

FIRST NEWS

December 2008

Christmas Presence

The scriptural readings associated with the first four Sundays in Advent, beginning this year on November 30, always presume that the people have been waiting in darkness for a long time, even if they don't always acknowledge that this is true. The people of the Babylonian Exile knew only too well that they had been waiting in darkness for a long time, as attested by the hopeful words of Isaiah 40 and following, for their circumstances had been dire in many respects, not the least of which was their separation from Jerusalem. The wait for the anticipated coming of the Messiah had stretched on some four centuries plus since then, at the time of Jesus' birth. However, in times of relative prosperity, as has been the case for Americans since WW II, the darkness has not seemed so oppressive nor the wait too arduous, for we have enjoyed many material, professional and political consolations which have prevented us from being marginalized in ways that are so pressing for much of the rest of the world's peoples. The temptation for us, in the midst of such generally conspicuous success, has been to become somewhat self-congratulatory, smug and complacent, supposing then that the capitalistically driven frenzy of buying and giving and receiving Christmas presents, with all those attractive and seductive ads, has been just a natural expression of the Christmas season.

While I do not wish to be unduly pessimistic, for I am not by nature pessimistic, the economically seismic events of the last two months or so have begun a process which may well redefine the "middle class" downward for many of us, for some time to come. As I shared with you from the pulpit recently, my third-quarter pension losses were unprecedented, as were many of yours. I do believe that we, as a nation, will survive this difficult passage, perhaps emerging wiser, as so many people did after The Great Depression, with the tragic assistance of WW II. One aspect of our emerging wisdom may be just here: it will no longer be possible to defer or deflect our awareness of the darkness which gathers or of the waiting which makes such awareness so terrifying. Within such a context, with some of our spiritual blinders removed and our airs of entitlement challenged, God may yet be able to come among us as the Christ-Child in abject humility and poverty and vulnerability and mortality. All of a sudden, that lowly stable may not appear quite so alien or quaint or pretty to some of us, just some delightful manger scene set among the holly on a piano. The darkness itself actually becomes a gift, quickening our senses to such light and messages as God chooses to share with us, what with the big city lights dimmed and the noise of the madding crowd left behind. The waiting itself becomes a gift, even after that interminable wait that I experienced as a child in Linville Caverns before someone in-the-know lit a single match. What light that was!! That's why the Star of Bethlehem seemed so huge.

I have a suggestion for us. Why don't we explore what it is like to practice Christmas "presence" in humility and gentleness instead of frenzied exchanges with rabid competitors at the bargain table? Why don't we give gifts of life around the world through "Unicef" or "The Heifer Project" or our favorite charity in the name of someone we love and respect? Why don't we worship together in humility and gratitude, profoundly thankful for what we do have and for what we are about to receive through the Christ-Child this season; through our simple, heartfelt celebrations here; through our humble identification with the marginalized in our midst, identifying with their stories of loneliness and abandonment and failure, exchanging our benign condescension for the experience of becoming poorer ourselves, so that we may experience them as our brothers and our sisters, and they may experience us as not judging them.

I once preached a sermon to the effect that of all the Biblical characters in the Advent and Christmas and Epiphany scriptures, it was King Herod who grasped immediately something like the full implications of the birth of the Christ-Child. This event terrified him, for he understood instinctively that this Christ-Child, Lord at His birth, was an absolute threat to the *status quo* as King Herod grasped it—a rabidly competitive, cutthroat world to be tamed only by raw, violent power. Herod would jeer at my suggestions in the preceding paragraph. Being granted the humbling spiritual gifts which attend leaner times, and the perspective of history, I pray this season that we will cheer these suggestions, and live our Christmas presence.

Blessings and Shalom. Pastor Walt

THOUGHTS FROM TRANSITION TEAM MEMBERS

What it is and what we do: Twenty of your fellow church members have been elected by you to move the congregation smoothly from one era into the future. It is a great honor and a privilege to serve in this way. We are going through a process which helps us, as your representatives, segue from “endings” to “new beginnings”. As we study our past, we look at the best that First Reformed United Church of Christ has been. We are striving to keep the positive attributes from our past in order to build a foundation for our future. Sometimes this experience is painful, but it is always gratifying.

