



The Methodist Messenger
DECEMBER 2019
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 2019-2020
Services of Worship
Whiteville United Methodist Church

First Sunday of Advent/December 1/10:00 a.m.
Hanging of the Greens

Second Sunday of Advent/December 8/10:00 a.m.

Third Sunday of Advent/December 15/10:00 a.m.
Service of Lessons and Carols: Led by the Combined Choirs

Fourth Sunday of Advent/December 22/10:00 a.m.

Christmas Eve/December 24/Tuesday/5:00 p.m.

First Sunday after Christmas Day/December 29/10:00 a.m.

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

Epiphany of the Lord/January 5/10:00 a.m.
Church Officers and Committee Members: Thanked and Dedicated

THE MASTER'S MEN
at the
Annual Boys and Girls Homes Christmas Open House
Boys and Girls Homes Campus
Leamon E. Rogers Memorial Chapel
Lake Waccamaw, NC

Sunday/December 1
4:00 p.m.

All are invited. Admission is free, and a reception will follow.

The Master's Men is an a cappella group of men from the Raleigh area.
Their mission is to sing and spread the Gospel of God's love.

WHY THE FATHER SENT THE SON

On November 15 at First United Methodist Church of Wilson, Bishop Timothy Whitaker (retired) spoke on the topic of "The Gospel Truth about Christ's Church for United Methodists" to a group of United Methodist laity and clergy. It was a powerful presentation. Dr. J. Warren Smith, of Duke Divinity School, thoughtfully responded to Bp. Whitaker.

In his presentation, Bp. Whitaker taught the assembly about Jesus Christ -- particularly about why God the Father sent God the Son into history, into this world. Preparing during Advent for the coming of Christ, we might read and ponder the following words about Jesus from Bp. Whitaker's presentation.

The vocation of Jesus of Nazareth

In my opinion, one of the biggest problems in mainline Protestantism is that the real Jesus is obscured by a fog of idealism and sentimentality.

Rather than try to back up that generalization about mainline Protestantism, I will only present my understanding of the true aim of Jesus' vocation. During His public career, what was Jesus really trying to do?

To understand Jesus' vocation, we have to remember two facts -- a fact about the beginning of Jesus' career and a fact about the end of Jesus' career.

The first fact is that, at the beginning of his public career, Jesus saw his own vocation in connection with the work of John the Baptist. John initiated a powerful movement of national repentance for the purpose of restoring Israel to its true identity and mission as God's own people. By connecting himself with John, Jesus was continuing John's movement of restoring Israel as God's own people.

The second fact is that, at the end of his public career, Jesus was rejected by the chief priests and handed over to the prefect of Judea to be crucified. The question is, Why did Jesus have to die? I am not talking now about what Jesus intended his death to mean according to what he said at his last supper with his disciples. I am not talking now about the theological meaning of his death -- what God was doing in the death of Jesus. I am talking about why the Jewish rulers, the members of the Sanhedrin, acted to get rid of Jesus and to hand him over to Pontius Pilate to be crucified. I think the only plausible explanation of why Jesus had to die was because his vision of the identity and mission of Israel clashed with that of the members of the Sanhedrin and was considered by them to be an existential threat. Jesus' vision of

Israel not only clashed with that of the Jewish rulers, but also with that of the Pharisees, the Essenes, and others. Jesus did not die because he went around telling people God loves them and they should love one another or because he offended religious leaders by criticizing them for being legalistic or hypocritical. Jesus died because he was the leader of a movement to restore Israel in a way that was a threat to the status quo and the interests of those who had a different vision of what Israel is and how it should live.

The heart of Jesus' message was the coming of the kingdom of God. Jesus told parables about what the coming of the kingdom is like, but the Gospels never define the term "the kingdom of God." We are secure in believing that the kingdom of God is God's reign or God's rule. It is also clear that Jesus taught that this rule of God is both present and future. In terms of the present, God is beginning to act through Jesus' words and works to establish God's rule. In terms of the future, at a time known only to God the Father, God's rule will be established on earth as it is in heaven. But what is usually totally missing in any discussion of the kingdom of God is how there is no kingdom without subjects. When Jesus spoke of the kingdom of God, the people who heard him heard Jesus talking about "Israel." After all, Moses had taught that God's Word says, "the whole earth is mine," and that from all the peoples on the earth God chose Israel to be "a priestly kingdom and a holy nation." Simply put, God's plan is to establish God's rule over all the earth, and the place where God rules on earth is where God's people know and obey God. When Jesus came preaching that the time had come when God was beginning to rule, Jesus surely envisaged the beginning of the consummation of God's rule over all the earth, but also the restoration of Israel as essential to the consummation of God's rule.

