



# EBENEZER

Methodist Church Dudley Shoals

# Dec '24

Volume 20 Issue 12

www.ebenzerm-church.com

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## Inside this issue:

Meetings, etc.	2
Gifts for Christ Notice	2
Something to Pray About	2
December Events	3
<i>Hanging of the Greens</i>	3
<i>Advent Wreath Lighters List</i>	3
<i>Soup &amp; India Crafts Sale</i>	3
December Celebrations	3
Military Prayer List	3
Hid In My Heart	3
Something, cont'd	4
Pastor's Pen, cont'd	4
Upcoming Events, Ministries	4
Special Giving	4
A Special Thank You	5
Hurricane Helene Relief Efforts	5

“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 Pen



One of the pertinent questions I have been asked by a youth member is, “Pastor, why do we celebrate Christmas”? Among the many reasons I gave, one stands out very clearly to me and I wish to share it with you this season of Christmas. I want to suggest to you that Christmas does offer a wonderful opportunity to show love and appreciation for others. I will be one to quickly admit that the commercialization of Christmas has corrupted this gift giving tradition to some extent. It however remains true that there is no other better time to give apart from this season. I invite you to notice the amazing gifts that surrounds Jesus’s birth.

Mary agreed to carry Christ in her womb for nine months even though she was not married. She therefore gave up her reputation in obedience to the command of the angel Gabriel who said, “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus”

On the other hand, Joseph is remembered for giving provision and protection for both Mary and baby Jesus. The same angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, explaining the virgin birth thereby averting a painful divorce. Joseph chooses to obey, and he happily provides the needed protection and support.

The Roman emperor Caesar Augustus gave a decree. He called for a census to accomplish his plan of taxing all the people. Thinking it was his idea; God was using him to accomplish His divine purpose. It was Caesar’s proclamation that brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem to fulfill the Scriptures. The angel of the Lord gave an announcement to a group of shepherds. The angel told them that the Messiah had been born and explained where to find the baby. Then, a multitude of heavenly angels appeared in the sky, giving praise and glory to God. What a sight that must have been!

The shepherds gave a testimony of what they had seen. They found the baby Jesus but quickly hurried off to tell everyone about a baby lying in a manger, called Jesus. . And all those who heard their testimony were amazed. I hope that you are already noticing that you don’t just have to go shopping for a gift.

Matthew 2:1-11 talks about the magi who gave gifts and worshipped baby Jesus. These were probably astrologers or scientific advisors from Persia. It was a brilliant star that led the way. They found the King of kings and fell down to

*(Continued on page 4)*

## Merry Christmas to all!

NOTE: The Church Office will be closed Dec 19-Jan. 3 for the holiday and for Cindy’s surgery and recovery.



### Sunday Services

- 9:00am *Worship Service*
- 10:15am *Sunday School*
- 5:00pm *Adult Choir / 4:00 pm Praise Band Practice*
- 6:00pm *Every FOURTH SUNDAY Ebenezer Methodist Women*

### WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

- 6:30p *Prayer Meeting*
- 7:00p *Bible Study – Adults.*



### CHURCH OFFICE HOURS:

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



## Meetings, etc.

### Food Ministry

The next meal will be served on **Monday, December 16th**. This will be the annual Holiday meal. Please contact Ricky Baker for details.

### Seniors Gathering

Our Senior citizens are invited to another morning of fellowship with meal on **Tuesday, December 17 at 11:00 a.m.** Please bring finger foods to share.

### EMW Meeting

The Women will have their next meeting on **Sunday, January 5th at Kim Ellis' house**. Details will be in the January newsletter.

### Christmas Cards

You may drop off Christmas cards for our **regularly attending** members and friends at Ebenezer until Dec. 22nd. We cannot mail cards that are not picked up. Any left will be discarded after Dec. 29th.

### Soldier Boy Address

Here is the mailing address for Hunter Tolbert who is currently serving in the military. Please consider sending him a card or letter, especially during the Christmas season.

SSG Tolbert, Hunter  
TF Commando, HHC  
APO AE 09330

### Gifts for Christ

Forms are now available for the Memory Tree memorials. You may hold your gift until Sunday, Dec. 22nd when we will take up this special offering. **Forms must be turned in by Dec. 15th.** Thank you.

