



The Connection

Seeking to Link Person to Person And All to Christ

December/January, 2015

Christ United Methodist Church
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Chapel Hill, NC 27516
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Members of Our Staff

David Goehring, Sr. Pastor; Ext. 207
dgoehring@christmethodist.org

Suzanne Hultman, Assoc. Pastor
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919-969-7126;
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Ext. 206; mdaysaou@christmethodist.org

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Ext. 200; mivancic@christmethodist.org

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Ext. 209; bbaker@christmethodist.org

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919-969-1690;
darena@christmethodist.org

Brent Levy, Duke Intern
Ext. 205
blevy@christmethodist.org

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www.christmethodist.org

Christ Church gathers in the name of
Jesus Christ to worship God, to invite
and nurture disciples, and to send
them into the world.

The Pastor's Pen

Greetings! This is a very interesting time and season for Christians. We certainly must live in the world, but how do we live in ways that are not of the world? I am learning that the Biblical teachings on Advent, Christmas, and new beginnings can be very helpful. So, how do we approach our Christian faith and enjoy December and the first of January? Can we keep our focus on Jesus while the world teaches us instant access and immediate gratification?

My friends, we do not have to be distracted by the goings on of December or become disheartened by the worldliness of this season. In his sermon on November 30th, our Duke intern, Brent Levy, reminded us that God does his best work when life seems most dark. The prophet Isaiah cried out to God, "Oh that you would tear open the heavens and come down!" (Isaiah 64:1). And, God did come down in the form of His son Jesus, and He continues to be here through the Holy Spirit.

Because God did tear open the heavens and come here, we still can yearn for God, through Jesus, to right all wrongs, to usher in peace where there is brokenness, and to change the world for goodness sake. In our yearning for Christmas love and joy to permeate the world, not just in December but throughout the year, we must be open to God working *through us* to bring this about. Can you see yourself as a part of God's hope for the world? To imagine this is to realize that God's son Jesus can work with our deficiencies. When we feel powerless to effect change, Jesus shows up! That, my friends, is one of the many lessons I have learned from the Christmas story. Jesus keeps showing up! Receive this as Good News!



Whether it is Christmas or the New Year, as followers of Jesus we are to remain watchful and hopeful. These are not passive behaviors; they are purposeful actions! Here at Christ UMC, we truly want to see what God is doing, and we choose to partner with the Lord. You help me to get excited about being a minister in the local church. Merry Christmas and genuine love and care in 2015.

Peace, Pastor David

P. S. I personally want to thank all of you for your responses to funding ministry in 2015. I am encouraged by your commitment to God's work here.

Watching and Hoping this Christmas

Experience hope.

Christmas Eve Worship

3 pm - family service
5 pm - family service
7 pm - traditional service
9 pm - folk music service
(childcare provided at all services)

Join us for singing, candlelight and celebration during one of our four services this Christmas Eve as we experience hope together.

Share the gift of Love this Advent season! We're looking for additional help in the nursery rocking babies, reading to little ones, or playing with the children on Christmas Eve during the 3:00, 5:00 or 7:00 pm services. Contact Nursery Coordinator Bevin Sekora (bevinsekora@hotmail.com) or Children's Ministry Co-Director Jane Reeb (919-969-8820; jreeb@christmethodist.org) to offer your help.



On Sunday, Dec. 28th, we'll worship at 9:45 & 11:00 am only. Our normal service schedule will resume on January 4.

A Special Message from the Staff-Parish Relations Committee

The Advent & Christmas seasons are especially busy for our pastors, music leaders, & admin staff. These people serve with great love and commitment all year, & the pace is even more demanding in December. A longstanding CUMC tradition is to show our appreciation for all of them through a Love Offering at Christmas. We invite you to express your gratitude for the blessings they've given you and your family by contributing to this fund. Please note "Love Offering" on the memo line of your check, which may be placed in the offering plate on December 21 or mailed to the church office by Dec 18.

Wishing you a blessed Advent and Christmas season.
Christine Cox, Hal Brokaw, Katherine Kubel, Haven Cockerham, Jennifer Woods, Butch Fowler, Bill George, Jean Elia, Gavin Heymann, BJ Thompson, Pat Brooks

The Spiritual Lessons of the Christmas Crèche

Nativity scenes are a common sight during Advent and Christmas, but, if you look closer, what seems like a simple decoration actually carries a lot of spiritual lessons. In 1223, St. Francis of Assisi created the first crèche in an attempt to bring the focus of Christmas back to the birth of Christ and away from material, gift-giving customs. The history, customs, and meaning behind variations in crèche displays has always interested Jean Honeycutt, a member of First UMC in Tullahoma, TN. Her church houses a permanent Nativity museum which includes over

(See "Crèche", p.3)

CUMC Holiday Office Hours

December 24: Office open 9 am—noon
December 25 & 26: Office closed
December 31: Office open 9 am—noon
January 1 & 2: Office closed

When the office is closed, call 919-969-8820, x 202 to reach the pastor on call.



