



# EBENEZER

Methodist Church Dudley Shoals

www.ebenzerm-church.com

# December '23

Volume 19 Issue 12



Church's e-mail: [emcdudleyshoals@yahoo.com](mailto:emcdudleyshoals@yahoo.com)

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**Merry Christmas  
and  
Happy New Year!  
Christ is born!**

### Sunday Services

- 9:00am Worship Service
- 10:15am Sunday School
- 5:00pm Adult Choir Practice
- 6:00pm Every FOURTH SUNDAY  
Ebenezer Methodist Women

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...” *Matthew 28:19*



## Pastor's Note



We have come to December and the end of my time serving as your pastor. I will fill the pulpit through this month. We will end the month with the Wesley Covenant Service as you transition to the Global Methodist Church, and I prepare for what the future holds for me and my family within the United Methodist Church.

Let me share with you the following information:

- We will remain in the parsonage through June 30, 2024, as per the disaffiliation agreement. As part of the disaffiliation, you will provide the Western North Carolina Annual Conference with the funds needed to pay me through that time and provide benefits. This will be dispersed to me through the Annual Conference.
- If there is a funeral during this time and you would like for me to participate in it, I may do so if your next pastor invites me to do so. This is simply how we are supposed to do things as pastors.
- I will be filling in at churches in the conference as needed. I will also be giving time to the Conference archives as they process the historical records of the churches that have disaffiliated. There are other projects in the works, but nothing is set in stone currently.
- Please pray for Marsha and Staff Parish as they work with representatives from the Global Methodist Church to secure pastoral leadership. This may be an interim person or a permanent appointment. All of that is still being worked out.
- Please pray for all the leadership at Ebenezer during this transition. While some things will remain the same, other things will change. As the Global Methodist Church creates its structures it should be expected that there will be some hiccups along the way. Simply remember, “Blessed are the flexible for they shall not get bent out of shape.”
- We should know something about our next appointment in March or April. I will not be able to share that until the conference announcement date.
- There will be several fundraisers in 2024 to raise funds towards the disaffiliation costs. Please be prepared to support these events.

*(Continued on page 5)*

### WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

- 6:00p Praise Band Rehearsal
- 7:00p Bible Study – Adults.



### CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

Mon.–Friday: 8:30–1:00 p.m.  
Phone: (828) 396-2214



## Meetings, etc.

### Prayer Group

Tuesdays at 6:00 p.m. our weekly prayer group meets. You may call the office or email us prayer requests at [ebenezerumc@yahoo.com](mailto:ebenezerumc@yahoo.com). **Group will not meet on Dec. 26.**

### Wesley Class Meeting

Class meets on Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. **Class will not meet on Dec. 26.**

### Food Ministry

There will be no meal served in December.

### Seniors Gathering

Our Senior citizens are invited to another morning of fellowship with meal on **Tuesday, December 19th at 11:00 a.m.** Meal will be provided by the church. Bring a dessert to share if you can.

### Church Council

The Church Council will meet on **Sunday, November 29th at 4:00 p.m.**

### EMW Meeting

The Women will have their Holiday Party on **Sunday, December 31st at 5:00 p.m. at Kim Ellis's home.** Please bring finger foods to share.

## Our Military

Ricky Garland  
Shane McRary  
Jamie Mullinax  
Hunter Tolbert



Please pray for the men and women who protect our freedoms.

## Something to Pray About

by Cindy Sears

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”  
—Matthew 28:20b NIV

**PARTING'S  
SWEET SORROW**

References: John 16:5-15; Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 8, pp. 730-733.

*“But I tell you the truth: it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”* --John 16:7-11 NIV

With Jesus on earth, before and after his resurrection, his influence and guidance would have remained restricted to one small area of the world. Also, his disciples would have continued to let Jesus handle “all their difficulties and to answer all their questions” and, therefore, they would never grow to full maturity in their faith or personhood. With the Holy Spirit in the world, he has access to everyone and every place all the time—and Jesus, the king, sent him here for that very reason.

The Holy Spirit glorifies Jesus by convicting people of their greatest sin—disbelief in God's Son, Jesus (v. 9), and their lack of righteousness—or they would have recognized God's Son (v. 10), and of judgment here and now and to come because Jesus has shown his power over the devil (the ruler of this world, v. 10), and continued rejection of Jesus, God's Son, will lead to eternal punishment.

The earthly ministry of Jesus lasted only a short time (approximately 3 years). There was not time enough to teach his disciples everything. The Holy Spirit is here to lead his disciples into a greater understanding of God and what it means to follow him—as he does for each Christian in the world since Jesus went back to the Father, and his throne. It is through the Holy Spirit that we recognize the total righteousness of Jesus (his complete obedience to God the Father even to the cross of shame and death). It is the Spirit that convicts us of our sins, including our disbelief in God's Son. It is the Spirit that convinces us of the resurrection of Jesus that proves all his claims to be God's Son. And it is the Holy Spirit that continues the teaching of Jesus as he works daily to show us Jesus' glory and power and love. It is the Holy Spirit that remakes us in Jesus' image as we mature in our faith with the aid of God's written word, the revelation of his natural creation, daily prayer (communion with God), and worship and obedience that cements our relationship with Jesus our Lord and Savior.

