



## FIRST WORD

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

December  
2011

### A Christmas Witness

Lewis Grizzard is a southern humorist, not a Christian witness, but the author still writes about time when his family shared the kind of people they were at Christmas. Lewis' father had to work until noon on Christmas Eve and so he waited for him at the storm door, sitting and staring until the blue Hudson pulled into the drive way. His father climbed out of the car and at the sight of him, Lewis ran into his arms. "Ready for Santa?" his father asked. "I've been ready since August," said Lewis. His dad announced that they had errands to run. There is an "old man who is out of work, in need of a shave and a haircut, and his wife is crying because her babies are hungry. They're down on their luck and its Christmas. No-body deserves that." His father somehow found a barber willing to work on Christmas Eve and he took the down and out man for a shave and a haircut. Then he bought the family groceries. There were a number of children so his father bought each one a toy. Grizzard later wrote, "It was a Christmas a man could carry around for a lifetime. My father has long since gone to his grave, but I thank God that Christmas is mine to remember." ("Shoot Low, Boys- They're Ridin' Shetland Ponies", 1987, pp. 20-21.)

The idea of being a Christian witness may be scary to some of us but it is simply a matter of telling what you know—or better yet—demonstrating what you know about Jesus Christ. The challenge is neither to show off nor to hide. The point of being a witness is that someone else may come to know Jesus because of what you are saying and doing. Matthew 5:16 states, "let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

Of course, a mercy ministry is a wonderful way to bear witness to the birth of Christ at Christmas. The CCAP Christmas give away is an opportunity to get involved. Another way might be to make a special gift. If you use the Christmas Eve offering envelope you will support Winchester District Apportionments and the Winchester Area Temporary Thermal Shelter. Still another way to be a witness is to invite a friend, relative, or acquaintance to one of our Christmas Eve services. Most people who do not go to church appreciate the invitation this time of year and you will be showing that you care about them and God. Mercy ministries, giving and worship are all means of grace— that is special channels through which we experience God's power. By involving ourselves in this way, we are both demonstrating and telling others what we have learned about Christ.

John the Baptist knew about bearing witness. "I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal," John told those who questioned him. John didn't want people to get the wrong idea. He was not the light himself. He was a witness to the Messiah who was coming. "He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him." (John 1:1-27)

And that is our job for Advent and Christmas. Through all of the means of grace, we bear witness to Jesus. Through all of our efforts together, we are saying he is Christ. Together we are saying in effect, "the Messiah has come and he means *this* to me. Come and follow him."

" and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." ~ Jesus (Acts 1:8)

Share the kind of person you are during Advent and Christmas. Become a witness!

*Pastor White*



#### Special points of interest:

- *Pastor's corner*
- *Mediation Update*
- *In Bethlehem Inn*
- *Church Calendar*
- *Advent, Christmas & New Year's at FUMC*
- *Holiday Open House*
- *Christmas Offering*



© fummunch.com

#### Inside this issue:

Inn Bethlehem Inn	2
Advent, Christmas & New Year's at FUMC	3
December Calendar	5
Christmas Offering	6
Holiday Open House	7



## Mediation Update

On Wednesday, Oct. 26th, 2011, some members of the PPR committee met with Barbara Robbins, a potential consultant for our church. Barbara Robbins is affiliated with a Mennonite Center

dedicated to reconciliation. She has extensive experience and has worked with churches in our area. A report was given at the November 19th Charge Conference. The Church Council is the group that will

be responsible for hiring the consultant. Please watch the newsletter and bulletin for more information as it becomes available.

## In Bethlehem Inn Dinner Theater, Please Come!

The time to buy your tickets is now! Purchase your tickets between the worship services on Sunday morning. Cost: \$8 adults; \$4 children. ***You must purchase tickets in advance as the space is limited.*** All proceeds from ticket sales will be divided between Youth Missions and Winchester District Apportionments. The food will be donated by the United Methodist Men. The drama will be fun!

