



The Central Connection

MESSAGES & OPPORTUNITIES FROM CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH TO YOU!

December 2010

“In His Time”

God marks time differently than we do. We have instruments that divide the days into minutes, hours and seconds. We have calendars that organize the days into weeks, months and years. We make appointments with people; we keep track of the TV schedule; we set aside certain times for prayer, meals, worship, school and vacations. The Greek word for this type of time keeping is usually “chronos”. We get the words chronological, chronic and chronicle from this root. For example, history is a chronology of events. Especially in the modern West, time is often conceived of as a dimension, along with space, that humans imagine, name, measure and order to locate themselves in this world and in history.

God, however, acts not according to our time-tables, but according to the right or appropriate time as determined by God’s sovereignty. The Greek word for time in this sense is *kairos*. *Kairos* is used to describe the appropriate or decisive moment or period of time. For example, *kairos* may refer to the time when people are challenged to decide how they are to prepare for God’s imminent intervention; so Paul urges his readers, “you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers” (Rom. 13:11).



Advent is a tuning in to God’s time, God’s appropriate and decisive intervention into our time. In Advent we anticipate God’s eternity coming into our temporal world. God’s advent into our schedules may disrupt our planning. God’s advent may interfere with our appointments. God’s “right time” may seem like poor planning to us. Nevertheless,

we have a God who chose the right time to come to us in Jesus Christ. Jesus was born in the “fullness of time,” the decisive moment in history, for our salvation. (Advent also refers to Christ’s second coming, which will occur, not according to our schedules but at the right time according to God’s design.)

During Advent season we wait again for the celebration of God’s incarnation in Jesus Christ, “God-with-us” when the time was right. May we spend our days and weeks, minutes and hours, in joyful anticipation and awareness of God’s coming, not according to our calendars, but according to God’s purpose. In this way we live expectantly and hopefully, because our God is a God who intervenes at just the right time. “Joy to the world! The Lord is come!”

In anticipation,
Pastor Stephanie



So, two preachers living a hundred years apart and writing in two different countries, combined their talents to bid us come, joyful and triumphant, and adore Him born the King of angels.

O Come all ye faithful,
 joyful and triumphant,
 O come ye,
 O come ye to Bethlehem.
 Come and behold Him,
 Born the King of angels,
 O come let us adore Him,
 O come let us adore Him,
 O come let us adore Him,
 Christ the Lord.

—Sherry von Oeyen, Minister of Music

MUSIC NOTES

John Francis Wade was an 18th century Roman Catholic Layman in Lancashire, England. He became a refugee in France having left England because of the Jacobite rebellion. He was able to support himself by teaching music at the Roman Catholic College and Ministry Center in Douay, France. He also became renowned as a copyist of musical scores.

In 1743, Wade had composed a Latin Christmas carol beginning with the phrase “Adeste Fideles, Laeti triumphantes.” He died in 1786, being remembered for his “beautiful manuscripts” that were seen in chapels and homes.

As time passed, English Catholics began returning to Britain, and they took Wade’s Christmas carol with them. An Anglican minister, Rev. Frederick Oakeley found the carol, and loved it so much that he translated it for his church. His translation said, “Ye Faithful, approach Ye.” Somehow those words didn’t catch on. Eventually, as he continued to say the Latin phrase “Adeste Fideles, Laeti triumphantes,” he finally chose the better words, “O come, All Ye Faithful, Joyful and Triumphant!”

The Upper Room Disciplines,

A Book of Daily Devotions 2011



“*Disciplines* offers you a way to make time and space for God: to still yourself, to meditate on scripture, to pray, and to listen. Each week, *Disciplines* features scriptures from the Revised Common Lectionary, a guide or table of readings used weekly in public worship. Each week a spiritual leader or writer reflects on a different set of scriptures, explores its meaning, and suggests a way to meditate and pray. This daily practice of scripture reading, reflection, and prayer is a powerful means of grace and spiritual growth

Available in the Gathering Area and the Church

Office: Regular Print \$12
 Large Print \$15

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

Mailing address: P. O. Box 953
 Staunton, VA 24402

Telephone: (540) 886-3441
 FAX: (540) 886-5771

e-mail: centralumc@centralumcstaunton.org
www.centralumcstaunton.org

The Central Connection Editor: Agnes Campbell

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



December 2010

Can you help fill your church's Christmas wish-list as well as that of your loved ones? Central is asking for only one thing for Christmas: your ongoing support.

Each year, we provide an opportunity for members and friends of Central to give to our Christmas offering. This year, the Finance

Committee has set a goal of \$6000, which will be used to support the general fund of the church and the United Methodist World Service Fund. The ministries supported by the World Service Fund (WSF) are especially crucial in today's economic climate. At the end of September, the US Census announced that the official poverty rate in 2009 was 14.3 percent, up from 13.2 percent in 2008. This means that 43.6 million people are living in poverty here in the United States alone.