May the Spirit convict you, convince you, and mature you in the faith that gives us the greatest gift of all—a right relationship with the One True God—the Creator and Sustainer of all that was, is, and ever will be. Amen.



## December Events

### Hanging of the Greens December 3

#### Help us decorate!

We will hang the ornaments on the Chrismon Tree on Sunday, December 3 during the morning worship service. We invite you to join us in this joyful event as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.



### Other Special Sundays

#### December 10th Memory Tree Forms

We are putting up another **Memory Tree** this year with ornaments honoring and in memory of your loved ones. **The forms need to be turned in by this date** for inclusion in the list of honorees.

### Special Sundays Cont'd

#### December 17th Gifts for Christ Sunday

On Gifts for Christ Sunday, your special donations in honor or memory of the persons on the Memory Tree will be collected. Please mark the offering envelopes in the Other section as GFC or Gifts for Christ. Thank you.

#### December 24th Christmas Eve Services

Our morning worship service will be held at **10:00 a.m.** Sunday school classes will not meet.

In the evening at **6:00 p.m.**, we will have a short service as we commemorate the Advent of the Christ child, and look forward to his Second Coming.

#### December 31st New Year's Eve

Our worship service will be held at **10:00 a.m.** Sunday school classes will not meet.

#### Thank you and Farewell

**After the service we invite you to a pot-luck lunch in honor of Rev. Alan Gaylord and his family.** Please bring a favorite dish or dessert to share if you can.

We are sad to see him go, but this will be Pastor Alan's last day as our pastor. Come and say good-bye and thank you to him for his service and ministry to our church. May God bless him and us as we follow our separate paths in service to the Lord.

*Happy New Year!*

## December Celebrations



- 4th—Shane Kelley
- 5th—Teresa Simmons
- 7th—Jim Farr
- 10th—Abigail Mullinax
- 11th—Jeanette Eby
- 12th—Barbara Frye
- 14th—Carla Yoder
- 14th—Patty Toliver
- 20th—Peggy Jenkins
- 23rd—John McCrary
- 26th—Lyle Miller
- 26th—Sarah Teague
- 27th—Cheryl Vosdingh
- 28th—JoAnn Knepp
- 29th—Tina Williams



#### *Happy Anniversary*

- 5th—Kevin & Pat Sears
- 13th—Shawn & Heather Wallace
- 29th—Dylan & Vicky Baker



### Note On Happiness

"Here we touch on... one of the secrets of the spiritual life that also is one of the laws of happiness. The more we cultivate gratitude and thanksgiving, the more open our hearts are to God's action, so that we can receive life from God and be transformed and enlarged. By contrast, if we bury ourselves in discontent, permanent dissatisfaction, then our hearts close themselves insidiously against life, against God's gift"

(The Way of Trust and Love, p. 112).

—Father Jacques Phillippe





**Church Council — November 26, 2023**

Attendees: : Pastor Alan, Irene Austin, Kim Ellis, Barbara Ferguson, Bleaka Hollar, Judy McCrary, Marsha McRary, Linda Moretz, Cindy Sears, Becky Silver, and Kenny Silver.

Our devotional readings came from Psalm 107:1-2, Psalm 111: 1-5. Say thank you to the Lord for being so good to us. Speak out publicly about his deeds of mercy and grace. As Marsha said, we should be thankful every day and constantly remember how good God has been to us. He led Alan to us, and God will bring another good Pastor to us, too. Marsha thanked Pastor Alan for all he did while he was with us, and thanked him for his powerful sermon this morning. Marsha then gave the opening prayer.

Reading of the minutes.  
Approved with one typo corrected.  
Motions by Irene, Kenny.

**Financial Report – Irene Austin**

The Action-MISC fund has over \$40,000 in it, which will be used to pay on the disaffiliation cost from the Western NC Conference. This means that we need to borrow \$60,000 more. Irene presented a quote from the Wesleyan Investment Foundation. The terms are not very good, so she will continue to look for a better offer. She has also applied to People’s Bank that handled the CLC loan.

**Trustees Report – Marsha M.**

Marsha reported that Ricky will get a crane to deal with removing the flame from the top cross on our steeple. The outside faucet has not been replaced yet. The garage door problem and plumbing problem at the parsonage have been taken care of.

**Pastor’s Report**

**Membership Report.** Our membership now stands at 166.

He also presented worship service information for the rest of

December. See p. 5.

Marsha thanked Alan again for his service to our church, and announced that we will have a pot-luck meal on December 31st to honor Pastor Alan and his family.

