

# Centerpiece

A Monthly Newsletter of Center United Methodist Church

6142 Lake Brandt Road, Greensboro, NC 27455 • Rev. Cecil Donahue • Office 643-7765 • Home 643-6011

## From the Pastor's Desk . . .



The really cold days of mid November made me think that there could be snow this Christmas! It is cold

enough, early enough so maybe, just maybe, we can have a white Christmas this year! I enjoy snow if it is not too cold or too windy and the snow doesn't cause power outages! But there is something mystical about waking up to a blanket of snow on Christmas day!

During my time as a United Methodist minister, since 1983, I have experienced snow on Christmas eve and Christmas day two times. And I recall the wonder and awe I and many others from the church had when we stepped outside after the midnight Christmas Eve service to the lightly falling snow as we sang Joy to the World! It was absolutely breath taking! And you know, it made all the folks at the service have a deeper, warmer feeling about them. Oh, the snow didn't change the Christmas message that God loved us so much that he sent His Son as an infant to become Savior of the World. We still rejoiced in this gift as we sang *Away In A Manger*, *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus* and *O Come All Ye Faithful*. We still greeted each other with hugs and smiles. We laughed at the children's play and felt so proud of them for sharing the Christmas story in their own unique way. And the communion, reminding us of the fulfillment of Jesus' promise to save the world, was so special

as we looked into the manger knowing the sacrifice he would make for us. Yes, all the fears and rush of Christmas melted away at least for a few minutes.

But when we went outside, the gently falling snow flakes vaulted me and many others to our childhood when we prayed and prayed for a white Christmas and rarely ever saw one! It made many simply giddy as they saw the confluence of snow and Christmas happening there before their eyes.

I know that it made it impossible to get to the relatives house for a few days. That was frustrating. But when my family and I accepted that then, Christmas day had a whole new dimension to it. We didn't have to rush through opening presents, getting breakfast so we could get on the road. Everyone gave us "a pass" for not getting to the extended family get-together. Christmas day became a peaceful time of resting, playing in the snow, hot chocolate, watching "It's a Wonder Life" that played continuously. And it also gave pause to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas, of God's love for us and sending a savior to meet us just where we are! (I am glad on these two occasions we didn't lose power and we had plenty to eat, two other blessings of those Christmas') The snow on those two Christmas eves and Christmas days were two of the best I experienced even though it messed up plans we had. But, that was ok, because it was God's way of slowing me down and enabling me to soak in the Christmas that I had been preaching about and going about as hard as I could go for

the 8 weeks leading up the Christmas Eve. And that was such a wonderful Christmas gift to me.

So, in the coming weeks, don't be surprised if you hear me say that I am hoping for a white Christmas. If it happens, I know that God has some great blessing for us when we are forced to stop and "just be" because the snow has given us that opportunity. I look forward to our Advent worship, decorating the church, serving in missions through the Christmas store, helping families through the Pastor's Discretionary Fund who request help to have presents for their kids, singing the cantata that Lisa and the choir have worked so hard on, the following brunch provided by the UM Men, the various Christmas parties by various groups in the church, and finally seeing you at one of our Christmas eve services. May each of you have a wonderful Christmas, share the wonder of this season with those who are lost and those who are missing loved ones, and make it a priority to be at our services and attend the Christmas Eve service to see if we will be delighted again this year by the unique design of each snow flake as it gently falls on us while we sing Joy to the World out on the front lawn of the church!

Blessings to you and your family,  
Cecil Donahue

Pastor, Center UMC

(Please see article on Advent Study on page 3)

## Center On Mission

Missions is rounding out the year!

We have had a great year and we are quickly coming to the end. This Fall we had another successful Blood Drive. Twenty people came in to donate and 17 pints were collected. We filled all 51 baskets purchased for the schools for Thanksgiving and got them all distributed. The Missions Committee wants to thank everyone who helped with both these events!! We also served our last meal at Pathways on November 5th and we want to thank everyone who has provided food and helped serve this year!

Our last event this year is the Christmas Store. There is a hand made tree hanging in the Narthex with tags asking for hoodies, sweat shirts and time. We are asking for this last little bit of help to provide Christmas to those families who wouldn't have it otherwise.

We want to wish everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!



