



EBENEZER

Methodist Church Dudley Shoals

June '24

Volume 20 Issue 6

www.ebenzerm-church.com

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New Pastor on the way. See p. 4 for more information.



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*

“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*



Church Council—May 26, 2024

Attendees: Tammy Adams, Irene Austin, Ricky Baker, Ted Daniel, Kim Ellis, Bleaka Hollar, Judy McCrary, Marsha McRary, Linda Moretz, Cindy Sears, Becky Silver, Kenny Silver, Monte Hollar, and Peggy Jenkins.

Marsha gave the opening prayer and read from Jude 1:20-23 about building our foundation on faith, staying within the boundaries set by God, hate the sin while being merciful to the sinner, and careful not to be stained by their sin.

Reading of the minutes from March 24 and April 28 meetings: Minutes accepted as written.

Finance Report – Irene Austin

We have paid over \$12,000 on our disaffiliation loan so far this year. Irene said that she keeps some funds in the Action-MISC Fund, so that we will always be able to make our regular payment. Otherwise, all of the proceeds from the fundraisers go directly to paying off the loan. Financially, we continue to get by for which we praise God and thank our faithfully giving members and friends in the community.

Irene also reported that she has reserved the reptile zoo, petting zoo, and other items for the Community Day that will be held on August 10th.

Trustees Report – Ricky Baker

The Trustees will do a walk-through the parsonage in June. We know that we will need to do some painting and replace the refrigerator and range. He reported that Monte Hollar repaired the CLC fire door that was not closing properly. The playground equipment needs some repairs.

Staff Pastor Parish Relations – Tammy Adams

The Council members were provided with a biographical report on our new pastor, Simon Chigumira, who is originally from Zimbabwe in southern Africa. He is now a citizen of the U. S. and has served several churches in Louisiana the last 20 years. When he returns from a visit to his family in Zimbabwe, he will be resigning from the St. Mark UMC in Baton Rouge where he now serves as Pastor and join the Global Methodist Church organization. He has asked for some help with his expenses for moving to North Carolina. The GMC has no funds to help at this time. He will be renting a moving truck and driving it here himself, but needs help with the rental fee and gas. The Council is waiting to see how much he will need. A quick estimate was

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WEDNESDAY ACTIVITIES

- 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, June 17th**. Please contact Ricky Baker for details.

Seniors Gathering

Our Senior citizens are invited to another morning of fellowship with meal on **Tuesday, June 18th at 11:00 a.m.** Details to be announced later.

Church Council

The Church Council will meet on **Sunday, June 23rd at 4:00 p.m.**

EMW Meeting

The Women will have their next meeting on **Sunday, June 23rd at 6:00 p.m.** All the women of the church are invited to attend.

So, in essence, a person can be willfully blind.

Special Giving

We gratefully acknowledge the following special gifts in May:

- **In memory of Kat Teague** by Cindy Satterwhite;
- **In memory of Hester Stafford and Inez Spencer** by Delores & Gary Paul Campbell;
- **In honor of Mother's Day** by Delores & Gary Paul Campbell;
- **In honor of Ed Stephenson and His Wife, Kaye** by Delores & Gary Paul Campbell.

Something to Pray About

by Cindy Sears

**WILLFUL
BLINDNESS &
DEAFNESS**

As it is written: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes so that they could not see and ears so that they could not hear... Romans 11:8 NIV

Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear." --Mark 4:9 NIV

References: Deuteronomy 29:1-9; Interpreter's Bible, V. 2, pp. 501-505.

*Moses called together all the people of Israel and said to them, "You saw for yourselves what the LORD did to the king of Egypt, to his officials, and to his entire country. You saw the terrible plagues, the miracles, and the great wonders that the LORD performed. **But to this very day he has not let you understand what you have experienced.**"* --Deuteronomy 29:2-4 GNT

Why are people spiritually blind? Despite all the wonders that the Israelites witnessed, they continued to be blind to God's presence, power, and care. As men are today. Why? Does God purposely refuse to give some people "ears to hear and eyes to see?" (*For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah (6:10) says elsewhere: "He has blinded their eyes and deadened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them."*)

The early Jews believed that God deliberately "blinded" some people. Christians (except maybe Calvinists) believe that everyone can "see" if they so choose. The truth may be in between these two viewpoints. God withholds insight until each person becomes open to the truth of God, becomes willing to believe, or cries out for God to "*help thou my unbelief.*" (See Mark 9:24.)

Then God, as the Holy Spirit, opens his eyes, ears, and mind. After that, "obedience is the discipline by which faith grows or, as Phillips Brooks said, it is the organ of spiritual knowledge. The Lord then, waiting upon man's willingness to believe and obey, does finally give the mind to understand." (Interpreter's Bible, V. 2, p.503)

So, in essence, a person can be willfully blind. This blindness may be nothing but apathy towards anything relating to God, to sin, to grace. Or, a person may just be too busy to worry about such "superfluous" matters. Or they are caught up in sins that are so pleasurable to them that they refuse to consider that God, who created us, knows better what we have need of. So, God, leaves them blind and insensible to his presence. But, this does not mean that God is not actively working and seeking to get their attention. He will do what he must to get each person's undivided attention. Tragedy may be the only solution to a person's hard heartedness toward God. The Church and Christians are used by God to get them to listen up, too. That is our responsibility toward our Savior and Lord, because of the grace he has given to us when we woke up and, finally, had "ears to hear, and eyes to see." Praise be to God!



