



The Connection

Seeking to Link Person to Person And All to Christ

December, 2016/January, 2017

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The Pastor's Pen

Greetings!

This is a great time of the year to be a Christian. For us, the season of preparing for Christ's birth brings out the best in us. Let's pray that others will come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, as well.

The prophecies in the Old Testament point to the event that took place in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. As Christians, we often ask, "Why doesn't everyone believe that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy?" I



am realizing that God is still working that out with people.

Jesus tells us that he is the fulfillment of God's plan for all people. I have noted that, throughout history, people have had their own ideas about who and what the Messiah should be. For many, Jesus did not meet their criteria. And that is why God in Christ Jesus still is bringing about his plan.

Enjoy these weeks leading up to Christmas Day. There is much planned at Christ Church for you as we actively wait during the Advent season. You will enjoy reading about those events in this newsletter. I invite you and your family to participate in everything you can. Rejoice that Jesus is the fulfillment of God's plan for all humankind. Let God's will continue to be what you desire.

**Amen & Amen,
Pastor David**

Slow Down . . . It's Advent!



Have you got **4.2 seconds** to spare this season? I know you're busy with shopping, wrapping, baking, decorating, partying, traveling, cooking, and more, but please click this link right now. Really! Don't wait! Hurry: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oIqtAAe0XTU>.

Whew! Isn't that an incredible video?! If you watched the second clip (about 4 mins. long), it shows how the band *OK-Go* made the 4.2 second video.

Isn't it amazing to see how the band crafted it??? Isn't it a little unsettling, too? For me, the video was like looking in the mirror. It made me realize that during this Advent season—this season of *waiting*—I've been hurrying through it at break neck speed. I've been expecting everyone else to do the same thing, too. And, I'll admit that my impatient, frazzled self has been humbled because I realize that all that rushing has caused me to miss the most important thing about Advent.

When I'm dashing, darting, and driving hard through these December days, there's no time to watch for God, or to turn to God, or to see what God is doing in this world or even in me. And, there sure isn't time to dream God-size dreams. So, let's just breathe! Let's just wait . . . and become fully aware of all that God is doing in our lives and in the world. Whatever has you rushing today *can* wait for 4.2 seconds . . . or maybe even longer while you consider the slow and beautiful coming of the Son of God. If we don't pause, we'll miss the most important message of Advent and Christmas—God showing us, through the birth of a baby in a manger, how very much we are loved. Let's do as Mary did on that long ago Christmas Eve. Let us treasure up all things of the season and ponder them in our hearts (Luke 2:19) while we wait for the Messiah to be born once in again in us.

Peace of Christ, Deon Roach

Advent Events and more!

30 min. Midweek Meditations on Wednesdays during Advent
Morning prayer - 8:00 am
Midday prayer - 12:15 pm
Evening prayer - 5:30 pm

Christmas Cantata
Dec. 18 at 9:45 & 11:00 am

The Longest Night Service
Dec. 21 Meal at 5:30 pm
Service at 7:00 pm

Christmas Eve Services
Dec. 24 at 3, 5, 7, & 9 pm

Christmas Day Service
Blessing of the Toys at 10:30 am

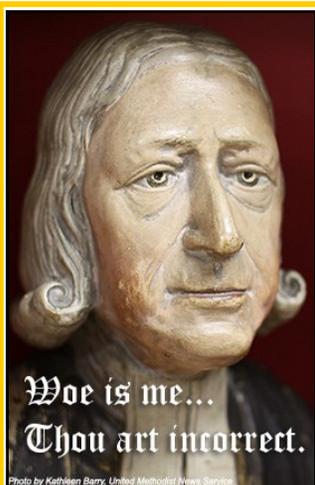
New Year's Day Services
with Communion
8:30, 9:45, 11:00, & 7:00

Administrative Office Closed
Dec. 26-Dec. 30

Finance Office Open
Dec. 28-29 9-5 | Dec. 30 9-12

Test your Advent Knowledge

As we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth, UMC.org offers a fun and fascinating quiz that allows you to test your knowledge of the season. Do you know why Advent wreaths are shaped in a circle? Is Advent a fixed number of days? A new question to challenge you is posted five days a week. Check it out at <http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/advent-quiz>. And, please do your very best. If you get a wrong answer, it really annoys John Wesley.



