



Tidings of Joy

The Newsletter of the First United Methodist Church of Decatur, Alabama

December 3, 2014

Great Beginning for Answering God's Challenge

Through Monday, December 1, we have received 108 Commitment Cards to the 2015 Ministry Budget totaling \$546,048.00. We also have received 85 Commitment Cards to the Capital Funds Budget totally \$628,740.00.

If you have not turned in your Commitment Card, you are encouraged to do so before Sunday so it can be counted in the First Fruits Celebration.



First Fruits Luncheon

- **Sunday, December 7 – Noon**

This will be a time to celebrate what God has been doing through our **Answering God's Challenge** Stewardship Campaign. The meal will feature recipes from Betty Sims & Sister Schubert's new Cookbook, **Celebrations from the Heart**. Make plans to be present in the Fellowship Hall.

Night of Miracles

Sunday, December 14

8:45 & 11:00 a.m. Worship Services

John W. Peterson wrote this cantata after reading the account of the first Christmas from Matthew and Luke. He came to realize that first Christmas was "a night when centuries old prophecy came miraculously true."



Join in the special time of worship that will be sung by our Chancel Choir and the 8:45 Worship Team.

Here is Our King Children's Choirs

- **Wednesday, December 17 at 6:00 p.m.**
- **Sanctuary**

Come join the Children's Choirs as they lead us in the Celebration of the Birthday of our King. There will be a Dessert Fellowship following the service.

Christmas Eve Communion Services

Wednesday, December 24

12:00 Noon and 5:00 PM

Expressions of Appreciation to Jimmy Cantrell

Sunday, December 14th will be Jimmy Cantrell's last Sunday at Decatur First Church as our choir director. We have had many years of beautiful music led by Jimmy, and the Christmas cantata will again be a moving and glorious experience. Jimmy has requested no reception, but personal notes of appreciation would enable us to let him know his place in our hearts and our church. There will be a basket in the central entryway into the sanctuary at both services for your cards and notes. Please let Jimmy know how much his service has meant to you and this church by **writing a personal note or card and dropping it in the basket on Sunday the 14th.**

Mission Moments

December Emphasis: Salvation Army



Please take a moment to look over the bulletin board for Missions leading down to the Fellowship Hall. Our emphasis for this month is the Salvation Army whose motto is "Doing the Most Good". The Decatur Corps serves Morgan, Lawrence and Limestone counties. Social Services, Disaster Services, The Center of Hope Shelter, Thrift Stores and Christmas Assistance (families, jails, nursing homes) are all services carried out by the Decatur Corps. This is a time when "those who help the needy are themselves in need".

- Items Needed:
- Paper Towels
 - Toilet Tissue
 - Cleaning Supplies
 - Canned Goods



Please place these items in the blue barrel by the Fellowship Hall.

REFLECTIONS FROM BRO. RUDY

“The Singing Methodists”

How do you teach the faith to persons who have little education or access to the Bible? That was the challenge John and Charles Wesley faced as the Methodist movement grew in Eighteenth Century England. This was before the average person had access to a Bible. And even if they had a Bible, many of the early Methodists would have struggled reading. Many of them had little or no formal education.

Charles Wesley’s answer was to put the faith to music. Charles Wesley was one of Christianity’s most prolific hymn writers. It is estimated that he penned between 5,000 and 8,000 songs. We have 59 of his hymns/poems in our present United Methodist Hymnal. Charles used his hymns/poems to teach theology. The people called Methodists learned the faith by singing it.

John and Charles realized that the Christmas season was an important time to teach the truth about God’s coming into the world in Jesus Christ. In 1743 Charles wrote what may have been his first Christmas hymn, “Hark How all the Welkin Rings.” Wesleyan experts believe they footed the bill to have this hymn printed and distributed for Christmas 1743. That hymn has become what we know today as “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing.”

Remember, they believed music was a great way to teach the faith, so the following year (1744) they paid to have a pamphlet of Christmas hymns printed under the title “Hymns for Christmas Day.” No copies of this exist today, but Wesleyan experts believe it contained three or four hymns, with “Hark How All the Welkin Rings” being among them.

