Inside this issue:

Christmas  2
Mission 2013  5
Farmers Market  6
CDC  12
Bible Studies  15
Lifetree Café  16
Calendar  19

Christmas Cantata: A Celebration of Carols
Chris Klaus

On Sunday, December 16 at the 11:05 service, the Chancel Choir is pleased to present to the congregation “A Celebration of Carols” by Joseph Martin.

Based on the traditional "Lessons and Carols" service to overflowing with beloved carols and original seasonal songs, this cantata tells the story of Christ's birth adorned with beautiful arrangements and meaningful Scriptures. The work will include moments for congregational singing and prayer. Titles include: A Christmas Overture; O Come, All Ye Faithful; A Prayer for Advent; People of Promise, Arise!; Song of Hope and Joy; O Little Town of Bethlehem; My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord; Lullabies of Bethlehem; Angels We Have Heard on High; Carols for Seekers; Let Christmas Begin; and A Christmas Trilogy. There will be accompaniment by a small chamber ensemble consisting of Piano, Strings, Winds, Brass, Percussion and Harp. Included in the ensemble will be Associate Concert Master of the Huntsville Symphony, Jeff Dortch. You will be filled with the Holy Spirit and energized for the coming of the Christ Child on this wonderful Sunday morning of music and song! Please mark your calendars and plan to attend!

Click here for the opening song of this year’s Cantata.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVHm51JknXU

From your Church Staff
This is the theme for our Advent and Christmas observance at Latham.

What is “Christmas Is Not Your Birthday?” It is a:

**Sermon series**—weekly messages from the first Sunday of Advent to Epiphany Sunday address steps along our journey toward Jesus’ birthday.

**Christmas Miracle Offering**—each week, we will issue the bold call for members of the congregation to reassess their spending this Christmas and bring a generous offering for a particular mission: Our Mission will include the Morris Elementary Backpack program and summer feeding program at the Boys and Girls Club AND the Chacraseca, Nicaragua School Lunch Program.

**Small group study**—Sunday school classes or small groups are invited to read and discuss *Christmas is Not Your Birthday: Experience the Joy of Living and Giving like Jesus*. Each chapter includes discussion questions and corresponds to the weekly sermon theme so groups can dig deeper and share their personal experiences.

**Week 1—December 2, Christmas is Not Your Birthday**
Christmas has become a consumer-centered buying binge fueled by materialism and self-indulgence. We need to refocus on Jesus, his purpose in coming, and the birthday gifts he truly desires.

**Scripture:** 1 Cor. 1:3-9. “Do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.”

**Week 2—December 9, Expect a Miracle**
Who gets top billing in our Christmas celebrations? Santa Claus or Jesus? Too often, the two morph together into a magical Santa Claus deity that comes just to grant our wishes. We tend to confuse magic and miracle, craving a magical, holly-jolly holiday rather than an experience of the miracle that God came to earth in such a humble form.

**Scripture:** Isaiah 9:2-7. “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness--on them light has shined.”

**Week 3—December 16, CANTATA WEEK**
**Giving Up On Perfect-SERIES SERMON IN MORNING WATCH AND SPIRITLINK**
This week’s sermon examines our unrealistic expectations for the “perfect” Christmas. How much money, time, and energy go into chasing this unattainable ideal set for us by Norman Rockwell? The first Christmas was pretty messy, and life today is pretty messy—but God shows up in the middle of the mess to bring us a message of hope.

**Scripture:** Luke 1:26-38. “You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus’. . . Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I am a virgin?’”

**Week 4—December 23, Scandalous Love**
We often fail to understand just how scandalous God’s love for us is, and how radical it is that God would show that love by lowering himself to be born in human form. Using the story of Hosea, this week’s sermon
The UMW invites the congregation to come and enjoy a presentation of Christmas and Sacred musical selections by the Omicron Delta Colony of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia Fraternity of America, Inc. This Colony is a group of 15+ male students at Alabama A&M who are avid musicians, participating in the Marching Band and the University Choir. Their academic pursuits range from music education to biology. One of the main principles of Phi Mu Alpha is to protect the legacy of music for generations to come. In fulfilling this, the Chapter is raising funds to support the university music program and provide scholarships for music majors. The concert is **Thursday, December 6th, at 7 PM** in the Sanctuary. We are excited to have this group come to Latham, since we had to cancel their scheduled appearance back in May 2011 after the devastating tornadoes across North Alabama. At the conclusion of the Colony’s presentation, the UMW will install its officers for 2013. Refreshments will be served at the end of our program.