A special
worship service
for those
experiencing
loss or grief

The Longest Night
Dec. 21 at 7:00 pm



The holidays can be a difficult time when you've had loss or difficulty in your life or family. Experience a special time of prayer to acknowledge pain and loss and to recognize God's light in the midst of darkness. Join your CUMC friends for a dinner prior to the service from 5:30-6:30 pm in Ascension Hall.

Christ Church Cantata

December 18, 9:45 & 11

VIVALDI
GLORIA

MAGNIFICAT & DIXIT DOMINUS

Vivaldi's *Gloria* is one of music's most uplifting choral works, full of high drama and musical fireworks. Enjoy CUMC's 35-voice choir, accompanied by organ and handbells, as they sing in the Good News of Christ's birth on Sunday, December 18th at 9:45 and 11:00 am.



CHRISTMAS
Dec. 24 3, 5, 7, 9 pm
Dec. 25 10:30 am



Around the Christmas Tree at Christ Church



Oh Christmas Tree!!!

Have you ever wondered who decorates our beautiful church for Advent and Christmas? We can thank our wonderful flower peddlars (including Terry Woodfin, Deanne Bradley, and Shari Ligget pictured here with “elves” Nick Jonckowski and Danny Ferguson) for the gift of beauty they share with us this season.



Angel Tree 2016

Gifts donated in December will be shared with children of the inmates CUMC ministers to through our Prison Ministry; at FPG Bilingue School (many of whom we tutor on Wednesday nights); at El Camino UMC in Siler City; and with families in the Orange and Chatham County communities whom CUMC serves through our benevolence program. A BIG thank you goes to Head Elf Sarah

Cameron & to all our generous shoppers.



Everybody's a Star at the Christmas Pageant

Over 70 children joyfully sang about the birth of Jesus at our annual Christmas pageant on December 11. We're grateful to our adult & youth volunteers who directed an energetic group of participants

(Catherine Neal, John Paul Middlesworth, Caroline Steirner, & Lilly Thompson) & to those who organized the pot luck fellowship time that followed the show (Jennifer Thompson and Jan Elliott).

You're Invited to Christmas Dinner!

If your plans allow, please join Don Wollum and Carole Chrvala for Christmas dinner, 2-6 pm, with the meal being served at 3 pm. Their table is set and ready to welcome all who would like to enjoy a time of holiday fellowship and celebration. To RSVP, contact Don (919-451-6812; donwollum@centurylink.net).



2016 STOCK CONTRIBUTIONS & YEAR-END FINANCIAL GIFTS

December 16th is the deadline for you to give a gift of stock to the Methodist Foundation in order for it to appear on your 2016 year-end statement at CUMC. Also, if you are mailing a check to CUMC, per IRS regulations, it must be dated and postmarked no later than Dec. 31, 2016 for it to appear on your year-end statement. While our administrative offices will be closed between Christmas and New Year's Day, the CUMC Finance Office will be open Dec. 28-29 (9 am—5 pm) & Dec. 30 (9 am—noon). Questions? Please contact Denis Brichford (dbrichford@christmethodist.org; 919-969-8820, x203).

A Special Message from the Staff-Parish Relations Committee

The Advent and Christmas seasons are especially busy for our pastors, music leaders, & administrative staff. They serve with great love & commitment all year, & the pace is even more demanding in December. A longstanding tradition of Christ Church 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 have 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 18 or mailed to the office by Dec. 19.

Wishing you a blessed Advent & Christmas season,

CUMC's Staff-Parish Relations Committee

Hal Brokaw, Pat Brooks, Haven Cockerham, Tom Hanlon, Carol Martin, Bob Murden, David Parker, Mike Roach, Mark Scurreia, Stephanie Stout, & BJ Thompson (Chair)

Welcome New Members!

New Faces @ CUMC

We've welcomed new members to Christ Church in the last several months, and we're happy to introduce them to you here. Take a minute to reach out to them & extend a warm CUMC welcome.

