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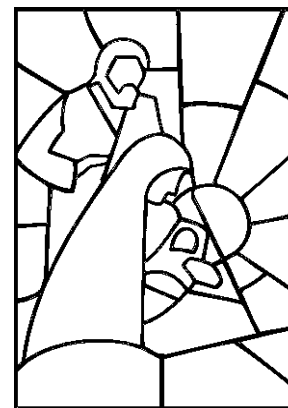
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*A Special
Advent
Connections*

to fayetteville first united methodist church

Vol. XII #12
December 2010

Listening for the Silent Night

Mark Westmoreland

Some events are so big that you have to get a running start.

Take a wedding, for instance. Most wedding services I'm involved in take less than an hour, but so meaningful is that hour that most couples start the run toward it a year or so in advance, with plans, showers, parties, brunches, rehearsals, etc., all leading up to that one life-changing ceremony.

A wedding is just an hour, and Christmas is just a day on the calendar. But so significant is that day, so meaningful that event, so cosmos-changing is the birth we celebrate, that a whole season is needed just to prepare for it.

Beginning November 28, we will spend a month of Sundays (and plenty of days in-between) pondering and proclaiming an amazing message that can be summed up in one word, "Emmanuel," God with us. With grace and life, our God comes to us. In the birth of a Savior, a Messiah, God comes to us. In a humble setting and to poor parents the Son of God is born, and the world is turned upside down. Salvation, truth, grace, hope and love all take on flesh and blood in the life of Jesus the Christ. That's big. That's good news worth mulling over for a while.

But wait, there's more! The Christ who comes to us as one of us, who was born as we were born, who died and was raised, that same Christ will come again in the fullness of time, bringing justice and peace and the final victory of God's grace.

Got it? It's a lot to get. So we spend a season, Advent, getting it once more, pondering it all, proclaiming it all, listening, nodding, singing, offering our "amens" together.

The season before us, for all the commotion and noise that comes with it, is really about tuning our ears and hearts to the holy message of the silent night. Our journey together in the church is about blocking out life's many distractions so we can hear again the pure and wondrous message. "For God so loved the world ..." "We bring you good news of a great joy ..." "Mary took her firstborn son and wrapped him ..." "Behold, I come ..."

In this special Advent edition of Connections, you'll find a season's worth of listening. It all begins with The Hanging of the Greens on November 28 and continues through the music, worship, fellowship, and giving of December. And at the heart of it all is the sacred silence of a truth so profound it challenges our words to express it.

Inside This Month's Connections

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Listen. There was born a humble servant who was Christ the Lord.
And in him past, present and future are embraced in love and power.
Listen. Angels sing. A newborn cries. It begins.
And we begin a holy season.

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Have a safe and wonderful holiday season!

Merry Christmas,



About Our Church Family

New Members:

- Barbara, Bob and Mac Byard, 225 Turnberry Circle, Fayetteville, GA 30215 - Barbara and Boy transfer their membership from Peachtree City UMC. Mac is currently serving in the Air Force in Arizona. He's awaiting deployment to Afghanistan.
- Jennifer and Jeff Cleland, 241 Willow Bend Way, Senoia, GA 30276 - Jeff transfers his membership from Burns Road Baptist Church in Lilburn, GA and Jennifer transfers from Griffin First UMC. We welcome Jennifer and Jeff along with their children Jilli (3) and Wiley (11 months). Jennifer is one of the newest members to the Fayetteville First staff and serves as the Communications Director.

In Sympathy:

- Danny and Julie Beck and family upon the death of his father, Hoyt Beck, on November 13.

Keep Them In Your Prayers:

Nell Babb	Jim Friday	Thelma McMillan	Bill Walters
Annelle Burch	Lloyd Groover	Connie Walton	Bob Partridge
George Copeland	Annis Harrell	Brad Wilkinson	Jean Aument
Carolyn Croft	O.C. Hendrix	Josh Williams	Annette Evans

Church Membership: 2029

Our Giving Through November 1 - 15:

Budget: \$63,195.53
Building Fund: \$1,175.00

2010 Budget: \$1,435,874.00

**Amount Needed to Meet Budget:
\$254,103.83**

Note of Thanks!

It's nice to know there are still people who take pleasure in doing special things and make others feel good. Thank you for your prayers, cards and words of encouragement during the death of yet another brother. You, my church family, are special.

In Christian Love,
Nadine Anderson

Donations

A donation to the building fund has been given in honor of Jean Aument, Bob Partridge and Kay Walters by the Fellowship/Discipleship Class.

