



The Methodist Messenger

JANUARY 2017

Whiteville United Methodist Church



Sunday School - 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service - 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday Communion Service - 6:30 p.m.

"IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE" AND CHRISTIAN LOVE

"It's a Wonderful Life" is a one-of-a-kind film. Every Christmas Eve, after attending the Christmas Eve Communion and Candlelighting Service at the church, our family sits down to watch and enjoy the movie. This has been going on for 20 or more years.

On its surface, "It's a Wonderful Life" is simply a morality movie, if you will. Good goes against evil during a simpler time, in a simpler America. Mr. George Bailey, played by the winsome Jimmy Stewart, imperfectly represents what is good in this world. Grouchy, old Mr. Henry Potter -- who is always on the prowl for more power, for another dollar (or thousand), another land acquisition, another house purchase, another housing development -- personifies what is greedy, selfish, and evil in this world. While Mr. Bailey and Mr. Potter contest against each other throughout the film, with Mr. Potter most often seeming to get the upper hand on Mr. Bailey, it is Mr. Bailey who triumphs and goodness wins out at story's end. One is always forgiven for shedding a tear just before "The End" appears on the screen, and the credits roll.

On December 15, 2016, Mr. Eric Metaxas broadcast on evangelical radio, and posted at the Colson Center website, a "BreakPoint Daily" editorial entitled "The Gospel Message in 'It's a Wonderful Life.'" (Mr. Metaxas, you will remember, is the author of the acclaimed Amazing Grace: William Wilberforce and the Heroic Campaign to End Slavery [HarperOne, 2007] and Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy [Thomas Nelson, 2010]. He works with the Colson Center, which is named after Charles Colson and which engages matters related to Christianity and public life.) Mr. Metaxas, with the help of Ms. Anne Morse, sees the movie in terms of temptation. Mr. Potter is the tempter, and Mr. Bailey is the tempted.

But in my little opinion, "It's a Wonderful Life" is a morality movie that demonstrates and narrates love -- genuine love -- in a Christian way. Christian love, also called agape love, is always sacrificial in nature. Christian love sacrifices for the good of the other. CHRISTIAN LOVE IS NOT ABOUT MAKING AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE FEEL GOOD. (Sorry about that, but I really do feel better...) Again, Christian love sacrifices for the good (the genuine good, which often is not easily discerned) of the other.

Throughout "It's a Wonderful Life," Mr. George Bailey sacrifices for the good of others.

When Mr. Potter offers George a high-paying job (complete with European travel), George turns him down to keep open his Dad's Building and Loan business so that many middle-class workers in Bedford Falls can keep their mortgages, their houses, and their lives.

When his Dad dies and college calls, George decides to stay in his hometown so that he can keep the Building and Loan open, provide a check on Mr. Potter's nearly absolute power in town, and deliver affordable financial services to the workers in town.

After his marriage to a hometown gal, George passes on an exotic trip, honeymoons in a broken-down old house in town, and works to prevent Mr. Potter from destroying the Building and Loan firm.

When George's war-hero brother, Harry, and his new bride visit Bedford Falls to announce their oversized plans for the future and invite George to join them, George says "no thanks" and sets aside his own aspirations -- so that Harry can fulfill his dreams.

When George's Uncle Billy misplaces \$8,000 cash (thanks, in part, to Mr. Potter's deception), which threatens the very existence of the Building and Loan, George takes the blame and keeps the feeble Billy out of trouble.

Sacrifice for the good of the other. Sacrifice for the good of the other. Sacrifice for the good of the other. That is the way of Christian love.

That is what George Bailey embodies and enacts throughout "It's a Wonderful Life."

But more importantly, that is what is demonstrated by the divine Word becoming human flesh and by this same Son of God hanging, suffering, and dying on an old, Roman cross. Sacrifice for the good of the other.

It is a wonderful life. But it is a mighty strange love.