---

**Christmas Is Not Your Birthday!**

*Continued from page 2*

emphasizes how doggedly God pursues us, in spite of our unfaithfulness.

**Scripture:** Hosea 3:1-5. *Then the Lord said to me, “Go and love your wife again, even though she commits adultery with another lover.”*

**Christmas Eve, December 24, Jesus’ Wish List**

We put so much time and energy into finding the perfect gifts for our loved ones—but what about the things the real Birthday Boy wants from us? Jesus made it clear that we give to him by giving to others—feeding the poor, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned.

**Scripture:** Matt. 25:31-46. *‘The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’’*

**Week 5-December 30, Those Who Receive Him**

We were recipients of numerous gifts this Christmas, gifts given by generous family and friends to express their care and love—but what about the gift God sent to you? Have you received him by trusting in His name and acting on the power he gives you to become His child, to be made over into the image of Christ?

**Scripture:** John 1:1-12. *“To all who received him, who believed upon his name, he gave power to become the children of God.”*

**Week 6-January 6, 2012, By a Different Road**

On Epiphany, we celebrate the magi’s visit to see Jesus, and note how they were transformed by their experience of the Christ child. As we start a new year, let’s resolve to make things different, to live a life transformed by Jesus.

**Scripture:** Matt. 2:2-12. *“And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another road.”*
On Sunday, November 18, area churches from the South Huntsville Community gathered to give thanks and worship together in word and in song at Weatherly Heights Baptist Church. Latham’s Chancel Choir, Wesley Singers and Children’s Choirs combined, opened the worship service with “Thanks Be to God” by Marty Haugen. Other area choirs that participated were: Hope Presbyterian Church Choir, and Weatherly Heights Chancel Choir and Adult Handbell Ensemble. It was truly an intergenerational music and worship experience! Pastors from All Saints Lutheran, Hope Presbyterian, Weatherly Heights Baptist, St. Stephen’s Episcopal, The Center for Loss, Grief and Change all led scriptural readings as well as Rabbi Elizabeth Bahar from Temple B’nai Shalom. The Message was given by Dr. Rick Owen of Trinity UMC and Dr. Renee Mobley, Chaplin of Crestwood Hospital. All brought words of thanks, love, peace, and kindness. The Community Thanksgiving Service is a wonderful expression of how God’s love can shape us together in the image of Him. During this season of Thanksgiving and Advent, let us truly come together and be in prayer for each other, for our congregations, and our community as we all seek to be outward and visible signs of God’s love.
This week we wrapped up the Operation Christmas Child shoebox campaign. What a joy to have been a part of that truly inspiring mission to bring joy, meet needs, and share Christ with “the least of these!” My girls and I have been blessed to be a part of this ministry for several years. I love that I am a part of a church that serves as a drop-off point for the region.

Yet, all is not well in my soul today. I wonder why, in a church our size and with so many who “suffer” from comfortable livings, we are such underachievers in our benevolence to such a worthy cause. Other churches gave more and thereby shared more of the love of Christ than we were able to accomplish. Does that mean we have less love for others than they do? No, of course not. But, might it mean that we have lost our passion and zeal for serving? Maybe so.

Maybe we need to hear more about our missions more often so we can focus on living out our faith through our actions. You know, the Bible tells us that “faith without works is dead.” I don’t know about you, but that makes me very upset to think that someone sees my faith as dead. I am compelled to action.

So, beginning in January’s edition of the Branch, you will see an Operation Christmas Child needs list. In January, for example, the list will have several suggested toys for the boxes we will fill in November. Toys are good buys for January because many of the stores will put them on clearance after the Christmas rush is over. When you go out and shop, you can pick up a few that you find on sale and bring them to the collection bins at the church. While you are at it, pick up a few items for the food pantry that we collect every month on the second Sunday. And then in the fall, we will allow small groups and Sunday school classes to host packing parties for the OCC boxes where they can partner with the children or youth to have an intergenerational impact on the world around us, helping others to connect to God while we connect to one another.

And while we are talking about next year, how about a trip down south? Nicaragua is the destination for our summer mission project this year as we continue our partnership with the people there. Set some vacation time aside or if you can’t go, begin to pray and offer support financially as the needs become known.