RETHINKCHURCH

Advent Calendar

[Nov. 30
Dec 25]

In the spirit of Advent Calendars, where every day holds something new, let's journey to Christmas together to experience a different kind of season.

Looking for a new practice this season? Check out rethink-church.org/Advent daily through December 25th for something new *to do, read, or experience* as we journey to Christmas. Yes, you read that sentence right! Get these daily devotionals by email or text & get ready! You may be encouraged to do something for someone else, or the devotion may offer a creative new experience to silence the seasonal hub bub so you can be close to God & those He loves. Grab a cup of cocoa and join other UMC congregations across the country as we prepare, watch, and wait for that wonderful something God is sending our way at Christmas and every day. CUMC's Devotions for Advent through Epiphany are online too. Read them at <http://christmethodist.org/resources/announcements/advent-devotional/>, or pick up a copy in the Narthex.

Advent Resources for All Ages

(“Crèche” from p. 2)

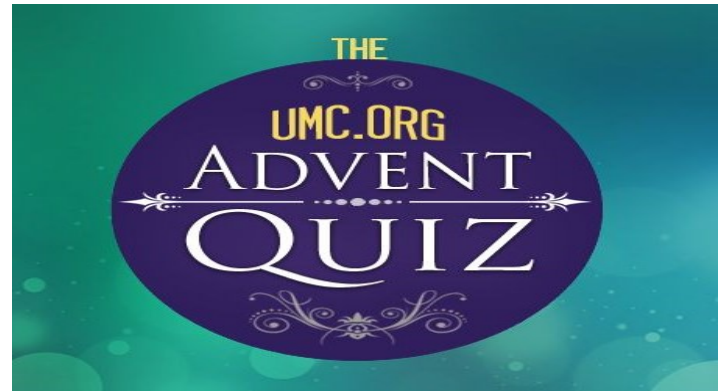
400 crèches. So, what do you know about the symbols in your nativity scene? Jean explains some of them below.

- ⇒ **Baby Jesus’ outstretched arms** reflect the invitation to salvation through him.
- ⇒ **Baby Jesus’ swaddling clothes** foretell Jesus’ burial shroud.
- ⇒ **The Virgin Mary’s gown** of red signifies lifeblood, and her mantle of blue represents the sky and heaven, conveying that she is the link between the human and the divine.
- ⇒ **Mary’s hands over her heart** allude to Luke’s account: “But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19).



⇒ **The Shepherds** represent the common man and also reference David, the shepherd who became king, and indicate Christ’s ancestral lineage.

⇒ **The Magi** are often depicted as being three different ages (young, middle-aged, and elderly) relating to the three stages of life. Sometimes, they also represent three different cultural and geographical areas – Asia, Africa, and Europe – the three known continents at the time.



Okay, quiz show fans! Here’s a great holiday gift just for you: *the UMC.Org Advent Quiz*. See how much you know about the traditions and symbols of the season by clicking on the daily question you’ll find at <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/advent-quiz-test-your-knowledge-of-the-season>. Spoiler alert: Go to page 4 of the newsletter to see who will congratulate you each time you answer a question correctly. Looking for more advent & Christmas resources for the whole family? Check out <http://www.umc.org/topics/topic-advent-and-christmas>.

No special plans for Christmas Day yet?

No worries--here is an invitation just for you. Spend the afternoon of Christmas Day with Don Wollum & Carole Chrvala & other friends from our CUMC church family! Celebrate the birth of our Savior in a warm home in Chatham County with friends, good cheer, and a delicious meal. RSVP to donwollum@centurylink.net, or call 919-545-2149. The Wollums look forward to welcoming you to their home.

**Been a Bit Wrapped Up
in Yourself this Season?
This Year? Or for Too Long?**



**Use your spiritual gifts to
help our community.**



**Coming to CUMC
FEBRUARY 2015!!!**

**GIVE OF
YOURSELF**

Looking ahead to 2015



Women's Retreat 2015: The Winter of Listening

“How easily you can belong to everything simply by listening,” writes the poet David Whyte. The spiritual practice of listening – to God, each other, & ourselves – is a vital skill in our scattered, busy lives. But too often we feel we lack the time, discipline, or know-how to listen faithfully. Through poetry, music, journaling, & storytelling, this retreat will teach us how to practice deep listening, embrace stillness, & belong to God in the quiet.