**On December 11<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm, please join us in the fellowship hall.** In dinner theater style, the drama will be a part of the meal and you will be served by our youth as you watch the several acts of the play. Come find out how “the finger of God”, whacky servants, and dangerous shepherds all point toward the arrival of the Messiah.





## Advent, Christmas and New Year's at First UMC

The season of Advent begins on November 27<sup>th</sup>. This year's theme is "Journey to Bethlehem". A teenage girl and a twenty something young man were forced to make an arduous journey many years ago. Arriving in Bethlehem, shortly before the census was to begin, Jesus was born in a *katalumna* (Gr. "outbuilding", usually translated as "stable"). Follow Joseph and Mary's progress each week during worship. Hear about the journey through the spoken word and choir music. Join us on Sunday mornings at 8:30 and 11:00am unless stipulated below with the asterix\*.

November 27<sup>th</sup>: The Annunciation

December 4<sup>th</sup>: Joseph of Bethlehem

December 11<sup>th</sup>: Mary's Visit to Elizabeth

December 18<sup>th</sup>: From Nazareth to Bethlehem

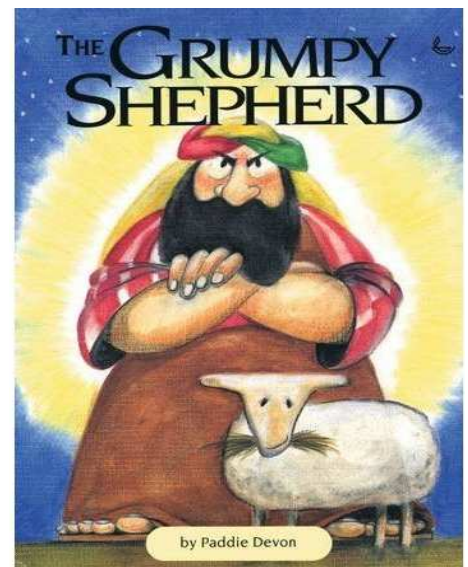
**\*Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve**

### ***Who is this man? Why is he so grumpy?***

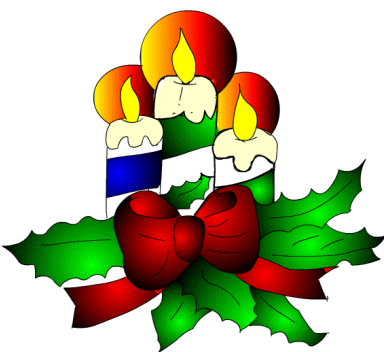
5pm, *The Grumpy Shepherd* (Children's Christmas Eve)

This is a service designed for children, but adults are welcome too! Joram is one grumpy shepherd! He needs a new attitude. He needs a new perspective. Fortunately, he meets the Messiah who will give him more than that. Based on the book by Pattie Devon, this service will feature dramatic characters and carols.

Communion will not be served at 5pm. Join us for a family-fun children's worship service.



7pm and 11pm, *This Will Be a Sign* (Candles, Choir, Carols, and Communion)



The "incarnation" is the mystery whereby God became flesh in Jesus Christ (John 1:1-4). If we take seriously the thought of an all powerful God becoming manifest in a wrinkled and red baby, the only conceivable response might be to come and worship. Please join us at 7 or 11pm to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Lighting the candles reminds us that we are to go into the world to bear witness to Christ's birth. Join us for a traditional Christmas Eve worship service.



## **Advent, Christmas and New Year's at First UMC continued**

### **\*Sunday, December 25<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Day (One Service Only)**

*10am, A Birthday Party for Jesus*

The worship for the season does not end with Christmas Eve. There is more! Ready, set, go—cake, candles, Christmas carols, reflections from time honored members, and a message from our Lay Leader Susie Brown. Please join us in the fellowship hall. This type of service will only happen once every several years, so don't miss it! Come celebrate the reason for the season with your church family on Christmas Day.