What Transition Team has meant to me: I have learned to know twenty people better: nineteen team members and one Intentional Interim Minister. I have a deeper appreciation for each of them as we have studied the Bible, mining it for nuggets of truth for our situation; as we have shared stories and view points; as we have labored to envision our church’s future. At present we are looking at our needs for professional staff, studying changes to suggest to our consistory with regard to our constitution and by-laws and possible procedural improvements. We are trying to discern God’s will for First Reformed UCC in downtown Lexington, North Carolina in the twenty-first century. I have been given insights into what others in our group believe is important. This has helped me in my personal growth.

What we hope our work will mean to the future of our church: We hope that our hard work will be helpful to you as we prepare to search for new leadership. Reverend Patten has told the congregation that this transition might be an eighteen month process. I think that we are about where we could expect to be after seven months. We are striving to get a vision of who we are now, and as a fellowship in covenant with other UCC churches and other sister denominations, so that we will know what kind of pastoral leadership we need in the future. What will our mission be as we try to live out Christ’s prayer that “they may all be one”? Your transition team is working on this task. Thanks for your continued prayerful support.

Eulene Shepherd

Transition means moving from one place to another. It is change and humans resist change because it requires leaving a comfortable place which, in turn, leads to dealing with unknown factors. Our transition team has required change in thoughts, actions, and communications. The team has discussed and studied difficult times in our church. We have used Bible study to clarify direction and purpose. Hopefully, the team will lead the congregation in a process of self evaluation that will define and renew our purpose as a Christian family. Thus, our church grows!

Carolyn Spivey

Being on the transition team I now have a better understanding of the church’s history. Even though we have worked with difficult issues, it has been a spiritual journey for me. With the outstanding leadership and the input of all transition team members it has been very rewarding. Our assembly with the congregation was very inspiring, giving the people a chance to interact with members of the transition team. With everyone working together we will become a closer church family.

Janette Neal

The Transition Team experience has allowed me the opportunity to self-evaluate and to develop more spiritually. As a team, we have developed a deeper understanding of issues and a respectability of each other’s opinions. It takes each of us to hold on to what is good and right as we move forward. As members of our congregation, we each have a piece of the thread that holds together the fabric of our church. My thread is growing stronger and I challenge you as well to become a stronger thread.

Lynn Brown

THOUGHTS FROM TRANSITION TEAM MEMBERS

Because I have attended First Reformed for only three years, I am the newbie on the Transition Team. Many of our team members have attended this church all their lives. Before joining the team, I attributed my lack of understanding about how our church operates behind the scenes to being a new member and to not really being involved in anything other than attending Sunday services. But through the Team meetings, I've discovered that even people who have attended for decades are often confused about some of the ways things work or they just don't have the information that other people assume they do. "Transparency" is a buzzword in communications today, but it's a concept that I see coming out of the Transition Team's work. While we are focused on the transition between ministers, I hope that the Team's work will also help our congregation transition into more open ways of communicating with each other so that everyone in our church, no matter how long they have attended, or who they know within the church leadership, will understand how decisions are made, what's going on, and how to contribute their voices to the important conversations about the life and work of our church.

Kivi Miller

The FRUCC transition team is a group of elected representatives of our congregation. Our job is to collectively listen to church members and clarify the church's vision for the future leadership and direction of our congregation. This shared vision will establish standards the search committee will use in selecting our next pastor. The process so far has been one of reflection upon our past and managing conflicts in productive ways. This has been a slow and painful process at times but a necessary step to begin looking towards our church's future. I hope this process will be one that the congregation takes full advantage of in terms of contributions of ideas and involvement in church assemblies. The future of our church depends on it.

Mark F. Smith

Reverend Patten has asked members of the FRUCC Transition Team (TT) to prepare paragraphs elaborating on what the team is, what it has meant to us, and what it means to the congregation. I offer the following comments in response to this request.

