

The Beacon



"Nativity Energy Conservation"

*"-- And she brought forth her first-born Son, and laid Him in a manger,
for there was no room for them in the inn".*

There are fuel sources all over the stable on that first Christmas night. On the stone walls there are wooden stakes with ends wrapped in oiled rags. These torches provide the bulk of the light in the dark animal shelter. There are probably a few oil wick candles burning softly, sending light into the corners. There are wads of straw in a feeding apparatus, a manger, fuel whereon the sheep and cows can snack during the night.

Not far from the hooves of the normal residents, a young couple, probably teen-agers, huddle in the straw on the floor, he with a worried frown on his brow, she with perspiration glistening on hers, as yet another contraction begins. Forgotten for the moment, they also have fuel that they have brought, some dried fruit, stale biscuits -- the trek from Nazareth has been a long one, and the "good stuff" was probably consumed days ago. Hopefully there has been enough, so that when the baby finally enters life, the mother will be able to provide fuel for Him.

Then, that for which they have dreamed: Him for whom the world has waited in darkness: *"the hopes and fears of all the years are met"* in Him. This virgin-born Baby cries the fuel of oxygen into His lungs, and Christ is born!

We hear so much about conservation these days. It's absolutely essential that non-renewable sources of energy be protected and preserved, for ultimately, they will cease to exist. They will burn out, run out, escape, or dissolve. The human race is constantly searching for new, as well as renewable, sources of energy. We cannot do without it!

In the manger, that evening long ago, God our Father sent to us the greatest source of energy the world has ever seen. He has sent us the only source of energy we will ever need! He has sent us the only energy on which we will properly run! We feed on Christ the Lord, God Incarnate, the Baby, the Shepherd, the Bread of Life!

"A car was made to run on gasoline, and it would not run properly on anything else. Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other." (C. S. Lewis)

Be responsible! Pay attention to conserving non-renewable sources of energy! But for Heaven's sake, as well as your own, understand that the fuel on which you were designed to run is eternal, it is renewable, and it is renewable at a rate unbelievably faster than we can burn it! Only one source of fuel and energy in that stable will last forever -- Jesus Christ, our newborn King! We cannot do without Him!

Betsy and I rejoice as we enter our first Advent and Christmas at Benson Memorial! Speaking for us personally, and for our church staff family, we are grateful for all your prayers, ministries, generousities and love that you have shared with us and with this special part of God's Kingdom! We wish for all of you a very merry Christmas, and the most exciting and fulfilling new year! May the peace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with you all! (And see you in church on Sunday!) --Skip

DID YOU KNOW...By Gwen Baskett
For my last contribution to the Beacon, I
want to share the inspiration that is my
motto for living. Thanks be to God!

.CELEBRATE THE TEMPORARY
By Clyde Reid (1972)

CELEBRATE THE TEMPORARY
DON'T WAIT UNTIL TOMORROW
LIVE TODAY

CELEBRATE THE SIMPLE THINGS
ENJOY THE BUTTERFLY
EMBRACE THE SNOW
RUN WITH THE OCEAN
DELIGHT IN THE TREES

OR A SINGLE LONELY FLOWER

GO BAREFOOT
IN THE WET GRASS

DON'T WAIT
UNTIL ALL THE PROBLEMS
ARE SOLVED
OR ALL THE BILLS
ARE PAID

YOU WILL WAIT FOREVER
ETERNITY WILL COME AND GO
AND YOU
WILL STILL BE WAITING

LIVE IN THE NOW
WITH ALL ITS PROBLEMS
AND ITS AGONIES
WITH ITS JOY
AND ITS PAIN

CELEBRATE YOUR PAIN
YOUR DESPAIR
YOUR ANGER
LOOK CLOSER
BREATHE DEEPER
STAND TALLER
STOP GRIEVING THE PAST

THERE IS JOY AND BEAUTY
TODAY...