To restore Israel, Jesus traveled all over the territory that had belonged to Israel in the time of David and Solomon. He called everyone to be a part of the restored Israel by following him. And to make clear to the people what he was about, Jesus designated twelve of his disciples to be the equivalent of the twelve princes of the restored Israel.

During the Season of Advent, prepare for the coming of this Jesus Christ.

In Christ,
Pastor Paul

MORE THAN ENOUGH

During these last few years as Stewardship Chair and co-Lay Leader, I have had the opportunity to observe how so many of our church members give so much of themselves to our church. They give of their time, talent, resources, and witness to support our ministries as well as attending to the “business” of running the church. Because of their efforts, my awareness and appreciation of good stewardship have been elevated. What I see in our church encourages me to examine my own life for potential opportunities to more fully participate in, and support, our church. Although I will be stepping down from Stewardship and Lay Leader leadership, I will still be engaged in church activities. And when the Stewardship Pledge Card for 2020 comes my way, I will promise to support Whiteville United Methodist Church financially. I seem to have no problem committing to AT&T to pay for a new I-phone or to my cable provider for programming. But in actuality, AT&T and Spectrum are connections I can live without. But my spiritual connection is vital. Being a good steward of what God has entrusted to me is a component of my spiritual growth. It has been true in my life that giving to God changes me by improving my connection to Him through service and stewardship.

In this season of Thanksgiving and Advent, I pray for all of us to have gratitude and hope. We can be grateful because all of us have more than we need – more than enough. However, in truth, although we may in some sense feel our rewards are justified because we have worked hard, we actually don't *deserve* anything. It is all a gift. I pray that gratitude and hope will be translated into action in service and support beginning in our church and extending into our communities and individual spheres of influence. This outward extension of ourselves through love always brings the blessing of connection to God through connection to His people.

Darryl J. Diefes

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

October was a very busy month for UMW. On October 12, the Annual Meeting was held at Methodist University where the women celebrated 150 years of the organization. From the very beginning, the focus was on women and children. On October 26 the Harbor District held its Annual Meeting at Trinity UMC in Wilmington. Dr. Laura Early of All God's Children UMC in Aulander, NC was the speaker. The program ended with a memorable Communion Service. At the November UMW meeting, we worked on Christmas

Remembrances.

Come join the UMW on Monday, December 2 at 6:30 p.m. in the Parlor. You'll have the opportunity to meet Jo Wainwright, UMW District President. She will be installing our 2020 Officers.

Debbie Sellars, President

THANKS . . .

Whiteville United Methodist Women have much to be thankful for as we seek together to be a community of women interacting to improve the lives of women, children, and youth.

Always we begin by giving thanks for the love and grace of God shown clearly in Jesus. And we are grateful for members of our congregation who gave generously at our Soup and Salad Fundraiser this past January. We want to let you know some of the areas we have supported with our pledges and your gifts.

In our own church, we have remembered people with cards throughout the year and with a tangible remembrance, in the Christmas season. To encourage teachers as a new school year began in August, we assembled gift bags of supplies and snacks for teachers at Edgewood Elementary School.

We have given financially in Whiteville to: Families First, Columbus County Literacy Council, Community CPR, and the WUMC Preschool. Moving outside our local area, we have sent funds to: MATCH Prison Ministry (incarcerated mothers and their children), Methodist Home for Children, Methodist Retirement Homes, Partners in Ministry (now a nationally recognized UMW program in Laurinburg), and our pledge to the Harbor District UMW – enroute to NCC UMW and national support for a variety of national and global mission outreach programs.

Learning more about the lack of prenatal care and dangers to mother and child during and immediately after birth, we gave to the Madonna Project at Rotifunk Hospital in Sierra Leone through Mission of Hope.

We have been richly blessed through a variety of learning experiences of the needs and opportunities around the world. As we have received, being Christ-disciples leads us to a grateful response. If you are unfamiliar with some of the places mentioned, please ask me to tell you more.

. . . GIVING

Carolyn Hankins, UMW Treasurer



Whiteville United
Methodist Church
902 Pinckney Street
Whiteville, NC 28472

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Mrs. Kathy Graham, Administrative Assistant
Monday-Thursday/8:30 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.

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)

Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth, Pastor

Whiteville United Methodist Church
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telephone: (910) 642-3376
website: www.whitevilleumc.org

Our Service of Worship is broadcast on WTXY 1540 AM and 103.9 FM from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. on Sundays. Also it is available online at www.Kool1039radio.com. Click on the “Web Audio Player” applet. To listen to the entire service, go to: <https://lynx.prostreaming.net:2199/start/unitedmethodist/> and click on the Web Audio Player applet. For either choice, you may need to enable Adobe Flash. There is now a link to the radio station on our church webpage www.whitevilleumc.org. Click on “Stream Live Service Sundays at 10:00 a.m.”

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.