The World Service Fund supports ministries with the poor, in the US and around the world. One of the goals of the general agencies of the church is to eliminate diseases associated with poverty by improving the quality of health globally. The WSF also pays the salaries of missionaries, supports Bible studies and provides leadership training, especially for those working with children, youth, students, elderly and persons who are mentally and physically challenged. Funds are also used to build new churches and to advocate for a more ethical, just and human world.

Please take some time to consider what you can give to help our church family and our larger world community during this difficult time, by responding generously this Christmas.

Committee on Finance
Josh Gutshall, Chairperson

Celebrating Advent & Christmas at Central UMC

Please invite your friends and neighbors to celebrate with you during this joyful season!

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL



Advent, A Calendar of Devotions 2010, by Robert V. Dodd, is a booklet of daily devotions for Advent (the four weeks before Christmas) that can help us step back from the hustle and stress of the season and prepare our hearts and minds to rejoice in God's loving gift, Jesus

Christ. Each daily devotion includes a recommended Scripture reading, a Bible verse, an inspiring message, and an uplifting prayer.

Pick up your copy in the Gathering Room or the Church Office.

MITTEN TREE



You're invited to help decorate our Christmas Tree with new hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, and socks. Let's fill every branch with an extra bit of warmth for local needy people. "What's needed?" We're so glad you asked . . . All sizes, from infant through adult, any color or style!



ANNUAL PROGRAM & LUNCH

Sunday, December 12

(following 11:00 Worship)

Our annual Christmas program and lunch will follow the 11:00 Worship Service on Dec. 6. Please bring 2 of your favorite covered dishes (enough for your family and to share with our guests). Meat, bread, and drinks will be provided.

All are welcome – Please invite family and friends!

WEDNESDAY

ADVENT SERVICES

12:05 p.m.



- Dec. 1 Rev. Lucy Jackson-Hughes, Preaching
Augusta St. UMC, Serving Lunch
- Dec. 8 Rev. Jeffrey Allen, Preaching
St. Paul's UMC, Serving Lunch
- Dec. 15 Rev. Robert Edwards, Preaching
Christ UMC, Serving Lunch
- Dec. 22 Rev. Stephanie Sault, Preaching
Central UMC, Serving Lunch

These devotional services are provided by the Staunton United Methodist Churches during Advent (and held here at Central UMC). The timing is planned to accommodate the "lunch hour," and everyone is welcome. A soup and sandwich lunch is served at 12:35 and is provided by volunteers from the designated church. (\$2 donation) Please invite a friend or co-worker to join you.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

December 24, 7:00 p.m.

Candles & Carols

a service of hope, peace,

joy, and love

Holy Communion

Candlelighting Service



Your family and friends will want to participate in this special service and celebrate the coming of our Savior.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING (During the month of December)

Is there any room for Jesus on your Christmas gift list?

Who's getting the biggest gift on His birthday?



BANNERS IN WORSHIP

Just over six years ago Cheryl Kent made a pair of banners to hang in our sanctuary during a wedding. The rich, fall colors in these banners added much to the barren walls, and so they were left throughout the season. Over the next year or so Cheryl made several more pairs, including beautiful Easter banners. Recently, Esther and Hunter Mabry gifted a pair of Communion banners, which currently hang in the sanctuary and have brought special beauty and meaning to our worship services. Central's Worship Team would like to add more banners to our collection to help celebrate additional liturgical seasons, such as Advent and Pentecost. To accomplish this goal we hope to purchase pre-made banners *and* make our own. The congregation can help in four specific ways.



1. Lift up this ministry in prayer, asking for wisdom and guidance.
2. Purchase one or more pre-made banners. (Catalogs containing a wide selection are available in the Church Office; and the Worship Team will be happy to help with selections.)
3. Contribute to the banner fund. As funds accrue, banners (or materials to make them) will be purchased.
4. Join the Banner Sewing Team (start up in January 2011). Sewing enthusiasts will meet regularly to design and sew additional banners for our sanctuary.

If you would like to be a part of this new ministry, please check the appropriate box(es) below. A member of the Worship Ministry Team will contact you soon!

Name _____ Phone _____

Yes, I am interested in purchasing a banner.

I would like more information.