And as you read this article, be thankful for the ability to read. Many students struggle to learn this most basic and yet foundational skill at Morris elementary. But thanks to the efforts of our church (headed by Doug Seay) and maybe even you in 2013, we are helping to increase their confidence and skill level through Panda’s Progress. Through these efforts, young people will gain the skill set necessary to escape their social environment and have a real chance at a strong future. What a gift to give?!

While this isn’t a full list of what we will do this coming year as missionaries for Christ, it is a good place to start you thinking of how you will be involved in putting your faith to work for God. Maybe you can even stop by and enjoy something from our farmer’s market this spring and allow the wholesome goodness of locally grown food to stimulate your intellect as you search for how best to offer yourself to God. We’ll see you on the mission field!
Latham United Methodist Church has an undeniably strong agricultural heritage. When the church moved to Weatherly Road in 1961, large fields and pastures outnumbered houses and commercial buildings. A new residential development was underway immediately north and east of the church, but to the south was open farmland and forest for five miles to the Tennessee River. To the west was the Hayes’ family farm, still partially in operation today, although much of it has been lost to residential and commercial development. Beyond the Hayes’ farm to the west is the 5,030-acre Redstone Arsenal. Soldiers, civilian employees, and contractors supporting the Army and NASA account for much of the growth that changed Huntsville from a town of 13,000 in 1940 to a city of 182,956 and a metro area of 425,480 in 2011. Today, residential and commercial developments fill most of the five miles between Latham Church and the Tennessee River and extend east over a mountain range and valley fifteen miles to Gurley, Alabama. Latham is located in the middle of the southern portion of the city of Huntsville.

On the surface, there is little evidence of an agricultural heritage at Latham today. A hidden clue to this heritage is the shape of Latham’s sanctuary. One of the members who joined the church in the 1970s alerted me to the architecture of the main sanctuary’s interior. It is shaped like the picnic basket he said his mother used to pack meals when the family traveled in the 1950s. In addition, the chancel window and the side windows contain shapes of the loaves and fishes that a little boy brought and Jesus blessed to feed a multitude. The church built this sanctuary in 1970. It is more than a coincidence that the architect accurately reflected the church’s commitment to sharing food with the hungry and building community through fellowship around food. After all, the church had formed in its original building, a fellowship hall where the congregation ate and worshipped together. That original identity and commitment of the church has remained strong at Latham. Today members use the sanctuary monthly as the platform for packing food to place in children’s backpacks at Morris Elementary on Fridays for weekend nutrition.

The church’s architecture and commitment to feeding did not go unnoticed by advertising consultant Allen Tomlinson who visited Latham in 2012 as part of a communications makeover of the church. His company designed our logo, developed a new website, and guided us in recreating our newsletter. He concluded from conversations with staff and laity that our identity and message are all about feeding people physically and spiritually. It took me seven years as a pastor at Latham to discover them, but there are more backyard gardeners here than I ever imagined. Growing food has been a hobby and diversion from their day jobs and community activities. Except among a few friends with whom they...
pairing experienced gardeners with anyone who wanted to learn to garden and share gardening ideas. He agreed to participate and started naming others in the church who garden. I invited them and made announcements in the church that we were occasionally shared vegetables, their love of the land was a well-kept secret. As I have talked more about my interest in and love for the land, gardeners and small farmers have surfaced. Many of them have participated in a “Grow Your Own Food Network” that I organized in the spring of 2012 to connect experienced gardeners with novice gardeners. Some of them are the core group working to establish a South Huntsville Farmers’ Market at Latham that we plan to launch in early spring 2013. The Grow Your Own Food Network began when I called a long time Latham member Cal Blevins in May of 2012 with the idea of meeting. Twenty-one attended during the next ten weeks to ask questions, share information, and give advice to first year gardeners about site selection, soil preparation, plant varieties, composting, mulching, caring for plants, combating insects and plant disease, and knowing when to harvest. Participants included Cal Blevins, Tom Yates, Jim and Mary Jane Williams, Al and June Kidd, Carolyn Peters, Faye Cook, Liz Hall Zeman, Susan Terry, William McRea, Candy Trowbridge, Betty Kilpatrick, Ben and Ginny Bentley, Cheryl and Cathy Cray, Charlie Warren, Diana Underwood, Carolyn Sorrell, and Michael Sorrell.