PRAYER CONCERNS : Tabitha Barbour, Jim
Bond, John and Barbara Cameron, Becky Clegg,
Barbara Darbee, Woody Giles,
Blanche Goodwin, Family of Gene and Ann
Crumpler, Fred and Bettye Greger, Walter and
Charlie Lackey, Irene Lowe, John Martin, Charles
McAdams, Elaine McBride, Doug McCrary, Dottie Piontek,
Paul Skinner, Bob and Gracie Walker, Katie Lee Whitman,
Camille Yorkey, Service men and women serving our coun-
try. For Prayer Concern Request, please complete the
Prayer Request Card in the Pew Book Racks or contact the
church office 787-0789. Drop the Prayer Request Cards
in the Offering Plate during the Worship Service or leave in
the church office.

PRESENCE...

Worship Attendance:
October 25-249
November 6-295
November 15-311
November 22-Will be posted in the January Issue
November 29-Will be posted in the January Issue

Sunday School Attendance:

October 25-143
November 6-181
November 15-177
November 22-Will be posted in the January Issue
November 29-Will be posted in the January Issue



Sympathy is extended to...
...Gene and Ann Crumpler for the death of Gene's
son, Eugene "Terry" Crumpler, III who passed away
November 9, 2009.

BEACON DISTRIBUTION CHANGES
Beginning January the Beacon will be sent by
the following methods

1. Posted to the church's website.
2. For members without computer access, the Beacon will be "snail" mailed to you.
3. Paper copies will be provided monthly in the church narthex and on the rack outside of the church office by the door.

These changes are being made to conserve postage
and time. Changes in Bulk Mailing have made mail-
ing the Beacon more time consuming for the office
and volunteers. Anyone not able to receive the
Beacon by one of the above methods listed please
contact the church office 787-0789.

CELEBRATE OUR FAITH, STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH,
SHARE OUR FAITH



ADVENT

Advent is the beginning of the Church Year. It begins on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day, which is the Sunday nearest November 30, and ends on Christmas Eve (Dec. 24). The word Advent comes from the Latin word *adventus* which means "coming" or "arrival." During Advent, we wait, prepare, and celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and anticipate His return in final victory.

Historically, the primary sanctuary color of Advent is **Purple**. This is the color of penitence and fasting as well as the color of royalty to welcome the Advent of the King. Purple is still used in Catholic churches. The purple of Advent is also the color of suffering used during Lent and Holy Week. The nativity, the Incarnation, cannot be separated from the crucifixion. The purpose of Jesus' coming into the world, of the "Word made flesh" but dwelling among us is to reveal God and His grace to the world through Jesus' life and teaching, and also through his suffering, death, and resurrection. To reflect this emphasis, originally Advent was a time of penitence and fasting, much as the Season of Lent and so shared the color of Lent.

In recent times, however, Advent has undergone a shift in emphasis, reflected in a change of colors used in many churches. Except in the Eastern churches, the penitential aspect of the Season has been almost totally replaced by an emphasis on hope and anticipation. Most Protestant churches now use blue to distinguish the Season of Advent from **Lent**. **Royal Blue** is sometimes used as a symbol of royalty. Some churches use **Bright Blue** to symbolize the night sky, the anticipation of the impending announcement of the King's coming, or to symbolize the waters of Genesis 1, the beginning of a new creation. Some churches, including some Catholic churches, use blue violet to preserve the traditional use of purple while providing a visual distinction between the purple violet of Lent. Red and Green are more secular colors of Christmas. Although they derive from older European practices of using evergreens and holly to symbolize ongoing life and hope that Christ's birth brings into a cold world, they are never used as liturgical colors during Advent since they have other uses in other parts of the church year.

The Advent wreath itself is a circle of evergreen branches that symbolize life without end. Four candles on the outer rim encircle a central Christ candle. These candles signify God's Son as the light of the world. The Advent Wreath is a widely used symbol of Advent waiting. Waiting in the dark for the day when Christ was born. The lighting of each candle is an act of faith, believing that Christ, the Light of the World, has come and will come again.



Benson Book Club

The Benson Book Club has selected 4 books to read in 2010. This book club is very informal. Any one is welcome at any time, and no long-term commitment is necessary. Read and discuss only the books that have interest for you. This club is open to anyone interested in reading and discussing good books. Please join us for lively discussions. For more information, please contact Carol Gosselin [881-0504](tel:881-0504) or email j.c.gosselin@bellsouth.net.

