to come.

### December Worship Information

#### Sermon Scriptures for December:

December 5th: Malachi 3:1-4  
with Communion

December 12th: Zephaniah 3:14-20

December 19th: Micah 5:2-5a

December 26th: Psalm 148

NOTE: Pastor Alan will be on vacation 12/27—1/3/22, and off on January 9 to attend grandson's baptism service.

## Something to Pray About

by Cindy Sears

You are not the only ones with whom the LORD is making this covenant with its obligations. He is making it with all of us who stand here in his presence today and also with our descendants who are not yet born.

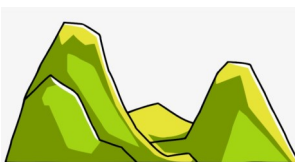
--Deuteronomy 29:14-15 GNT

### REDEDICATION

References: Deuteronomy 29:10-15; Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 2.

The renewing of the covenant in these verses shows us that nations and individuals need periodic renewal of their "covenant" with God. Our spiritual walk with God/Jesus is not a steady state. We do not walk straight up the mountain of faith and into heaven. Instead, we walk up and down hills. Our faith can falter, and will.

We can become cold in our belief and practice; ignoring God as we carry on with our lives; moving in and out of sinfulness or apathy. We need periodic reaffirmation of our faith. Some valleys of apathy or rebellion (aka sin) against God can be very deep and long, leading to all sorts of bad consequences for oneself and others around you. The same thing can happen to a nation (Example: the prosperity of the U. S. in the 20th century was built upon the religious faith of the 19th century and before, in which revivals broke out periodically, and churches were everywhere with "virtue" expected of everyone. Now, the increase of apathy toward God and his moral laws is leading to bad consequences for everyone, and more and more corruption as "virtue" becomes "relative," and everyone does "what is right in his own eyes.")



If you have fallen away or become apathetic in your service to God, rededicate your life (everything in your life) to God today. Start walking up that mountain of faith and service again. Don't be cocky or prideful about it, though, or complacent; because you will enter a valley again. Ask God to lead you out each time. You will thank him, and so will the next generation and the next, and so on; because righteousness and sin both influence future generations for good or ill. Wouldn't you prefer that your actions, words, and faith be a source of good for you, your family and friends, and the culture today and tomorrow; rather than a source of sorrow, degradation, and despair!

Renew your relationship with Jesus, and rededicate your life to him today as we enter into the season in which we celebrate our Savior's birth, while looking forward to his return.

### Merry Christmas!

To all my friends and fellow believers at Ebenezer UMC. —In Christ's love, *Cindy Sears*





## UMM Fish Fry

**Saturday, December 4  
4—7 PM**

**UMM Fish Fry**

**\$10 per plate**



The United Methodist Men of Ebenezer UMC are at it again. Here comes the Fish Fry with all the usual fixings, plus drink.

Come in or take out. Enjoy some great fish while helping out Ebenezer UMC. Lots of good fellowship will also be served with the meal.

**We thank you for your support.**

## Special Notice

New Covenant Church of God will have a barbecue fundraiser on

**Saturday,  
December 4  
11 AM—5 PM**

Proceeds will help pay funeral and medical expenses for Patricia “Patty” Icard, who recently passed away after a long illness.

**\$8 BBQ Plate  
\$10 Combo Plate**

Free Delivery

Call (828) 639-0833 or 390-4286.

Address is:

7135 George Hildebran School Rd.

## Christmas Eve Service

**Friday  
December 24  
5 PM**

We invite you to join us for our annual Christmas Eve Service, which will be held at the Barbecue Shack across from the church (weather permitting). Bring a chair to sit in.



We will have several bonfires going to keep you warm. If you wish, bring some

marshmallows or hot dogs (and a stick to put them on) and roast them over the fires.

This is a time to celebrate the imminent arrival of the Christ Child, and look forward to Christ our Savior's return to make ALL THINGS RIGHT.

See you there!



## Special Giving

We gratefully acknowledge these special gifts received in *November*:

**In Memory of Gerald Frye by:**  
Jay & Melissa McCarrahar

**In Memory of Kat Teague by:**  
Cindy Satterwhite

**In Memory of Hoke Clark by:**  
Becky Clark

**In Memory of Bob Jenkins by:**  
Peggy Jenkins and Robert

**In Memory of Jack & Ranny Frye by:**  
Barbara Frye

**In Memory of Gerald & Zetta Mae Frye by:**  
Barbara Frye

## December Celebrations



- 3rd—Justin Shoemake
- 4th—Shane Kelley
- 5th—Teresa Simmons
- 7th—Jim Farr
- 10th—Abigail Mullinax
- 11h—Jeanette Eby
- 12th—Barbara Frye
- 14th—Carla Yoder
- 14th—Patty Toliver
- 20th—Peggy Jenkins
- 23rd—John McCrary
- 26th—Lyle Miller
- 26th—Sarah Teague
- 26th—Tom Hunter
- 27th—Cheryl Vosdingh
- 28th—JoAnn Knepp
- 29th—Tina Williams

*Happy Anniversary!*

- 13th—Shawn & Heather Wallace
- 29th—Dylan & Vicky Baker

## Prayer Focus for December

As part of our period of prayer and discernment called “From Homecoming to Easter” we are engaging in focused prayer each week. The following is the schedule for December.