## Something to Pray About

by Cindy Sears

“This is the day which the LORD hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.”  
--Psalm 118:4 KJV

**JOYFUL IN  
THE LORD**

References: Psalm 118:24; Philippians 4:4; Jeremiah 31:34; Romans 3:23; Romans 12:19; Hebrews 6:4; Ephesians 2:8-9; Psalm 95:1; Matthew 11:29-30; Psalm 119:11; Psalm 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Philippians 3:13-24.

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. —Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV*

How do we maintain joyfulness in troubled times? We can talk all we want about believing in God’s promises, and announcing to ourselves that God is in control, no matter what is going on in this fallen world. But our sense of joy can falter and crash into despair anyway. So how do we keep our joyfulness despite heartaches, disappointments, frustrations, ill health, bad decisions and hard consequences? These seven guidelines may help.

- Fully accept the gift of grace.** As it says in Eph. 2:8, “For it is by grace you have been saved.” Don’t be one of the “enlightened” of Hebrews 6:4-6, who tasted the “goodness of the word of God” and then fall away from their faith. This is not a head belief, but a heart belief. You don’t work for it. You can’t earn it. You can’t buy it. It is a gift from God—“not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:9). Open your hands and your heart and your life and accept the gift. Jesus gives it freely. He covers you with Himself. He washes your sins away with His blood, until you are “blameless.” There is no shame in Christ.
- Confess your sins, repent, and let the guilt go.** “I will remember [your] sins no more (Jeremiah 31:34).” God lets them go, why can’t you? “All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).” You are no worse or better than anyone else in God’s eyes. We humans ten to rank sins, but to God, all sin is loathsome. So, once He washes you clean, let them go and move forward in Christ.
- Forgive others as you have been forgiven.** Let go of your past sins and mistakes and let go of the sins of others done to you also. Resentment is a burden you bear to your own sorrow and harm. “Vengeance is mine”, saith the Lord. “I will repay (Romans 12:19).” With God on your side, who can stand against you? And if God can forgive you, then you can and should forgive others and yourself. When you let go of past hurts your load is lightened. This is why Jesus says “His burden is light (Matthew 11:30).” Because there is no resentment, or bitterness or guilt or shame to carry around when we truly hand it all over to Him. We are free in Christ—freer than we would ever be without Him and His grace.

(Continued on page 4)



## December Events

### Hanging of the Greens

**Sunday, Dec. 1  
9:00 AM**

We will be decorating the Chrismon Tree on the first Sunday of Advent. This will be the first Sunday that we light the candles on the Advent Wreath. Come and help us hang the ornaments on the tree. All the ornaments are Christian symbols. All are welcome to help with this task.



### Advent Wreath Lighters List

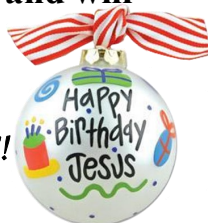
- Dec. 1 — Kenny & Becky Silver
- Dec. 8 — Linda Moretz & Barbara Ferguson
- Dec. 15 — Marsha McRary & Family
- Dec. 22 — Ricky Baker & Family
- Dec. 24 — The Chigumiras

The Christmas Eve Service will begin at 6:00 p.m.

**Christ is born and will come again!**

**MERRY**

**CHRISTMAS!**



### Soup & India Crafts Sale

**Saturday, Dec. 14  
9 AM—1 PM**

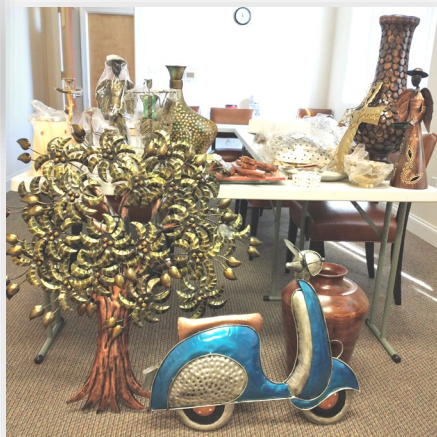
Thanks to a large donation we have some items from India for sale at bargain prices. Come by and look for a unique Christmas gift for a friend or for yourself.

Stay for a hearty helping of homemade soup and sandwiches. You choose the price.

Proceeds will be used by our church for our regular ministries and expenses. We thank you for your support.



