



EBENEZER

Methodist Church Dudley Shoals

Jan '26

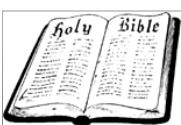
Volume 22 Issue 1

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Pastor's Pen



“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?”
—Isaiah 43:19

Dear Ebenezer Family,

Happy New Year! As we step into 2026 together, my heart is full of gratitude for the grace God has shown us and the faithfulness this congregation continues to demonstrate. January is always a time of reflection and renewal—a moment to look back with thanksgiving and forward with expectation. I believe the Lord is preparing us for a year of deepened discipleship, renewed mission, and spiritual growth.

A Season of Fresh Starts! January reminds us that God delights in new beginnings. Throughout Scripture, God meets His people right where they are and invites them into transformation. My prayer for each of us is that we will allow Christ to do a “new thing” in our families, in our worship, and in our witness to the community. May this be a month where: Prayer becomes your first priority, Scripture becomes your daily food, Worship becomes your weekly rhythm and finally, Service becomes your joyful calling.

Our Focus for 2026 is “Rooted in Christ, Reaching in Love”. This year we will emphasize growing deeper in our walk with Jesus while extending Christ’s love beyond our walls.

In 2026 we will focus intentionally on:

- ♦ Spiritual Formation — strengthening personal and corporate prayer
- ♦ Community Outreach — intentional engagement with our neighbors
- ♦ Family Ministry — equipping homes to become centers of faith
- ♦ Congregational Care — lifting one another up in compassion and presence

You will hear more about these focus points in coming weeks.

Red Cross Blood Drive
January 26.
Sign up online now.
Give the gift of life.



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

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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.

EMW Meeting

The Women will have their next meeting on **Sunday, January 4th at 5:00 p.m.** at Kim Ellis' house. All women of the church are invited to participate.

Seniors Gathering

Our Senior citizens are invited to another morning of fellowship with meal on **Tuesday, January 20 at 11:00 a.m.** Details to be announced later.

Church Council

Our administrative Council will meet on **Sunday, January 25 at 4:00 p.m.** to review our financial status from last year and discuss our goals for our finances and ministries for the new year.

ALERT!

We will not be collecting old greeting cards this year. Please dispose of your cards elsewhere. Thank you.

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

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

—Colossians 3:1-2 NIV

Special Giving

We gratefully acknowledge the following special gifts in December:

In memory of Gerry Daniel by Ted Daniel; Peggy Jenkins.

In memory of Kenneth, Gary, & Wayne A. Reid by Gail Reid.

Something to Pray About

by Cindy Sears

So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you." —Luke 17:6 (NKJV)

**O YE OF
LITTLE FAITH**

I am afraid that I have to admit, like Marsha did, that I didn't believe that we would be able to pay off the disaffiliation loan before the end of 2025. As we got closer to Christmas and the coming end of the year, my hope that some 'miracle' would happen to help us pay it off became smaller and smaller. This was depressing when I considered my own monetary sacrifices and that of others in our church, plus all the hard work we did with various fundraisers.

Even at the time that Pastor Simon challenged us to see if we could get out from under that debt before the end of the year, I had doubts. I knew we were barely keeping our budget going to pay our regular bills, plus those little emergencies that come up—water leaks, heat pump problems, roof leaks and more.

But, despite my doubts, I prayed, I gave, and I worked with my fellow members to make it happen somehow, somehow. In the end, God made it happen for us by leading a couple of members to give VERY generously at the end of the year. Praise be to our miracle-working God and those special members who gave large amounts, and to all the rest of us who put in our widow's mites to carry us over the goal line.

May we continue to put in the money and the work necessary to keep Ebenezer Methodist Church alive and serving God in our community. Let us pray that he will lead us to bring more people into our fellowship or FAMILY, as Trey says, so that we can grow our church and God's kingdom here on earth in the New Year. There are many lost and hurting souls near our church that we can reach out to and show and tell of God's love in and through Jesus Christ, his Son, our Savior and Lord.

Dear Father, please open our eyes to see the hurting ones in need of your love and salvation, and open our mouths to speak to them, to invite, and to tell them how Jesus has saved us and helped us to live fuller and more joyous lives because of our relationship with our Lord and Savior. Strengthen our faith and trust in You, and Your provisioning, instead of relying on our own resources. Give us faith at least the size of the mustard seed, and help us move your kingdom forward everywhere we go. Amen.

2026 HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026



January Events

Red Cross Blood Drive

Monday, January 26

2:30-7:00 p.m.

Our annual winter blood drive will be held on **Monday, January 26**. We will be serving homemade soups and sandwiches with desserts made by our members to blood donors and workers. Volunteers for the kitchen and check in see Irene Austin.