James Harrington & Carol Ann Iglesia

- ◆ Live in Southern Village
- ◆ Daughter Caroline (5 mos.)
- ◆ Carol Ann is the daughter of CUMC members Tony & Carol Iglesia.
- ◆ 336-507-4283
- ◆ mhtorringjan@yahoo.com
- ◆ ciglesia@yahoo.com



Randy & Shelley Kolls

- ◆ Live in Governors Forest
- ◆ Daughters Katie (23) & Karli (14)
- ◆ Randy is the GM at The Washington Duke Inn & Golf Club, & Shelley has also worked in the hotel industry.
- ◆ 919-968-6888
- ◆ RKolls@wdigc.com
- ◆ ShelleyKolls@aol.com

Richard & Judy Wearne

- ◆ Live in Governors Club
- ◆ 3 grown children, 2 son-in-laws, & 4 grandkids
- ◆ Judy helped organize CUMC's recent yard sale for Hurricane Matthew victims.
- ◆ 919-903-9340
- ◆ jgwearne@gmail.com



GOO
WORKS
They Make A Difference!

In Hebrews 13:16, Paul tells us, "Do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." The people of Christ Church, through a myriad of GOO WORKS this fall, have made a difference in our community and the world. You do the math—literally—to see how your generosity, coupled with God's blessing, adds up to a sum total of amazing resources to help those in need.

\$3000 given at CUMC's October Benevolence Concert
+
\$5000 given to Stop Hunger Now (along with 3000 meals packed at Culbreth Middle School in October)
+
\$5000 given to support the Koinonia Community Garden
+
\$10,000 collected through the November Hurricane Matthew Yard Sale & special gifts for flood victims
+
approx. \$24,000 given to CUMC's Angel Tree to provide gifts for needy families in December (See p. 2 to learn more.)
=
\$47,000!!! And, that \$47,000 is in addition to the \$50,000 the missions committee has already distributed to other mission projects in the first three quarters of 2016. Keep up the GOO WORKS in 2017, Christ Church!!



Stop Hunger Now Event
October 22, 2016

Christ Church in the Community



Hurricane Matthew Work Team Forming Now

Are you starting to fill in your 2017 calendar? Make sure you leave room to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ and volunteer to serve with the **Christ Church Hurricane Matthew Work Team in Robeson County this March**. According to FEMA statistics released in mid-November, 70,550 homeowners in the 44 counties of the North Carolina Conference have registered damage to their dwellings from the October storm. Of these, 50,127 are uninsured. **That's 71%**. CUMC Missions Coordinator David Harvin is leading a team who will work in Robeson County from March 13-17. UNC Nursing students, under the direction of CUMC member Jean Davidson, will also be on hand to provide medical interventions for hurricane victims. You may serve all week or just for a day as your schedule allows. All skill levels are needed to help with tree and debris removal, muck out, mold elimination, and more. Contact David Harvin if you're ready to serve (Dharvin@aol.com; 919-423-6433).

Who is my Neighbor? ¿Quién es mi prójimo?

Thoughts on what Church Community *Really* Means

By Chris Woodfin

Christ Church Council Chair

That question is just four simple words but it is deeper than it initially seems. And, the answer to it probably depends on whether we are looking *within* ourselves or *beyond* ourselves. Is "church community" who we are as a congregation of members, or is it who we are as a church in the broader context of those with whom we live and work in our community? Certainly we can't be one without being the other. We know that as members of Christ Church. We live into loving our neighbors in so many ways, so it is only natural to expand that love by taking steps to broaden our reach by putting love into action and turning words into deeds. And what if those words were spoken in Spanish?

Too many questions? Of course not! As we know, Jesus loved questions, especially asking them. Questions like "Who is my neighbor?" Or, "Quien es mi projimo?" Did you know there were over 3800 Latinos living in Chapel Hill when the 2010 census was taken? Can you imagine how many there must be in 2016? More questions, I know. That doesn't even include Pittsboro and northeast Chatham. Did you know that there is not any United Methodist Church serving the Spanish speaking Latino community in the Pittsboro and Chapel Hill areas? Well now you know.