Our members are encouraged to help by making some soup and desserts (brownies) for this event.



## December Celebrations



- 4th—Shane Kelley
- 10th—Abigail Mullinax
- 11th—Jeanette Eby
- 12th—Barbara Frye
- 14th—Patty Toliver
- 14th—Carla Yoder
- 20th—Peggy Jenkins
- 23rd—John McCrary
- 26th—Lyle Miller
- 26th—Sarah Teague
- 28th—Jo Ann Knepp
- 29th—Tina Williams

### Happy Anniversary

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

## Our Military

Ricky Garland  
Shane McRary  
Jamie Mullinax  
Hunter Tolbert



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

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

And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

—Luke 2:7 NIV





## Something, cont'd

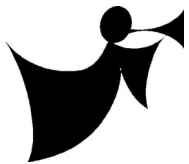
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4. **Stop doing it yourself.** Take His yoke upon you (Matthew 11:29). Let Him lead. Let the Holy Spirit have control and lean on His power—not your own power and strategies.
5. **Study God’s Word regularly, consistently, and reverently.** Meditate on God’s Word day and night and accept His promises as true. (Psalm 119:11; Psalm 1:2)
6. **Pray.** Commune with God daily and hourly. Pray without ceasing. (1 Thessalonians 4:17)
7. **Keep your eyes on the prize.** The true prize of life and living is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is our Savior, Messiah, Redeemer, Friend, King of kings and Lord of lords—forever and ever. And He will bring us home to Him someday. (Philippians 3:13-14)

And the final thing you can consider doing that will keep your joy going is by working in and supporting God’s church and its ministries and spreading the Good News about Jesus while showing the love that Jesus has shown to you to your family, friends, neighbors, companions, and business associates—to everyone. Working in the church and helping with its ministries keeps you from obsessing about your own problems and sins and the condition of the world. It also helps you to keep your eyes on the true purpose of your life in Christ. You cannot earn your salvation, but you can show your salvation through your work in God’s kingdom here on earth.

*Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice.* (Philippians 4:4)

**Merry Christmas to all!**



## John Wesley Said:

## Pastor’s Pen, cont’d

*(Continued from page 1)*

worship Him and gave Him precious gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. You probably now remember that God gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16). Jesus gave us the ultimate gift; His life as a ransom for many. Christ gave up the luxuries and glories of heaven just for you and me.

I hope you have been challenged to think of ways you can give this Christmas season. There are countless ways to give that don’t cost money, such as offering a listening ear, compassionate comfort, or a helping hand to someone in need. Try telling others what Jesus has done in your life. Go tell it on the mountain... Remember that the gospel is the best gift you could possibly give anyone this Christmas.

Prayerfully yours, Pastor Simon .

“One of the principal rules of religion is, to lose no occasion of serving God. And, since he is invisible to our eyes, we are to serve him in our neighbor; which he receives as if done to himself in person, standing visibly before us!”

## Upcoming Events & Ministry Opportunities

- Dec. 1 — Advent and Hanging of the Greens**
- Dec. 14 — Soup and India Crafts Sale**
- Dec. 22 — Gifts for Christ Sunday**
- Dec. 24 — Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**
- Jan. 5 — Ebenezer Women’s Group Holiday Meeting**

## Special Giving

We gratefully acknowledge the following special gifts in November:

- **In memory of Rex Teague** by Ebenezer Women’s Group, and by The Women’s Bible Class.
- **In memory of Bob Jenkins** by Peggy Jenkins.
- **In honor of Christopher Satterwhite** by Cindy Satterwhite.



### A Special Thank You from Gateway School

We provided breakfast for the students and staff of Gateway School in November. Below is a picture of the special thank you sent to us by the students.



And a hardy YOUR WELCOME from us!

### Hurricane Helene Relief Efforts

In October the Global Methodist Churches in our Circle in Caldwell worked together to provide meals along with other supplies two times. The first work meeting was held at Grace Chapel Global Methodist Church and the second time we put the delivery items together at Ebenezer Methodist Church. We thank everyone who participated in this effort, and helped around our community to clear trees and other debris from people's property after the storm. Below are a few photos of us working and preparing to make deliveries. NOTE: we will be taking up special offerings early next year to continue to help people affected by this storm.