Members of the TT were selected by members of the FRUCC congregation and reflect the diversity of opinions and perspectives present within the larger congregation. It was my perception that within recent years FRUCC has experienced some challenges in coming to terms with this very diversity. How is it that we can function as a healthy, united body when the members of that body feel so very differently about issues related to our Christian beliefs, the type of leadership we desire, and the manner in which our church is managed? The challenge facing the TT was to come to terms with this (and related) issues in the life of the church so as to allow us to move forward in searching for a new pastor with a coherent sense of what sort of individual will best fit the needs of the church. Serving as a member of the TT has allowed me the opportunity to work with some members of the congregation I have known well and others with whom I have hardly ever spoken. What have I learned from this opportunity? I have learned that the differences that separate the different members of this group are far fewer than I had ever expected. Generally speaking, we are in agreement concerning the challenges that face our congregation and the ways in which these challenges might be met. We have a strong mutual respect for the different perspectives present on the team and in the congregation. That respect has made it easy for us to discuss difficult issues and move beyond these issues in a manner that reflects our Christian beliefs as opposed to our human shortcomings. Reverend Patten is guiding the TT as it works its way through a series of five developmental tasks in preparation to initiating the search for a new pastor for FRUCC. It is our hope that the Pastoral Search Committee will be able to begin its work this spring as the TT draws to the end of its work as it related to these developmental tasks. In the meantime, I would urge members of the congregation to maintain an open dialogue with the various members of the TT with respect to our activities and progress. Through such dialogue, TT members will be able to continue to understand and represent the perspectives of congregational members – and these members will remain informed concerning the nature of the sometimes complex but always interesting TT process! *Anne Fletcher*

THOUGHTS FROM TRANSITION TEAM MEMBERS

I feel it is an honor and a privilege to be asked to be a member of the Transition Team of First Reformed UCC. It is a group of twenty members selected by the members of the congregation to meet under the leadership of our Intentional Interim Minister, Walter Patten. This group varies in age and thought and does not always agree with each other, but everyone has the opportunity to express his/her thoughts about conflicts or a situation within the church and not be afraid to express his/her opinion. The team respects his/her opinions, and they will be heard. Also, we have had a detailed study of the past history of the church — many conflicts and many wonderful things. We must reconcile with the past in order to move on to the future.

From this Transition Team experience, one important lesson I have learned thus far is to listen carefully to what other team members have to say whether I agree with them or not. There are usually two sides to every incident. By listening and talking, you can work out an agreement or a compromise. Another important thing I have learned is the power of forgiveness and prayer. “All things work together for those who love the Lord.” *Romans 8:28*.

Maybe I can help and encourage members of the congregation to listen and forgive. I know I must have a positive attitude to communicate with members and let them know we are willing to work together to make this a church that works together to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When we had our first Transition Team meeting with the congregation and discussed several questions, the communication was great. I just wish more members would have participated, but it was a start. It will soon be time for another congregational meeting with the Transition Team to discuss other issues. I hope to see a larger group participating. This is an excellent opportunity to express your opinion.

I think that the work of the Transition Team will help create a positive relationship between Minister/Consistory/members and there will not be a communication problem when conflicts arise in the future. Also, the Transition Team will give the Search Team important insights from our study that they will need as they search for a pastor that will meet the needs of First Reformed UCC.

Elizabeth Sink

Although I was not exactly sure what to expect, I feel that I have been truly blessed by being a part of the transition team. It has been a very rewarding and learning experience. I have learned new ways of looking at situations and studying the Bible and other readings. Also, I now understand that everyone has a little bit of the truth in the way we see or remember things from the past.

We experienced a lot of emotions, some of which felt bad at the time, but in the whole scenario of things, our experiences were very gratifying and cleansing. We learned things about each other, some new, others reinforced. As we continue to pray, study and grow in understanding, I know we can make our congregation stronger and that will make us grow, not only in numbers, but spiritually.

Melody Evans

Being voted to the Transition Team has been an honor and a rewarding time in my life at First Reformed Church. I did not know what we were being asked to do, but Reverend Patten started us looking to see what troubles we had in the past that needed to be solved. Then we all put our heads together to solving them. There are still things to be worked out, but with my fellow members and Reverend Patten things will be much different in the future for our new minister and members.

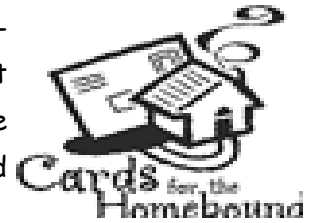
May the Lord Bless Us All, Peggy Bates

The primary purpose of our team is to facilitate a smooth transition period and to aid our search committee. Our team has worked with diligence in resolving past issues. We are positive about our efforts. The Transition Team members are congenial and are working toward a common goal. We want our church to grow in spirit and membership.