Lee McBride, a former landscape business owner, founded Foodscapes, Inc. through which he teaches and assists area residents with gardening. He also works for the Food Bank of North Alabama as the Local Food Coordinator. I knew Lee from CASA Gardens and attended a workshop he led at the Botanical Gardens in the late spring. He asked me then about the possibility of organizing a farmers’ market in south Huntsville. Soon after that, I talked with Marilyn Evans who led in establishing the very successful Greene Street Farmers’ Market at the Episcopal Church of the Nativity in downtown Huntsville in 2010. Marilyn shared
will make the Farmers’ Market a reality at Latham. When I presented the idea to the Latham Board of Trustees, trustees wanted to know what liability the church assumed. Our business manager Anita Banks checked with our insurance provider and underwriter who certified that our present insurance covers our liability as long as the farmer/vendors carry vendor’s insurance. Since our church is located in a area zoned residential, Anita and I have worked with the Huntsville City Zoning Board to request a variance that would allow us to host a Farmers’ Market here. The application process is underway and Latham is number one on the December 18 docket of the Zoning Board (6:30 p.m. Council Chambers). All landowners whose property lies within 500 feet of ours will be notified of our intention and invited to the Zoning hearing. Marilyn Evans of the Greene Street Market has provided us with the by-laws that her church established for their market. We will use these as a model for developing our own guidelines. One of Latham’s members will meet with Marilyn in early December to learn more about what is required to champion and manage the Farmers’ Market. We will then enlist and assemble a group of church members to form a Farmers’ Market support team. In the meantime, Lee McBride is working with area farmers and growers to enlist farmers who will sell at the farmers’ market. The farmers will select the best afternoon/evening for the market and we will advertise it in the church, community, and region. We have requested $5000 from our church budget to promote the Farmer’s Market. After that, it is up to you and me to support our farmers’ market by purchasing, preparing, and eating the food grown and sold by our famers.

If you are would like to serve on the Farmers’ Market support team to help make this dream a reality, call me at 256-417-5930 or send me an email at hughey@lathamumc.org. You can keep up with developments to establish a farmers’ market through my blog at www.downtoearthcrier.com.

details about the steps she and church leaders took to establish the farmers’ market and to build relationships and trust with area farmers. Within days of talking with Marilyn, I learned that Lee and Shannon McBride had bought a house around the corner from Latham Church. I saw his move to the church neighborhood as further impetus God had created to help us to form the South Huntsville Farmers’ Market at Latham.

Here are the steps that
Word Search

Christmas Services Schedule


Dec. 1st: Children to participate in the WAAY All Volunteer Christmas Parade at Noon

Dec. 2nd: Hanging of the Greens 5pm in sanctuary Followed by Soup & Sandwich Supper,

Dec. 7th: Youth Angel Tree Babysitting 6:30-9:30pm

Dec. 8th: Youth Angel Tree & Dirty Santa Shopping 9:30-11:30am

Dec. 8th: Cookie Bake 10am to 12:30 pm

Dec. 9th: Youth Dirty Santa Christmas Party & Bonfire @ Ditto Landing 5-7:00pm

Dec. 14th: Girls Night In: lock-in for elementary-age girls from 6pm to 8am

Dec. 16th: Cantata “A Celebration of Carols” by Joseph Martin, Chancel Choir & members of Huntsville Symphony 11:05am

Dec. 16th: Children’s Cantata 5pm in sanctuary followed by a “Happy Birthday Jesus” Party with L.A.M.B.S. to perform. Bring a canned good for the food bank & a snack to share. Cake and drinks provided

Dec. 23rd: Christmas Caroling 5pm

Dec. 24th: Christmas Eve Communion Candle light service 5pm and 9pm in sanctuary
Hello, and welcome to Latham’s youth ministry update! Our first month here has been incredibly busy, but exciting… We started in the middle of the “Pumpkin Patch,” followed in the same week by the “Craft Bazaar”—both of which turned out to be tremendous successes. Thank you to everyone who contributed to make those endeavors possible. The money raised from the “Pumpkin Patch” will go a very long way toward the youth’s missions projects and trips in the next year.