- **Retreat Leadership:** **Erin Lane** is author of *Lessons in Belonging from a Church-Going Commitment Phobe* (forthcoming February, 2015) and co-editor of *Talking Taboo*, an anthology of writing by young Christian women on the intersection of faith and gender. Confirmed Catholic, raised Charismatic, and married to a Methodist (our youth pastor, Rush Beam), she facilitates retreats for clergy and congregational leaders through the Center for Courage & Renewal. On our retreat, **Rev. Suzanne Hultman** will be leading worship, and **Mary Saou** will provide beautiful music.
- **Retreat Dates:** **January 23-24, 2015.** The retreat will begin at 5pm on Friday and conclude after lunch on Saturday at 1pm. Registration is due by Friday, January 9. Register online at <http://christmethodist.org/2015-womens-retreat-registration/>.
- **Venue:** Avila Retreat Center (<http://avila-retreat-center.com/>) - Located in north Durham, Avila offers space for rest and contemplation while traveling only a short distance.
- **Cost:** \$100 (Includes dinner Friday, breakfast and lunch on Saturday, lodging Friday night, use of facilities at Avila, and all retreat materials. Scholarships are available.)

Adult Bible Studies

Letters from Paul

Taught by Pastor David and Pastor Suzanne
In the Disciple Room

Free: Spending Your Time & Money On What Matters

A class for high school youth & their parents
Taught by Rush Beam & Erin Lane
In the 101 Market Street Conference Room

Beats by Jesus: A Look at the Theology of Music

A class for young adults
Taught by Brent Levy & Mike Saou
Location TBD



Kidz Club

Fruits of the Spirit

(1st-5th grade); In 105 Market St.

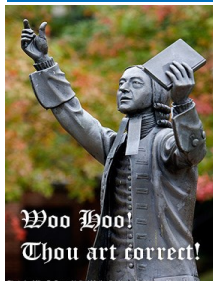
Youth Small Groups

(6th-12th grade); In the Youth Room, 103 Market St.

THANK YOU, JOHN WESLEY

... FOR ENCOURAGING ALL UNITED METHODISTS TO PLAY
THE UMC.ORG ADVENT QUIZ GAME

Learn more on page 3.



Welcome New Members!

New Faces @ CUMC

In November & December, we've welcomed new members to Christ Church, and we're happy to introduce them to you here. Take a minute to greet them & extend a warm CUMC welcome.



Steve & Marcie Hursting

- ◆ Moved from Austin, TX
- ◆ Live in Chapel Hill
- ◆ 919-903-9176
- ◆ shursting@earthlink.net
- ◆ mhursting@sprintmail.com

Crella Welge

- ◆ Moved from Illinois
- ◆ A retired RN & mom of CUMC member Scott Welge
- ◆ Lives in Pittsboro
- ◆ 618-654-8697
- ◆ tcwelge@gmail.com



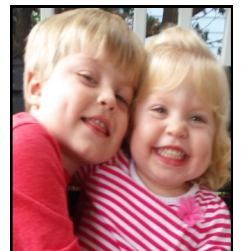
Dean & Ann Westman

- ◆ Moved from Akron
- ◆ D - a retired lawyer
- ◆ A - a Duke alum
- ◆ Live in Pittsboro
- ◆ 919-542-3589
- ◆ D - dewestman@icloud.com
- ◆ A - awest4duke@gmail.com



Katie Naftel

- ◆ Children: Jack (3); Isla (1)
- ◆ Lives in Chapel Hill (Southern Village)
- ◆ 919-923-0904
- ◆ KatieFinnNaftel@gmail.com



A dollar in the collection plate is no substitute for looking into the eyes of a real human being.

A donation in an envelope cannot replace the touch of a hand, the sound of a human voice, the feeling of worth.

The needy need money to survive. They need other human beings to live.



February 21 & 22
Make a Difference Weekend

****Featuring Guest Speakers**
[Eric Swanson](#) & [Clayton Jennings](#)

****Concert by [100 Men in Black](#)**

****Church-wide dinner, workshops,
and more!**

***Click the links above to find out more about
our special guests.***

Save the Dates & watch for more information coming soon! Want to help with this event? We'd love to have 50 hands on deck or more! Contact Deon Roach (droach@nc.rr.com; 919-225-5971).

Give of Yourself this Christmas and in 2015

yes, and...