A donation to the transportation fund has been given in memory of Danny Beck's father, Hoyt Beck, from the Cornerstone Class.

What's for Supper?

December 1
Cubed Steak/Creamed Potatoes/Green Beans/Biscuit/Dessert

December 8
Spaghetti or Lasagna/Salad/Bread/Dessert

December 15
Roast Beef/Baked Potato/Salad/Bread/Dessert

Titus II
December 7
Fried Chicken/Baked Potato/Broccoli Casserole/Bread/Dessert

Announcements

Legacy Bricks on Sale

The Legacy Brick sale is underway! Have the names of your friends and loved ones join the names of the senior ministers who have served this church through the years. You may purchase bricks in honor or memory of family and friends. The cost is \$50 per brick, however if you purchase 4 or more at one time the cost is \$45 per brick. This special pricing is available until December 31st. Each brick can be engraved with 3 lines of text with up to 18 characters per line. Order forms are available at the Welcome Center, at the kiosks, on the church website and at the church office. Simply fill out the form clearly indicating what you would like engraved on the brick and return it with payment in the offering plate or to the church office. Placing a loved one's name in the courtyard for future generations to see is a lasting way to honor them. These make great Christmas gifts, too!

Christmas Tour of Homes & Classic Car Tour

The annual Christmas Tour of Homes is Sat., Dec. 4 and Sun., Dec. 5 from 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. Your ticket includes a tour of beautifully and seasonally decorated homes, including the 1855 Holliday Dorsey Fife House Museum, Prime Financial and the Classic and Antique Car Tour and a free lunch with gift basket silent auction.

This year, a special edition to the Tour of Homes features Truett Cathy's, founder of Chick-fil-A, personal collection of more than 100 classic and antique cars, many with unique histories, on display. The Classic and Antique Car Tour will be open Saturday only on Dec. 4 from 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. and children are welcome. Chick-fil-A lunches as well as Mr. Cathy's autobiographies will be on sale at the car tour.

Then on Sun., Dec. 5., the church is offering a free luncheon from 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. in the Family Life Center. During the luncheon, there will be a gift basket silent auction. The luncheon is open to anyone regardless if you bought a ticket for the tour.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and children 12 and older. Tickets for children ages 3-11 are \$5.00 and under 2 are free and are good for the Car Tour, Prime Financial and Holliday Dorsey Fife House Museum only.

All proceeds will benefit three of the church's missions:

- ◇ Advantage Haiti, Medical Team International
- ◇ SafeHouse Outreach
- ◇ Blessing Our Schools

Tickets may be purchased at the church office. For more information, visit www.fayettevillefirst.com. or call the office at 770-461-4313.

Titus II

Our senior adults invite you to join them for lunch at noon on Tuesday, December 7 in the Family Life Center. The program this month is a concert by the Inman Elementary Fifth graders. The cost is \$6 for the meal of fried chicken, baked potato, broccoli casserole, bread and dessert. Please make your reservations by noon on Friday, December 3 to Sara James at 770-461-9703.

Fantasy In Lights Trip

SAGE and the youth of FFUMC are joining together for an intergenerational "Fantasy in Lights" trip to Callaway Gardens on Saturday, December 18. This is a family favorite trip every year as we enjoy the Christmas village and ride the open-air trolley through the best light display in the South! The cost for adults is \$22 and \$11 for children 6-12 and free for kids 5 and under, but they will still need a ticket. The group will have a late afternoon departure and late night arrival home. To register, contact Chris Mucha by December 1: cmucha@fayettevillefirst.com or call 770-461-4313.

Bring Financial Peace to Your Life in 2011

FFUMC is offering multiple 13-week courses of Financial Peace University (FPU) in the Winter - Spring 2011. The course benefits couples and individuals of all ages - those with or without debt! FPU is a life-changing program that teaches you to achieve your financial goals by eliminating debt, saving for the future and giving like never before. First course: Sundays, January 30 - May 1. 4:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. Facilitators are Charlcie and Pete Neal. Second course: Wednesdays, February 2 - May 4, 6:15 p.m. - 8:15 p.m. The facilitator is Mickey Seigle. Third course: Thursdays February 5 - May 5, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. The facilitator is Jack Wheeler. The cost for the course is \$100. To register, contact Kristin Heiden: kheiden@fayettevillefirst.com or call 770-461-4313.