Roy Bevan

"In-Residence" Member Address Update

Several First Reformed UCC members are not able to be in the beautiful surroundings of our sanctuary to worship as a congregation during the Advent Season. These members will enjoy a card, call or visit. Listed below are the addresses of those known at this time. If you know of anyone else that should be included, please contact the church office. Thank you.



Ethel and Sadie Bailey

110 West Fifth Avenue
Lexington, NC 27292

Henry and Juanita Beck

367 County Home Rd
Lexington, NC 27292

Giles Crowell

9 Lantern Lane
Lexington, NC 27295

Ike Green

11 Mayflower Lane
Lexington, NC 27295

Gertrude Jarvis

817 Inlet View Drive
Wilmington, NC 28409

Henry & Ernestine Kennedy

306 Shuler Circle
Thomasville, NC 27360

Frances Leonard

Piedmont Crossing
100 Hedrick Dr
Thomasville, NC 27360

Hilda Leonard

703 Greenway Drive
Lexington, NC 27292

Jacqueline Leonard

244 Greensboro St. Ext
Lexington, NC 27292

Lois Leonard

Carolina House
161 Young Drive
Lexington, NC 27292

Betty Potts

Alston Brook
4748 Old Salisbury Rd
Lexington, NC 27295

Louise Rollins

P.O. Box 207
Lexington, NC 27293

Barbara Schaeffer

Brookdale Place at University Park
400 University Park Dr, AL341
Birmingham, AL 35209

Margaret "Micki" Smith

303 Oakwood Drive
Lexington, NC 27292

Jeanne Trexler

Centerclair Nursing
185 Yountz Road
Lexington, NC 27292

Margaret Trexler

26 Chestnut Street
Lexington, NC 27292

Rita Tussey

Brookstone Retirement Center
2968 Old Salisbury Rd
Lexington, NC 27295

Lawrence Walser

Piedmont Crossing
234 Hedrick Drive
Thomasville, NC 27360

CONSISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

November 2008—Meeting



From the Pastor's Report:

- ◆ Reverend Patten reported that the Transition Team is on target with its timeline.
- ◆ The Transition Team report will help the Search Committee in its process to hire a permanent pastor.
- ◆ Reverend Patten reminded the consistory of the church's \$1,000 pledge to the OCWM Special Offering. Currently we have collected about half of that amount.
- ◆ The Pastor's Discretionary Fund has dwindled due to the increased number of people seeking emergency basic needs.
- ◆ He also reminded the consistory members of the November 22 wedding of Courtney McCarn and Wesley Grimsley and the December 7th Baptism of Jacob Hartle.

The Board of Christian Education is continuing its work on restructuring Sunday School for the children. The goal is to begin the new programming in March 2009. Approximately \$10,000 is needed to get the programming off the ground.

The Advent Workshop will take place Sunday, November 30th following the Worship Service and lunch in the fellowship hall.

Property Committee members were pleased with the insurance settlement of \$30,106.72 from the flood damage in the Educational Building. New carpet has been ordered for the Chapel and Annex and is expected to arrive the first of December. Volunteers are needed to assist in moving the pews and organ for installation.

The new Deacons are Mike Brown, Edgar Miller and Betty Link; Elders are Albert Evans and Calvin Odom; the new Trustee is Jim Swing; new Consistory President is Scott Frye; new Consistory Secretary is Vicky Gray; and the Consistory Treasurer is Melody Evans.

Pennies from Heaven Fall Campaign

Participate in the Fall **Pennies from Heaven – Spare Change Changing Lives Campaign!** It's a fundraiser for Crisis Ministry of Davidson County to help meet operational costs. Collectively the change of many is helping to change the lives of those served by Crisis Ministry. The "face of the homeless" is changing...the continued high unemployment rate, more elderly men and women are residents at the adult shelter, many of whom are physically handicapped or have serious health problems, veterans discharged from VA Hospitals, and patients discharged from state mental hospitals. What can you do to help? It's simple...**collect pocket change!** Drop donations in coin bottles located in the narthex and outside the church office. Thanks!