I would like to contribute to the Banner Fund; Contribution _____

I would like to participate in the Banner Sewing Team (startup in January 2011)



I **gs**

December 5

Isaiah 11:1-10
 Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19 (UMH 795)
 Romans 15:4-13
 Matthew 3:1-12

December 12

Isaiah 35:1-10
 Luke 1:47-55 (UMH 199)
 James 5:7-10
 Matthew 11:2-11

December 19

Isaiah 7:10-16
 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19 (UMH 801)
 Romans 1:1-7
 Matthew 1:18-25

December 24 – Christmas Eve

Isaiah 9:2-7
 Psalm 96
 Titus 2:11-14
 Luke 2:1-20

December 25 – Christmas Day

Isaiah 52:7-10
 Psalm 98
 Hebrews 1:1-12
 John 1:1-14

December 26

Isaiah 63:7-9
 Psalm 148 (UMH 861)
 Hebrews 2:10-18
 Matthew 2:13-23

NEWS FROM DONNA (& STEVE) HUFFER



Indone

It seems that everything is only a two-hour airplane ride from Singapore. In July we hopped on our favorite airlines, Singapore Air, and jetted off to Indonesia. Now, we have heard nothing good about Indonesia, past or present but everyone told me the beaches in Bali were worth going to. Bali is just one island in the large complex of islands that make up Indonesia. Historically, it is Hindu, settled by Indians centuries and centuries ago. Indonesia's state religion is Islam so this puts it at odds with the main government. They can't force the people to switch without great violence so they settle the score by ignoring and not addressing the social ills there.

We passed large volcanoes rising from the ocean reminding me of all the earthquakes, eruptions, and landslides I hear about in the region. It is located on the ring of fire and is just below the equator, so the temperature was close to but slightly colder than Singapore—a welcome relief! The airplane touched down at the airport around 5 p.m. This is significant because at 5, the customs officers walk away and go home. They don't care that they have a room full of five hundred travelers waiting in a line for the next couple of hours to get to their taxis. Only one customs guy remained to deal with a large room of angry, tired tourists. In a short time, we were approached by a man wearing an employee tag saying that for the right price, he could get us through customs. I'd heard about the corruption but this was obvious. I watched him approach the "white" people in the crowd. No one took him up on it because we'd all heard about being charged with bogus law-breaking and then having to pay large sums to get out of jail. It's a way of life there. So we waited our turn.

Our tour man was waiting to pick us up with a sign that read "Stevenson Charles" . They never figured out that last name was Huffer. For the rest of the trip, they called him Mr. Stevenson. Oh, well. We stayed at the Hard Rock Hotel which was modern (still had to use bottled water to brush the teeth with and to drink) and had nice restaurants that we had experience with—McDonalds and Pizza Hut. They had a buffet breakfast that was slanted toward the

Japanese, Chinese, and Korean tour groups that came in large buses. At night these groups would drink like fish and party into the wee hours of the night. Our room seemed to be near the band and the floor thumped with the beat!

Our tour of the island was messed up so they asked us what we wanted to do. That gave us an opportunity to see and do more than we would have ordinarily. We piled into a van and off we went through the highlands to see how the people lived. It was worse than Thailand. Only two or three main roads are paved in Bali and they are narrow and one lane. It was a game of "chicken" to get anywhere. We dodged trucks, dogs, people, goats, cows, and carts. People all lived beside the road in little open huts with grass roofs. My guide explained to me that as a Hindu, the people are bound in their caste. That is of course getting weaker as the modern world approaches, but most people remain poor because they believe it is their lot in life. The tour guide was of the farmer caste but he was sent by his father to college (two years and the only major is tourism). So he had done well but complained that he'd never been off the island. Why? Every Hindu is obligated to save all their life to cremate their relatives. It takes a fortune and thus cripples any hope of getting ahead. I asked if they ate meat since the cows roam freely. Yes, he said, they ate everything. Even dogs. They just sprinkle some rice on their head to cleanse themselves before they go to the temple (offerings three times a day). It's that easy!

I noticed that their form of Hinduism is greatly mixed up with Buddhism. They don't distinguish between the two and worship a huge group of gods and their incarnations. I couldn't keep them all straight. They had wooden sticks that they dressed up in black and white shirts (Ying and Yang) that they called the "Trinity". Rama, Vishnu, and Siva. These sticks got offerings three times a day and an umbrella to keep them dry. I had to cover my legs to "respect the gods" when I visited the temple (9th century AD). It is still very much in use today.

Watch for Bali, Part 2 in the January Connections!

“DAY OF THANKSGIVING”

By Luz M. de Tablan

The Apostle Paul knew this so well and we must too: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:6-7).

The month of November reminds us that it is the month for Thanksgiving, the time we spend to acknowledge the grace and provisions of God during the time of our needs. This is also the time to focus on God who is our true provider and the source of our blessings, our God who had given us everything we need whether we deserved it or not. The provisions He gives oftentimes we could barely contain our excitement. No matter what is currently going in our life, we all have blessings and God deserves or thanks.

In my personal experience it is so good to give thanks and be grateful to God and for those who have blessed us with their love and care during the time of our needs and troubles.

