



EBENEZER

United Methodist Church

www.ebenezerum-church.org

Dec '22

Volume 18 Issue 12

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

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Special Note

Gifts for Christ

Forms are due in on
Sunday, December 11th.

Gifts will be collected on
Sunday, December 18th.

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



Recently Barbara Ferguson passed out pins that say, “God’s got this!” As we enter the Advent/Christmas seasons and the end of the year this phrase is a good reminder of the good God we serve.

In the Christmas letter, I made note of all the things we were able to accomplish in 2022 thanks to the blessings of God. I did not have space to mention all of them. The one’s I left out include:

- ♦ moving back to the sanctuary for worship and staying in the sanctuary.
- ♦ We received new members and baptized 2 of them.
- ♦ We lost some beloved members of our congregation and yet in your grief you supported the families with words, prayers, presence and food.
- ♦ The Easter service and breakfast were blessings to those who came.
- ♦ We still show the service on Facebook and have people joining us through this format who may not otherwise be able to attend.
- ♦ While paying down the roof loan other repairs at the parsonage and buildings have been attended to.
- ♦ Sunday School still meets, as does choir, prayer group, class meeting and women’s group.

We will have some decisions upcoming that will affect the future of Ebenezer. We still have 2 more presentations to go. These decisions about the future are scary and there are a lot of unknowns. Yet, look at what God has done through Ebenezer this year. That ministry WILL continue in 2023! This is the season of remembering that “God’s got this!” All we need to do is follow.

May you have a blessed and merry Christmas along with a happy New Year!

In God’s grace,

Pastor Alan

Please Note:

Wednesday Night Bible Study will not meet on December 21 or 28. We will resume the regular schedule on Wednesday, January 4.

WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

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



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Mon.—Friday: 8:30—1:00 p.m.

Phone: (828) 396-2214



Meetings, 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. **Will not meet on Dec. 27th or Jan. 3rd.**

Wesley Class Meeting

Class meets on **Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m.** **No meeting on Dec. 27th or Jan. 3rd.**

Seniors Gathering

Our Senior citizens are invited to another morning of fellowship with meal on **Tuesday, December 20 at 11:00 a.m.** Meal will be provided by the church. Bring a dessert to share if you can.

Church Council

The Council will meet on Sunday, **December 18 at 3:00 p.m.** to discuss the presentations from the other Methodist organizations, and our possible disaffiliation from the UMC; plus what has to be done if we decide to go that route.

Food Ministry

No meal will be served in December.

United Methodist Women

The UMW will not meet in December.

Church Office Closure

The Church Office will be closed for Christmas Holiday, Thursday, December 22 through Monday, December 26. Reopen Tuesday, December 27.

Merry Christmas!



Something to Pray About

by Cindy Sears

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

—John 3:16 NIV

**DON'T WAIT
TOO LONG**

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior again, let us remember why Jesus came to earth, what he did for us, and how we best show our gratitude to him—by leading others to salvation in Christ—the ONE WAY to be forgiven of our sins and made right with God, our Creator.

References: John 12:35-41; Thru the Bible with J. Vernon McGee, Vol. IV, pp. 449

Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you."

--John 12:35 NIV

Jesus is closing out his public ministry at this point, and John, the Apostle, quotes some scriptures from the Old Testament prophet, Isaiah. This comes immediately after Jesus himself has given a warning to his listeners and followers. "While you have the light, believe in the light; that you may be the children of light (v. 36a KJV)."

As Isaiah said, there comes a time when God will blind their eyes, and harden their hearts...and they will no longer be able to be converted. (see Isaiah 6:10 and John 12:40) It is this way with Jesus and the Good News. There will come a day when the door to salvation is no longer open. As McGee says, "Jesus had presented Himself to them as the Messiah and as their King. They have rejected Jesus personally. Now He rejects them! Listen to me carefully. Because they *would not* accept Him, there came a day when they *could not* accept Him. My friend, the most dangerous thing in the world is to hear the gospel and then turn your back on it. If you just go on listening and listening and do not accept it and act upon it, there comes a time when you cannot hear and you cannot see. God is God, and it is He who has the final word."



Don't wait. Respond before your eyes and ears are so dulled with the presentation of the gospel that you can no longer hear it or see it as truth and salvation, but only as a clanging of pointless noise. Then you will truly walk in darkness forever. Today is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2).

Don't wait too long!

Merry Christmas to one and all!



DECEMBER Events

Dec. Worship Information

- *December 4:* Luke 2.1-7 (Communion)
- *December 11:* Luke 2.8-21
- *December 18:* Luke 2.22-38
- *December 24:* See next column
- *December 25:* John 1.1-14 (Communion)

Service will be at 10 a.m. No Sunday School this day.

- January 1: Roy Hamby preaches

Service will be at 10 a.m. No Sunday School this day.

Gifts for Christ and Memory Tree

We will set up a Memory Tree again this year and accept designated "Gifts for Christ." For your gift, we will hang up an ornament on the Memory Tree in honor or in memory of a loved one. **Please turn in your forms by Sunday, December 11th.** You may hold your gift until Sunday, December 18th when we will take up the special Gifts for Christ offering.

Forms are available now in the narthex and lobby areas.