Monday, January 4, 2010, 7PM – *The Glassblower of Murano* by Marina Fiorato

Venice, 1681. Glassblowing is the lifeblood of the Republic, and Venetian mirrors are more precious than gold. Jealously guarded by the murderous Council of Ten, the glassblowers of Murano are virtually imprisoned on their island in the lagoon. But the greatest of the artists, Corradino Manin, sells his methods and his soul to Louis XIV of France to protect his secret daughter. In the present day, his descendant, Leonora Manin, leaves London for a new life as a glassblower in Venice – only to find her fate inextricably linked with her ancestor's dangerous secrets.

Monday, April 5, 2010, 7PM – *Still Alice* by Lisa Genova

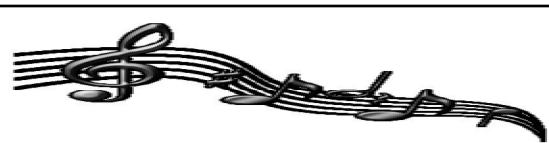
Still Alice is a compelling debut novel about a 50-year old woman's sudden descent into early onset Alzheimer's disease. Alice Howland, happily married with three grown children and a house on the Cape, is a celebrated Harvard professor at the height of her career when she notices a forgetfulness creeping into her life. As confusion starts to cloud her thinking and her memory begins to fail her, she receives a devastating diagnosis: early onset Alzheimer's disease. Fiercely independent, Alice struggles to maintain her lifestyle and live in the moment, even as her sense of self is being stripped away. In turns heartbreaking, inspiring, and terrifying, *Still Alice* captures in remarkable detail what it is like to literally lose your mind.

Monday, July 12, 2010, 7PM – *Change of Heart* by Jodi Picoult

The acclaimed #1 "New York Times"-bestselling author presents a spellbinding tale of a mother's tragic loss and one man's last chance at gaining salvation. Once again, Picoult mesmerizes and enthralls readers with this story of redemption, justice, and love.

Monday, October 4, 2010, 7PM – *Home* by Marianne Robinson

A brilliantly imagined retelling of the prodigal son parable, set in the Iowa town of Gilead, The Rev. Boughton's hell-raising son Jack has come home after twenty years away. Now an alcoholic carrying two decades worth of secrets, he is perpetually at odds with his traditionalist father, though he remains his most beloved child. *Home* is a luminous and healing book about families, family secrets, and faith.



MUSIC NOTES

Sunday, December 6, 8:45 a.m.
Children's Christmas Program



The Carol Choir will also present several songs during the 11:00 a.m. Service Sunday, December 6



Sunday, December 13—Journey to Bethlehem, 7:00 p.m. at the home of David and Ginger Friedlein—directions will be announced in future bulletins.

Sunday, December 20, 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
Chancel Choir Cantata—"The Holy Light" by Claude Bass

The Chancel Choir is pleased to welcome Erwin Tate back to the group. The choir is also looking forward to having Rev. Jon Strother join with us in singing the Cantata on December 20.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

METHODIST HOME FOR CHILDREN – ANGEL TREE – The Methodist Home for Children is serving more children than ever before and needs our help to ensure that they have a Christmas full of love and happiness. What a wonderful way for us to celebrate this season! There is a Christmas tree decorated with Angels in the main entrance of the Fellowship Hall. Each Angel represents a child or a foster family, complete with details about sizes and "Christmas wishes." Select the Angel you want to help, write your name and phone number in the appropriate place on the list beside the tree and return the unwrapped item(s) in a bag with the Angel attached by Sunday, December 6th. This is a great project for families, Sunday School classes or other small groups to undertake. If you have questions, please contact Billie Carson at 314-2840 during the day or 896-6114 during the evening; email billie@ucs-edu.net

SIGN UP FOR WONDERFUL WEDNESDAY NIGHT DINNER – Anyone wishing to attend Wonderful Wednesday Night Dinner, 5:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall, is asked to bring a vegetable or dessert, and \$2.00 per person to cover the cost of the meat. Please complete the "yellow" Sign-Up forms in the pews, and put in the offering plate or the church office.