The following year, Christmas 1745, the Wesleys issued an 18-hymn collection of entirely new Christmas hymns under the title “Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord.” This collection was extremely popular among Methodists of the day. It is believed that the pamphlet went through at least 25 printings. It included one of the Advent hymns we sang this past Sunday, “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus.” (Christmas-tide Hymns of Charles Wesley at www.hymnsandcarolsofchristmas.com)

Music continues to be a powerful means for learning the faith, as well as expressing worship to God. I imagine that many of us know a lot of the Christmas Carols by heart, at least the first verse of them. During this Advent/Christmas season, we will be singing these great hymns of our faith. We will do an Advent/Christmas medley each Sunday and then on Christmas Eve we will sing several of the Christmas Carols.

In addition, we still have two special services of music through which to grow in our faith and express our worship to God. In this *Tidings*, you will find further information on “Night of Miracles” which will be sung by our Chancel Choir and Worship Team on December 14 and “Here is Our King” which will be sung by our Children’s Choirs on December 17.

See you Sunday as we join in worship through singing, praying, proclamation, and Holy Communion.

Rudy

Our Stewardship of Presences

Attendance Numbers for Sunday, Nov. 23, 2014:

Total Usher Count for 8:45 a.m. = 124

Total Usher Count at 11:00 a.m. = 129

Total Count both services Nov. 23: 253

First Fellowship Nov. 19

Children- 26 + 10 adults

Youth- 22 + 4 adults

Adults- 33

Total First Fellowship for Nov. 19= 95

Sunday School: 11-23

Children- 16 + 9 adults

Youth- 15 + 6 adults (Bake Sale)

Adults- 138

Total Sunday School for Nov. 23= 184

Community Thanksgiving Special Service - 132

Attendance Numbers for Sunday, Nov. 30, 2014:

Total Usher Count for 8:45 a.m. = 76

Total Count for 11:00 a.m. = 116

Total Count for morning services for Nov. 30= 192

Sunday School 11-30-14

Children- 9 + 9 teachers

Youth- 5 + 1 teacher

Adults- 107

Total Sunday School 11-30-14 = 131

Hanging of the Greens total = 131

Our Stewardship of Resources

Ministry Budget

Received YTD

\$732,656.02

Needed YTD

804,389.88

Given This Week

5,413.64

Needed Weekly

16,416.12

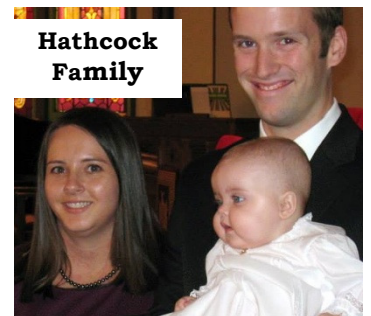
Capital Fund

\$190,771.93

391.34

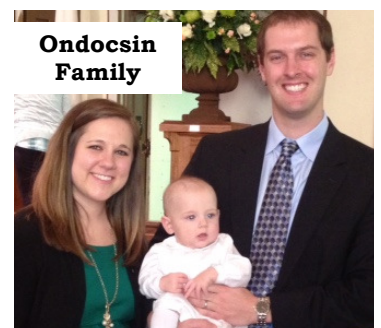
Baptisms

The baptism of **Caroline Frances Hathcock** took place on Nov. 9th. Her parents are **Virginia** and **Myles Hathcock**. **Dr. Rudy Guess** presided over the ceremony.



Hathcock Family

The baptism of **Luke Williams Ondocsin** took place on Nov. 9th. His parents are **Calley** and **Brian Ondocsin**. **Dr. Rudy Guess** presided over the ceremony.



Ondocsin Family



Servant Spotlight:

Our Servant Spotlight this week shines on our volunteers Betty Ann Mitchum and Barbara Ashwander for organizing and helping with the youth bake sale.