And in case you haven’t been up to the second floor – we’ve been “redoing” the youth wing. We had a lot of fun Friday night, November 16th building, painting, cleaning, etc. and had a wonderful turnout of more than 30 people total – including 23 youth! It is a work in progress; but it’s a vast improvement, as now the utilization of the dedicated youth space is very deliberate. The kitchen is, well, just that – a kitchen; but we’ve painted the cabinets and trim, built additional shelving to better utilize space, cleaned up A LOT, and even put in a chalkboard wall. One side of the divided wall is now dedicated as the “Fellowship Room.” We have arranged the same great couches in a way that better facilitates interaction, moved the pool table over and covered it with a nice removable cover to make it “multi-purpose,” pulled the TV down off the wall and replaced it over in the corner where the sound board used to be, built an “island” on casters to use for meals, and textured the wall (which looks really good.) The other side of the divided wall is now dedicated as the “Worship Room.” We built a stage/platform, put in curtains behind it with unique stage lighting in front, painted it a very pleasant neutral “tan,” built a sound booth in one corner and with cabinets under the screen, took out the drop ceiling (but left the grid and fluorescent lights) and added “Christmas Style” lighting in addition to unique custom built “lamps.” We’re adding an indoor waterfull and alter area as well.

The thought process behind the design and execution was really quite simple: we wanted to give our youth the opportunity to take that space and really make it theirs. Their input was solicited for every change. We also wanted that space to reflect our church’s vision to connect generations to grow relationships with God, others, and creation. Moving forward, we plan on utilizing the kitchen to better connect with other generations. The dedicated fellowship room was designed to better connect with each other, and the dedicated worship room was designed to better connect with God.

This is an exciting time in Latham’s youth ministry. Even though you can’t necessarily measure everything “by the numbers,” we’ve consistently had 20-25 youth attend on Sunday nights and we’re growing with numerous new faces. Monday morning Prayer Breakfast is seeing significant turnout at 7AM – and there is an air of excitement in this place. Come and join us. We’re having a lot of fun in the Lord!
Girls Night Out, December 12th
Sarah Smyth

Hi ladies! We decided at the last Girls Night Out that the one for December should be at Tortora’s in Hampton Cove. We will meet at Tortora’s located in Hampton Cove at 182 Old Highway 431, Wednesday, December 12th at 6:30PM. And with the holiday spirit in mind, bring a $5.00 gift for a fun game of Dirty Santa plus a blanket, warm hat, gloves, or jacket that we can donate to ‘Blankets From Warm Hearts’ which is the annual collection drive sponsored by the North Alabama Coalition for the Homeless.

If you have any questions, please contact Sarah Smyth at 731-446-4194 or sarahsmyth1020@gmail.com.

This is a time for fun, food, fellowship, and fuel for your soul! Take one night this month just for you, your girlfriends, and God.

See you there!
Pumpkin Patch Update
Susan Terry

WOW!! Where did November go?? Last I remember, I was sitting in a pumpkin patch watching the last of the pumpkins ride off in the back of a pick-up truck headed to the Botanical Garden to become compost. Thankfully, there weren’t many left to send. We sold over $15,000 worth of pumpkins this year, making The Patch a HUGE success! This gave the youth and children’s departments over $3,000.00 each.

We saw several of our “regular” customers come back again and made many new friends in our community this year. I even met an author who stayed and talked with me at length about her book and why she wrote it, and then reached in her car, took one out and autographed it for me. It’s a really good book too! We had two neighborhood friends that came and helped us regularly and brightened my day with their enthusiasm to sell pumpkins. They felt like they had a “job,” and it made them very happy.

The youth and children’s departments sincerely want to thank those who volunteered to sit at The Patch. There weren’t many wet days this year, but there were some pretty cold ones. We know it was time taken out of your schedule that you could have been doing something else, but your help was really appreciated!!

Hope for the Holidays
Rev. Carl Malm

“Going through Grief: A Guide to Understanding, Surviving and Supporting the Grief Process” will be presented by Rev. Carl Malm of the Center for Loss, Grief and Change

Mondays, December 3rd & 10th 6:00-7:30 PM. The program will be in the Welcome Center. A light supper will be served. Preregistration is requested but not required (256-883-6539 or 256-881-4069). There is no charge for this program but donations are welcome.

December 3rd—The Bridge: Surviving Grief
December 10th—Winter without Spring: The Problem of Complicated Grief
Child Development Center
Traci Harris

There is never a dull moment with 59 beautiful children in the Child Development Center! Each is growing and developing. Each is learning something new each day about the world in which they live. What a joy it is to see life through a child's eye!