Kristin's Kids Korner

With Christmas just around the corner, the busyness of shopping and preparing for the holidays has begun. For many of us, the stress of the season often overwhelms the celebration and joy we are meant to experience. This year, I invite you and your family to think about how best you can celebrate the season together, parents, grandparents, and children alike. With children out of school for Christmas break, they will have plenty of free time, so why not focus on creating special cards for family and friends, ornaments for the tree, and more! There are many websites that offer great suggestions. One of my favorites is www.kaboose.com.

Talk to your children about the gifts they would like to give to family and friends, and consider non-traditional items. Great organizations like Heifer International and World Vision have gift catalogs allowing you to support families across the world through the gift of an animal, a sewing machine, school, and more. Also, help your children think about how they can support other children that are in need. As a family, choose a child from our church's Angel Tree and let your children help you shop for the items requested. I pray this is truly a season filled with joy, hope, and love for you and your family.



Youth News

Renovatus 2011

Our winter spiritual retreat is right around the corner! This is the event that we highly encourage ALL of our active students and adult leaders to participate in. The dates are January 14-17 and we will be traveling to St. Simons Island, Georgia and staying at Epworth by the Sea. This beautiful retreat location contains a lot of Methodist history. As we are on that hallowed ground, we will be exploring our identity as followers of Christ and what it is to be a part of the United Methodist Church. It will be an amazing weekend that you will not want to miss! Sign up in the Welcome Center or by emailing Chris at cmucha@fayettevillefirst.com. We are committed to getting everyone that wants to participate in this event the opportunity to do so.

Christmas Beach Party

Join us for our youth Christmas Beach Party! The party is for all students from 6 -12th grade. Everyone is invited to show up in appropriate beach attire. There will be a lot of fun games, great food, music and a few surprises! The party will be on Sunday, December 12, from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

December Advent Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 1st Sunday of Advent Hanging of the Greens			1 Advent Study: 6:15-7:15	2 Fellowship/Discipleship Class Christmas Party in Fellowship Hall: 6:00	3 Advent Study: 10:00- 11:00 Sunshine Christmas Party: 6:30 Staff Christmas Party: 7:00	4 Tour of Homes: 1:00-5:00 Car Tour: 11:00-6:00
5 2nd Sunday of Advent Tour of Homes Luncheon & Silent Auction in Family Life Center: 11:00-1:30 Tour of Homes: 1:00-5:00	6	7 Titus II Imman Elementary Singers: 12:00	8	9 UMW Christmas Party in Fellowship Hall: 6:30	10	11
12 3rd Sunday of Advent Lessons & Carols: 8:30 & 11:00 No 9:45 Service Walk Thru Bethlehem: 9:40-10:40 DFACS Christmas Party in Gym: 2:00-4:30 Youth Christmas Party in Fellowship Hall: 6:00-8:00	13	14 Preschool Christmas Program in Fellowship Hall: 5:30	15 Children's Christmas Party in Fellowship Hall: 6:00-7:00	16 Yoga Christmas Party in Fellowship Hall: 6:00	17 Body Recall: 10:30 Walking Group: 1:00 AA: 7:00	18 Children's Ensemble at Azalea Estates: 4:00 -4:30 Fantasy in Lights: 5:00
19 4th Sunday of Advent Candlelight Concert: 6:00	20	21	22 No Wednesday night programs or dinner	23	24 Office Closed Christmas Eve Services in Sanctuary 4:00, 6:00, 11:00 No nursery 11:00	25 Christmas Day
26 No Children's Sunday School 11:00 service only	27 Office Closed	28	29 No Wednesday night programs or dinner	30	31 Office Closed	

'Tis the Season of Giving

Angel Tree

Through the Angel Tree, we will bring the joy of Christmas to dozens of Fayette County foster children. The tree will be in the Family Life Center beginning Sunday, November 28 and feature ornaments with the first name of a foster child, their gender and age. Simply select an ornament and purchase the Christmas presents for that child. The recommended amount of gifts should average \$75-\$100 per child.

Shoebox Mission Project

This holiday season, we will again be filling shoeboxes to reach out to members of our community. We will be shifting our focus, however, to those ministered to by SafeHouse Outreach in Atlanta. Our youth program has partnered with them this year and we are excited to join in that partnership. SafeHouse Outreach is an urban outreach committed to affecting real change in the lives of those in the margins of society. The organization provides practical, emotional and physical assistance to those living in the margins, and helps integrate them back into society – to lead healthy, functional lives.