First Grace would like to thank Diane and Mitch Summerlin and Dell Ward for helping with the First Grace Thanksgiving Feast. Thank you all for your service to our children and youth.

The Sanctuary looks festive so we give thanks to Mike and Dell Ward, Mary Earley, and Charles and Barbara Ashwander for setting up the Chrismon Tree.

If you have individuals to lift up in the Servant Spotlight, please contact any of our staff at (256)355-0277.



Church

Christmas Pageant and Worship Service

Wednesday, December 17th

6:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

We would love to see everyone come and join this special evening service which will be followed by a Dessert Fellowship time in our Fellowship Hall.

Hilltoppers

Christmas Luncheon



We will be having our annual Hilltoppers Christmas luncheon on Thursday, Dec. 11th at 11:00 a.m. in fellowship hall. The cost of the luncheon is \$6.00 per person. Our entertainment will be Wallace State singers. Please call the Church office if you have not signed up yet. Everyone is welcome to come and celebrate the holidays!

Shine

Children's Christmas Pageant Rehearsal Schedule

5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. - **Dec. 10th** - All Children will meet in Music room #250 (New Building)

2:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. - **Sunday, Dec. 14th**

Dress Rehearsal for all children in the Sanctuary.

Seekers Class

Sunday school Helpers for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Grade Class

Dec. 07	Sage Copeland
Dec. 14	Diane Summerlin
Dec. 21	Lesley Heidecker
Dec. 28	Margaret Dunivant
Jan. 04	Lou Underwood



Riverside Christmas Party

On Thursday, December 18th at 10:30 a.m. we will be hosting a party for our shut-ins at Riverside. We will sing Christmas Carols, share in some light refreshments, and fellowship! Please join us!

Christmas Goodies Needed



We are looking for a few bakers to make cookies etc. for our Children's Christmas pageant fellowship on Wednesday, December 17th. If you are willing to bake a few goodies, please let Lorri McGuire know.

Church & Family

Austinville Elementary Backpack Needs

It's December and our month to help provide food for 54 children at Austinville Elementary. We especially need help this month as we will be sending food home for three weekends. In addition to that, we will divide the number of children with Ninth St. UMC and provide food for their Christmas Holidays. These are the food items we need your help with:

Canned pasta meals	boxed mac & cheese
Ramen noodles	Beanie Weenies
Snack crackers	Granola bars
Pop Tarts	Fruit cups/snacks
Pudding cups	Rice Krispie Treats
Instant Oatmeal, Grits	

Please place items in the marked blue barrel by the Fellowship Hall.

*Sincerely,
Jan Dean*

United Methodist Women

The Tidwell Circle and the Lydia Circle met for their regular meetings in November. Some of the members from the Lydia Circle went to lunch together after the regular meeting and then worked at the Methodist Relief warehouse. They put together health kits and bagged sheets for the Ebola relief effort.



Men's Breakfast

- Sunday, Dec. 14 at 7:30 a.m.
- Wesley Fellowship Hall
- Breakfast is \$5.00.


Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study will meet December 9th but will not meet the rest of December. Our study will resume on January 6, 2015.

Ushers 8:45 a.m. Worship Service

If you are currently an Usher at the 8:45 a.m. Worship Service and you want to be removed, please let Ronnie Dukes know via email rdukes@pepsicoladecatur.com. Also, if you are not ushering now at 8:45 and are willing to help, please let him know. We need people to help usher for the 8:45 service. Thank you.☺

Communications Committee News

A few months ago the Communications Committee published a notice and information in the bulletin about upcoming changes to our welcome center. We have been working on securing all the necessary items to make this happen. In the next few weeks you will be seeing this transition completed. Please watch for these exciting new changes at FUMC! 

These changes will allow the church to grow and provide more inviting areas for both our members and our visitors.

The new name for the old Coffee Café will be "Family Connections." This area will become the central location for members to visit and catch up, to sign up for events, volunteer, pick up ordered items, etc. This area will be member focused and will provide an area that will eliminate the traffic jam we so often get caught in at the hallway intersection. Please make a note of this and watch for its launch in the next two or three weeks.