We had a fabulous Fall. The pumpkin patch was enjoyed by all the children, even the babies as they took a daily stroll in the buggy. The older children explored, compared, and counted the many cool pumpkins and gourds. Halloween festivities included a costume parade followed by the Fall Festival of games. The fun continued at our Annual Thanksgiving Feast. The food was yummy and we had the cutest Pilgrims, Indians, and Turkeys around!

With December upon us, North Alabama Food Bank received 122 pounds of non-perishable food items from our collection. Did you know 50 pounds of food feeds a family of 4 for 4 days? So much to be grateful for! Happiness is spread when we share our love with others.

Elderberries December Activities

Elderberries planned activities for December are a trip to the Botanical Gardens to tour the Galaxy of Lights December 11 and the regular monthly meeting December 20 when we will be entertained by the Wesley Singers with a program of Christmas music directed by the talented Chris Klaus. Visitors are welcomed, whether or not they are members of Latham and/or the Elderberries. For further information or to make reservations, contact Shirley Hayes at 256-881-1873 for the Galaxy of Lights tour and Dot Coombe at 256-881-1608 to attend the regular meeting December 20. You will find a warm welcome at Elderberries activities, enjoy good food, fellowship and entertainment and maybe learn something new from our programs.

Child Development Center
Traci Harris

There is never a dull moment with 59 beautiful children in the Child Development Center! Each is growing and developing. Each is learning something new each day about the world in which they live. What a joy it is to see life through a child's eye!

We had a fabulous Fall. The pumpkin patch was enjoyed by all the children, even the babies as they took a daily stroll in the buggy. The older children explored, compared, and counted the many cool pumpkins and gourds. Halloween festivities included a costume parade followed by the Fall Festival of games. The fun continued at our Annual Thanksgiving Feast. The food was yummy and we had the cutest Pilgrims, Indians, and Turkeys around!

With December upon us, the children will be busy little elves as they celebrate Christmas. We always look forward to a visit from Santa and our classroom holiday parties but the best celebration we have is during our Christmas Chapel when we act out the nativity and celebrate Jesus' birthday! All of the children ages 2-4 years participate in various roles and sing holiday songs. It takes place on Wednesday, December 19th at 11:30AM in the Sanctuary. Our program is open to all who wish to feel the joy of the season.

In the theme of giving this holiday, LUMCDC will be sponsoring a Children's Pajama Drive again this year to benefit the Manna House of Huntsville. December 3-14 new pajamas ranging in size from 6 month-6 years can be hung on the garland in the Children's wing. Your generosity is another's blessing!

Happy Holidays!!
When Jesus’ ministry began, He was careful to call a group of men together that He could train to carry on His ministry. Their training helped them to be some of the very first folks who truly understood what it meant to follow Christ and serve others. Since then, millions have followed their example and embarked on their own journeys with Christ.

Here at Latham, we believe that a significant part of our task is to help create disciples that will change the world. But we can’t change the world with words, now can we? No. Jesus taught the disciples that we must reach out to the world around us. And so, as we develop disciples here, we will use the same model.

Beginning in January, all small groups, Bible studies, and Sunday school classes from youth and up will have two tasks demanded of them: 1) once a month or every six weeks, to participate in an outreach program of the church, which could be a project of their own choosing or one already underway, and 2) once a quarter or so, host an event of some sort for the church, such as a fellowship supper or other activity. More info on this will be presented to your group soon. This endeavor will help us ensure plenty of volunteers for all our functions as well as give you a place to develop your discipleship.

These events will also give us a chance to invite other classes or groups to help us and even open the partnership with youth and children that we need to make us intergenerational in all of our growth in Christ. We don’t have to look much further than Jane Smith and the Kata-luma class for a great example of this in action, just this month.

Get together with your class and think about which projects you want to make your own. If you wait too late, the “good” one will be taken. Talk to other groups about being partners and get moving. January will be here before you know it!

---

**Children’s Sunday Night Program**

A Dozen Called, Millions Created, You’re Next!

Scott Smyth, Associate Pastor
**Bible Study**

**Young Adult Bible Study**
Every Tuesday night, there is a young adult Bible study held at Bro. Scott and Sarah Smyth’s house. It starts at 6:30 and is BYOD (Bring Your Own Dinner.) Then at 7:00 the discussion begins. We are currently going through the Experiencing God study. This is open to all young adults in the church, married or single. The Smyths live behind Latham at 100 Strong Circle SE. Hope to see you there!