Women's Life Fellowship

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Women's Life is up and running! We met Tuesday November 18th at 7:00 p.m. in the parlor. Our meetings have been changed to the **third Tuesday of the month**. Child care is provided during meeting times, with Kids Club meeting occasionally. If you are interested in coming and being more active with our church family, we would love to have you! New Members are always Welcome! Our annual Christmas Party will be Tuesday, December 16th, 6:30pm at the home of Carolyn Spivey. We would like to invite anyone interested in seeing what Women's Life Fellowship is about to attend our Christmas Party. Please rsvp to Carolyn Spivey at 336-787-5591.

We would like to thank Amy McNeill and Cathy Waitman for their program. This introduced us to the New Look Sunday School idea. We would also like to thank Beth Callicutt and Nina Smith for the refreshments they provided as well as Belinda Yates for the Devotion.

We had a **Bake Sale** on Sunday the 23rd, just prior to Thanksgiving. We would like to thank everyone who participated, baked, and purchased these delicious items, helping to raise money for many great First Reformed UCC causes. A second **Bake Sale is planned for SUNDAY December 21st**. This is the Sunday prior to Christmas and the same Sunday as the Christmas Program. We will see you there!



One of our goals this year is Community Outreach. In November, the Women's Life Fellowship donated 49 cases of non-perishable food items to Crisis Ministries. This was in response to the article in the Dispatch, explaining that the food pantry was bare. It is causes like this, and working with the wonderful women in Women's Life Fellowship, that makes me proud to be a member of First Reformed UCC.

Thank you for all your support in helping The Women's Life Fellowship fundraising efforts.

Thank you again and God Bless! Sauni Johnson, Women's Life President

United Friendship Club

President: June Grubb

The United Friendship Club will have a combined November/December meeting on **Wednesday, December 10th**. We will celebrate the season with a Christmas party including a covered dish lunch and making Christmas decorations. EVERYONE is welcome to come enjoy good food and fellowship.

Men's Brotherhood

By: Clifford Lopp

Thursday November 20th, the Men's Brotherhood met and were served delicious oyster stew prepared by J.W. Bates, John Potts and Butch Bouchard. Twenty-five men and guests were in attendance and a great evening of fellowship was enjoyed by all. The special guest of the evening was Harold Bowen who shared stories about his days at Catawba playing football, his days of teaching and broadcasting Lexington Senior High football games, and his adventures helping with Carolina football games. Everybody enjoyed his tales. The next meeting will be our Christmas Party that will be held on December 15th at 6:30 pm at Yarborough's Restaurant. Please let Clifford know or call the church office to make your reservations so we will know how many to plan for.

November Memorials

MARIAN LAWRENCE CADWALLADER {Anne Fletcher's Grandmother}

Wanda Daye
Banks and Eulene Shepherd



MARY LOUISE LEONARD

Louisa L. Huebel
Ned and Sally Carter
Butch Bouchard

RILEY BATES

Hilda Leonard

JEAN MORGAN {Camille's Mother}

Merle and Jerry Hodges
Wanda Daye
Cathy Waitman
Lee Ann and Tony Peele
Elizabeth Sink
Hilda Leonard
Maxine Lohr

JARED PERRELL {Harriette & Clifton Murphy's Grandson}

John and Vicky Gray
Butch Bouchard
Bob and Dawn Shaak
Banks and Eulene Shepherd
Roy and Anne Bevan
Janie Lohr
Edgar and Kivi Miller
Aurelia and Jerry Smith
Carroll and Carolyn Spivey

CHARLES HOLLIS "C.H." BATES, JR.

VFW Post 3074
Gladys Snider
Wanda Daye
Judith Perry
Marguerite Leonard
Butch Bouchard
John and Sylvia Walser

Elizabeth Sink
Pattie Everhart
Cathy Waitman
Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Smith
Mr. and Mrs. Steve Smith
Janie Lohr
Carroll and Carolyn Spivey

Myrtle Latimer
Keith and Alisa Johnson
Mrs. Mable Prevette
Doris Frye
Lee Ann and Tony Peele
Betty B Matthews & Ellen Briggs