December 1-4: Dudley Shoals Elementary

December 5-11: Gateway School

December 12-18: Granite Falls Middle

December 19-25: South Caldwell High School

December 26-Jan 1: CCC & TI



## Church Council, November 28, 2021

Attendees: Rev. Alan Gaylord, Irene Austin, Ted Daniel, Kim Ellis, Barbara Ferguson, Roy Hamby, Bleaka Hollar (Lay Leader), Monte Hollar, Judy McCrary, Marsha McCrary (Chair), Linda Moretz, Cindy Satterwhite, Cindy Sears, Kenny Silver, Becky Clark, Phyllis Minton.

Marsha McCrary called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. She read from Ezekial 37:1-11, 14 about the valley of dry bones brought back to life by God through the prophet Ezekial in his vision. Even though our church has been hard hit by controversies and the reaction to the pandemic, we can turn back to God and let him breathe life back into our church. Marsh gave the opening prayer.

Reading of the minutes from the September meeting. Passed as written. Motion by Irene Austin; second by Bleaka Hollar.

### Finance Report by Irene Austin

Irene explained that the restricted funds amount given to her by Jo Nell Harrison (\$14,000) has been divided up and put into the accounts for the specific restricted funds the money was originally contributed to. The General Fund now has around \$8,000 in it.

### Trustees Report by Monte Hollar

The Trustees replaced the water heater at the parsonage, because it had a bad leak. There was some discussion about the Heavenly Sonlighters' classroom being cold on Sundays. Monte said to contact him if there is a heating or cooling problem, and he will adjust the thermostat.

### Pastor's Report

There has been no new guidance from the Conference or District Office about Covid-19. It was decided to remain in the Christian Life Center through December; then

return to worship in the sanctuary unless we have a significant outbreak of cases before then in the church.

Pastor Alan has been having meetings in the Sunday school classes in relation to the future direction of our church and its ministries, instead of holding meetings in homes as previously planned. We will continue the directed prayers From Homecoming to Easter.

### New Nominations

Ted Daniel to Trustees Class of 2024; Ricky Baker to Council at Large class of 2024; and Dylan and Vicky Baker as Communion Stewards. Cindy Sears made a motion to accept all three nominations; second by Kim Ellis. Motion carried.

Pastor Alan gave us more names for the **membership audit letters**. There were no objections. The next letters will be mailed in January.

So far, we have sent out 53 letters and received 13 responses, not counting the address unknown people.

We discussed **snow days**. It was decided that we would avoid closing, except for icy conditions. Pastor Alan will have the final call.

There was a discussion of setting aside some months when the **Thank Bank money** will be given to a local mission/ministry that we used to include in our budget. These include the following: Hospice, Pregnancy Care Center, Robin's Nest, Kairos. We will also continue to collect food items for SCCM, and promote the August month specifically for their food panty items.

December has been set aside to collect food items and raise funds to for the **CCC&TI ready-to-eat**

**service**. All donated items must be ready-to-eat, such as fruit cups, crackers, or microwaveable soup cups (single servings), etc.

Due to scheduling issues with our partners in the Missional Network the mission trip with the **Appalachia Service Project will not take place in 2022**. We will look at doing this in 2023.

### Newsletters

Cindy Sears announced the end of our bulk mailing of our monthly newsletter. Please see article below for more information.

Irene Austin announced that our next **Red Cross Blood Drive will be on January 24th**.

Kim Ellis hopes to have Kevin Powell return one Sunday to talk about what is going on with **Finding Hope Ministries**, too.

**Next Council meeting was set for Sunday, January 23rd at 4:00 p.m.** Meeting adjourned.

Minutes by Cindy Sears.

## Newsletter Mailing Changes

As of January 2022, we will only mail hard copies of the monthly newsletter to our shut-ins, those out of the Caldwell County tri-county area, and anyone who specifically request a mailed copy.

Copies of the newsletter will be available for pick-up at our church for our regular attendees. You may also request that it be sent as a pdf file to your email. Or, you can access the newsletter on our website ([www.ebenezerum-church.org](http://www.ebenezerum-church.org)) under the tab "Newsletters."

Call, write, or send an email to [ebenezerumc@yahoo.com](mailto:ebenezerumc@yahoo.com) to request to stay on the mailing list or to have a pdf sent to your email each month.





## Gifts for Christ/Memory Tree

We have set up a **Memory Tree** at the church again this year.

Please use the form on this page or pick one up at the church to have the name of a loved one included on the tree. Names will be written on ornaments, and a special offering is requested as a "Gift for Christ."

**NOTE:** Please use extra forms if you have more names than lines on the form. Do not use the back of the form. Thank you.

**Please note that names must be submitted by Sunday, December 12th, to be put on the tree.**

Thank you for honoring your loved one and Christ by your special offering during this season of remembrance and celebration of the Christ child.

Call 828-396-2214, mail to 4948 Burns Rd, Granite Falls, NC 28630, or email to: [ebenezerumc@yahoo.com](mailto:ebenezerumc@yahoo.com).

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

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?

2 Corinthians 13:5 NIV

## Our Military

Ricky Garland  
Trey Hefner  
Shane McRary  
Jamie Mullinax  
Michael Potts  
Hunter Tolbert



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

## Gifts for Christ



Your extra *Gift for Christ* this season, above and beyond your normal giving, will go to our General Fund.

We are setting up a special **MEMORY TREE** with names of individuals you wish to honor or memorialize written on ornaments and hung upon the tree.

**We need the name by December 12, but the gift can be held until Sunday, December 19.** Please list the people you wish to honor on the form below, and place in the offering plate.



Please circle *Honor* or *Memory* and write name of honoree in the space.

In Honor /Memory of \_\_\_\_\_.

In Honor/Memory of \_\_\_\_\_.

In Honor/Memory of \_\_\_\_\_.

**NAME OF GIVER** \_\_\_\_\_.



# Merry Christmas