ANNOUNCEMENTS CONTINUED...

LAY LEADER WITNESS Periodically a Lay Witness from our congregation shares during the Sunday worship services a part of their life when God answered prayers. Our Lay Witness persons have a faith message that shows us how God is working in our lives. Are you willing to share a faith story with us? Contact Jimmy Ennis 787-5626.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD – It is time to get gift-filled shoe boxes ready! This is a ministry of Samaritan's Purse, and brings joy and hope to children in desperate situations around the world through shoe boxes filled with small toys and other small items. No Time To Shop?.....You can donate online at www.samaritanspurse.org Just click on EZ GIVE. Complete information is available in the narthex. For more information see Gayle Jordan or call 523-3167.

RECYCLE AT BENSON – There are dark green recycling containers located throughout the campus. Please take responsibility for emptying these containers into the large dark green bin located behind the Fellowship Hall near the dumpster. Items placed in this bin are collected weekly on Mondays. Recyclable items include newspapers, catalogs, white paper, plastic bottles, corrugated cardboard (only 3 x 3ft.), paper tubes, steel food cans, aluminum beverage cans, aluminum foil and trays free of food, glass food and beverage containers, and drink boxes. Thank you for assisting with saving our environment and keeping our campus beautiful. Trustees

FACILITY NEEDS – Please list facility needs on the clipboard located on the office entrance information rack. Thank you for assisting. Trustees

JAMAICA UPDATE - Chuck Moore, Gayle Jordan, Celeste Whitt, and Ed Priestal returned from a very successful mission trip to Jamaica. The Good News: Benson Memorial is working alongside the Lethe All Ages School to feed some of the children who would otherwise go hungry. The challenge ahead: many more children at the school are still in need. In the coming weeks, the team will share their experiences, and discuss a vision of how to help during the coming year. Thank you for your continued prayerful support of this mission!

NO CIRCLE MEETINGS OR UMW MEETINGS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

"Train up a child in the way he/she should go. When he or she is old, he or she will not turn from it."



"Why Jesus is Better than Santa Claus"

This past week, I came across a great article written by an anonymous person comparing Jesus and Santa Claus. Here is what it said.

"Santa lives at the North Pole

Jesus is everywhere.

Santa comes once a year...

Jesus is an ever present help.

Santa fills your stockings with goodies...

Jesus supplies all your needs.

You have to wait in line to see Santa...

Jesus is as close as the mention of His name.

Santa has a belly like a bowl full of jelly...

Jesus has a heart full of love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

Santa's little helpers make toys...

Jesus makes a new life, mends wounded hearts, and builds mansions.

While Santa puts gifts under your tree...

Jesus became our gift and died on a tree, for you and for me."

What a powerful article! This month, let's remember who Christmas is really about, Jesus Christ. My hope and prayer for you this season is that you will draw closer to the Savior and to one another! Merry Christmas from my family to yours!!! Kristina

Nursery Ministry Sign-up Sheets for December are posted outside the Nursery door and on the Children's Ministry bulletin board located in the Administrative Building. We need 1-2 volunteers each week to assist our paid contractors in the nursery during the 11:00 a.m. worship service. Sign-up directly or send an email to kveatts@bm-umc.org with the dates you are available to serve. For more information, please contact Kristina Yeatts 787-0789, Ext. 304. Thanks for serving our youngest disciples!

Christmas Caroling Sunday, December 13, 5:00-7:00 p.m. — All Children age 3-grade 5 and their families are invited to meet at the church, go caroling, then meet in the Fellowship Hall for cocoa and cookies.



Nursery Ministry Volunteer Schedule (11:00 a.m. service)

* Please remember to switch with another volunteer if you are not available to help on your assigned day.