You'll also be happy to know that CUMC has decided to do something about that fact. With approval received from your CUMC Council at its August 28 meeting, we are taking initial steps to explore the need and opportunity to expand our community of faith to embrace our Spanish speaking neighbors who seek a church home right where they live. Here! This builds upon our longstanding relationship with El Camino UMC located in Siler City. But it won't be there—it will be here. Pastor Daniel Pantoja, who serves El Camino Church on a part-time basis, will be working with us to explore this opportunity to commune with our Spanish speaking neighbors right in our own front yard by inviting them into God's house at CUMC.

Speaking of God's house, God recently blessed Terry and me with a new downsized house just over the Chatham County line, a stone's throw away from Christ Church. During the construction process, God sent some of the most talented artisans and craftsmen to build our new home. Easily 95% of these hardworking, dedicated, highly skilled people were Latino. We couldn't communicate readily with all of them, but the universal language of warm smiles offered and received, as well as warm food and cold drink provided to weary workers, combined to forge relationships that transcended language. Feelings of mutual thanks were experienced through our breaking bread together, first on boxes and then on new countertops. We can do that right within God's house at CUMC, too!

There is much more information to come on this exciting opportunity that God has laid upon our hearts. I look forward to learning more and sharing more with you in the months to come.

Connect at Christ Church

**THIS YEAR
WILL BE
~~THE SAME~~
~~HARD~~
~~NINE TO FIVE~~
~~BORING~~
~~ALRIGHT~~
~~STRESSFUL~~
DIFFERENT**

MMP: When You Need Something a Little Different

By Brent Levy, Associate Pastor

In a few weeks, it will be a new year. 2017! What are your goals for the year? Have you made resolutions? And, what about your faith life? Will it be the same, hard, 9-5, boring, alright, stressful? Maybe you'd just like it to be **different**, and if so, I've got your answer: MMP. For several months now, a solid, faithful group has met every Wednesday morning at 8 am in the Sanctuary for **Midweek Morning Prayer—MMP**—from the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer. We're going to keep going as long as friends continue to show up. It's been one of the blessings of my week in 2016, and part of what I've loved most about it is the routine. Even amidst the craziest weeks, MMP is a constant. It keeps me grounded. It keeps my feet on solid ground. It reminds me what matters. It reminds me who God is and who I am. It reminds me to put first things first. And that routine has made my spiritual life different.

Yes, 8 am is early. I get it—although John Wesley *routinely* awoke at 4 am to pray. Just saying! But routine *is* important—especially as it relates to prayer and Scripture reading. (We would call these means of grace, and there are others, too.) Routine is important in our journeys of faith so that we learn to grow in holiness, to discern God's will for our lives, and to become the people God is shaping us to be.

Even if you can't make it to MMP on Wednesday mornings in 2017 (You could follow along on our CUMC Facebook page. Just saying!), I want to offer a few of my favorite resources that might aid in your daily practice of prayer, reflection and Scripture reading. Books, emails, podcasts and music resources are available at <http://christmethodist.org/resources-from-pastor-brent/>. My prayer is that you'll find space in your routine to lean into the holy. And as you lean in, trust that the year 2017 will indeed be different!

Greetings and Salutations!

Do you talk to people? Do you talk to people at church? If you answered yes to either or both of these questions, you are the perfect person to be a greeter for one of our Sunday worship services. The Connect Team is working hard to enhance our welcome experience on Sunday mornings, and we need your help! There's no better way to meet people – even if it's outside your comfort zone. That's where the magic happens! Paul knew this, too, as he implored the Romans to "welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you." To learn more, contact Pat Brooks at pbrooks0816@gmail.com.



confirmation | 2017

"Confirmation is not the beginning or the end of the faith journey. Confirmation is about making lifelong disciples."

CUMC Youth Ministry is excited to announce that enrollment is now open for the 2017 8th Grade Confirmation classes. This year's confirmation will not be your conventional classroom experience. Throughout the course of the 8 week study, we'll blend worship, Sunday School, Bible Study, service, and church ministries into confirmation. This exciting approach to confirmation will help equip students with a stronger grasp of Christian history and the core beliefs of the United Methodist Church, and it will challenge them to live out their faith on a daily basis.