This is a good way to show the love of Christ and support the sanctity of life. Please sign up online at www.redcrossblood.org/give.html and put in our zip code 28630 to find our drive and sign-up.

Thank you for caring enough to give.



John Wesley Said:

"God's command to "pray without ceasing" is founded on the necessity we have of His grace to preserve the life of God in the soul, which can no more subsist one moment without it, than the body can without air."

Upcoming Events & Ministry Opportunities

January 4th—EMW Holiday Meeting, 5:00 p.m. at Kim Ellis's house
 January 25th—Church Council Meeting, 4:00 p.m.
 January 26th—Winter Red Cross Blood Drive, 2:30-7:00 p.m.

January Celebrations



- 1st—Barbara Shelton
- 1st—Mary Teague
- 5th—Jason Collins
- 10th—Cole McCrary
- 14th—Garry Minton
- 16th—Rosalind Kelley
- 18th—Chuck Adams
- 20th—Barbara Ferguson
- 21st—Kennedy Behmer
- 23rd—Tyler Ellis
- 28th—Dwight Kelley
- 30th—Kevin Sears

Our Military

Ricky Garland
 Shane McRary
 Jamie Mullinax
 Hunter Tolbert



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

Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.

—Psalm 37:5-6 NIV

The Hypocrisy Within

It is the height of hypocrisy for churches to claim allegiance to Scripture while supporting ideologies that contradict it. To believe that man can override God's design—whether in gender, climate, or the sanctity of life, is to reject the Creator in favor of the created. When churches endorse gender fluidity, normalize abortion, or celebrate broken families, they do not reflect the Gospel, they distort it.

And the hypocrisy does not end with institutions. Parishioners, too, bear responsibility. Many attend church weekly or stream services online. They sit, listen, nod, and then leave unchanged. The Word enters their ears but never reaches their hearts. They proclaim themselves "good Christians," yet their lives reflect no transformation. They speak of grace but show no repentance. They wear the title of "Christian" like a badge, not a burden of love and obedience.

This is not faith. It is performance"

https://www.americanthinker.com/blog/2025/10/the_crisis_of_hypocrisy.html

Thank You from SCCM

We received another thank you card from South Caldwell Christian Ministries for a donation on December 23rd of 40.2 pounds of food for their food pantry. Keep up the good work, folks! May God bless you for your willingness to help others in need.



Pastor's Pen, cont'd

(Continued from page 1)

What is NEW for January? Wesleyan Class Leader Training

One of the historic strengths of the Wesleyan movement was its commitment to small-group discipleship through Class Leaders who offered spiritual encouragement, accountability, and care. As we seek to become a congregation more deeply rooted in Christ, we want to reclaim this life-giving practice. Beginning this month, I will be leading an eight-week Wesleyan Class Leader Training for volunteer participants. This training will help equip those who feel called to:

- ⇒ Shepherd and support small groups
- ⇒ Encourage discipleship and spiritual growth
- ⇒ Strengthen connection and care within the church family
- ⇒ Help build a culture of accountability and grace

If you sense a nudge from the Holy Spirit or simply want to learn more about this powerful Methodist tradition, please consider registering if you have not already done so. Your gifts, compassion, and presence could make a profound difference in someone's spiritual journey.

January Sermon Series: "Growing the Deep Roots of Faith"

Each Sunday we'll explore how to strengthen our faith through developing deep roots in our relationship with our Lord.

- ◊ Jan 4 – "Rooted in Christ"
- ◊ Jan 11 – "Rooted in the Word"
- ◊ Jan 18 – "The Genesis Story" (Trey Hefner preaching)
- ◊ Jan 25 – "Rooted in Prayer"

January is a perfect time to invite friends, neighbors, and family to worship with us.

Winter Ministries Resume

We look forward to restarting our regular ministries after the holiday season: Wednesday Bible Study resumes Jan 7, Choir Rehearsal resumes Jan 11, Prayer ministry also resumes on January 7th. Thank you to all who serve so faithfully.

Your generosity throughout Advent and Christmas was a blessing to our entire church family and our wider community. Our balance on the disaffiliation loan currently stands at \$0, that's ZERO dollars. It is paid in full! Whether you gave through your presence, prayers, service, witness, or financial giving—thank you. Your help make the ministry of Ebenezer vibrant and fruitful.

Let's Begin the Year Together in prayer and fasting if able. As we enter this new year, I invite you to join me in this simple daily prayer: "Lord, make me attentive to Your voice and obedient to Your leading. Do something new in me, through me, and among us at Ebenezer."

May the God of new beginnings bless you abundantly in 2026.

With love in Christ,

Pastor Simon