Kim Ellis expressed her thanks to everyone who helped with the biscuits for the Festival on the Square in Granite Falls this year. They prepared about 840 biscuits and gave them all away. She also thanked everyone who has contributed to her mission fundraiser in November.

**Disaffiliation Update**

Marsha announced that she has sent in an application for a pastor to the Global Methodist Church. It is possible we will get one by the beginning of the year. We are working on a church profile that will be sent in soon, too. There may be a need to pay living expenses for the new pastor until July 2024 when the Gaylords will have vacated the parsonage. Several other lawyer-related procedures remain in process.

**New Business**

Bleaka Hollar presented a thank you from the students at Gateway School for the leftover Halloween candy that we gave them. It will be posted on the bulletin board in the hallway past the lobby. Bleaka said that she has met with the social director at the school, Darlene Berry. Ms. Berry wants to set-up a small closet for some of the students that are in need. Items she want include toiletries, such as deodorant, toothpaste, razors, brushes, combs, etc. and some small, medium, large sweatpants and hooded pullovers for students to change into when they come to school. (Some students live in bad situations.) We will set up a box in the old fellowship hall for donations. There are plans underway to have another meal for the students in February.

Linda Moretz brought up a

request from a teacher of a special needs class at South Caldwell High School. She would like to have gently used items such as costume jewelry, sunglasses, stuffed animals, mugs, and other items. We will get a list of the items needed soon.

Monte sent thanks to everyone who helped with the Veterans’ meal we had here. He would like to do it again next year, and find a way to contact more people about it.

Bleaks Hollar announced that she has contacted the committee members that were scheduled to rotate off this coming year, and they have agreed to remain for 2024, since we do not know yet how the GMC wants us to organize our administrative council and committees. Tammy Adams has been appointed as chairperson of the SPPR Committee to replace Roy Hamby. The Committee will not be doing an assessment on Pastor Alan this year, since he is remaining in the UMC, and we are not.

The Audit Committee will meet at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 5.

Cindy brought up a request from the Caldwell County Fraternal Order of Police for money to help provide for a good Christmas for needy children in the area. We voted to give \$200. Motions by Kim Ellis, Bleaka Hollar. We decided against a donation to Habitat for Humanity.

We set a date for another fundraiser (disaffiliation costs). We will have a Poor Man’s Supper on January 27th, 4-7:00 p.m. for donations. We will need homemade desserts for this, of course.

Kim Ellis will be on a mission trip to Belize January 15th-25th.

Marsha asked us to stay in prayer for our church, Pastor Alan, and our new pastor, for Irene and the loan process, etc.

Marsha gave the closing prayer.  
Minutes recorded by Cindy sears. ☐



**Pastor's Note cont'd**

*(Continued from page 1)*

And as one Bishop I had always said, "Remember to keep the main thing the main thing."

As we prepare to celebrate the Advent/Christmas seasons together I wish to share this prayer with you.

O God our Father, you have brought us again to the glad season when we celebrate the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that his Spirit may be born anew in our hearts this day and that we may joyfully welcome him to reign over us. Open our ears that we may hear again the angelic chorus of old. Open our lips that we, too, may sing with uplifted hearts. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill toward all; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In God's grace, Pastor Alan

**Dec. Worship Information**

- *Dec. 3* — Mark 13:24-37 (Communion/Hanging of the Greens)
- *Dec. 10th* — Mark 1:1-8
- *Dec. 17th* — John 1:6-8, 19-28
- *Dec. 24th* — Luke 1:26-38 (10:00 a.m. Service time, no Sunday school)
- *Dec. 24th* — Christmas Eve Service at 6:00 p.m.
- *Dec. 31st* — Wesleyan Covenant Service at 10:00 a.m. (No Sunday school. Will offer anointing.)

Advent candles will be lit each Sunday December 3– 24.

No praise band or choir will be needed on December 31st.

The pastor needs extra scripture readers on the 24th and 31st. See him to volunteer.

*John Wesley Said:*

"A Methodist (Christian) is one who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength. God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul, which is continually crying, 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth whom I desire besides thee.' My God and my all! 'Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.'

He is therefore happy in God; yea, always happy, as having in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life, and over-flowing his soul with peace and joy. Perfect love living now cast out fear, he rejoices evermore. Yea, his joy is full, and all his bones cry out, 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten me again unto a living hope of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved in heaven for me.'"



**Special Giving**

We gratefully acknowledge the following special gifts in Nov.:

- **In memory of Kat Teague** by Cindy Satterwhite.
- **In loving memory of Bob Jenkins** by Peggy Jenkins & Family.
- **In honor and memory of Veterans' Day** by Delores & Gary Paul Campbell.

**Church office closed December 22-26, Jan. 1.**

Please turn in bulletin information by 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, December 21. January newsletter items need to be turned in by Dec. 27th.

Thank you.

**How do I hide God's word in my heart? Memorize it!**

Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations.

He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.

In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope.

Isaiah 42:1-4 NIV