Confirmation Dates:

January 8	11:00 am	Parent/Student Meeting
January 15	11:00 am	Confirmation Session 1
January 22	11:00 am	Confirmation Session 2
January 27	7:00 pm	Confirmation Session 3
January 28	9:00 am	Confirmation Session 4
February 12	11:00 am	Confirmation Session 5
February 19	11:00 am	Confirmation Session 6
February 24	7:00 pm	Confirmation Session 7
February 25	9:00 am	Confirmation Session 8
		Confirmation Sunday - TBA

To register, go to <https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07edjtu5bqc48b174d&oseq=&c=&ch=>. Contact Youth Pastor Nick Jonckowski with questions (919-260-1424 or njonckowski@christmethodist.org).

YOUTH, JUMP INTO 2017!!!!

NEW EVENT: Skyzone Trampoline Park

Friday, January 6; 7:00-9:00pm

\$25/person includes 2 hour access to group open jump.

Food and drink is not included. Please register at:

<https://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/eventReg?oeidk=a07edjtu5bqc48b174d&oseq=&c=&ch=>. Learn more about Skyzone at <http://www.skyzone.com/durham>.

Looking Ahead to 2017



The Well Starts January 11th

Start your New Year with an evening of great food, warm fellowship, and a variety of programs for adults, youth, and children. Each Wednesday, we will gather for a meal at 5:30 pm, and small group classes with different focuses will start at 6:30 pm. The schedule below provides additional details. Questions? Contact the church office (919-969-8820; office@christmethodist.org).

5:30 pm—Dinner

6:30 pm— Classes; music rehearsals; youth & children's programs; FPG Elementary Tutoring

Classes:

January 11th-January 25th

Bible Study with Pastor David (Disciple Room)

Exploration of Wesleyan Theology with Pastor Brent (location TBD)

February 1st-February 22nd

American Christianity Class (instructor TBD)

Exploration of Wesleyan Theology continues with Pastor Brent (location TBD)

Register your Child for Christ Church Preschool

Would you like your child to be part of the Christ Church Preschool family? Christ Church Preschool (CCP) will accept applications for Fall 2017 classes now through January 27, 2017. Church members receive first priority class placement (after currently enrolled children) **IF** your completed application is returned by the member deadline of **January 20, 2017**.

Christ Church Preschool, a ministry of CUMC, offers weekday morning classes for 2, 3, and 4-year-old children. (Your child must be the age of the class by August 31.) Applications are available in the preschool office or on the CCP website: www.christchurchpreschoolinc.com. If you have questions or want more information, contact director, Debbie Arena (919-969-1690; darena@christmethodist.org).

An Invitation:

*Begin the New Year with
Blessing Prayer!*



The Prayer Team would love to offer prayer to everyone at Christ Church! Please sign up as an individual or with your family for a 15-minute time slot on **Wednesday, January 18** from 6:30-8:00 pm (following the Well dinner) or on **Sunday, January 22** (9:45-10:45 am; 11:00 am—noon; 5:45-6:45 pm). All sessions will be held in the Church Library, except for the 11:00 am hour on January 22, which will be in the Disciple Room. You may sign up for a time slot on the church website (www.christmethodist.org) beginning December 20th. Or, make an appointment by calling the church office (919-969-8820) or Sharon Guyer (919-537-8242).

Save the Date



► **January 18: Palm Sunday Cantata Rehearsals Begin** for *Requiem*. Contact Daniel Steinert, Director of Music, to get involved (919-969-7126; dsteinert@christmethodist.org).

► **January 28: Immigration Workshop** led by Pastor Daniel Pantoja & Lindsey Goehring (partner in the Law Office of Goehring & Strang which specializes in family-based immigration law & Pastor David's daughter!). More information coming soon!

► **June 26-30: Vacation Bible School**. Theme—*Maker Fun Factory: Created by God; Built for a Purpose*.

The Church Office will be closed on January 16 in recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

CHRIST CHURCH

United Methodist

800 Market Street

Chapel Hill, NC 27516

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Photo by Jonathan Van Ark