Christmas Eve Service

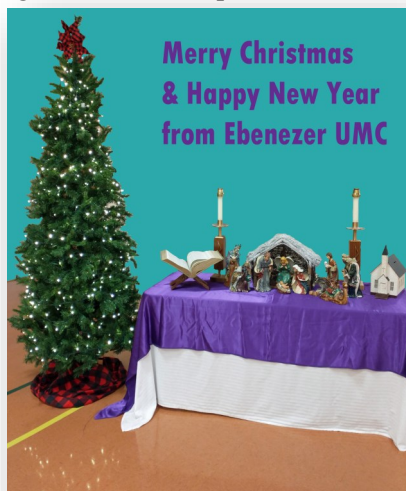
Saturday, Dec. 24

5 PM

We invite you to join us for a Christmas Service of anticipation and celebration of the birthday of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ in the Sanctuary. NOTE: We will need people to read scripture for this service. See Pastor Alan to volunteer.



After the service (weather permitting), we will move to the barbecue shed across the street, light a bonfire, and sing carols. Please bring a chair for that part.



December Celebrations



- 4th—Shane Kelley
- 5th—Teresa Simmons
- 7th—Jim Farr
- 10th—Abigail Mullinax
- 11th—Barbara Frye
- 14th—Carla Yoder
- 14th—Patty Toliver
- 20th—Peggy Jenkins
- 23rd—John McCrary
- 26th—Lyle Miller
- 26th—Sarah Teague
- 27th—Cheryl Vosdigh
- 28th—JoAnn Knepp
- 29th—Tina Williams

Happy Anniversary!

- 5th—Kevin & Pat Sears
- 13th—Shawn & Heather Wallace
- 29th—Dylan & Vicky Baker

Our Military

Ricky Garland
Shane McRary
Jamie Mullinax



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

Card Distribution

We will set up a table where you can bring Christmas cards to give out to our regularly attending members and associates. PLEASE CONFIRM that the person is coming to church before leaving envelopes here. See Bleaka Hollar, Cindy Sears, or Pastor Alan to confirm. Thank you.

Special Methodist Presentations in December:

There will be two ZOOM presentations in December from Methodist organizations that are options to consider if we disaffiliate from the UMC.

The *Free Methodist Church* will speak to us on **Sunday, December 4 at 3:00 p.m.** The *Association of Independent Methodist* (AIM) will talk to us on **Sunday, December 11 at 3:00 p.m.** Both presentations will be online and on the screens in the sanctuary. No vote will be taken at this time.

Please continue to pray as we gather information and decide what to do.



Church Council—November 20, 2022

Attendance: Rev. Alan Gaylord, Irene Austin, Becky Clark, Roy Hamby, Bleaka Hollar, Monte Hollar, JoAnn Knepp, John McCrary, Marsha McCrary, Linda Moretz, Cindy Sears, Marilyn Kohnle, and Kenny Silver.

Marsha opened the meeting. She thanked everyone on the board this year for their service and dedication. She asked us to pray for those who will be joining the Council next year or serve on committees; and please keep Roy Hamby in our prayers as he continues his journey to become a local pastor.

Financial Report

Irene Austin brought us a brief financial report, thanking the church first for helping her to grow in her Christian walk. She explained that we have gone over the budget in some categories, because of rising prices and greater usage. We still owe \$8,704 on our 2022 apportionments due to lower contribution levels this year. We continue to pay on the roof loan. We still owe around \$4,000 on that. The budget report was accepted by vote. Irene then presented the 2023 Proposed Budget. Motion was made to accept. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report

Regarding the question of disaffiliation, the Pastor presented 2 more presentations from other Methodist's groups: December 4th a Free Methodist Church Zoom meeting at 3:00 p.m. in our sanctuary, and December 11th an Association of Independent Methodists Zoom meeting at 3:00 p.m. in the sanctuary.

On December 18th our Council will meet to discuss the presentations and what to do next. Meeting will begin at 3:00 p.m.

Pastor Alan also presented copies to us of the Disaffiliation Process guidelines required by our Western North Carolina Conference.

A proposed Christmas letter to go out to our membership and attendees was presented for approval. We hope to encourage more of our members to give to our church during the Advent season. The letter was approved by the Council.

December Worship information was presented. See the Dec. Newsletter for details.

Marsha called for us to be in deep prayer for the next few months and for our Pastor, too. We have had a wonderful pastor over the last two years, who has been helpful and proactive in cleaning off the church rolls of people who no longer attend or support Ebenezer; and he has actively worked to help us in our decision of whether or not to disaffiliate from the UMC. Seek God's guidance for our decision. God may take us where we do not want to go, but he will always be with us.

Marsha closed the meeting with prayer.

Minutes by Cindy Sears. 📖

Recycle Your Cards

After the holidays, we will be collecting used Christmas cards and other types of greeting cards to send to a charity. Please hold the cards until after January 1st. A box will be placed in the old fellowship hall for you to place the cards in.

Thank you.



Special Giving

We gratefully acknowledge the following special gifts received in November:

In Memory of Bob Jenkins by
Peggy Jenkins

In Loving Memory of Hoke Clark by:
Becky Clark

In Honor of Bleaka and Monte Hollar by:
Judy McCrary

In Honor of Libby Long, Marsha McCrary, Bleaka Hollar, and all the UM Women who worked hard at the Country Store Event by:
Delores & Gary Paul Campbell

John Wesley Said:

"In all cases, the Church is to be judged by the Scripture, not the Scripture by the Church."
~ John Wesley

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

God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

—1 John 1:5b-7 NIV