The entry area off Lafayette St. will become our new "Welcome Center." Our goal is to provide a warm, welcoming atmosphere without having gatherings that leave our backs to the incoming visitors. A kiosk has been designed and is being constructed to be placed in this area. It will house all the brochures in one location and remove them from the several other furniture pieces. A larger map of the church will be on display to allow greeters to see where they wish to go and the most convenient way for them to get there. The new brochures will provide a description of the classes we offer and will correspond to the framed map. *Some* seating will remain but the focus will shift from a member reception area to an area of welcome - encouraging direct view and contact with visitors and prospective new members. The primary function will now become the greeting of visitors and the providing of FUMC information to those looking for a new church home.

A lot of thought has gone into these changes to improve the first impression of those visiting FUMC. The Council on Ministries and the Administrative Board have been presented this plan and discussed it thoroughly. They are in full support of these changes and we look forward to members welcoming these positive improvements and enjoying the rewards they bring.

The 2014 Communication Committee



Coming Up...

Sunday, December 7

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. - Worship & Shopping Trip to Birmingham



Monday, December 8

7:45 a.m. - Jr. High Prayer Breakfast at McDonald's

Thursday, December 11

7:30a.m. - Sr. High Prayer Breakfast at Chick Fil A
5:00-8:00 p.m. - Ring the Salvation Army Bell at Old Navy

Sunday, December 14

10:00 Sunday School
6:00 p.m. - Youth Christmas Party at FUMC

Wednesday, December 17

12:00 Noon - College Lunch, location TBA
6:00 p.m. - Children's Christmas Program

Thursday, December 18

12:00 Noon - Sr. High Prayer Lunch at the Brick

Worship & Shopping in Birmingham

On Sunday, December 7, at 8:00 a.m., the youth will go to Birmingham to worship at The Church of the Reconciler, a United Methodist Church that serves the homeless in downtown. After worship, we'll go to Target where each of our youth will shop for teens in Morgan County who will not get Christmas without our gifts. Following Target, we'll end our day at the Galleria for lunch and shopping for friends and family. We'll return around 5:00 p.m.

Other News

First Grace News

The First Grace Thanksgiving Feast was so much fun with 101 adults and 38 children in attendance. We want to thank Lifepoint Worship Team Band for playing the music and we also want to thank Jody at J.W. Steakhouse for catering the dinner. The 3K and 4K students did such a great job with their Thanksgiving Program. Our next event will be the First Grace Christmas Program on Dec. 18 at 5:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall



Thank You

Thank You for your support of our first Bake Sale for missions! We were able to raise over \$2,500 for our summer mission trips to Jamaica and Memphis. Thanks again!

Jamaica Mission Trip, July 18-24, 2015

If you were not able to attend the info meeting on November 23 and would like information about the trip or have questions, please contact Beth. beth@decalurfumc.org

Christmas Party

Who: All youth and friends
When: December 14 at 6:00 p.m.
Where: FUMC. We'll start in the Fellowship Hall.

Join us for food, games and Christmas Spirit! We'll start our night with dinner together in the Fellowship Hall. After dinner, we'll have a game of Underground Church. The results of the game will determine our gift picking order for "Dirty Santa!" Bring a \$10 Christmas gift (non-gag) for a girl or boy.

General Info

"Like" us on Facebook or follow on Twitter to get up to date information about our church, meetings, changes, prayer requests, photos and more!

www.facebook.com/DecaturFirstUMC
or www.twitter.com/decalurfumc

facebook



If you have not seen our updated web site, please visit www.decalurfumc.org to see the exciting updates. Download the Tidings and Reflections from Rudy. Listen to a sermon. View upcoming events on the calendar. See what Discipleship opportunities are available on Wednesday night. Find a ministry in which you can get involved!

Church Cookbooks

We still have an abundance of our Church Cookbooks available for purchase. You will find these in the Church office for only \$10 each. These make wonderful gifts. Pick one up today!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Youth Worship & Shopping Trip to Birmingham
(details page 5)

Sunday, December 7 from 8:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m.

