



EBENEZER

United Methodist Church

www.ebenezerum-church.org

MAY '21

Volume 17 Issue 5

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

Inside this issue:

Meetings	2
Hid in My Heart	2
Something to Pray About	2
Hickory Crawdads Offer	3
School Car Line Ministry	3
May Worship Information	3
May Celebrations	3
Military List	3
Council Minutes—Apr. 25, 2021	4
Special Giving	4
Something, cont'd	5
Finding Hope Ministries Update	5

Special Note

July 4th 2021

Is the designated Sunday for returning to our Sanctuary for Worship Services. This will also be our Patriotic Sunday. Plan to wear your patriotic gear that Sunday.



Sunday Services

- 9:00a Worship Service
- 10:15a Sunday School
- 4:00p Adult Choir Practice
- 6:00p 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



Last month, I told you about starting a class meeting here at Ebenezer. This will happen over the summer, and I have 5 people who have expressed interest in being a part of this group. I do not have a date or time for the meeting yet. I would like to get a few more people to express an interest in participating.

So, what is a class meeting?

This is how Methodism got started. They are small groups of 10 to 12 people guided by a leader who meet weekly for at most an hour and a half. There is one question asked of each participant and that is “How has it been with your soul this past week?” After the person answers, then guidance, encouragement, or support for growth is given. In this way the members of the group grow in their discipleship (which is the command Jesus gives us in the great commission), and in their care for one another (which is a function of the body of Christ).

I encourage you to pray about joining this group as we reclaim our roots as Methodists. My hope for this group is that more and more people will take part, and that the numbers of groups will grow. I firmly believe that this is how we can impact our community and world for Christ. I also believe that all need Christ. There are too many people trying to get through life without the presence of God, or the support of the church. I remind you that the church is not an institution. Rather it is the living, breathing, active, and growing body of Jesus in this world.

I know that more and more people are turning away from organized religion and even from God. Less than 50% of Americans now belong to a church, synagogue or mosque. We are blessed to have a resource called Mission Insite that is provided by the annual conference. It is a collection of data that can help us understand our community. If you draw a circle three miles around Ebenezer we find that there are 4,677 people in that circle. The data tells us that only 38.5% of those people are active in a faith community. That leaves 2,877 within 3 miles of Ebenezer who have no faith community to support them, love them, and care for them. That is our mission field.

Imagine if they were all part of a class meeting growing in the faith of Christ, and in their love for each other. What a difference that would make in Dudley Shoals, Caldwell County, North Carolina, the USA, and the world.

This summer we take our first steps towards that goal.

In God's grace,

Pastor Alan

WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

- 6:00p Praise Band Rehearsal
- 6:00p Teens for Christ (Gr. 6-12)
- 7:00p Bible Study—Children & Adults.



CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Mon.—Friday: 8:30—1:00 p.m.

Phone: (828) 396-2214



Meetings, Events, etc.

Food Ministry

The Lord's Supper Ministry will begin delivering monthly meals to shut-ins and others in need of special care again on **Monday, May 17th starting at 5:00 p.m.** Please contact the church if you know of someone who is recovering from sickness, or surgery that might like to be added to the list.

SPPR Committee

The SPPRC will meet on **Sunday, May 23rd at 3:00 p.m.** in the sanctuary. We thank you for your service on this committee.

United Methodist Women

The UMW will meet on **Sunday, May 23rd at 5:00 p.m.** Irene Austin is in charge of the programming. All women of the church are invited to attend.

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

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

—Matthew 28:19-20 NIV

Special Offering Alert

We will be taking up special offerings in on May 2nd and 9th to fund the purchase of ready-to-eat meals for the food closet at CCC & TI. Please consider giving to this local mission effort.

Something to Pray About

by Cindy Sears

For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it.