In Christ,
Pastor Paul

YOUTH FUNDRAISER

The WUMC Youth are selling beautiful 2017 calendars and all-occasion cards for their fundraiser. Wall calendars are \$7, and all-occasion cards are \$7. All are available in the Church Office.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Whiteville United Methodist Women are eager to begin a New Year with many activities. As we begin the new Quadrennial, our theme is "The Summons" using Micah 6:8, "He has shown you, O Mortal, what is good and what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (NIV) The specific theme for 2017 is FOLLOW – Jesus summons us to follow in his footsteps and to grow spiritually. "And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.'" (Matthew 4:19)

Our first meeting of the year will be held on Monday, January 2, at 6:30 p.m. in the Parlor. There are meetings planned for every month except July and August. In addition to our local meeting, there are district and conference meetings planned for 2017. Please mark your calendars for Saturday, January 21, 2017, as ALOTS day will be held at Jordans Chapel out from Burgaw. This is a day where a session is scheduled for all local officers can be updated or trained for their positions and learn about special plans for the new year. We look forward to each of you ladies coming together for the UMW events during 2017. – Dixie Batten

PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

On January 3, Tuesday, the Harbor District of the North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church – whew! that's us! – is asked to pray for the Church: the Church universal, especially The United Methodist Church, our annual conference, our district, and our congregation. Please mark this on your calendar or journal. And thank you for being faithful to this challenge.

WONDERFUL WEDNESDAY MEAL

You are cordially invited to the WOW Meal on January 4, Wednesday, at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. And bring a visitor or two.

The Food Pantry and Outreach team are appreciative of the pallet of product donated by Campbell Soup plant in Maxton. Twice a year the church may request a donation of food to give to clients of the Food Pantry. The pallet contains items that were overruns in production in the three to four weeks prior to pickup. This December food included V8 Fusion fruit/vegetable juice, baked beans, among several other items. Thanks to Bob Hankins for transportation and several volunteers who made fast work of unloading the truck on December 16th.

UNITED METHODIST YOUTH

Thanks to everyone who supported our yard sale on December 3! It was a lot of hard work, but we loved seeing all our members who donated items or bought

more stuff at the sale! We enjoyed preparing for the December 18 Church Service and hope you were as blessed as we during the Lessons and Carols Service. We also enjoyed caroling to many of our shut-ins and spreading the Christmas spirit! We still have some calendars and memo pads for sale in the Church Office. Our first meeting of the year will be on Wednesday, January 4, 2017, and we look forward to seeing all youth in grades 6-12. – Heather LaMora

UNITED METHODIST MEN

For our January meeting on Thursday, January 5, we are planning to meet at Joe's Barbecue at 6:30 p.m. for our meal together. Instead of having a program, we will be using the time as a "working meeting" to plan for the upcoming Annual Valentine's Dinner in February. We look forward to the time of fellowship together and hope to see all the men of our church there, and please feel free to invite a guest. – In Christ, Brad Crowell

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

The Wednesday morning Bible study class will begin Romans: The Letter That Changed the World Bible study on January 11 at 9:30 a.m. in the Parlor. This is a 12-lesson study of Paul's letter by hosts Mart DeHaan and Jimmy DeYoung. Participant guides will be around \$7. Please call the Church Office, 642-3376, or Florence Marlowe, 642-4714, by January 4th to order a study guide. All are welcome to join this group!

– Florence Marlowe

SUNSHINE CIRCLE

The Sunshine Circle will meet on January 16, Monday, in the Fellowship Hall at 11:00 a.m. All women of the church are invited to join for devotion, a program, and fellowship. Please bring your lunch; a dessert and beverage will be provided.

PARISH NURSE NOTES

SAVE THE DATE: The next American Red Cross Blood Drive is tentatively scheduled at WUMC for Thursday, March 2nd, from 2:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

A friend recently gave me a copy of James C. Howell's book: Why This Jubilee? Advent Reflections on Songs of the Season. Reading it prompted me to ponder anew the beauty of the words and messages conveyed in the songs of Christmas -- sacred carols, cantatas, oratorios, and even a few secular works.

As we continue to celebrate Christmastide with music old and new, let us rejoice just as the angels and shepherds did long years ago beside the lowly manger where Jesus lay. Oh come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord! – Pat Ray, Parish Nurse

NEW MEMBERS CLASS

If you would like to participate in a New Members Class, please let the pastor know. By telephone, he can be reached at 642-3376 (church) or 207-6389 (home).