## H.O.P.E.

We would like to invite everyone to join Mingle Mixers for 2020! Please send an email to Rachel Tatum ([RachelRTatum@gmail.com](mailto:RachelRTatum@gmail.com)), or Martha Sloan ([msloan@center-umc.com](mailto:msloan@center-umc.com)) if you would like to be added to the list for next year. Singles and couples of all ages are welcome! Please don't let the need for childcare hold you back---we will make sure this is covered for you! The gatherings include everything from in-home dinner parties, game nights, cookouts, outdoor music events, and more! **Please send your name and best way to contact you to Rachel or Martha by January 1, 2020.** We hope to have the first round of groups in place by Sunday, January 5. Merry Christmas!!!



## United Methodist Men



The United Methodist Men will not meet in December. We would like to invite everyone to to the Christmas brunch on December 15th in the fellowship hall immediately following the cantata.

## United Methodist Women

The United Methodist Women will have our Christmas dinner and ornament swap on Monday, December 16 at Bravos restaurant at Friendly Center in lieu of a regular meeting.

### MATCH

The United Methodist Women are collecting **new toys and children's books** for the MATCH Program of the Women's Correctional Facility in Raleigh. Please have items to the church by Wednesday, December 4 for delivery on Tuesday, December 10. See the list to the right of suggested toys and gifts. Walmart gift cards would also be great for the children that can't make the celebration.

- \* Lotions (Like Bath and Body)
- \* Cool Bath bombs
- \* Fuzzy Slippers/ funny slippers
- \* Pajamas
- \* Nail Polish
- \* Gloves/Mittens
- \* Sports Balls
- \* Arts and Crafts Kits
- \* Slime Kits/ Slime
- \* Baby Rattles
- \* Baby Blocks
- \* Baby music toys
- \* Baby Books
- \* Headband Game
- \* Hair bands, barrettes

## Education

The education committee would like to thank all the folks who came out on an extremely threatening Halloween. Our attendance was at a new high and many parents thanked us for having our event despite the weather. As always, Kid Zone did an excellent job on the cupcakes and games.

### Christmas Eve Children's Program

We will be practicing for our program during Sunday school in November and December. If your child will be participating, please have them at Sunday school on the following dates: Nov. 17, Nov. 24, Dec. 8, Dec. 15, and Dec. 22. We really appreciate the support of our parents.



## Financial Report

As of November 20, 2019

	Income	Expense	Net Rev.
Actual	217,68	15,222	6,546
YTD	227,729	229,904	-2,175

### Counters for December

Misty Byrd  
Bill Taylor

### Weenies On Wednesday



On vacation  
until 2020!!!

## Reflection on Advent and Christmas

We've been hearing about Christmas since before Halloween! The Black Friday sales started when we turned the calendar over to November. The culture is revved up and promoting Christmas as a season to give more and bigger gifts. It justifies its actions based on Santa Claus and all the traditions related to him. But somewhere along the way the culture and the celebration of Christmas has gotten disconnected. Buying, Buying, Buying is not what God had in mind! Advent is a time we prepare for the recognition that God came as a baby, that God continues to be with us in the holy Spirit and that God will return at some future time to redeem this world we all live in.

Advent is a time to prepare for Jesus to come to us in new ways. Yet in the pressure of how culture demands we celebrate, we often miss the Christ Child entirely! When January comes, many are in more debt, exhausted and feel the pressure of the cold winter nights.

A movement called the Advent Conspiracy

([adventconspiracy.org](http://adventconspiracy.org)) which began about 30 years ago, advocate ways of breaking the pressures of cultural Christmas celebration and rediscover the real meaning and celebration of Christmas. They advocate **worship fully, spend less, give more and love all**. As we go through the season of Advent this year, I am challenging myself and you to give attention to your personal devotion and your corporate worship at Center. Try your best to 'check' all the 'to do list' at the door. Clear your mind and heart so you can anticipate Jesus' coming.

Secondly, try to spend less! Our kids don't need 5,6,7 or more gifts. Think of relational gifts to give. How can we spend quality time with our loved ones?

Thirdly, give more to ministries that help the needy; the ones Jesus tells us to help!

And lastly, Love All. Let Jesus be the model. Who did He show love to? Jesus had a way of looking through the outside and seeing one's heart. How might we look beyond one's skin color, one's accent, one's clothing, one's tattoos, one's mannerisms and see the person

God created. All of us need love and Jesus uses us to show that love.

The above is a way to have the most joyous and satisfying Christmas ever. I hope you will join me and give it at try.

Your pastor,  
Cecil



*Do not be afraid; I bring you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.*

*Luke 2:10-11*



## Worship

It is hard to believe 2019 is almost gone. Kind of sad, but also exciting. If we forget about the commercial side and concentrate on the true meaning of Christmas, we can find the excitement. Jesus, our Savior was born.