Date	Volunteer	Volunteer
December 6	Jessica Kuse 368-8154	Sandra McLaughlin 567-3438
December 13	Cathy Poland 781-3076	Andrea Porter
December 20th	Debby Wojnarowski 787-2462	Joni Amerson 420-0963
December 27th	Joni Amerson	TBD

Children's Church –Children Church is a special program for children Ages 4 through Grade 2 that meets in Room 113 during the 11:00 a.m. Worship Service after "Time with Children". Parents who want their children to go to Children's church must do the following:

- 1) Sign-in their child at the designated table in Narthex, outside the sanctuary, by the bathroom.
 - 2) Take their child's numbered nametag and attach it to his/her clothing. If their child is visiting for the first time or does not have a name tag, please fill out a blank nametag.
 - 3) Have a seat in the sanctuary for the beginning of the worship service.
 - 4) Send their child up to the front of the sanctuary for the "Time with Children".
 - 5) After the "Time with Children," your children will leave worship and be escorted to the Gathering Room, located in Room 113.
- In order to protect the safety of our children, we require that 1) All children be picked up by a parent or adult guardian. 2) Sign out your child with the Children's church leader. 3) Take off your child's numbered nametag and return it to the teacher. 4) Before leaving, please check the Children's Church schedule posted outside the nursery to sign up to take a turn assisting this quarter or to remember when you have already signed up to serve. One volunteer is needed each Sunday to work with the Children's Church program.

In December, Children's Church will be offered right after the "Time with Children" moment at the 11:00 a.m. worship service on Sunday, December 6, 13, 20 and 27. The leader, Erin Swinson, will be assisted in December by: Peggy Reynolds (6), Sandra McLaughlin (13), Jodi Darrohn (20), and **TBD** (27). For more information or to volunteer, contact Rev. Kristina Yeatts at Ext. 304 or email kyeatts@bm-umc.org. Thanks for serving our youngest disciples!



December Birthdays

16th – Ashley Dugan

Special Events/Activities for the Children

Children's Christmas Music

On Sunday, December 6, the 8:45 a.m. worship service, Our children will be presenting a dramatic Advent presentation entitled, "Our Savior is Coming," and singing a variety of songs that they have worked on all Fall. Plan now to come and support the children of our church!

Birthday Party for Jesus

Sunday, December 20—All Children, Age 3 through Grade 5, are invited to attend a Birthday Party for Jesus on Sunday, December 20th from 5:00 to 6:15 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will read the Christmas story, sing songs, play games, make a craft, and have lots of FUN! All who attend are asked to bring one unwrapped toy for a boy or girl. The toy will be donated to the Raleigh Toys for Tots program, which provides toys to children in need in our area.

Children's Christmas Eve Communion Service

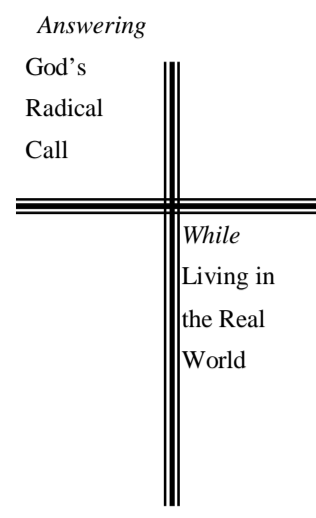
On Thursday, December 24, 4:00 p.m., our church will have a Children's Christmas Eve Communion Service in the sanctuary of our church. All who attend are asked to bring one new or gently used winter coat for a boy, girl, teen, infant or adult. These coats will be donated to the Coats for the Children program which provides coats to Salvation Army families in need. Any size coat will be accepted; however, larger sizes for teens and adults and infant sizes are in particular demand.

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**BEACON DEAD-
LINE**

The Newsletter Deadline for the **JANUARY** Issue is **DECEMBER 15**.

Mary Honeycutt, Editor
919-787-0789
mhoneycutt@bm-umc.org

Our Financial Giving

	MONTH	YEAR-TO-DATE
	<u>October</u>	<u>Jan-Oct.</u>
Budget Needs	\$65,774.23	\$657,742.30
Actual Receipts	\$60,204.17	\$602,509.20
Actual Expenses	\$57,805.94	\$576,941.27

NOTE: Reverend Skip Williams day off is Friday and Ed Priestaf, Associate Pastor is off on Monday. The church office closes at 1:00 p.m. on Fridays.