



The Central Connection

MESSAGES & OPPORTUNITIES FROM CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TO YOU!

January 2011



Another New Year.

We come to January 1, 2011 with hopes that things will be different this year. Or better. Or that we will be better this year.

We resolve: A time to draw a line and step over it. To put behind us those painful or embarrassing things and move forward. A new chance, a new beginning! As the hymn has it, “This is a day of new beginnings, time to remember. . . and move on. . . time to believe what love is bringing, laying to rest the pain that’s gone.”

The New Year speaks of hope.

And yet. . . it’s not always that easy.

While we can intend to make better decisions this year than we did last year. . . and while we can learn from the past . . . and while we really do need to let go of some parts of the old life (like grudges, hurts, harmful habits), we do not wake up on January 1 a substantially different person than we were on December 31. Sad but true.

But lest we begin a new year feeling defeated, let us at least resolve to let God love us more and let us endeavor to treat ourselves and others with greater kindness and respect. For it is God who makes new beginnings possible, and it is God who transforms who

we have been into who we can become in Christ Jesus.

Here is a prayer for the New Year from Maren C. Tirabassi,

*Creative God, you make all things new
in heaven and on earth.
We come to you in a new year with
new desires and old fears,
new decisions and old controversies,
new dreams and old weaknesses.
Because you are a God of hope,
we know that you create
all the possibilities of the future.
Because you are a God of love,
we know that you forgive
all the mistakes of the past.
Because you are the God of our faith,
we enter your gates
with thanksgiving and praise,
we come into your presence
with gladness and a joyful noise,
and we serve and bless you. Amen.*

In anticipation of all of God’s new beginnings—for us, for the church and for God’s world—I look forward to the new year with you!

In Christ’s love,
Pastor Stephanie



A TIME OF PRAYER, FASTING & DISCERNMENT!

This fall, Bishop Charlene Kammerer invited us to join her in a weekly time of fasting and prayer, through December 31, to ask God to work within us for the future of the church. This invitation came following a motion adopted by the 2010 Annual Conference that calls on all Virginia Conference United Methodists to “fast, wait before the Lord, confess our sins related to sharing our faith with those not connected with any faith community, and repent of all that has kept our faith communities from being as fruitful as God desires.

This request from Bishop Kammerer could not have come at a more perfect time, a time of change. We are experiencing re-alignment (of some) of our district boundaries, reforming of some of our boards and agencies, and a renewal within the mission of many of our churches. What better time to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit for our church and in our lives.

Some may have trouble with this way of thinking. First of all that nasty word “change” is being said again. We hope that all can see that our God the Creator, is continually at work in this world, and with every new creation there is a change. A new baby changes a family forever, new inventions

change how we live. Change is one of the signs that we live in a world alive and full of God’s grace and love.

As we look toward (the) new year, resolve to set aside a block of time to think and dream. During this time, think about your church, the people, and the future it holds. What do you think that your

Take some time for
prayer, fasting and dreaming!

church will look like in five years? Do you think it will look the same? Most likely not, change comes. Will there be more people? Fewer people? Will your church be alive and vibrant, or possibly closed? During this continued time of prayer and fasting, ask the Holy Spirit to lead your thoughts to a vision of your church in five years, God’s vision for a vital faith community. Don’t be afraid of the changes that you see. Let your faith in God be stronger than your fear of change.

Take some time for prayer, fasting and dreaming!

The Central Connection is the monthly newsletter of Central United Methodist Church, Lewis and Beverley Streets, Staunton, VA.

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IN MINISTRY

The Mission of Central UMC is to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

Pastor..... Stephanie M. Sault
Minister of Music/Organist..... Sherry von Oeyen
Church Secretary..... Agnes Campbell
Child’s Play Director. Jo Ann B. Black
Custodian. Janet Nuckoles
Retired Missionary Professor..... Hunter P. Mabry
Retired Pastor..... David D. Reed

JANUARY MUSIC NOTES



Come one, come all.

All are always welcome to join the choir. But at this time, we especially need women--sopranos and altos.

We also need a handbell ringer.

Please let me know if you're interested.

Happy New Year!

Sherry von Oeyen



HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

JANUARY 16

The Human Relations Day offering supports

- Youth Offender Rehabilitation programs
- Community Developers self-improvement programs
- United Methodist Voluntary Services--community work and advocacy that challenge oppression and injustice in the United States and Puerto Rico.

We invite you to participate in the church-wide Special Sunday offerings--changing the world, one life at a time.



What do

United Methodists believe?

- ◆ Are you interested in finding out more about United Methodist beliefs?
- ◆ Do you have questions about Baptism, Communion, or Christianity in general?
- ◆ Or, how the different denominations differ?

Please consider coming to an introductory class which will be starting in March. This class is for all who are considering membership--or just plain curious--and will offer lots of time for your questions.

Please call Pastor Stephanie (886-3441) during January or early February, so we can pick a day and time that is best for those involved.