When someone asks what we are grateful for, most of us can recite an entire list of events, relationships, and possessions that we deeply appreciate. But sometimes the abundance in our lives may leave us a bit lean in the area of thankfulness and can actually cause us to lose sight of the most important blessing we have. There are times in my life that being grateful is easy when I am in the midst of abundance and all things are going well with me and my family, but when I am or my family are in a very difficult circumstances to express thanks was so hard and I found that my Thank-You quickly give way to a list of requests. But, I thank the Lord that oftentimes when trials come my way, it keeps me aware of God’s presence and I began to look for God’s purpose and reason in my trial, that it might be that he wants to give me strength, develops wholeness in me, and be motivated to be more submissive to Him. My troubled times gives me more powerful impact on my witness. I was learning from day to day that no matter what is

currently going on in my life, all the blessings that I received in life, God deserves my appreciation and my praise. Thanking God may not come naturally to some people, because they live in a culture that in many ways is ungrateful and takes a lot for granted. In such an atmosphere it is easy to let thoughts drift toward what we want instead of expressing appreciation for what we have.



Dr. Charles Stanley said that we received blessings from genuine praise and thanksgiving to God. In thanksgiving we have focus on our priority in life; reminds us of our dependence upon God; releases our anxiety and worry; refreshes our relationship with the Lord; refines our spiritual perception; reinforce our faith and rejoices our spirit.

It is really true that we will be more thankful when we make the conscious decision to spend more time praising God than petitioning Him and focusing on the Lord’s grace in our lives.

This Thanksgiving I praise and thank the Lord for the following:

- my church,
- my family,
- the United Methodist Women,
- the love and generous support of Eleanor and Caroline to United Methodist Women and
- the contributions of our Circle leaders: Deborah, Esther and Caroline and their members to our PURPOSE.

Thanksgiving is a special opportunity for me and for you to express our gratitude to God for his provisions and blessings throughout the year. A day to thank God for His grace which is sufficient in our weakness and a day for receiving the blessings that comes from our grateful heart.



HARK THE HERALD HUSTLERS SING

Writing to *The Kalamazoo Gazette* about many merchants greeting customers with “Happy Holidays” instead of “Merry Christmas,” Karen Bjork of Vicksburg, MI, asked, “How long before we begin singing ‘Consumer Carols’?”

She then suggested some commercially correct songs to celebrate the season:

- ★ Away in a Macy’s
- ★ We three Retailers
- ★ Joy to the Wal-Marts
- ★ Reindolph the Credit Card Bandit
- ★ Rockin’ around the Evergreen Tree
- ★ I’m Dreaming of a Full Cash Register
- ★ Oh Little Town of Buy-it-all
- ★ Hark the Herald Hustlers Sing

Bjork concluded: “Then we can wish each and everyone, ‘Merry Merchandising!’ I mean isn’t that the true meaning ofshhh...Christmas?”



A BOX FULL OF LOVE

A four-year-old girl asked her mother, “Mommy, what is Christmas?” Her mother explained that Christmas is Jesus’ birthday.

“Then why don’t we give gifts to Jesus if it’s his birthday?” the girl asked. The mother explained the tradition of exchanging Christmas gifts as expressions of our love for one another.

On Christmas Eve the little girl placed a package under the Christmas tree before she went to bed. She explained that it was a birthday gift for Jesus, and that she was sure he would open it while she slept.

After she was asleep, the mother, not wanting her daughter to be disappointed, opened the clumsily wrapped package and found the box empty.

On Christmas morning, the little girl was thrilled to find the package had been opened and her gift was gone. Her mother asked, “what was in it?”

“It was a box full of love, the girl replied.

—Author unknown

B.C.



By Johnny Hart

from *The Joyful Noiseletter* © Creators Syndicate, Inc., Reprinted by permission of Johnny Hart & Creators Syndicate, Inc.



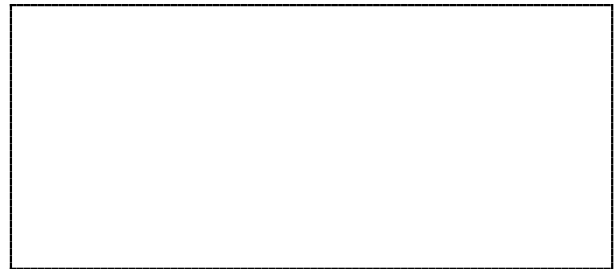
Central United Methodist Church

Lewis Street at Beverley
Post Office Box 953
Staunton, Virginia 24402-0953
www.centralumcstaunton.org

Non-Profit Org.
U. S. Postage
Paid
Staunton, VA
24401
Permit No. 93



Return Service Requested



*May the peace of God reign
in our hearts and in our world!*

Pastor Stephanie, Sherry, Janet, & Agnes