—Ephesians 2:8-9 GNT

**BASIC DOCTRINE:
NO WORK INVOLVED**

For it is by God's grace that you have been saved through faith. It is not the result of your own efforts, but God's gift, so that no one can boast about it. God has made us what we are, and in our union with Christ Jesus he has created us for a life of good deeds, which he has already prepared for us to do. —Ephesians 2:8-9 GNT

There is a tension in the Christian faith that sometimes breaks out into division and persecution, and legalism within the Church. Or, leads some people to ignore obvious sin within the Church, and refuse to point it out in society. That is the subject of the Grace of God in and through Christ Jesus, and what he did for us on the cross of Calvary—and what happens after we "believe in him."

Grace is unmerited, undeserved favor, given without claims or expectations of return (Lockyer, p. 163). The graciousness of God first appears in the Old Testament in Genesis 6:8 where Noah is said to have found grace (or favor) in the eyes of God; therefore, he was saved from certain death in the flood. Nehemiah 9:17b (NIV) proclaims "But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love." Grace, gracious, and graciously occur over 200 times in Scripture; so, it is a theme throughout the Bible. The Grace of God is made manifest in Christ Jesus—in his coming to us as a man (fully divine, fully human), teaching and preaching and showing us Who God Is, and dying on the cross to open the door to God's full grace to all who believe in him (John 3:16). His Resurrection stamped "paid in full" on our indebtedness to God, and assures us of everlasting life when we accept Jesus as our Savior.

So, salvation is a free gift—or is it? Some churches give lists of actions, responsibilities, works that must be done by the Christian to ensure that he is saved, and has his "ticket to heaven." Others play fast and loose with the "free" part and proclaim that a person can be a Christian and continue to sin with impunity.

You could find evidence in Scripture (especially when taken out of context) to support both these approaches to "grace." But, Grace from God is not just a stamp of approval or admittance to the Christian Church. It comes with power and benefits. The Power rest within the Holy Spirit that is bestowed on ALL who believe in Jesus. In this Power, the benefits include being seen as righteous by a righteous God; reconciliation and fellowship with God; the promise of eternal life; and the power to be remade in the image of

(Continued on page 5)



Hickory Crawdads Sunday Offer



During their season, the Hickory Crawdads have 10 Sunday home games. **If you bring your church bulletin, you can receive a ticket for \$6. The Crawdads will then donate \$4 to the church for each ticket purchased.** We will start using bulletins again in May.

The Sunday games are at 3 p.m. (except for the 4th of July game which is at 7 p.m. and includes a fireworks show). The dates for these games are: May 16th and 23rd; June 13th and 27th; July 4th and 18th; August 1st, 15th and 22nd; September 12th. An all church outing will be planned for one of the games in either August or September.

Enjoy a baseball game, and helps support your church!



School Car Line Ministry

Monday, May 17th
2:00 p.m.

Special Ministry Opportunity

We will be providing bottled water and a snack to parents in line waiting to pick up their children at Dudley Shoals Elementary School on Monday, May 17th starting at 2:00 p.m.

Please talk to Kim Ellis to get more information, and to volunteer to help with this community outreach event. This is only a gesture of caring. We will not be promoting Ebenezer UMC in any other way than our presence and the free water and food.

Thank you for your prayers and support.



May Worship Information

- May 2nd – John 15.1-8 Communion will be celebrated
- May 9th – John 15.9-17 Mother’s Day
- May 16th – John 17.6-19
- May 23rd – Acts 2.1-21 Pentecost Sunday – Wear something red
- May 30th – Bleaka Hollar preaches

May Celebrations



- 5th—Bill Campbell
- 5th—Brei Ledford
- 8th—Marsha McRary
- 12th—Paul Burson III
- 12th—Heather Helton Wallace
- 13th—Ricky Baker
- 13th—Meredith Knepp
- 14th—Carolyn F. David
- 15th—Darren McCrary
- 22nd—Michael Crouse
- 24th—Lillie Johnson
- 29th—Ted Daniel

Happy Anniversary!