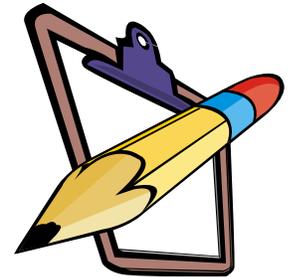
*Child care can be arranged if we receive advance notice.

NAME CHANGE

Fellowship Fund to Samaritan Fund

In order to better describe the Pastor's discretionary fund, Pastor Sault and the Finance Committee decided to change its name to the *Samaritan Fund*. This will more easily identify the purpose of the fund, which is to provide emergency financial help to people/families facing various crises. Most often help has been given for housing emergencies (utility cut-off or eviction notices), necessary medicines, or other special needs.

During this year you'll see both names in use--but it will be the same account. Our boxed envelopes for 2011 had already been printed with "Fellowship Fund" before the change was made. Please bear with us during the transition and know that your contributions to the Fellowship/Samaritan Fund will be used judiciously to help as many people as possible!





**LECTIONARY
READINGS**

January 2, 2011

Isaiah 60:1-6
Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 (UMH 795)
Ephesians 3:1-12
Matthew 2:1-12

January 9

Isaiah 42:1-9
Psalm 29 (UMH 761)
Acts 10:34-43
Matthew 3:13-17

January 16

Isaiah 49:1-7
Psalm 40:1-11 (UMH 774)
1 Corinthians 1:1-9
John 1:29-42

January 23

Isaiah 9:1-4
Psalm 27:1, 4-9 (UMH 758)
1 Corinthians 1:10-18
Matthew 4:12-23

January 30

Micah 6:1-8
Psalm 15 (UMH 747)
1 Corinthians 1:18-31
Matthew 5:1-12



**UNITED METHODIST DAY
AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Thursday, February 3
Richmond, VA

Sponsored by:
The Board of Church and Society
&
The United Methodist Women
of the Virginia Conference

For the past 18 years, United Methodist Day at the General Assembly has helped faith communities become empowered to serve as missionaries of justice, as well as the more traditional missionaries of mercy.

United Methodist Day, and other avenues of faithful advocacy, help United Methodists look beyond mercy ministry to ask, “What *caused* this problem? What causes hunger? Unemployment? Poverty? Inadequate health care? Global warming?” We empower members of congregations who wonder, “How can I make a difference? How can I be a good Samaritan in our world to the fullest sense?”

United Methodist Day gives congregations a vehicle for reaching beyond themselves and introduces them to the Social Principles of the United Methodist Church in a meaningful way.

For more information, please contact your UMW leader, or pick up a brochure in the Gathering Area. Early bird registration and payment of \$20 must be received by Friday, January 21; after that date registration will be \$25.

WAS THE KID RIGHT?

The Sunday School teacher asked her class this question:

“Why is it good at times to get away from everyone and have some quiet moments?”

A lad named David promptly replied,

“So our conscience can bother us.”

—Mrs. R. M. Nies
Wahpeton, ND

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

By Luz M. de Tablan, UMW President

New Year gives me numerous opportunities to examine my past performance and perhaps for you too. With the arrival of each New Year I often make New Year's resolutions and when the result did not satisfy me I started again with renewed purpose. Perhaps you are also the type of person who has a hunger to discover your capabilities and a passion to do your best.

I remember when I was still in the elementary grades one of the topics in our theme writing was "My New Year's Resolutions." Every one of us was so busy writing down our New Year's resolutions and things we wanted to do and to have happen for the coming year. Each pupil wrote down in their theme book so many resolutions with the thought that everything could be done in their own little ways. We were full of excitement and hopes that what we had written would be fulfilled, kept; and we promised not to break them.

Even today, we often make resolutions involving so many things like our finances, time management, our diet, getting rid of clutter at home and even considering loving and extending love to those individuals who are hard to love—our enemies, but what about our hearts? Have we thought of examining our heart to find if it's pure and clean? Godly people often say: if we want to reach our full potential, realize what we resolved to do for the coming New Year, and have the good things we want to happen to our lives, it is crucial that we have a clean heart. Our question now: how can we have a clean heart? We often hear that spiritually the Bible is God's cleansing agent and responsible for renewing our hearts. As we live, we naturally get "dirty," saying things we shouldn't, developing attitudes not befitting a child of God, thinking thoughts that are not right or pure. 1 Peter 2:8 says, "They stumble



because they are disobedient to the Word." Disobedience to God's Word makes our hearts impure. As Christians we should be making Godly decisions and resolutions. I have read stories from the Bible about people just like you and me changed by God. The woman at the well longed to be loved and accepted, as did the woman caught in adultery; and both of them welcomed Jesus Christ into their lives.

As the Scriptures speak to our heart, the result is our change of hearts toward God. Accepting Him in our lives and inviting the Holy Spirit to dwell in us gives us power over our natural selves and makes our potential into reality.

Matthew 5:8 says: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Proverbs 4:23 teaches, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life."

Let us place into God's hands our hopes, dreams and resolutions for the coming New Year 2011; for His answer ensures greater blessings. Many people never reach their full potential and do not realize what they have resolved in lives, because they don't trust God.