Melody Harmon and Melinda Russell will coordinate the reflective testimonies. Susie Brown and Kathy Baccary will head up the refreshments for this true birthday party. Please contact them directly:

Melody Harmon	667-3514	Melinda Russell	858-3731
Susie Brown	323-2834	Kathy Baccary	667-5529

You may also call the church office if you'd like to offer help: 662-3151

### **\*Sunday, January 1, 2012 New Year's Day (One Service Only)**

*10am, Covenant for a Holy New Year*

What common thread is there among Noah, Abraham, and Isaac? What do Moses and Jesus have in common? Covenants, that's what! God made covenants with or through each of these men and Jesus was the supreme expression of the covenant. In Matthew 22 the "new covenant" is proclaimed by Jesus for the forgiveness of sins and the sign of that covenant is Holy Communion. On the one hand, God has obligated himself to humans through the covenants. On the other, humans have a response that they can make to a gracious God.

Come participate in the time honored tradition of the covenant service on January 1. Copies of the covenant will be available through the adult Sunday School classes during the month of December. You are invited, and encouraged, to pray over the covenant prior to January 1. Let's start the New Year in unity and love! Let's embrace one another in the love that Christ has bestowed upon us and commit ourselves to doing His work in the world outside our doors! This commitment can only strengthen and reinforce our goals and sincerity as Christians.

***There will be no Sunday School classes on December 25, 2011 and January 1, 2012.***





## December Calendar

### December 2

Time TBA      Senior High Eagle Eyrre  
Retreat

### December 3

9:00 am      Bible Study

### December 4

8:30 am      Worship Service  
9:45 am      Children's Choir  
9:45 am      Sunday School  
11:00 am     Worship Service  
4:00 pm      Play Practice  
5:00 pm      Youth Meeting



### December 6

7:00 pm      PPRC Meeting

### December 7

5:15 pm      3-F Dinner  
6:00 pm      Hand Bell Choir  
7:00 pm      Chancel Choir

### December 10

8:00 am      UMM Meeting  
9:00 am      Bible Study  
10:00 am     Play Practice & Cast  
Lunch

### December 11

8:30 am      Worship Service  
9:45 am      Children's Choir  
9:45 am      Sunday School  
11:00 am     Worship Service  
4:30 pm      Dinner Theater



### December 12

6:45 pm      Trustee Meeting  
7:00 pm      Finance Meeting

### December 14

6:00 pm      Hand Bell Choir  
7:00 pm      Chancel Choir

### December 16

6:30 pm      Preschool Christmas  
Program

### December 18

8:30 am      Worship Service  
9:45 am      Children's Choir  
9:45 am      Sunday School  
11:00 am     Worship Service  
11:30 am     "TOP" Mission  
5:00 pm      Youth Meeting

### December 19

8:30 am      CCAP Christmas Give-away at  
Mt. Carmel  
6:45 pm      Worship Meeting

### December 20

8:30 am      CCAP Christmas Giveaway at  
Mt. Carmel

### December 21

6:00 pm      Hand Bell Choir  
7:00 pm      Chancel Choir

### December 24

#### Christmas Eve

5:00 pm      Children's Christmas Service  
7:00 pm      Candle Light Service  
11:00 pm     Candle Light Service

### December 25

#### Christmas Day

10:00 am     Worship Service

### December 26

#### Office Closed

### December 28

6:00 pm      Hand Bell Choir  
7:00 pm      Chancel Choir

### December 31

#### New Years Eve



© Lakeshore



## **Christmas Offering**



The Christmas Eve Offering will be split equally between the FUMC WATTS program, scheduled in February, and our Winchester District Apportionments. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Finance Committee.

## **Way to Go Parish Health!**

On Wednesday, November 16th Ellen Cavanagh, our Parish Nurse conducted an Infant, Child, Adult & AED CPR class for the staff at First Church. The following staff were recertified:

- Paula Corbett                      Discovery Preschool teacher
- Laura Fost                            Discovery Preschool teacher
- Aimee Nuwer                        Discovery Preschool teacher
- Kristen Grzywacz                  Church Office Manager

Thank you to Ellen Cavanagh for all of her hard work and dedication to our health and spiritual needs here at First UMC.

