

THE SPIRE



Centenary United Methodist Church 1501 Rivermont Avenue Lynchburg, VA 24503
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January 2009

2009 Declared the Year of Communication!

By Chris Howell, *Spire Editor / Media Committee Chair*



Near the end of the summer of 2008, Pastor Rick asked if I would be willing to chair a new committee that would encompass communications both to the

community at large and the congregation. After brief consideration, I agreed. We are in an age where communication is critical and is done in so many different ways. Many people not only get their news from traditional sources like radio and television broadcasts and tangible newspapers, but also from new media like websites, e-newsletters, virtual newspapers and social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace. All of these communication devices can be tools for getting our messages to each other and to the community as a whole. One of the tasks set before the media committee is figuring out how best to utilize the incredible toolbox of communication at our disposal.

As I began editing this edition of the Spire and creating a new folder for the 2009 Spires – I came to realize that this will be my third year as editor.

My goal each month is to inform the congregation of upcoming events, report on activities and projects in progress and to provide a forum where contributors can convey news and observations. To reach this goal I must rely upon reporters and other sources. I need YOU to help make the communication happen! I implore each circle, class, committee, group and organization at Centenary to appoint a reporter to write about your happenings and upcoming events. As much



as I enjoy suggestions of what I ought to write about in the Spire – it will mean a great deal more to get details from the people actually involved!



In addition to the Spire – the media committee has responsibility for the website, which will be spearheaded by our able web guru – Alan Takseraas. Many Centenary members have come to rely on the website for the Calendar of Events, Spire online, handy links and especially the recordings of the worship services. But did you know that people from all over the world are enjoying our Sunday worship services? In addition to being a tool for outreach to our congregation when they are not able to be in worship in person – the website is a tool for outreach even beyond the geographical boundaries of Lynchburg. With that in mind – the Sound Team that makes that recording happen will fall under the direction of the media committee. And our final obligation will be to make use of the traditional communication pathways by sending out notices and press releases of upcoming special events.

So, as media committee chair, I hereby declare 2009 as The Year of Communication! If you have suggestions on ways to reach out to each other and to the world beyond – please send them on! If this is an area where you feel led to participate as a committee member, Sound Team member or assist in any way – let me know. You can reach me by writing centenaryspire@hotmail.com or by calling 665-8138.





Dear Friends –

Let me first say thank you to all of you for your kind generosity during Advent and Christmas to me and my family. We truly do have a warm and caring fellowship.

Please also accept my best wishes for a wonderful New Year. It is hard to believe that we are now into 2009 – a new year. It seems we just welcomed in 2008!

But we are in a new year and we face new opportunities and challenges ahead. 2008 was, of course, a presidential election year, a leap year, a new district superintendent, a General Conference year, and a year of financial instability. What an exciting and challenging year it was!

Youth plan active winter

A big thank you to everyone that participated in the youths Christmas cookie bake sale! Special thanks to ALL of the bakers for your wonderful cooking skills! A lot of time, effort, and love was put into each cookie.

The youth have some exciting events coming up in the next few months. We will be participating in the Souper Bowl of Caring again this year; all donations will go to UMCOR (United Methodist Committee on Relief). UMCOR responds to natural or civil disasters that are interruptions of such magnitude that they overwhelm a community's ability to recover on its own.

We will also be participating in the District Youth Retreat at the end of next month and Stop Hunger Now. We raised over \$250 dollars to go towards making the food packages in this program that will be delivered to people in Haiti. I am so excited about the mission projects that we also have coming up through the District youth and in partnership with other UM Churches around the District. The district is planning on starting up the Praise Team again; if you are interested in that please let me know.

For our regular youth meetings we are viewing the NOMA series, and so far we have thoroughly enjoyed the experience! This month we will have a Native American Study as part of our regular youth group meetings – all are welcome to participate. The study is based on the School of Christian Mission Curriculum. Alan Gurdal, James Gurdal, and Kassi Sutherlind participated in the youth study during SOCM and Patricia Butler and I took Native American classes. Reba Gurdal and my mother, Pat Butler took the lesson on 'I believe in Jesus'; my mother will be leading the Native American study.

Please remember to take advantage of the wonderful

I welcome all those new church officers elected at our charge conference and I pray that together we can make a difference in the life of our church. I continue to be in prayer daily for each of our church members and I recommend this discipline to everyone in the church.

We ended 2008 with a net gain in church membership and I am very optimistic about our future.