The Wednesday Evening Bible Study will begin a new study on January 9th in Room 10 at 7:00pm. The study will be *Nehemiah, A Heart That Can Break*, by Kelly Minter

---

**Financial Update as of November 25th**

**Operating Fund**
- Received to date: $685,688
- Needed to date: $699,950

**Capital Fund**
- Received to date: $219,916

---

**Beautification Committee Update**

*Liz Hall Zeman*

The first expenditure of the funds donated to the beautification committee was made to paint the cross at the Weatherly Road end of the business wing. It is beautiful due to the efforts of a member of the church, Jeremy Och, and his work crew.

Other improvements include:

1) The exterior doors to the sanctuary and the business wing were painted the green of our logo on The Branch. Our enthusiastic painters were Janet Watson, Windy Geisinger, Howard Trowbridge, Doug Seay, Jane Smith and Sam Zeman.

2) The big pines on the Weatherly Road side were trimmed to make our signs more visible, and the dogwood were trimmed a bit for a more pleasing appearance. Our tree trimmers were Jim Geisinger, Keith Welch, Don Lambert and Hughey Reynolds.

3) Bathrooms are being “spruced up” thanks to the efforts of Sharon Windom, Jenny Lowery and Shirley Fugit. Hope you will enjoy the pictures and plants as they continue to appear!

4) The ugly and non-functional water fountain in the business wing has been removed as has unnecessary furniture. (Future water fountain solution is still pending due to the cost.)

Coming Next: Placement of more attractive pictures in some areas; placement of donated furnishings in public areas to present a more appealing and inviting corner or area; consolidation and standardization of bulletin boards to create a more attractive, uniform way to present communication items and pressure-washing the courtyard.

We hope you will walk around the church to see these results, thank the volunteers and offer your suggestions for additional beautification projects.

Committee members are Windy Geisinger, Keith Welch, Jane Smith, Shirley Fugit and Liz Hall Zeman.
Join the conversation each Thursday Night at 6:30 PM. An hour long experience is packed with interesting stories, fascinating people, and lively conversation that will feed your soul.

What folks are saying:

"I am always challenged when I hear the message at Lifetree”

"Really enjoyed this topic. Host was great!”

"Very powerful message tonight, it’s one I needed to hear.”

"That was a very good, encouraging and important topic. Wish more folks could hear it.”

"Very good, difficult subject.”

"Timely topic. Generated a lot of thoughts.”

"Enjoyed the company of my tablemates. We shared some very meaningful stuff.”