HURRICANE MATTHEW DISASTER RESPONSE

To District Superintendents, Pastors and Laity,

The Hurricane Matthew Disaster Response Ministry is moving forward by establishing Disaster Recovery Centers for Long Term Recovery. Today we are announcing a need for hiring people to fill positions in each of four (4) centers. These centers are located in: Windsor, Tarboro - Princeville, Fayetteville and Lumberton.

At each of these sites, we will be hiring staff for three (3) positions.

Site Manager - will be responsible for receiving volunteer teams, maintaining the Volunteer Housing Facility, working with the Construction Manager to coordinate construction projects.

Case Manager - will be responsible for working with the clients, collection of confidential records, maintaining case files, entering data into Quick Books Accounts and working with volunteer caseworkers.

Construction Manager - will be responsible for tear-out and rebuild assessments of projects, pulling together the plan for rebuilding homes, overseeing the projects and coordinating volunteers.

If you or anyone you know would be interested in applying for one of the positions listed above, please contact us via email at:

HurricaneMatthew.staffhire@gmail.com by sending your contact information and which position you are interested.

Respectfully,
Cliff Harvell

NCCUMC Disaster Response Superintendent

A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

All during Advent we prepared for the coming of Christ. As promised, He came. In His real presence in Holy Communion, He came. Truly and truthfully, He came. And yet, we yearn for His final coming in power and glory.

Thanks to all who have made 2016's Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Christmas Season so special. The gift of your presence at worship services and Christmas caroling, and many gifts of music to the worship services, have blessed God and blessed the Whiteville United Methodist Church.

Also, Marsha and I would like to thank you for all the Christmas cards and goodies that came our way. You are very thoughtful, kind, and generous. Again, we are grateful to you. – Marsha and Paul Stallsworth

A NOTE FROM STOP HUNGER NOW

Whiteville UMC, December 20, 2016

In this season of gratitude, we wanted to take a moment to extend our most heartfelt thanks to you. You have helped us nourish thousands of lives around the globe, enabling entire communities to rise and break the cycle of poverty.

THANK YOU! MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Chris, Stop Hunger Now

A LETTER FROM FAMILIES FIRST, INC.

December 20, 2016

Dear Fellow United Methodists:

I wanted to drop you a note to say thank you so much for the Christmas gifts you have contributed to help the children of families we have worked with over the past year. I want you to also know how very proud I am to be a part of such a loving congregation of Christians! You have truly shown your love of others who are in an unfortunate, frequently short-term, situation. Many of the survivors we work with go on to live a very successful lives. It is our pleasure to help them on their way to meeting this goal.

Thank you also for choosing Families First, Inc. as one of the recipients of the Community Thanksgiving Service offering. We are always in need of operating funding and contributions like this one help us with unexpected expenses, such as purchasing new locks or helping repair a car. We so appreciate your confidence in our organization to adhere to our mission to rectify issues related to domestic violence and sexual assault.

Thank you again for all you do for Families First. I know we are all in your daily prayers and that is appreciated and needed always. I love you all!

Very Sincerely Yours,
Vicki Pait
Executive Director



MY GIVING COMMITMENT FOR 2017

In fulfillment of my/our commitment to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, I/we plan to support the ministries of **Whiteville United Methodist Church** with my/our financial gift of:

\$ _____ (annual total)

Anticipated giving interval: weekly monthly

1 annual gift other _____

Please print clearly. Thank you.

Name _____

Signature _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

“Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as you ever can.”

– John Wesley



Whiteville United
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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.

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: **click on "Church Services" in the upper heading, and then click on "Click to Listen Live" next to "United Methodist Church of Whiteville"** at 10:00 a.m. to hear the complete audio of the service.

Mrs. Kathy Graham, Administrative Assistant

Mr. Layton Dowless, Custodian

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Office (910) 642-3376

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www.whitevilleumc.org

Rev. Paul T. Stallsworth, Pastor