This coming year let us lay down every plan we have and trust God that He continues to work in you and in me to will and act according to His good purpose. I believe that the same God who fashioned all things in the Beginning of our world is still able to create in the lives of His people today. Wishing you all a PROSPEROUS and PEACEFUL NEW YEAR!

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hands our hopes, dreams
and resolutions for the
New Year 2011

NEWS FROM DONNA

(& STEVE) HUFFER



Indonesia

Note: This is Part 2 of Donna's article about their July visit to Bali.

They loved cock fights and all along our way I saw roosters in cages. My guide explained that gambling is forbidden in Hinduism but that one or twice a year, it is allowed as a religious rite. "Sure," I said. There is an over-population of dogs which are now infected with rabies. This has become a serious problem and the government had a couple thousand dogs killed. The people were so unhappy that they stopped. But then the island ran out of rabies vaccines and so the problem continues as more and more people are dying of rabies.

Education is provided only for the rich in Bali. By law all children must attend school but in the highlands there are no roads, schools, or money. Our guide explained the money for education never makes it to the island but instead ends up in someone's pocket. That is Indonesia.

We drove to the island's largest and still active volcano. It was huge! People are now forbidden to live on its sides because they get killed, but we saw lots of people planting crops like tomatoes and corn in the lava soil. There was a lake at the base of the volcano and a hotel where we had lunch and bathed in the hot springs. We stopped by coffee plantations on the way back to see the crops they grew and to see how they make their famous dung coffee that is the rage in Asia. They cage ferrets and feed them coffee beans. From the animal dung, they take out the undigested beans and make coffee. People love this stuff. We said, "No, thanks."

They make quilts in Bali. My quilt teacher here in Singapore employs a whole village to do the needlework on quilt tops. They make beautiful Batik material there too. We marveled at the wood work, sculptures, and even painting they do there. Tourism is their only business. We sat out on the beach for two mornings. The water was beautiful and there was no trash. Why? My guide explained that the trash is dumped out to sea and comes back with the current about March. Then they pick it up again and ship it back out. Because it was July, we were in between trash pickups! The best season, he said, for tourists. That night we went to the monkey

cliffs overlooking the sea. There the wild monkeys live, living incarnation of some god and so they are protected from hunting. They are large and quite mean. We were warned to take our glasses off, hide our camera, take out my earrings, and keep our hands out of our pockets. This we did but the Chinese didn't get the memo. While we were there, a monkey pulled off the glasses of a boy and tore them apart and then tossed them over the cliff. I think thinning out some monkeys would improve the place, gods or not.

Bali is also the place where Al Quada bombed a nightclub and killed over 200 people, mostly Australians. They have a monument there to honor the dead, their 9/11 they call it. It was a double blow, aimed at the tourists and aimed at the Bali people who are Hindu. Did I notice more security? They do have guards to let you into the hotel. At lunch time, they never bothered. Sometimes they were napping. Ah, well. The terrorists seem to have bigger targets in mind these days.

Only one incident marred our vacation in Bali. The professional beggars. When you sit on the beach, you are besieged by women and men trying to sell you something—drink, food, beads, carvings, you name it. "No. No. No," we chanted over and over. Then we decided, after seeing how the people really live, to pass out some American dollars. That was our mistake. They came from everywhere and would not leave us alone. We had to physically get up and leave to get away. We never did that again. We bought souvenirs in the airport.

Next time, our trip to Cambodia.

Quote:

The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else; whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else.

Oswald Chambers in *The Highest Good*



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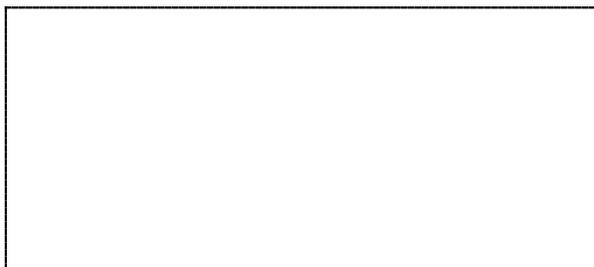
January

2011



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5th Sunday Lunch January 30

All are invited to the United Methodist Men's 5th Sunday Fund Raiser Lunch following Worship on January 30. Donations will be accepted to benefit special UMM projects.

Please invite your family and friends!

Martin Luther King, Jr. Event

Monday, January 17

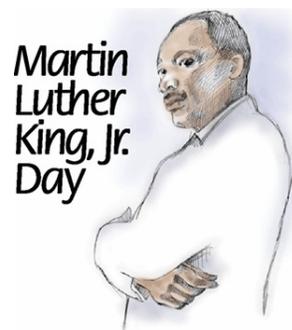
(snow date, January 24)

6:30 p.m. Candlelight March

Beginning at Central

7:30 p.m. Memorial Service

Central UMC, Sanctuary



This event sponsored by:
Mary Baldwin College–
The Office of African American
and Multicultural Affairs
the Department of Philosophy and Religion
and
The Staunton Chapter of the NAACP