



# The Methodist Messenger

## PASTOR'S NOTES

### The Person and Work of Christ

In the last installment of our discussion of Wesleyan theology we discussed John Wesley's view of the nature of God. For this issue of our newsletter, we will move on toward John Wesley's understanding of the *person and work of Jesus Christ*...

Similar to the topic of God's [the Father's] nature, John Wesley generally affirmed the orthodox creeds (following the Anglican Church) concerning Christ's full divinity and full humanity. Even so, he tended to stress Christ's divine nature over his humanity. This tendency to stress Christ's divinity may have been Wesley's desire to push against the Enlightenment ideals that tended to portray Jesus as just a good human teacher. Or, perhaps he was simply wary of becoming overly familiar with a God who stands above and beyond our comprehension. Whatever was Wesley's primary concern, it was important enough for him to stress that Christ's humanity was of the perfected kind. We can see this in his view, that Christ did not inherit the broken, fallen, human nature from his earthly mother Mary. Instead, Wesley believed that the Holy Spirit created a new and "perfected" human within Mary. To John, though he was fully human, he clearly retained all aspects of his divine nature.

John's brother, Charles Wesley, had less theological concern with stressing Christ's human nature, even being willing to portray Christ in the familiar language that John despised. Typical in some of Charles' nativity hymns, Christ's human nature is very evident. In his Hymn 5, when he writes, "...Our God contracted to a span, Incomprehensibly made man..." Charles indicates his understanding that God had to empty himself of those things which did not fit the human condition (i.e. omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence). Neither is Charles afraid to let God incarnate our brokenness when he writes, "...Widest extremes to join, To bring our vileness near, and make us all divine..." (Charles Wesley, hymn #5) In both these instances, Charles seems to stress Christ's human condition more so than John.

But what concerned John more than trying to understand the nature of Jesus' person, was the *work* of Christ. Meaning how, specifically, did Jesus affect our salvation. John Wesley held a predominantly Western church view of Christ's affective work on our behalf. That is, John saw Christ's work on the cross primarily as atonement for our sin. "Thus our sins are frequently represented in Scripture; every sin laying us under a fresh debt to God, to whom we already owe, as it were, ten thousand talents" (Wesley, p. 233). Through our inherited and personal sinfulness we have amassed a debt of sin that we are incapable of paying. His ideas were in line with the Anglican church to which he appealed to defend his preaching of free grace. In practice though, the Wesley brothers could be seen combining many of the prevailing atonement models together, especially in Charles' hymns. Elements of several different models can be seen in Charles Wesley's hymn *Desiring to Love*, even in the same stanza when he writes, "Is crucified for me and you, to bring us rebels near to God (Abelard's Model); Believe, believe the record true, We are all bought with Jesu's blood (Ransom Model); Pardon for all flows from his side (Penalty Satisfaction Model);" (Charles Wesley, hymns).

Another important feature of John Wesley's Christology was his insistence that his ministers preach Christ in all three of his offices: Prophet, Priest, and King. The roles of these three offices are seen distinctly in Wesley's sermon *The Law Established through Faith, II*: "We are not ourselves clear before God unless we proclaim him in all his offices. To preach Christ as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed is to preach him not only as our great 'High Priest...but likewise as the Prophet...and remaining a King for ever...until he has 'subdued all things to himself; until he hath utterly cast out all sin, and 'brought in everlasting righteousness.'" (Wesley, p. 280-281). Wesley's chief concern for preaching Christ in all his offices was to ensure a theological and methodological balance that didn't emphasize one nature above another.

## STAFF

Rev. Howard James,

Pastor

Morgan Simmons,

Secretary

Chalmers Waddell,

Custodian

Gus Cothern,

Music Director

Nan Leggett,

Organist

Geneva Ashley,

Pianist

# STEWARDSHIP REPORT

## BIRTHDAYS

### NOVEMBER

- 1<sup>st</sup> Jessie Edwards
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Marly Gore  
Jake Bullard
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Kristen Williamson  
Dowdy
- 7<sup>th</sup> Les High
- 9<sup>th</sup> Ruth Kuykendall
- 12<sup>th</sup> Andrew Sauls
- 15<sup>th</sup> Emily Harris  
Emily Gilmore
- 17<sup>th</sup> John McGougan
- 19<sup>th</sup> Mary Jo Williamson
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Robert Dew
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Janice Simms
- 24<sup>th</sup> John Gayle Barkley
- 25<sup>th</sup> Phyllis Maultsby  
Kathy Simmons
- 29<sup>th</sup> Tyler Hood

### DECEMBER

- 6<sup>th</sup> Betty Hamilton
- 12<sup>th</sup> Morgan Simmons
- 13<sup>th</sup> Darryl Diefes
- 16<sup>th</sup> Anna Georgis Phelps  
Mary Hutchins
- 18<sup>th</sup> Anne Williamson
- 22<sup>nd</sup> Mac McGougan
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Lonnie Bullard, Jr.
- 25<sup>th</sup> Sandy Duncan
- 27<sup>th</sup> Nancy Bullard
- 29<sup>th</sup> Jenny Barnhill
- 31<sup>st</sup> Paul Gore



Good news first! Our offerings are \$6,367 higher than last year at this time. We are blessed to have members who have stepped up their support during these transitional times. Sunday morning attendance is holding up relatively well considering Covid and other seasonal illnesses. Attendance so far this year has averaged 41. The October average was 39, ten less than last year.