MARIE EVERHART CROUSE

Mr. and Mrs. Don Leonard
Katherine Skipper
Holton Davis
Butch Bouchard
Marguerite Leonard
Cathy Waitman
Elizabeth Sink
John and Sylvia Walser
Doris Frye
Mrs. Jane Ridenhour & George Anna
Gary and Karen Bowman and Family
Dwight and Carol Cartner

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Beck
Jacqueline Leonard
Randy and Amy Swicegood
Hilda Leonard
Bob and Dawn Shaak
Pattie Everhart
Janie Lohr
Carroll and Carolyn Spivey
City of Lexington
Steve and Tracy Roberts
Odie and Colleen Thacker
Lexington Home Brands, Customer Care

Merle and Jerry Hodges
George Crouse
Jacqueline and Victor Kirkman, Jr.
Peggy Bates
Gladys Snider
Roy and Anne Bevan
John and Vicky Gray
Aurelia and Jerry Smith
Maxine Keiffer
Mr. and Mrs. Gib Parlier
Don and Ann Bishop

November Honorariums

AMY MCNEILL

Tony and Lee Ann Peele
Clifford and Paula Lopp
Cathy Waitman

CATHY WAITMAN

Clifford and Paula Lopp
Amy McNeill

Bell Ringers Needed!



First Reformed UCC will assist the Salvation Army by ringing bells at **Belk's** on **Friday, December 5th** and **Saturday, December 6th**. We are responsible for providing someone to ring the bell in one-hour increments, 9:15 a.m. to 7 p.m. both days. Signup sheets are in the narthex or you can contact the church office at 248-2617.

Angel Tree

As has been the custom, the tree of "angels" will be in the breezeway of the Educational Building again this year. Make a donation (your discretion) to place an angel on the tree in honor or memory of someone special. All donations will be given to the Pastor's Discretionary fund for assistance to needy individuals/families. Please contact the church office if you are interested.



Christmas Cantata



The First Reformed UCC Choir along with a professional group of instrumentalist will present the annual Christmas Cantata, **Sunday, December 14th** at the morning worship service.

Holiday Bake Sale

Women's Life Fellowship will hold a bake sale **Sunday, December 21st** beginning at 9:30 a.m. Pound cakes, cookies, tea mixes, cookie mixes, etc. will be available. These will make wonderful gifts for teachers, neighbors, friends and even for yourself. Items will be sold before Sunday school, between Sunday school and worship, and immediately following the worship service. If there is anything left over, it will be available for purchase at the children's Christmas program that night. All monies raised will help the mission work of our circle. Thank you for your support!



If you want to make a last minute financial contribution for 2008 it **MUST** be received in the church office by Wednesday, December 31, 2008 to be credited to your 2008 giving statement. 2009 Offering Envelopes will be mailed to your home.

Director of Christian Education

Director of Christian Education, Amy McNeill



Sunday School Start-up

I want to start my article by thanking everyone who has donated to the "New Look" fund. I appreciate your support in this remodeling of our youth's Sunday School program. I would also like to say a big thank you to the wonderful group of women who have agreed to help in this transformation. I continue to ask for everyone's prayers and to remember it is never too late to donate and any amount is greatly appreciated.

We are getting ready for the rush of the Advent season and while it is one of the busiest for most people it is by far my favorite time. The church just comes to life with all it has going on during this time. The Advent festival is on the first day of Advent, **November 30th**. It is immediately after the worship service with a sandwich bar lunch. Donations from lunch will help support costs of the church retreat to Blowing Rock in June. The lunch will be followed up with our Advent Workshop. There will be crafts for the younger ones and an Advent wreath workshop for anyone who is interested.



Also our Christmas tree in the fellowship hall will have twenty names of city school system children who need our help to have a blessed Christmas. Their sizes, age, gender, and what they need are all listed for you. All that is required of a "Special Santa" is to select a name from the tree, purchase items requested, wrap the gifts and bring them back to the church. If any names are left Saturday night they can be "picked" from the tree Sunday, December 7th at the morning social. Let us share the joy of giving with those who truly need our gifts.

We have the fabulous Christmas Cantata on December 14th during church and I can't wait to hear what Paul, Lee Ann, and the choir have in store for us this year.

The Annual Church Christmas party will be December 21st at 6:00 p.m., beginning with a delicious potluck supper. The children's program will start at 7:00 p.m. They have been practicing very hard so please come out and see our talented youth. This is a wonderful time of fellowship and we are usually surprised by a special guest!!!