We have the privilege to celebrate Jesus's birthday each year as the year comes to a close. He was born just as we were on earth, he walked and lived life as we do, but his purpose was clear, to save his children. His mercy and grace are the greatest gift we could ever receive. Now that is a gift worth receiving.

There are several things happening in our church during December and early January. Hopefully everyone can participate to share in the joy and celebration of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Merry Christmas to all and may God bless.

December 1 - Beginning of advent

December 15 - Christmas Cantata and men's brunch. One service 11:00 am

December 24 - Christmas Eve Service at 5:00 and 11:15 pm

December 29 - One Service 11:00 am



## Seniors In Action

Seniors In Action will meet, Tuesday, December 10. We welcome all Seniors age 55 and above. Come join us and invite a friend. Meet friends in the Fellowship Hall at 10:45 am for fellowship. Lunch will be served at 11:15. Our program will be Singing voices from CUMC, Christmas carols (all are invited to sing. Please call the Church (336-643-7765) by Thursday, Dec. 5, for reservations.



## Companions In Christ

Companions In Christ will meet at Bravo's in Friendly Center at noon on December 19. We will not take the bus due to parking. Please let me know, Doris Windsor 336-298-3169, if you plan to go by December 16 so I can confirm the reservation. Also, bring a gag gift suitable for men or women. Call Doris if you need a ride.

Merry Christmas







**DECEMBER 2019**

**PSALM 96:1**

O sing to the Lord a new song;  
sing to the Lord, all the earth!



### **Make Room**

*Preparing to celebrate Christmas often feels like a flurried mixture of nervous anxiety and joyful anticipation. There are gatherings to plan, meals to prepare and gifts to buy. 'Tis the season for socializing and celebrating. Often glaringly absent, is our focus on worship, during the Christmas season.*

*As I listened to and previewed new music for our Advent worship services, I stumbled upon a song that impacted me in a powerful way. "Make Room" is a song by the group Casting Crowns. When I first listened to the song, I expected it to be a typical song about making room for worship during the Christmas season. However, the song transcends a holiday focus, instead focusing on making room in our hearts - all year long – for God to shape our lives.*

***Is there room in your heart?***

***Is there room in your heart?***

***Is there room in your heart for God to write His story?***

*These may seem like simple questions but they cause me to pause and examine my heart. I am so busy chasing my own dreams. My days are full, focused on attempting to make the dreams I have for myself and my family come to life. How often have my own dreams crowded out God's plans, which are surely better than mine? May we all make room in our hearts, especially during Christmas, for God to write His story in our lives.*

*-Lisa O'Hal*

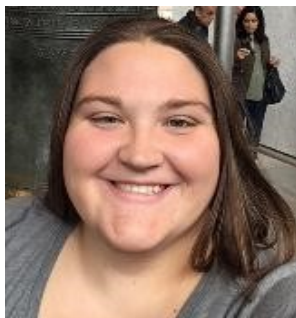
### **Christmas Cantata**

**Sunday, December 15th**

**11:00 am**



### CenterField Youth



During the month of November we focused on the idea of gratitude. We visited the residents of Countryside and made apple crisp with them. We also made progress on our plarn (plastic yarn) project. During the winter, our youth will be able to make plarn in their free time. Then we will make sleeping mats for the homeless with the plarn. We have had a great number of donations of plastic bags from the congregation which we appreciate. The youth also attended a progressive dinner with members of both congregations from Centerfield. Along with having some great hospitality, the youth got to hear first hand how meaningful a church community is and how our current leaders have been influenced by their church families. It was a great time to bring everyone together.

In November we also visited the Jewish Festival as part of youth and our confirmation class. Our group had a wonderful talk from the rabbi and got to enjoy some yummy food. I am so proud of how our confirmation class is growing in faith and spirit! We will be taking a hiatus in December but coming back strong in January at SPUMC. Please pray for our youth and mentors during this time.

In December, we are embracing the season with multiple service and fellowship activities. We will be helping out with our annual Christmas Store, assisting families with having the best Christmas possible. We will also be caroling to our homebound members. Then for some fellowship we will be doing events like ice skating and having our annual Christmas party!

We are so thankful to everyone who helped make our year successful and we are looking forward to a new year with our church family.