June Events

Saying Goodbye to Ed



Our interim Pastor Ed Stephenson will deliver his last sermon here on Sunday, June 30. He has requested that we not do anything special other than to personally thank him for his service to Ebenezer during the last six months. Please let him know all this month how much you appreciate him and his wife, Kaye, for his preaching of God's word and calling us to greater service in the Lord's kingdom.

We lift up prayers that he and Kaye will continue to find ways to serve God, and be blessed for his service to our church.

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

As for you, my son, be strong through the grace that is ours in union with Christ Jesus. Take the teachings that you heard me proclaim in the presence of many witnesses, and entrust them to reliable people, who will be able to teach others also.

--1 Timothy 2:1-2 GNT

Father's Day

Father's Day is on Sunday, June 16, and we will be honoring all our fathers in the congregation that day during the Worship Service at 9:00 a.m.

Please join us as we celebrate our fathers on this special day, and thank them for all they have done for us, their physical support, spiritual leadership, and strong presence.

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY!



John Wesley Said:

"There is no faithfulness like that which ought to be between a guide of souls and the person directed by him. They ought continually to regard each other in God, and closely to examine themselves, whether all their thoughts are pure, and all their words directed with Christian discretion. Other affairs are only the things of men; but these are peculiarly the things of God."

June Celebrations



- 4th—Marley Smith
- 8th—Becky Yount
- 10th—Mary Lynn Pennell
- 11th—Ezma Austin
- 13th—Kim Ellis
- 16th—Casey Knepp
- 22nd—Nathan Adams
- 23rd—Theia M. Wheeler
- 26th—Delores Campbell
- 28th—Ragan Knepp

Happy Anniversary

- 20th—Jimmy & Heather Stone
- 21st—Kirk & Irene Austin
- 22nd—Dwight & Rosalind Kelley
- 22nd—Rex & Gwen Teague
- 24th—Chris & Tasha Haas
- 24th—Ted & Gerry Daniel
- 28th—James & Freida Farr

Our Military

Ricky Garland
Shane McRary
Jamie Mullinax
Hunter Tolbert



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

Let's jump into summer!

JUNE 20





Council, cont'd

(Continued from page 1)
around \$2,000.

New Business

Our fundraisers are going well. Ricky and Monte will discuss and make plans for another meal, but they do not have one set up yet. There will be no Golf Tournament this year. Irene suggested a cornhole tournament. Monte said that people have asked for more chicken and a Poor Man's Supper. Bleaks said that there are a few bags of barbecue in the freezer. The one-pound bags are priced at \$10 a bag. She her to buy.

Kim Ellis

Kim will be attending the GMC NC regional conference in Winston-Salem on June 20-21. She explained that she would be using the lay delegate funds to help pay for this trip, because the location is rather expensive. She will be staying one night only.

Kim is also planning to go to Romania at the end of September or early October. She wants to do a fundraiser for this. She may use the Calendar fundraiser that has been used before.

Community Day

There was more discussion about this year's Community Day. It is suggested that we have flyers to pass out and use this as a way to introduce our new Pastor to the community. The date is August 10th, 10-2:00 p.m. Activities planned include water slide inflatables, reptile zoo, petting zoo, face painting, and more. We have access to a small bouncy house and will have a small pool for the little kids. We will serve hot dogs, water, popsicles, and dessert (cookies, brownies, cupcakes?).

Other Business

Marsha said that our contract with the NCLL, the lawyers that helped us with our disaffiliation, will be running out this June. They are continuing to help churches. We may wish to give them a donation to help occasionally.

We were encouraged to speak to any new people who attend our fundraisers or worship services and make them feel welcome.

Irene reported that we have been able to give regularly to our GMC connectional funding and have given \$6,338.46 this year.

Our nomination and other committees will be having meetings soon. Marsha reminded us that members of these groups should not talk about what goes on in the meetings prematurely. Wait until the information is ready to be presented to the members.

Bleak Hollar closed the meeting with prayer.

Minutes recorded by Cindy Sears.



Our New Pastor Arriving in July

Ebenezer Methodist Church continues its faithful journey as we move forward with a new Pastor in July who has also chosen to affiliate with the Global Methodist Church.

Elder Simon Chigumira, a U. S. citizen, will be arriving in July. He currently resides in Baton Rouge Louisiana. Born and raised in Zimbabwe, he started out as a teacher, earning his Master of Education at Zimbabwe University in 1999. Later he decided to become a minister. He earned his Master of Divinity at Emory University in the U. S. in 2004. He is currently finishing his Doctor of Ministry at Asbury Theological Seminary in the U. S.



Simon served as Pastor in four UMC churches and a Cooperative Parish in Louisiana for the past 20 years. He is married with one adult child living at home. His wife, Eunice, is also a minister.

Having been raised in a foreign country and living in "Cajun" country for quite awhile here, Simon has an accent decidedly different from ours. Let us be patient with one another as he and we both work on understanding one another. A couple of our members have expressed hope that he and his wife can supply them with some great, spicy recipes. And let's pray for some fiery and Spirit awakening sermons, too. We'll see.

Please be in fervent and regular prayer for Simon and our church as we embark on our journey together in the new Global Methodist Church, and continue our ministries in our community and around the world.