First Fruits Luncheon, Fellowship Hall
Sunday, Dec. 7 starting at noon

Jr. High Prayer Breakfast at McDonald's
Monday, Dec. 8 at 7:45 a.m.

Worship Team Practice/Monday, Dec. 8 at 6:00 p.m.

Women's Bible Study, Courtyard Conf. Room
Tuesday, Dec. 9 at 10:00 a.m.

Council on Ministries, Minister's Conf. room
Tuesday, Dec. 9 at 6:00 p.m.

Alabama Emmaus, Fellowship Hall
Tuesday, Dec. 9 at 6:00 p.m.

DHS Choir Concert, Fellowship Hall
Wednesday, Dec. 10 at noon

Children's Choir Rehearsal, Room 250 New Bldg
Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 5:30 p.m.

Chancel Choir Practice, Sanctuary
Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 6:00 p.m.

UMM Bible Study, Minister's Conf. Room
Thurs., Dec. 11 at 6:30 a.m.

UMM Breakfast, City Café
Thurs., Dec. 11 at 7:30 a.m.

Sr. High Prayer Breakfast at Chick Fil A
Thursday, Dec. 11 at 7:30 a.m.

Youth Ring the Salvation Army Bell at Old Navy
Thursday, Dec. 11 from 5:00-8:00 p.m.



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DECATUR, AL 35601

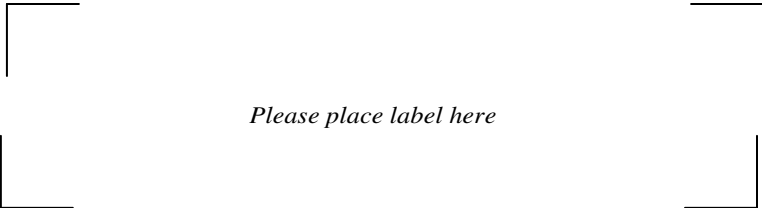
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www.decaturfumc.org

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Dr. Rudy Guess, Senior Minister, rguess@decaturfumc.org **Cindy McCulloch, Administrative Assistant to the Senior**
Beth C. Green, Youth Minister, beth@decaturfumc.org **Pastor & Finance, cmcculloch@decaturfumc.org**
Laura Vines, Interim First Grace Director, firstgrace@decaturfumc.org **Sandy Callahan, Food Manager**
Karen Moore, Worship Team Director, kkbabf@gmail.com **Alyson Quinn, Church Secretary, aquinn@decaturfumc.org**
Lorri McGuire, Director of Children & Family, lmcguire@decaturfumc.org **Kim Bell, Pianist**
Jimmy Cantrell, Chancel Choir Director, jcantr1011@aol.com **Charlie Elliott, Custodian**
Gail Warth, Organist **Melissa Wiley, Housekeeper**

Upcoming Worship Services

(8:45 & 11:00 AM)

VISION STATEMENT:

Growing in Christ, Sharing God's Love through...
Inspiring Worship
Empowering Ministries
Equipping Persons for Ministry
Promoting Well-Being

Rudy Guess, preaching at 8:45 and 11:00 a.m.

December 7, "God Calls Mary" – Luke 1: 26-38

Dec. 14, Christmas Cantata both services (details on front page)

December 21, "God Calls Joseph" – Matthew 1: 18-25

Christmas Eve Communion Services

Wednesday, December 24

12:00 Noon and 5:00 PM

Scheduled To Serve Dec. 7

Acolytes:

8:45 a.m. - Zachary Floyd

11:00 a.m. - Jack Bell & Aiden Garriss
Nelson Earley, Crucifer

Greeters:

8:45 a.m.— Jim King, Mitch & Diane
Summerlin

11:00 a.m. – Lisa Earley, Jim & Gail
Herren

Ushers:

8:45 a.m. – Jim Surber, Bert Phippen,
Ronnie Dukes, Jolly McKenzie

11:00 a.m. – Mark Maloney, Greg
Clemons, Ken Chandler, Jim Milner,
Judson Davis