## **For Children 4-10**

Keep your eyes and ears open..... After Christmas we will be starting "Clubs" just for you. Think about friends you would like to invite to join us. Ask your moms and dads to contact me for more information. Martha Inglis [marthamartha1@hotmail.com](mailto:marthamartha1@hotmail.com)

## **An Epiphany Concert of Organ Music by Mike Edington**

**At Toms Brook UMC 3263 Main Street Toms Brook, VA  
Friday, January 6, 2012 at 7:00 pm**

Come enjoy the music of organist Mike Edington. His selections will include carols, hymns, classical works and the mighty and mystical "We Three Kings of Orient Are". This concert is given to support Relay for Life and celebrate those that are battling cancer.



# Holiday Open House

at

**Jim & Melody Harmon's**

2:30 pm- 7:30 pm

Saturday, December 3, 2011



olipartChef.com

182 Highview Road  
Stephenson, VA 22656  
540-667-3514

*No need to bring anything. Stop by for some Seasonal Joy, Friendship and Light Refreshments.*

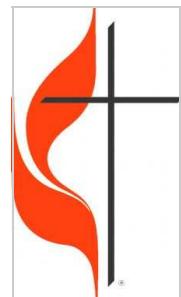
### **Directions:**

*From Leesburg, take Rt. 7 West, cross into Frederick County, VA. Take first right onto Burnt Factory Road. Follow past Burnt Factory United Methodist Church. Take first right onto Riverdale Circle. Take first left onto Highview Road. 182 is at the top of the hill on the right.*

*From Winchester, take Rt. 7 East. Take second left exit ramp past Red Bud Run Elementary onto Woods Mill Road. Go to end of road and take a right onto Jordan Springs Road. Take second left onto Riverdale Circle. Take first left onto Highview Road. 182 is at the top of the hill on the right.*

## **Mark Your Calendar!**

Winchester District Annual Leadership Training  
January 14, 2012  
8:15 am to 3:45 pm  
at  
Braddock Street United Methodist Church.



Watch the January 2012 for more information.

**First United  
Methodist Church  
308 North Braddock Street  
Winchester, VA 22601  
& Apple Pie Ridge  
Campus directly across from  
the Apple Pie Ridge Elementary  
School**

**Web site:**

**[www.fumcwinchester.org](http://www.fumcwinchester.org)**

**Church: 540-662-3151**

**Fax: 540-662-1462**

## Staff

**Rev. William M. White**  
Pastor

**Kristen Grzywacz**  
Office Manager

**Allyson Allison**  
Preschool Director

**Susan Brown**  
Lay Leader

**Ellen Cavanagh, RN**  
Faith Community Nurse

**Jim Harmon**  
Choir Director

**Melinda Russell**  
Hand Bell Director & Children's  
Choir Director



Non-Profit Org  
U. S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 136  
Winchester, VA

## **Caretakers of God's Creation**

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed." (KJV) Later interpretations use the word census, but whatever version you are reading you get the message that Joseph and Mary had to leave Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

As you read these words today does your mind ever venture back and consider at least three things those people must have been concerned about, weather conditions, traffic, and hotel accommodations? Do you ever stop to think about the mood of these travelers to Bethlehem, especially Mary who was taking this journey on the back of a donkey and "was great with child?" It is my understanding that the weather conditions were harsh, the traffic was bumper to bumper, and of course you know that there was no room in the Inn!

Now let's fast forward to the present times to the ending of one calendar year and the beginning of another, from fall to winter, from Advent to Lent. Where will you find the strength and the peace you will need to face tax season and a session of the General Assembly, falling leaves and falling snow, a manger and an open tomb? I believe Jesus gave us the answer, "Render unto Caesar things which are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." Life is all about making choices, and it has taken me a lifetime, (I'm still working on it), to put this Serenity Prayer into action.

**" God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference."**

Patsy Gochenour  
Caretakers of God's Creation