



*The Methodist Messenger*  
DECEMBER 2018  
Whiteville United Methodist Church



Sunday School - 9:00 a.m.  
Sunday Worship Service - 10:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Communion Service - 6:00 p.m.

PREPARE FOR AND WELCOME  
THE COMING OF THE LORD  
Advent-Christmas-Epiphany 2018-9  
Services of Worship

First Sunday of Advent/December 2/10:00 a.m.  
Hanging of the Greens

Second Sunday of Advent/December 9/10:00 a.m.

Third Sunday of Advent/December 16/10:00 a.m.  
Lessons and Carols: Led by the Combined Choirs

Fourth Sunday of Advent/December 23/10:00 a.m.

Christmas Eve/December 24/5:00 p.m.  
Communion and Candlelighting

First Sunday after Christmas Day/December 30/10:00 a.m.

New Year's Eve/December 31/5:00 p.m.  
Communion and Covenant

Epiphany of the Lord/January 6/10:00 a.m.  
Church Officers and Committee Members Thanked and Dedicated

GOD'S MYSTERIOUS PROVIDENCE

On the surface, something can look disastrous. But stirring under the surface is renewal that is unimaginable.

Consider the athletic team that suffers a humiliating defeat. It looks like the defeated team might as well forfeit the remaining games of its season. But immediately after the crushing loss, the team escapes from the lights and mics of the press, holds tough and truth-telling meetings without coaches present, demands that its team leaders step up, absorbs the blunt criticisms and challenges of its leaders, and gets doubly serious about playing to the best of its ability for the rest of the season. In its next game, the once-humiliated team enters the arena of contest with renewed unity and determination. Whether it wins or loses, it rises above its recent humiliating defeat.

Consider Joseph of Genesis. Sold into slavery by his brothers, Joseph knows he was wronged by his brothers, but he later tells the truth to them: "Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." (Genesis 50:19-21, NRSV) Because of Joseph's office and service in Egyptian government, his larger family, his nation, would escape famine and extinction.

Consider the crucifixion of our Lord. It appeared to be nothing but a disaster for Him and for The Eleven,

nothing but a horror for the few concerned. However, three short days after gasping for His last breath on a cross, He was raised from the dead to live, and to reign over this world, eternally.

Consider today's Great Debate -- on unity and human sexuality -- in The United Methodist Church. From the outside, it looks like a mess. These days United Methodists often lament that there is division in the denomination. And distraction from the basic mission of the church. And fatigue from the long, seemingly endless, debate of nearly 50 years!

However, there is another way to look at this Great Debate that is underway and that will begin to end in the special, called February 2019 General Conference. Perhaps this debate, like nothing else in memory, is teaching United Methodists what being part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church requires. We United Methodists are learning that being the Church does not come naturally. That being the Church does not involve simply believing and behaving like the nice people on The Today Show believe and behave. That being the Church does mean -- first, last, and always -- hearing, trusting, and heeding Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church catholic.

During the Great Debate in our denomination, there is excellent teaching that is occurring. That teaching is rooted in Scripture, the Church's Tradition, and the Wesleyan way. To be sure, schlock (that is, to be gentle about it, inferior teaching) is regularly coming out of some quarters. But such schlock can be ignored by most United Methodists, and it can be challenged by a few with good teaching. Solid teaching informs and forms United Methodists into being more fully and faithfully the Church. Right now, I believe that there are more United Methodists who know more about what The United Methodist Church teaches, and how The United Methodist Church works, than ever before.

Again, before the Great Debate, the vast majority of United Methodists just let others tend to denominational matters. Now, because of the Great Debate, many more United Methodists know more about what is required of the Church, and more about The United Methodist Church (its doctrine and discipline), and they participate more fully and faithfully in the church. That is for the good.

God's mysterious providence is always at work -- especially when all looks lost.

In Christ,  
Pastor Paul

## THE BIBLE IS NOT A PICNIC

Leslie Newbigin (1909-1998, Reformed bishop and theologian in India) is glad to speak about the oneness of the Church's faith: "[T]he gospel is not an empty form into which everyone is free to pour his or her own content. Scripture, it has been wittily said, is not a picnic where the authors bring the words and the readers bring the meaning. The content of the gospel is Jesus Christ in the fullness of his ministry, death, and resurrection. The gospel is this and not anything else." (The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society, Eerdmans, 1989, emphasis added)

## OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Outreach Committee assisted Hallsboro United Methodist Church with a Rise Against Hunger meal-packaging event on November 10<sup>th</sup>, Saturday, in our Fellowship Hall. We packaged about 25,000 meals and would like to thank all who came out and helped us work toward ending world hunger by 2030!

The committee is also sponsoring the Angel Tree this Christmas. The names of 22 children are hanging on the Christmas Tree in the Narthex. Please consider taking an "ornament" with the name, age, sizes and interests of a child for Christmas. Gifts should be turned in to Families First by December 19th. Please call Ashley (642-5996) if you have any questions about your child.

Love and Peace,  
Vickie Pait, Outreach Chair

## UNITED METHODIST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

All the youth of our church are invited to a Hayride Christmas Caroling Party on Sunday, December 2. Please meet at the First Presbyterian Church at 5:00 p.m. Hot dogs will be served afterwards!