Come and be a part of Lifetree Café!
Some of the participants in the Painting Party were Jim & Windy Geisinger, Janet Watson, Sam & Liz Hall Zeman, Howard Trowbridge, Keith Welch, Jane Smith and Don Lambert
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st</th>
<th>10th</th>
<th>19th</th>
<th>26th</th>
<th>31st</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Betty Booth</td>
<td>CJ Chua</td>
<td>Kathy Smith</td>
<td>Barbara Herrington</td>
<td>Carol Wells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doris Owen</td>
<td>Genette Stephens</td>
<td>John Rose</td>
<td>11th Clara Conley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elfriede Schlumph</td>
<td>Peggy Holmes</td>
<td>12th Zella Page Hope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charles Hester</td>
<td>Mike Wilkinson</td>
<td>13th Sara Carson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kyle McCarter</td>
<td></td>
<td>Philip Patterson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>Margaret Pearson</td>
<td>Etta Wills</td>
<td>14th Debbie Rose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shannon Briggs</td>
<td>James Brahm</td>
<td>15th Dawson Allen Angle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th</td>
<td>Linda Moore</td>
<td>Danny Braswell</td>
<td>16th Gippa Kendall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David Parson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Gerri Cogburn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Roy Lewis</td>
<td>Lena Gaines</td>
<td>17th Nan Favor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rose LaMerle Battle</td>
<td>Tom Parker</td>
<td>18th Helen Hagler</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ian Lee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th</td>
<td>Sue Reid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th</td>
<td>Tamami Seay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>Lynette Gough</td>
<td>June Young</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tyler Jackson Clark</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## December 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2   | 8:00 AM Life South Blood Drive  | 3:00 PM Just Faith | 3:00 PM L.A.M.B.S. Reha. | 4:00 PM Celebration Choir & Cherub Choir | 5:00 PM Hanging of the Greens Service/Potluck Dinner to follow | **1**  
6:00 PM Kairos Sunday School Class Party |
| 3   | 8:30 AM Bend & Stretch  | 9:30 AM Bible Study | 2:30 PM Morris Elementary Tutoring | 6:00 PM Hope for the Holidays | 6:00 PM Praise Band Rehearsal | **2**  
8:00 AM Bend & Stretch  |
| 4   | 10:00 AM Staff Meeting  | 2:30 PM Morris Elementary Tutoring | 6:00 PM Board of Stewards | **3**  
6:00 PM Jubilation Handbells  |
| 5   | 1:30 PM Wesley Singers  | 6:00 PM Jubilation Handbells | 7:00 PM Chancel Choir | **4**  
7:00 PM Wednesday Evening Bible Study  |
| 6   | 8:30 AM Bend & Stretch  | 2:30 PM Morris Elementary Tutoring | 6:00 PM Board of Stewards | **5**  
6:00 PM Hope for the Holidays | 7:00 PM Finance Com Mg. | **6**  
6:00 PM Praise Band Rehearsal  |
| 7   | 1:30 PM Wesley Singers  | 6:00 PM Jubilation Handbells | 7:00 PM Chancel Choir | **7**  
7:00 PM Wednesday Evening Bible Study  |
| 8   | 8:30 AM Bend & Stretch  | 10:00 AM Circle 3 Party | 2:30 PM Morris Elementary Tutoring | **8**  
6:00 PM Lifetree Cafe  |
| 9   | 8:30 AM Bend & Stretch  | 9:30 AM Bible Study | 10:30 AM Circle 2 Party | **9**  
2:00 PM Jo Walton Literary Group | 2:30 PM Morris Elementary Tutoring | **10**  
6:00 PM Hope for the Holidays | **11**  
6:00 PM Praise Band Rehearsal  |
| 10  | 10:00 AM Staff Meeting | 2:30 PM Morris Elementary Tutoring | 6:30 PM Elderberry Trip to Botanical Gardens | **12**  
8:00 PM Elderberry Party  |
| 11  | 10:00 AM Staff Meeting | 2:30 PM Morris Elementary Tutoring | 6:30 PM Elderberry Trip to Botanical Gardens | **13**  
8:00 PM Elderberry Party  |
| 12  | 7:30 AM Wesley Singers  | 1:30 PM Wesley Singers  | 6:00 PM Jubilation Handbells | **14**  
7:00 PM Chancel Choir | **15**  
7:00 PM Wednesday Evening Bible Study  |
| 13  | 8:00 AM Bend & Stretch  | 2:30 PM Morris Elementary Tutoring | 6:00 PM Board of Stewards | **16**  
6:00 PM Hope for the Holidays | **17**  
7:00 PM Finance Com Mg. | **18**  
6:00 PM Lifetree Cafe  |
| 14  | 5:30 PM Single's Sunday School Class Party | **19**  
6:00 PM Girls Night In  |
| 15  | 12:00 AM Girls Night In | 10:00 AM Cantata Rehearsal  |

**20**  
11:30 AM Elderberry Lunch & Program  
6:30 PM Lifetree Cafe  
**21**  
10:30 AM Latham Ladies Luncheon  

**22**  
**23**  
**24**  
2:30 PM Just Faith  
5:00 PM Christmas Caroling  
**25**  
10:00 AM Staff Meeting  
**26**  
**27**  
8:30 AM Bend & Stretch  
6:30 PM Lifetree Cafe  
**28**  
**29**  
**30**  
**31**
Christmas Fairies?

Liz Hall

You have probably noticed that the Christmas fairies have descended, sprinkling Christmas decorations and spirit throughout the church. Actually, these Christmas “fairies” are the Worship Committee. The fairies are Judy and Jim Gillespie, Adelaide Cape, Sharon Windham, Jennie Lowery, Rosemarie Bishop, Becky and Bill Vosahlik, Joyce Smith, Mike and Michelle Gray, Jan Sturbois, June Young, Jack and Sandra Matheny, Ken Stephens, Catherine Gris, Don Lambert and Molly Hall.

As you enjoy the Christmas Spirit at LUMC this Season, please thank the folks that help make it possible.