By Brent Levy,
Duke Intern

One Friday afternoon during my first year at Duke Divinity School, when the pressures of papers and piety and preceptorial sessions peaked and became nearly unbearable, I found my way to a basement classroom

affectionately called "The Dungeon." Meeting in "the Dungeon" that day was a group of 7 to 10 students who had invited me to be a part of Duke Divinity's esteemed, world-famous improv comedy troupe. I loved watching "Whose Line is it Anyway" growing up and had always wanted to give improv a shot, so that Friday afternoon, I jumped in ... and I loved every second.

I loved it so much that my wife Natalie let me take improv classes for 10 weeks that summer in Carrboro, where I learned the fundamentals of improvisational comedy. It was an incredible way to spend a summer after a grueling first year. It was just what I needed.

The first thing they teach in improv class – the most basic lesson – is the "Yes, and." The idea is that when you're in a scene with your partner and your partner has an idea, you don't shut it down to make way for your own idea. Instead, you "Yes, and." It's a way of saying, "Yes... that's a great idea, and... here's what could make it better." "Yes, and"-ing takes the scene to the next level. Each idea builds on the last. When the scene starts, the players have no idea where they're going. They have no idea where their "Yes, and"-ing will take them. But the exciting part is that where they go **together** ends up being so much better (and so much more fun!) than if they decided to go it alone.

I wonder what it would look like if we did this in real life. How might this change our relationships with one another? Where might we go together? Or what if we imagined our lives as the biggest improv scene ever with God as our improv partner? Perhaps our "Yes, and" would lead us into a new friendship with the barista or the chance to feed God's beloved by gleaning sweet potatoes. Or maybe a "Yes, and" will compel you to speak out against an injustice or operate from a place of love rather than fear. I don't know, but I think it just might be worth a shot.

CUMC has supported Chatham Habitat for Humanity since 2009 by participating in the Habitat Apostles Build program. Up to 12 local churches (i.e., the twelve apostles) contribute funds and volunteer labor to help construct one or two homes per year. CUMC also contributed in the past to the Habitat home rehabilitation program in Siler City.

As we look back over 2014, we are thankful God used us to contribute \$5000 as well as the manpower &



womanpower needed to construct a house for the Johnston family and other Chatham County families who have long dreamed of owning a home. Looking ahead to 2015, Habitat has purchased 28 acres of land in Pittsboro (off Old 64 East behind the Piggly Wiggly) where future houses will be built. Are you ready to say "Yes, and" to showing Christ's love in our community through serving with Chatham Habitat? Contact Ed Harland (EdHarland@aol.com).

SNACK! \$ Back!

Did you know that 50% of public school children in Chatham County receive free or low cost meals (breakfast and lunch) through the federal school lunch program because their family income is at or near poverty level? That's 4,352 children who will likely not have adequate replacements for these meals when school ends in 6 months. It's a very difficult struggle for their families to provide for them over the 10-week summer break.

That's where SNACK (Summer Nutritional Assistance for Chatham Kids) & YOU come in. SNACK fills the gap by providing food boxes to eligible families each week. Food programs in other counties require families to find their own transportation to given locations for meals, but that's a difficult task in rural Chatham County with no public transportation. So, SNACK

provides food boxes at designated neighborhood sites. Last summer, CUMC members Jamie & Rick Skinner distributed food from Nature Trail Mobile Home Park near Carolina Meadows.

In the spring, 2015, Christ Church members plan to organize a food drive. It costs \$15 to feed a child for a week and \$150 for the entire summer. Won't you say "Yes, and" to this opportunity to show Christ's love to people in your community? Don't just write a check; serve with SNACK, too. Contact Shari Ligett to make a difference today (ncshari@bellsouth.net).

Looking Ahead to 2015



Calling all **8th through 12th graders** who have never before confirmed their faith in this or any other church!! If that is *you* and you are interested in what it means to claim God for yourself, please contact Youth Pastor Rush Beam (rbeam@christmethodist.org; 919-969-8820 x 204). The 2015 confirmation class **begins on January 11th**. (An information session for parents and students will be held on Sunday, January 4th, 11:00 am—12:30 pm, in the Youth Room.) From January 11 to March 8 (11:00 am—

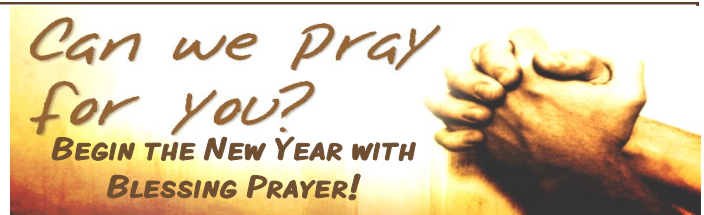
12:30 pm; Youth Room), you'll enjoy class sessions that will include huge faith questions, a retreat, writing a faith statement, standing in front of our congregation & announcing your beliefs, & so much more. Confirmation Sunday, including a family luncheon, will be held March 15.