My door continues to be open for all who want to meet with me or speak with me. May God bless you all in this new year.

Grace & Peace,

website that Alan Takseraas has designed for the church, it is full of wonderful resources...especially the calendar to keep us all up to date on church events, even youth events! And don't forget the Glad Tidings in the church bulletin.

A warm welcome to Emily, Matthew, and Nicole Roseveare! We are so glad you are here with us!

Thank you to all that continue to support us on our journey in faith and continue to pray for us as we certainly do for all of you!

Bettina ☺ bettinarb@msn.com or 434.426.6935

January

10 & 11th – Lock-in (tentative) / Native American Study ;

18th – Native American Study 5pm – 7pm;

25th – Native American Study 5 pm – 7pm

MEMORIAL GIFTS

In Memory of Mr. & Mrs. C.T. Bryant
Darlene Bryant

In Memory of Rev. Byron R. Wilkinson, Sr.
Virginia & Nae Hugh Pearson

In Memory of Mary Wilson Carwile
Starr Shank

In Memory of Leirona Barron
Ann Campfield
Terrell & Doris Moseley
Bill & Ida Powell

In Memory of Eleanor Farlow
Bill & Ida Powell

In Memory of Edith & Henry Minix
Doris Speierman & Elsie Russ

January 2009 Spire

Day of Difference 2009

by Paula Howell, *Spire Contributor*

Centenary is the lead church for our 2009 Day of Difference activities. Day of Difference was highlighted in the Religion section of the News and Advance on December 27, 2008 in an article on Faith in Action: "Day of Difference," a spring Saturday project of seven Rivermont Avenue area churches, features home repairs, health checks, children's activities, a prayer walk, and joint worship services, involving members of C Street Baptist, Centenary United Methodist, Fellowship Church of Christ, Mt. Carmel Baptist, Rivermont Avenue Baptist, Rivermont Baptist and Rivermont Evangelical Presbyterian churches. ***"In unity for a better community,"*** each church is represented at monthly planning sessions for ongoing joint activities, and leadership comes primarily from lay members of the congregations."

Our next meeting will be January 19 at Fellowship Church of Christ on Bedford Ave at 7pm. Please make an effort to attend this meeting as there are many events for the year to plan, we will need everyone's participation to continue to make a Difference in this community. We can no longer expect someone else to get all the jobs done, we need to be willing to step up to the plate and do our part.

Food Pantry gets a boost from unusual source



by Karen Lee White, *Manager Disney Store #704*

We have started to earnestly take our VolunTEARS (Ears as in Mickey Mouse) Program as a part of the reason that our store is here. We want to give back to our community. So when I heard my church needed help supplying the Rivermont Area Emergency Food pantry – we collected 54 cans of food on the night that we had our Holiday kick-off meeting. It was your ticket to get in! We are happy to be able to donate this food pantry and look forward to the next event that we can help out with. We are your Mouseketeers in Christ!

2009 District Training

The Lynchburg District will be offering training for all church officers and committee members on Saturday, January 24 from 8:45am to 2pm at Timberlake United Methodist Church. This training is especially helpful to persons new to their positions, but returning members will want to attend also.

Larry Davies will be the keynote speaker and he will be unveiling many of his plans for the district for 2009. The title of his presentation is Building a Bridge from Church to Community: Making the Church Work.

Workshop titles include: Tips from a Fruitful Congregation, Building a Bridge to the Youth in Your Community, Theology and How-To of Passionate Worship, Igniting Laity to Action, Creating Successful Small Groups, Passionate Couples, Passionate Church, Mission Roundtable, Making Disciples: A Better Membership Class, Fireproof Your Marriage, Becoming a More Fruitful United Methodist, Energizing Your Volunteer Ministry, Not Your Daddy's Offering Plate, Bridging the Gap: Where are the Young Adults?, Youth in Missions, Pastor Parish Relations – Why so Important?, Trustees: Preparing Your Church for Radical Hospitality.

Don't miss this opportunity to share, learn and be excited about your future as a United Methodist Church. Cokesbury will have a display of books and materials for sale and there will be mission and ministry booths. Great food and hospitality.

Thanks for Ringing!