The most important event of all is our Christmas Eve service. We get to celebrate Jesus' birth with Reverend Walt for the first time and I'm sure it will be a memorable one. I hope to see you all at these special events and I wish you all a blessed Christmas with family and friends and a Happy New Year!!

SUNDAY SCHOOL — NOVEMBER 2008



Laura Strenk	Alice Gray	James Gray
Betty Bates	Wanda Daye	Marguerite Leonard
Jo Hudson	Katherine Skipper	Ramona Yarbrough
Earlie Hartley	John Hudson	Don Leonard
John Potts	John Walser	Clifford Lopp
Camille Morgan	Walter Patten	Clifford Lopp
		Paula Lopp
		Cathy Waitman

Kids' Club



For the month of November Kids' Club celebrated Thanksgiving! We had a scavenger hunt to find things that we are thankful for, such as family, the church, and shelter. Plus, we played Thanksgiving bingo to get familiar with the origin of the holiday. Also, we discussed that although Christmas is just around the corner we can't forget about thanking God for what he has blessed us with.

The December meeting of Kid's Club will be immediately following the children's moment, **Sunday, December 7th**.



CURRENT COLLEGE STUDENTS...It is time to apply for the Hinkle, Sink, Swing Scholarship. The application forms are available in the church office or can be emailed. These forms should be completed and back in the office by **DECEMBER 31, 2008**.

Congratulations to Nicole and Mark Smith upon the birth of their daughter, **Emory Robin Smith**. Emory was born Thursday, November 20, 2008 and was also welcomed by her brother, Elliott and grandparents, Charlotte and Steve Smith.



Dear Church Family,

There are no words to sufficiently express our appreciation to our First Reformed Church family for your overwhelming unconditional love and support shared with us during the four years of Jared's life. Your thoughts, prayers, cards, visits, food, flowers, and most especially love have been a source of encouragement and support giving us the strength to meet so many challenges with Jared. We are so blessed and may God Bless You for your many kindnesses.

We love you, Harriette and Clifton

Dear First Reformed Church Family,

Our family would like to express sincere gratitude to Reverend Patten and the ladies who assisted with Marie Crouse's memorial. It was a wonderful celebration of a beautiful soul. Thank you for accommodating us on short notice and respecting the families' wishes with all the formalities. Thank you for your continued support and love; please know that Marie is celebrating with us and would be most proud.

In friendship and Christian Love, The Family of Marie Crouse

NOTE: If you purchased a poinsettia in honor or memory of someone, they will be placed in the sanctuary Sunday, November 30th and can be picked up following the service to enjoy at home during the Advent Season.



DECEMBER STEWARDS

Ushers: Chairperson: Peggy Bates
 Captain: Walter Hoffman
 Ushers: Ann Hoffman, June Grubb, and Doris Sink

Plate Attendant: John Potts

Sound Tech: Jordan McCarn

Acolytes: Matthew and Kelsey Johnson

Adult Joint Sunday School: Responsible for lesson - - - Willing Workers Class

Social: Host/Hostess: Vicky & John Gray and Nina & Ted Smith

Greeters:

December 7	Joyce Price and Lib Hinkle
December 14	Ramona Yarbrough and Adena Wall
December 21	Dawn and Bob Shaak
December 24	Banks and Eulene Shepherd
December 28	Sandra and Kalyssa Hutchens

Nursery:

December 7	Kay Crouse and Emily Leonard
December 14	Betty Bates
December 21	Alice and Corinne Gray
December 28	Amy and Birke McNeill



(Alston Brook) Betty Potts
 (Carolina House) Lois Leonard (Brookstone) Rita Tussey
 (Centerclair) Jeanne Trexler (Brookdale Place) Barbara Schaeffer
 (Piedmont Crossing) Henry and Ernestine Kennedy, and Frances Leonard

John Smith, John Robbins, Henry and Juanita Beck, Mike Brown, Jacqueline Leonard, Ethel Bailey, Sadie Bailey, Ike Green, Giles Crowell, Gertrude Jarvis, Hilda Leonard, Willie Ruth Leonard, Louise Rollins, Micki Smith, and Margaret Trexler. Also, please remember Butch Arnold, Bob Biesecker, and Jacob Berrier (Great-grandson of Mary Berrier). To add a name to the prayer chain, please contact **Sandra Hutchens at 249-3001**.