- 2nd—Lucas & Sarah Teague
- 4th—George & Sarah Christas
- 30th—Monte & Bleaka Hollar

Our Military

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



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

Salvation is free but being Christian is costly.

Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried.

Happy is the people whose God is the Lord.



Church Council Minutes—April 25, 2021

Attendees: Pastor Alan Gaylord, Irene Austin, Ted Daniel, Kim Ellis, Barbara Ferguson, Bleaka Hollar, Monte Hollar, Peggy Jenkins, JoAnn Knepp, Judy McCrary, Marsha McCrary (Chairperson), Linda Moretz, Cindy Sears, and Phyllis Minton

Marsha called the meeting to order and read from Romans 12 about our responsibilities toward society and our church. If you have a gift, use that gift. No one gift is more important or less important than another. Marsha gave the opening prayer.

Reading of the Minutes: stand as written.

Financial Report

Irene says that we are basically on track for the year. There was a question related to the electricity bill. New thermostats were installed, but the bill has not gone down much. Still, we are using our building more now.

Old Business

UMW Country Store proceeds over \$2400. We had a great turnout.

Candace as not gotten back to us on the youth group meetings.

New Business

Linda Moretz asked about the nursery clutter. Could we remove some of what is in there? It was suggested that she talk to Nancy Sears about this.

There was a discussion about removing the window air conditioner in the old Pairs and Spares room, because of an opening on the side that lets stinkbugs, etc. into the building. It was pointed out that it may be needed in the summertime or if we start VBS up again.

Pastor Alan’s Report:

Covid-19 update: We expect to return to the sanctuary on July 4th, which will also be our patriotic service Sunday. It has been reported that most restrictions will be lifted in June, though we may still be required to remain at 50% capacity.

Pastor Alan reported that less than 50% claim to belong to a church, synagogue, or mosque in the U. S. now. He explained that he considers the Great Commission in the book of Matthew to be our “mission statement” and the only one we really need. Pastor Alan then expressed his desire to promote small group/accountability groups for our church and its members to help make disciples within our church, and to encourage and empower us to reach out to the non-churched in our community.

In the three-mile radius around Ebenezer Church there is a population of 4,677. Of those people, only 38.5% claim to be affiliated with a church or other religious group. That means that there are 2,897 people without a church home. We have a huge mission field all around us.

Pastor Alan will be doing a summer series of sermons in which he will explore Methodist theology.

The Council members explained the Benevolence Committee and Fund (Thank Bank) to Pastor Alan.

Pastor Alan brought up the Hickory Crawdads special offer for its at-home games this summer. (More information is included in the May Newsletter.)

Biscuit sales: Monte and Bleak indicated that this monthly fundraiser will not be starting again, because of lack of helpers.

School starts on August 23rd in Caldwell County.


The next Blood Drive is set for

Monday, July 19th.

On a personal note: Pastor Alan will be away on May 27-31 to attend a graduation of some of his former members (youth) in Florida. Bleaka Hollar will be the speaker here the Sunday, he is away.

There will be no Church Council meeting in May. June 27th at 3:00 p.m. is set for the next meeting.

Irene Austin closed us with prayer.

Minutes by Cindy Sears. 

Special Giving

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

In Memory of Kelly McCrary by:
Patricia Anderson
Janice & Marquess Parsons
Women’s Bible Class

In Memory of Bob Jenkins by:
Peggy Jenkins

In Memory of Bea Spencer and Buck Spencer by:
Joan Pennell

In Memory of Edward & Bonnie Roberts by:
Darrell & Harolyn Roberts

In Honor of Bill & Delores Campbell’s 53rd Anniversary on Sept. 7th by:
Delores, Bill, and Gary Paul Campbell

In Honor of Billy Wayne Campbell’s 52nd Birthday on Sept. 19 by:
Delores, Bill, & Gary Paul Campbell

How is it with your soul?