Once again I would like to thank all of the Centenary members that braved the cold and rang the Salvation Army Bells at K-Mart. This is a small way we can join a lot of people in making a big difference in the Central Virginia area not only for those less fortunate have a better Christmas but the Salvation Army helps to make this a better place to live all year. – Paula Howell, *Head Dingaling*

Ralph Freeman to present “Song Sermon” on March 22

Ralph Freeman will present a “song sermon” during worship on Sunday, March 22 at 11:00 a.m. He will be appearing in Lynchburg that weekend as part of the “3 Inspirational Tenors.” Please mark your calendars now for this exciting musical worship experience. There will be some costs to this event and if you would like to make a special donation to defray the costs, please make your check payable to Centenary UMC and mark it for the Freeman Concert.

About Ralph Freeman

A native of Atlanta, Georgia, Ralph Freeman earned his Bachelor of Science degree with concentration in math and physics from Morehouse College. After spending nine years in marketing with the IBM Corporation, God gave him the vision that the lost could be won and the faith could be shared through the medium of song. His Christian witness, using this method, has been a vital part of his lifestyle for many years. He sang with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus for five years, under the direction of the late Robert Shaw. Then God opened opportunities for him to sing in a broad range of settings across the United States, and in many other countries. His wife, Julie, three adult children and two young, talented sons bring a lot of joy to his life. He and his family worship at the First United Methodist Church of Norcross, GA.

Ralph led the music in a pilgrimage to Israel and sang special solos in Bethlehem, at the Garden Tomb, on the Sea of Galilee, at the Jordan River, in Jerusalem, Jericho and Capernaum. He was the guest soloist at World Methodist Conferences in Honolulu, Hawaii and Brighton, England. He was the featured soloist on Friendship Force tours in Gelsenkirchen, West Germany, Newcastle, England and Seoul, South Korea. He also participated in Missions tours to Monterrey, Mexico, Ghana, West Africa and Niteroi, Brazil.

His ministry in the United States includes solo appearances on national television, and concerts in



churches and other settings that include more than forty states. He has been a favorite soloist at the North Georgia Conference United Methodist Men's retreat for many years, and has made five appearances at the International Congress of United Methodist Men held at Purdue University.

In 1998 God led him to a new horizon when Song Sermon Ministries was formed. It has enabled him to share the "Good News" through a unique blend of

traditional hymns, current-day songs and short thematic messages. This fresh approach to proclaiming the Gospel has become his primary focus, and is available to churches in worship services, evangelistic meetings and special events throughout the world.

Evidence of Fruitfulness

by Janice Riggle Huie, *Bishop of Texas*
Conference of the United Methodist Church

When congregations live in Christ and for Christ and through Christ, something happens: fruitfulness. The expectation of fruitfulness begins in the first chapter of Genesis when God says to the human beings whom God has created, "Be fruitful and multiply." Human fruitfulness is our response to God's own fruitfulness in making the heavens and earth and everything within it. (Genesis 1:28) That expectation of fruitfulness runs throughout the Scriptures concluding with the last chapter of Revelation in which the new creation is envisioned with a river of life flowing through the holy city. On each side of the river is the tree of life with twelve kinds of fruit, producing fruit each month, and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. (Revelation 22:1-2)

Jesus spoke about fruitfulness many times. There are stories and sayings about fruitfulness in all four gospels. It was that important.

In Matthew, Jesus describes a disciple's life in terms of fruitfulness. He says, "Every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree

Fruitfulness (continued)

cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits." (Matthew 7:17-20)

Mark tells the story of Jesus being hungry and seeing a fig tree in full leaf. He comes up to it expecting to find something for breakfast. Instead, there is nothing but leaves. He says to the tree, "No one is going to eat fruit from you again – ever." (Mark 11:12-14, The Message) That's a pretty high price to pay for a lack of fruitfulness.

Luke tells us the parable of the farmer who went out to plant some seed. Some seed fell on rock. They dried out. Some fell among the thorns. They were choked out. However, some fell on good soil. When they grew, they produced an abundant harvest. Jesus said, "Let those who have ears to hear listen." (Luke 8:4-8)

In John's gospel, Jesus describes the relationship between life in God and fruitfulness. He puts it this way, "I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me." (John 15:4-5)

The apostles and earliest disciples of Jesus bore much kingdom fruit. They were able to do so because God, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, was in them, and they were responsive and obedient to the Spirit's leading. Life in Christ and fruitfulness are inextricably bound together. The Book of Acts offers powerful testimony to how the practices of faith and the fruits of faith are connected. We hear the witness of these Christians practicing their faith. Then we hear about the fruits that are produced.