Believing in the power of prayer and the blessing that receiving prayer can be, CUMC's Shemaiah Group – the prayer team - looks forward to offering prayer in January to everyone at Christ Church. What a wonderful way to begin 2015! Each individual or family group may sign up for a 15 minute time slot on one of two days:

- ♦ **Sunday, January 18** (9:45—10:45 AM, 11 AM—12 Noon, & 5:45—6:45 PM) or
- ♦ **Wednesday, January 21** from 6:30-8:00 PM (following the 5:30 PM dinner at The Well.

Blessing Prayer will take place in the Library, except for the 11 o'clock hour on Sunday, January 18, when it will be in the Disciple Room adjacent to Ascension Hall.

The format will be very simple. First you may briefly share any prayer needs that you have, next we'll listen for what God might have to say, and then we'll conclude with a blessing prayer. Go to the church website (www.christmethodist.org) and look for "Blessing Prayer" to sign up for an appointment online. No internet? No problem! Call the church office or Sharon Guyer at (919) 537-8242. Don't forget that the Shemaiah Group is available for intercessory prayer *every Wednesday at 11 am in the Library*. For more information, contact Pat Horton (supatthelake@gmail.com).



UPDATE: BEYOND OUR BORDERS

Dear Brothers & Sisters of BOB,

I hope you are fine and well. I am sending you some photos of Sao Jorge's construction development—as Orlando calls it “of the first part.” There is a new entrance, a new gate, walls are painted, etc. The bricklayer is the father of one of the children, and he is doing an excellent job. Orlando said that the parents are very excited and proud of the remodeling. We will send more photos as the construction progresses. Thank you so much for your financial support! You *are* part of this ministry.

Peace, *Sueli Silva for the Sao Jorge Day Care Family*



****A Note from the BOB team:** The fruits of the \$10,000 in donations that CUMC has provided to the Sao Jorge childcare center in Londrina are evident in this photo and others. They document the dramatic improvements being made to that facility, all to the benefit of Christ's children who are lovingly taught and cared for there. Thank you for your generous support of Beyond our Borders.

CHRIST CHURCH

United Methodist


800 Market Street

Chapel Hill, NC 27516

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Register Now for
2015-16 Christ Church Preschool**

Christ Church Preschool (CCP) will accept applications for Fall 2015 classes **now through January 30**. CCP is a ministry of Christ Church which offers weekday morning classes for 2, 3, & 4-year-old children. (Your child must be the age of the class by August 31.) Applications are available in the CCP office or online at <http://www.christchurchpreschoolnc.com/>. Church members receive first priority for class placement (after currently enrolled children) ***IF the completed application is returned by the January 30 deadline***. For more information, contact the director, Debbie Arena (969-1690; darena@christmethodist.org).



PUT THIS on YOUR CALENDAR!

- ▶ Tentative Blood Drive Date—Jan. 27
- ▶ Youth Babysitting Night—Feb. 6
- ▶ Young Adult Service Day: Durham Food Bank—Feb. 7
- ▶ Shrove Tues. Pancake Supper—Feb. 17
- ▶ Ash Wednesday—Feb. 18
- ▶ Make a Difference Weekend—Feb. 21/22
- ▶ Youth Jr./Sr. Retreat—March 6-8
- ▶ Confirmation Sunday—March 15
- ▶ Mission 1:27 Russia Trip—March 27-April 4

Don't you Think it's Time You Tried?

Yes, it's time for you to try **Access CUMC**. Do you wish you could give your offering to CUMC by deducting the amount from your checking or savings account? You can! Do you wish you could easily access member emails, phone numbers, and home addresses without having to call the church office? You can! Do you wish you could make your 2015 pledge to the ministry and missions of CUMC online? You can do that, too. And, it's all FREE!!

Go to our website, www.christmethodist.org, and look for the *Resources* tab at the top of the page. Scroll down and click on *Church Directory*. You'll find an easy-to-use guide to help you set up your account. **Please note:** Your first and last names, as well as your email address, MUST match the record in the CUMC database, or you won't be given an account. If you aren't sure which email address you gave the office, you don't have one on file, or you experience any other problems, please contact Deon Roach (969-8820, x201; droach@christmethodist.org).



Even if you won't be using the online giving service, please check out Access CUMC. **It allows you to view/print a membership directory, view/update your membership profile, and add family/individual pictures to your profile.** What are you waiting for?