# Kid Zone News

December-January 2019-2020

## Winter Break All Day Care Hours:

December 23 - 7:00am to 6:30pm  
December 24 - 7:00am to 4:30pm  
December 25 - Closed  
December 26 - 7:00am to 6:30pm  
December 27 - 7:00am to 6:30pm  
December 30 - 7:00am to 6:30pm  
December 31 - 7:00am to 6:30pm  
January 1 - Closed  
January 2 - 7:00am to 6:30pm  
January 3 - 7:00am to 6:30pm  
January 20-21 - 7:00am to 6:30pm

All day care is \$25/child for those children enrolled in the after school program. All others enrolled are \$30/day/child. Registration forms may be found in the office. You must register for all day care at least one week prior to care date. We must have at least 8 students register for all day care to justify opening.

## Accepting Donations!

Baby Wipes  
Antibacterial Cleaning Spray  
(Bleach Free)



## Parent Reminders:

- Give as much notice as possible for All Day Care Days so we may schedule staff!
- Check the lost and found regularly. It is the time of year when coats get left behind.

• Thank you!!!





# Kid Zone News

December-January 2019-2020



# December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>1</b> 9:00 Contemporary Worship 10:00 Sunday School 10:10 Church Foundations 11:00 Traditional Worship 4:00 Youth to movie	<b>2</b> 6:30 Young Life	<b>3</b> 6:30 Girl Scouts	<b>4</b> 6:00 Praise Team 6:30 Youth Study Break -SP 7:00 Choir	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> 9:00 Contemporary Worship 10:00 Sunday School 10:10 Church Foundations 11:00 Traditional Worship 4:00 Church Council 6:00 Youth at SPUMC-sort night	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 6:00 Praise Team 6:30 Youth Study Break -SP 7:00 Choir	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> WOW Christmas Party 	<b>14</b> 10:00 Cantata rehearsal 9:00—4:00 Christmas Store SPUMC
<b>15 Christmas Cantata and Brunch</b>  10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Combined Worship with Cantata 12:30 Youth -Caroling	<b>16</b> UMW—Christmas Party at Bravos	<b>17</b> 6:30 Girl Scouts	<b>18</b> 6:00 Praise Team 7:00 Choir	<b>19</b> 12:00 CIC to Bravos for Christmas Party	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Van Wyk Piano Recital Fellowship Hall and Sanctuary 1:00-3:00
<b>22</b> 9:00 Contemporary Worship 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Traditional Worship 4:00 Youth Christmas Party	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>  5:00 Christmas Eve service with children's drama 11:15 Christmas Eve candlelight service	<b>25</b>  This Christmas as we CELEBRATE the miraculous gift of JESUS may we share with others the joy that knowing & loving brings!	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> 10:00 Sunday School 11:00 Combined Worship 12:30 Youth to Ice House	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<div>  <p> <i>I bring you good news of great joy for all the people:              to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,              who is the Messiah, the Lord .Luke 2:10-11</i> </p>  </div>			





# CENTER Notes



## Church Foundations



Interested in finding out more about Center's ministries? Have you been visiting and are considering joining Center? If you answered 'yes' to either question, come to a 2-session class about Center and what it means to be a member. Session 1 is Sunday, December 1, 10:10 a.m. – 10:40 a.m. The second session is 10:10 a.m. – 10:40 a.m. on Sunday, December 8. Please call the church office at 335-643-7765 to reserve your place.



**SHOP AT DEWEY'S BAKERY IN  
SUMMERFIELD & 10% OF YOUR PURCHASE  
WILL GO TO OUR CHURCH!**

**SUGARCAKE \* GIFT BASKETS \* CRAFTS**

**SAVE THE DATES!**  
**Wednesday Nov 27th &  
Friday Dec 6th  
11am - 6pm**



*Remember to say you're with Center UMC!*

**SUMMERFIELD DEWEY'S LOCATION ONLY**

**IN THE SUMMERFIELD SHOPS**  
(NEAR MAMA GINAS, ACROSS FROM THE FOOD LION PLAZA)  
4555-A US HWY 220 NORTH, SUMMERFIELD, NC

Like us on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/deweysbakerysummerfield/>



## *Christmas Cantata*

## *and Branch*

## *Sunday, December 15*

*11:00 a.m. - Cantata - 'Candles and Carols'*

*12:00 p.m. - Christmas Branch prepared by Methodist Men*





*Merry Christmas*  
*from the Staff of*  
*Center Church*

*Cecil*

*Katie Martha*

*Lisa*

*Samantha*