Empty shoeboxes will be available in the Welcome Center beginning Sunday, November 21. You may use one of those provided or your own and fill it with cold weather items: socks, gloves, hats, scarves, etc. The items can be for men, women, teens or children. Wrap the completed shoebox so that the lid may be easily removed, and please mark your box according to the preferred recipient (adult male, teen girl, etc.) Completed shoeboxes may be returned to the Welcome Center no later than Sunday, December 12. Contact Kristin Heiden with questions. at: kheiden@fayettevillefirst.com or call 770-461-4313, ext. 17. Thank you for your continued support of this project!

DFACS Christmas Party

For the past six years, the members of FFUMC have hosted a party for the DFACS children of Fayette County, which includes children in foster care. The party is Sunday, December 12 from 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. in the Family Life Center. The Cornerstone and Genesis Sunday School Classes are serving as co-hosts for the event. At the party, each child is presented with a \$15 gift and they will participate in games, photos with Santa and Karaoke. We expect more than 60 children in attendance this year. If you would like to make a financial donation, volunteer for the event or support in other ways, please contact Len Gough at 404-216-2566 or lengough@bellsouth.net.

End-of-the-Year Financial Notes

December has typically been an excellent giving month at FFUMC, and so we are hoping for a strong finish to 2010. Please check to see if you have fulfilled your pledge. And is it possible for you to make a special year-end gift to your church?

We are also looking ahead to 2011. Have you completed and returned your estimate of giving card? Please make the church a vital part of your financial plan as you look ahead. The work of God's house begins in your house. Also remember, all contributions that are to be credited to 2010 MUST be in the church office before January 1, 2011. According to income tax regulations, if a check is dated December 31, 2010, but physically delivered in January 2011, it is deducted only on the donor's 2011 federal return. The only exception is if the check is dated AND postmarked in December 2010. The Finance Office will be open Tuesday – Thursday, December 28 – 30 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Friday, December 31 from 8 a.m. to noon.

The 2011 offering envelopes will be issued soon. Everyone that is currently using envelopes will be issued a new set unless you notify the church office. If you do not currently have offering envelopes and would like a set, please contact the office. The church offers the convenience of having your contributions sent directly to the church account via electronic funds transfer. This is an excellent way to remain consistent in your giving while helping to stabilize the church's income. Forms are available on the church website and at the church office.

O Come All Ye Faithful

Join us during the holidays for our traditional Christmas church services. Please remember there are no regular Wednesday night programs or children's activities on December 22 and 29. On Sunday, December 12 there is no 9:45 a.m. service. Also, there is no children's Sunday School on December 26 and only an 11:00 a.m. service that morning.

Hanging of the Greens - Sunday, November 28, 8:30 a.m., 9:45 a.m., 11:00 a.m.

Understand the meaning of the symbols of Advent and Christmas during this musical service.

Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols - Sunday, December 12, 8:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m.

This service tells the story of the fall of humanity, the promise of a messiah and the birth of Jesus through music and readings from the scripture. The combined choirs, along with all of the children's choirs, will participate in this beautifully melodic service. The FFUMC orchestra will be accompanying the choir on several pieces.

Candlelight Concert - Sunday, December 19, 6:00 p.m.

This year will mark the 10th performance of the Candlelight Concert. Through the years, this concert has been one of the highlights in the community. The concert featuring violinist Sonia Squires and pianist Rick Massengale was held for several years in the historic chapel. But, due to popular demand, the concert has been held in the sanctuary for the past few years. Over the years, the list of performers has grown to world-class vocalists and a small orchestra. Join them for this special Christmas performance.

Christmas Eve Service - Friday, December 24, 4:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m., 11:00 p.m.

Celebrate the birth of our savior Jesus Christ through the word and music. There will be no nursery for the 11:00 p.m. service.

Celebrate the Season With Your Church Family

Below are a few more opportunities available to help celebrate the season.

Advent Study: Hallelujah - The Bible and Handel's Messiah -

Wednesdays beginning December 1, 6:15 p.m. - 7:15 p.m. with Rick Massengale

Fridays beginning December 3, 10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. with Rev. Westmoreland

This three week session is a unique study combining the Biblical text and the beautiful music of George Frideric Handel as we prepare for the coming of our Lord. The cost of the book is \$18. Contact Kristin Heiden to register: kheiden@fayettevillefirst.com or call 770-461-4313, ext. 17.

Walk Thru Bethlehem - Sunday, December 12, 9:40 a.m. - 10:40 a.m.

The annual Walk Thru Bethlehem will take place during the Sunday School hour. All children are asked to meet in the Youth Studio (below the chapel) where they will begin the journey. All family members are welcome to attend the Walk as we journey with the shepherds in search of the baby Jesus.