Even with the increased support we are struggling to maintain our current level of staffing and facilities. Our offerings are only 80% of expenses. As of October 31 we have had to withdraw \$45,141 from the trustees' reserves to meet expenses. Additional funds from the trustees and the parsonage fund have been set aside to help if needed with the balance of the year.

The 2025 budget is going to be a difficult for the finance committee given the challenges going forward. Our past stewardship has provided us with funds to survive the short term, but we must find a way forward in the long term. Growing our church with our local demographic conditions and social trends of decreased church attendance will be difficult.

The Conference is offering a program known as "Equitable Compensation" to assist with the pastor's 2025 salary and we made application. Our church council has authorized the reallocation of some unrestricted endowment earnings if needed next year.

We have faith that the Lord will continue to lead WUMC through this time of change. We are His instruments for carrying out His will. Through our prayers, extra efforts, and support we will become a stronger church.

Tom Leggett, Finance Chair

## HOMECOMING PICTURES



## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

For our October meeting we filled 20 gift bags for our members that are in assisted living or have been having difficulties in their lives. They were delivered and in some cases mailed to them. It was our pleasure to do so!

Our November meeting will be on November 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm in the parlor. We will have our program "A Penny and a Prayer"- a program started to help put prayer back into our giving for missions. Members are asked to bring their prayer jars back with their contributions in them. If someone didn't get a jar- any contributions will be accepted!

Our December meeting will be on December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00 pm in the parlor. We hope that all the women of the church will come- we try to focus on doing things for others at every meeting!

In Christian Love,

Debbie Conway, President



## NURTURE COMMITTEE

Our committee, along with several other great folks, helped to make our Homecoming dinner a great success! The food was delicious, the decorations were beautiful, and I think everyone enjoyed the time of fellowship with each other. Our next activity will be a soup and sandwich meal following the Hanging of the Greens (which includes decorating the Christmas tree in the sanctuary). This will occur following the Sunday worship on the first Sunday in December. We invite everyone to stay after the service and decorate the sanctuary and then stay for a great lunch in the Fellowship Hall.

We hope that everyone has a joyous holiday season- being thankful for our many blessings and celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Debbie Conway, chair

## PRESCHOOL NEWS

The preschool recently received the Gayle Stoll Memorial gift of \$1,200. This gift is made possible by Mr. Phil Stoll and Mr. John R. Grubbs Jr. The preschool would like to thank both gentlemen for this kind and generous gift in loving memory of Mrs. Gayle.



## CONCERT

Come and enjoy the Sounds of the Season as **Southeastern Oratorio Society** presents its Christmas concert on Monday evening, December 9 in the sanctuary of First Presbyterian Church. The musical selections are varied, mostly familiar and all beautiful.

# November 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4 -United Women in Faith 6:00pm	5 -50+ Exercise	6 -Food Pantry -Morning Bible Study	7 -50+ Exercise	8	9
10	11	12 -50+ Exercise	13 -Morning Bible Study	14 -50+ Exercise -Caregivers Support 1:00 p.m. parlor	15	16 -Yard Sale 8:00-2:00
17	18 -Church Council Meeting 6:00pm	19 -50+ Exercise	20 -Food Pantry -Morning Bible Study	21 -50+ Exercise	22	23
24	25	26 -50+ Exercise - Reaching Out	27 -Morning Bible Study	28 -Thanksgiving Day	29	30

# December 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 -Hanging of the Greens	2 -United Women in Faith 6:00pm	3 -50+ Exercise	4 -Food Pantry -Morning Bible Study	5 -50+ Exercise	6	7
8	9	10 -50+ Exercise	11 -Morning Bible Study	12 -50+ Exercise -Caregivers Support 1:00 p.m. parlor	13	14
15	16	17 -50+ Exercise	18 -Food Pantry -Morning Bible Study	19 -50+ Exercise	20	21
22	23	24 -Christmas Eve	25 -Christmas	26 -50+ Exercise	27	28
29	30	31 -50+ Exercise -New Year's Eve				

# WHITEVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

902 PINCKNEY ST.

WHITEVILLE, NC 28472



Pastor Howard, his wife Claudia, and son Jonathan at Homecoming.  
We are so thankful for our pastor and his family!

Rev. Howard James, Pastor  
Tuesday-Friday/ 8:30 a.m.– 3:00 p.m.

Mrs. Morgan Simmons, Administrative Assistant  
Monday-Thursday/8:30 a.m.– 2:30 p.m.

Mr. Chalmers Waddell, Custodian  
Monday-Friday/ 7:30-12:30 a.m.

Ms. Tammie Anderson, Treasurer  
Friday/4:00-6:00 p.m. (or later)

Office (910) 642-3376  
email: [wumc@whitevilleumc.org](mailto:wumc@whitevilleumc.org)  
website: [www.whitevilleumc.org](http://www.whitevilleumc.org)