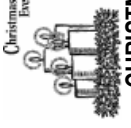


We extend **SYMPATHY** to and share Christian Hope with...

- ◆ George Crouse and his family upon the death of his wife and our friend, Marie Everhart Crouse.
- ◆ Clifton and Harriette Murphy and their family upon the death of their grandson, Jared Perrell.
- ◆ Martin Bailey, Clark Bailey, Annie Hucks, Peggy Bates, Mary Crouse and other family members upon the death of their loved one and our friend, Ralph Bailey.



December

2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
			11:30 a.m. (Sapona) MORNING GLORY CIRCLE 5:30 p.m. (Music Rm) Children's Play Practice 7 p.m. Choir Practice	5:30 p.m. {Parlor} Yoga Class	7:45 a.m. — 7 p.m. Ringing Bells for Salvation Army at Belk's	
7 Second Sunday of Advent 9:45 am Jt-Adult SS 10:20 am Social {FH} 11:00 am Worship Service KIDS' CLUB 7:00 p.m. CONSISTORY	8 5:30 p.m. {Parlor} Scrapbook/Craft Night 6:30 p.m. {Parlor} BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MEETING	9	10 NOON (FH) UNITED FRIENDSHIP CLUB CHRISTMAS PARTY 5:30 p.m. (FH) Children's Christmas Play Practice 7 p.m. Choir Practice	11 5:30 p.m. {Parlor} Yoga Class	12	13 {Sanctuary} Choir Rehearses With Orchestra
14 Third Sunday of Advent 11 a.m. CANTATA 	15 6:00 p.m. MEN'S BROTHERHOOD CHRISTMAS PARTY AT YARBOROUGH'S RESTAURANT	16 6:30 p.m. WOMEN'S LIFE FELLOWSHIP CHRISTMAS PARTY AT CAROLYN SPIVEY'S	17 6:00 p.m. (FH) Dinner and Dress Rehearsal for the Children's Christmas Play 7 p.m. Choir Practice	18 5:30 p.m. {Parlor} Yoga Class	19	20
21 Fourth Sunday of Advent  6:00 pm (FH) COVERED DISH DINNER AND CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM	22 5:30 {Parlor} Scrapbook/Craft Class	23	24  9 p.m. CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE	25 	26 Office Holiday	27
28  <i>The Pastor Will Be Away...</i> Dr. Lee Jessup Preaching	Reverend Patten on Vacation		30	31	Sunday, January 4, 2009 — New Year's Covenant Service — Installation of Consistory Members and Holy Communion	

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Moved Forward to 9:00 p.m. (for this year)



For the last two weeks, I had been hearing requests about possibly changing our regular Christmas Eve Service time from 11:00 p.m. to an earlier time, perhaps to 7:00 p.m. or 9:00 p.m., primarily for the convenience of old and young alike. I discussed this possibility with our Chancel Choir (who favored a change, with one or two exceptions), with our staff, with Peggy Bates (Worship) and Walter Hoffman (Consistory Chair). We discussed the various options at a called Consistory meeting this past Sunday (November 23) after our service, and decided with a strong majority vote to **adjust the time to 9:00 p.m. for this year only, to see if more people would be able to attend.** Obviously, we hope that you and your family will find this change to be advantageous and will be with us on Christmas Eve. For those of you who may be disappointed that we will not be leaving our sanctuary on Christmas Day (I greatly enjoy that experience myself), we ask you to join us in our desire to offer a meaningful service to the greatest number of people possible. We hope to see you then. Merry Christmas.

Pastor Walt

First News

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 Lexington, North Carolina 27292
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Return Service Requested

CHURCH STAFF

Intentional Interim Minister.....Rev. Walter Patten
 Cell #336-420-2728 Home #336-632-1985
 email: wrpatten@earthlink.net or minister@frucc.org
 Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. till noon Tuesday—Friday (Negotiable Otherwise)

Director of Christian Education..... Amy McNeill
 Administrative Assistant..... Paula Lopp
 Choir Director..... Paul Freeman
 Organist..... Lee Ann Peele

SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
 Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

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