We will have our group Youth meeting on Sunday, December 16, at 6:00 p.m. in the Whiteville United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall. Please bring a \$5.00 wrapped gift for the Chinese Christmas Exchange. Invite a friend for food, fun and great fellowship! Happy Holidays!

– Heather LaMora



## NURTURE COMMITTEE

Our committee is looking forward to participating in the decoration of the Christon Tree in the sanctuary. The Advent Season is such a joyous time of year, full of hope and preparation for the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ! Let us all join in the celebration!

Thanks to our committee members and all those who helped with our recent bereavement meals and receptions. This is one of the most important ministries of the Nurture Committee. It means a great deal to the families who have lost loved ones, plus it provides us an opportunity to express our Christian love. We hope everyone has a peaceful and joyous Christmas!

– Debbie Conway, Chair

## THANK YOU!

Dear Church Family, 11/11/18

Thank you so much for the lovely Study Bible. I have already been using it, and I've found the notes especially helpful.

I truly appreciated your love, kindness, and constant support throughout college. It means the world to know that no matter where I go, I always have a strong, support system at home.

You have all been an integral part of my faith journey, and I appreciate all of the thoughtful cards and gifts you have sent over the years.

You are always in my thoughts and prayers.  
Sincerely, Molly High

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

I once again want to take this opportunity to say "thank you" and to express my appreciation for the many labors of love so many of you have given to Whiteville United Methodist Church during this past year. Your willingness throughout the year to use your gifts and abilities has strengthened the ministry of our church, and we have been truly blessed by your faithful service.

The Worship Committee met November 1, 2018, and we discussed plans for the Christmas Season/December. Personally, I adore the spirit of this season – with sparkling lights, the smell of fresh-cut pine, the singing of familiar Christmas carols, the nativity scene, and the reading of the Christmas story with all of its mystery and awe . . . Come, this is the season to worship! Sunday, December 2nd, is the first of the four Sundays of Advent and also a time when we will celebrate our church's annual Hanging of the Greens Service during our regular Worship Service at 10:00 a.m. Other special services in December include December 16th, in which The Chancel Choir and the Jane Wyche Schulken Handbell Choir will present "A Service of Lessons and Carols." The Christmas Eve Service on December 24th, as well as the New Year's Eve Service on December 31st, will be at 5:00 p.m in the sanctuary.

The Worship Committee will meet Thursday, February 7, 2019 in the Pastor's Study at 5:00 p.m.

I wish all of you and your loved ones a happy, healthy, and peaceful holiday season.

– Betty Gray, Chair

## PARISH NURSE

The Columbus FAITH Coalition of Mental Health sponsored a two-part Adult Mental Health First Aid Training course on October 30<sup>th</sup> and November 1<sup>st</sup> at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Tabor City. Eight people completed the course for certification. Lyn Keating, Trillium MH community educator, taught the course. The training will be provided at other Columbus County sites in 2019.

A Service of Lights will take place Tuesday, December 11, at 6:00 p.m. at the Columbus County Arts Council Building on Madison Street. The public is invited, especially those who have experienced loss in their lives. For more information contact Carolyn Hankins at 207-2241 or Carol Caldwell at 840-7540.

Lunch and Learn was held November 19<sup>th</sup> at Joe's Barbecue. Twenty-four people enjoyed delicious food and good fellowship. Jamica Lynch, health educator at Columbus County Health Department, provided an interesting program on Community Assessments.

– Patricia Ray, Parish Nurse

A classic of the Christmas Season:

### *Messiah*

By G. F. Handel

Presented by  
Southeastern Oratorio Society  
Tim Koch, Conductor,  
with Orchestral Accompaniment  
and Soloists

Several singers are from WUMC Chancel Choir and would love to see you there!

Monday, December 17 - 7:30 p.m.

First Presbyterian Church  
511 North Thompson Street  
Whiteville, NC 28472

Admission free.  
Donations gratefully accepted.



Whiteville United  
Methodist Church  
902 Pinckney Street  
Whiteville, NC 28472

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WHITEVILLE, NC

Mrs. Kathy Graham, Administrative Assistant  
Monday-Thursday/9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.  
12 noon-1:00 p.m. Lunch

Mr. Layton Dowless, Custodian  
Monday-Friday/7:30-11:30 a.m.

Ms. Tammie Anderson, Treasurer  
Friday/4:00-6:00 p.m. (or later)

Whiteville United Methodist Church

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website: [www.whitevilleumc.org](http://www.whitevilleumc.org)  
Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth, Pastor

The Whiteville United Methodist Church Service of Worship is broadcast on WTXY 1540 AM from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. on Sundays. Also it is available online at [www.wtxy1540.com](http://www.wtxy1540.com): click on "Click to Listen Live" under "United Methodist Church of Whiteville" at 10:00 a.m. to hear the complete audio of the service.

Mission Statement of Whiteville United Methodist Church  
As people of the body of Christ, we will gather for and be strengthened by Word and Sacraments, participate in loving fellowship, grow in discipleship, and serve our community and the world in Christ's name.