Notice what happens as the apostles practice radical hospitality. "That day about three thousand persons took Peter at his word, were baptized and signed up." (Acts 2:41, The Message) How do we know 3000 people were baptized? Somebody counted, and the church thought the number was important enough to record and keep for 2000 years. By the way, they wouldn't have counted women and children, so many more people were actually baptized.

Notice what happens as the apostles practice passionate worship. "They followed a daily discipline of worship in the Temple followed by meals at home. Every meal was a celebration, exuberant and joyful, as they praised God. People in general liked what they saw. Every day their number grew as God added to those who were being saved." (Acts 2:46-47, The Message)

Notice what happens as people participate in risk-taking service and mission and extravagant generosity. "Everyone around was in awe – all those wonders and signs done through the apostles! And all the believers lived in wonderful harmony, holding everything in common. They sold whatever they owned and pooled their resources so that each person's need was met." (Acts 2:43-45, The Message)

Fruitfulness is evidence that the branches are connected to the vine. Fruitfulness is evidence that a congregation is achieving its mission. If your congregation is not demonstrating increasing levels of fruitfulness, it may well be lacking some of the practices of faith that Jesus taught us. The question is whether we are practicing the kind of holy living to which Jesus called his disciples that produces fruit.

Janice Riggle Huie recently completed a two-year term as president of the Council of Bishops.

2008 Operating Budget through December 31, 2008	
Receipts.....	297,194
<u>Expenses:</u>	
Apportionments	-68,156
Pastor Support	-61,260
Program Support	-13,750
Building & Grounds	-51,445
Office Support	-20,428
Staff Support	-92,786
Total Expenses 2008.....	307,825
Total Shortfall 2008	\$ 10,631
Shortfall including prior years:	\$29,973
<u>Benevolence Receipts Outside of Budget</u>	
Fellowship Fund	1,710
Sager Brown Trip	3,463
JIFF	2,735
Conference Second Mile Giving	1,104
Pennies For a Purpose	768
Scholarship Fund	1,815
Local Benevolences	705
Health Ministry	125
Operation Teddy Bear	292
TOTAL	\$12,717
Stewardship -December 2008 <u>Operating Budget</u>	
December 7	10,373
December 14	5,456
December 21	5,865
December 28	2,809
December 31	6,291

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

2009 declared Year of Communication	1
Pastor's Letter	2
Youth Activities	2
Mission and Ministry reports	3
Ralph Freeman presenting Song Sermon March 22	4
Evidence of Fruitfulness	4

SHARE Packages available for January

Call in by 1/11. Pickup on 1/24

REGULAR PACKAGE-\$20: 2½ # (pounds) roaster chicken drums, 18 oz. breaded fish portions, 1 package Hormel™ fully cooked bacon, 12 orange chicken egg rolls, Lemon meringue pie, 3# potatoes, assortment of fresh fruits and vegetables
SUPERBOWL PACKAGE-\$20: 1¼# precooked breaded shrimp, 10 oz. of Cocktail smokies, ¾# fully cooked meatballs, (4) 3 oz. chicken egg rolls, (4) 3 oz. beef egg rolls, 13 oz. breaded chicken breast nuggets, 8 oz. cheese franks, 10 oz. shaved honey ham
STEAK PACKAGE-\$16: (6) 8 oz. boneless NY strip
PEPPERONI PIZZA BAGELS-\$12: Includes 18 - 5½ ounce individually wrapped pepperoni pizza

bagels. Made by Schwanns. Just heat and eat, kids love them!

BREADED SHRIMP-\$16: 3¾ pounds of shrimp with tail on. 3 bags of 40-50 count per bag (1¼ #)

OSCAR MEYER CORNDOGS-\$7: tray packed with no sticks. Total of 20 corn dogs (5 to a package, 4 packs in each case) An essential freezer item—thaw and use as you need them.

SHARE (Self-Help and Resource Exchange) is a nonprofit food distribution and volunteer service program that helps everyone stretch their food dollars. Participants pay \$20 (holiday packages cost a little more) in cash or food stamps and complete two hours of volunteer work for a food box valued at about \$40. Volunteer time is anything you do for someone else or the community for no pay: Church, school, helping a neighbor or helping with your local SHARE program.

SHARE has no income requirements, so

anyone can participate

- if you eat, you're in. SHARE is a program of New River Community Action.

(all packages are subject to change)

Call Paula or Chris Howell 847-8138