Pastor Alan will begin two John Wesley type accountability class meetings this summer. If you are interested in being in the in-person or the Zoom group, please add your name to the sign-up sheet on the table at the entrance to the CLC.

See Pastor Alan’s article for more information about these class meetings.



Something to Pray About, continued

(Continued from page 2)

God/Christ. That last part means we change after giving in to the call of the Spirit to believe in Jesus Christ and be saved (see the second part of the verses above). The Spirit graciously empowers us to know and to obey the divine will. He helps us to resist sin. He develops our faith and patience, and enables us to bear suffering. Grace in the power of the Spirit causes us to relish the things of God, and find sin distasteful and abhorrent in all its forms. Grace teaches us to be gracious, to be kind, to be truthful, to be giving, to be less self-oriented and more God-oriented in all parts of our lives.

“When grace rules within, the whole being is brought into subjection to Christ, and the Spirit transforms us into His holiness.” (Lockyer, p. 168)
“Growth in grace is the best evidence of its possession.” (ibid.)

Therefore, God’s Grace is free, but God’s Grace also changes us. Some of us change faster than others; some of us are more mature in the faith—changed more into the image of Christ—than others. Some of us do greater works; some of us move backwards at times, instead of forward. Some of us are lazy and stubborn and fight the Holy Spirit’s calling, instead of humbly obeying. So, how can we make rules about what to wear, what kind of music to use for worship, and so on? Everyone who comes to church needs grace, saved and unsaved alike. We are called to show grace to all, as God has shown grace to us even when we were his enemies; and even now when we continue to disobey him.

In Christ we have liberty, but if we truly believe—have the faith—we will do works for God and his Church, because of the power and benefits of God’s grace working in us. But no work is required to receive the grace of God—only “believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31 GNT). Though “a believer may fall from grace, he can never fall out of grace” (Lockyer, p. 168).

Do not worry about the works part of the Christian life; be mindful of your relationship with Christ and study the scriptures, pray, and worship to develop that relationship, and the works will flow naturally in the power of God’s gracious gift of the Holy Spirit.

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” –Galatians 5:1 GNT

Finding Hope Ministries Update

COVID restrictions are still in place in Romania and Moldova, making it a bit more complicated to run things, especially when it comes to the schooling! School has been virtual because of COVID, so still homeschooling 40 + kids! So ready to get those kids back to the brick-and-mortar schools again!

Just please join us in prayer that COVID restrictions are lifted so we aren’t confined all summer.

Despite these relentless quarantines, the kids have still been able to attend church regularly (including Friday evening youth group) for the past few months. Thank the Lord, the government has

lightened up a bit on restricting religious activities. They are now allowing people out to attend religious services.

We have a weekly worship service at Finding Hope with all the Finding Hope children and staff. These weekly gatherings typically include an icebreaker game, worshiping in song, a short Bible lesson/story, and prayer...

Little by little, our kids are turning their hearts towards the Lord. In fact, several of the new kids gave their hearts to the Lord this last month...

We have been allowed to return to the gypsy villages to do some medical work and distribute clothes and food. The Finding Hope Church in the Tichendeal gypsy village is meeting again. The children’s church there has been very vibrant!

A couple of our children are transitioning into adulthood. Maria just turned 18. She hopes to dual enroll in a cosmetology program during her senior year of high school next year. Another young man who turned 18 in January.. is currently in a hairdressing school and looking for a job. We put him in an apartment - paying his room and board for six months - while we help him find a job to support himself... Another one, Alina, actually works for Finding Hope. She is the director of education for all the children at Finding Hope, and a house parent for Hope House. Alina will enter the university in the fall to study social work... We are so proud of Alina and thankful for her... contributions to our work here.

Many churches and Sunday school groups (which have been regular supporters of Finding Hope) are still not meeting regularly. Thus, our monthly supporters have fallen off. We are in dire need of more monthly donors. If you would like to become one, know anyone who is interested, or can connect us with churches, we would be very grateful indeed. Please pray for and support us as God leads you to.