



THE SPIRE



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December 2017

Centenary Youth and Children to Present "New Star"

By Denise Bryson, *Director*

We are excited to announce the presentation of "New Star" on *Sunday, December 17th @ 4 PM*, followed by our Birthday party for Jesus.

This year our play tells the Christmas story from the point of view of two stars (an Old Star and a New Star) who act as narrators.



The story of the First Christmas unfolds as our 20 actors portray all of the usual characters, with some surprises along the way. The music is a mix of traditional and new, vocal and instrumental and will leaving you feeling filled with the Christmas spirit!



Our cast list includes:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Old Star Sage Giles | New Star Taylor Hall |
| Gabriel Orion Giles | Mary Jasmine House |
| Elizabeth Lexi Waugh | Herod Kane Campbell |
| Scribe to Herod Charlie Smallshaw | |
| Head Angel Ella Layne | |
| King 1 Cooper Campbell | |
| King 2 Jimmy Smallshaw | |
| King 3 Turner Layne | |
| Shepherds Braeden Hall, Jacob Howell | |
| Caesar Justin Simmons | |
| Joseph Bryan Waugh | |
| Host of Angels & Bustling Crowd Sky Giles, Callen Campbell, Jubilee Giles | |
| Caesar's court and Herod's Advisors | |
| Wes Smallshaw, Rick Smallshaw | |

There's always room for more - if you want to join our cast, please see Denise Bryson, Adena Giles or David Williams.



The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Psalm 19:1

Bells of the Blue Ridge

The Bells of the Blue Ridge, a group of English Handbell ringers from Lynchburg and the surrounding area, will perform at Centenary on December 16 at 7pm.



The group is made up of people from all walks of life: professional musicians, educators, a local radio personality (!), physical therapist, and even a few who are retired! The group was formed in 2004 with



the goals of performing challenging and entertaining music, doing community outreach, and educating people about the art of English Handbell ringing.

Their concerts are always packed - so arrive early for a good seat! Centenary will also need some greeters and ushers to help our guests find their way around our historic building. Volunteers will have special reserved seats so sign up to help out today! Email or call the church office.



Advent in Manhattan

A few years ago on a cold Sunday morning, after walking from the place I was staying on 75th, I stood on 72nd street in front of the Dakota across from Central Park in Manhattan. It was on that very spot, on December 8, 1980, that Mark Chapman gunned down John Lennon. I left in a contemplative frame of mind and strolled through Strawberry Fields in the park realizing how much we are all part of the same human tapestry, the same history, the same needs, the same spiritual hungers. Fame and money (Lennon) or the lack of both (Chapman) can be magnifiers of those hungers which are addressed by neither. We are still in the aftermath of last year's rancorous political season in which we are reminded that the acquisition of power and headline attention will not slake the thirst for human significance and fulfillment despite deeply held beliefs to the contrary by some who seem consumed by the pursuit. We have been inundated with economic news that includes, as a subtext, stories of scandals of greed, both overt and hidden. Our cultural news is awash in a tide of sexual scandal spanning the affluent and powerful from Washington to Hollywood. What can we followers of The Galilean say to such a world in the twenty-first century since his advent? Friends, God is bigger than all of it. Jesus, more than ever, does not merely *have* the answer, but *is* the answer. God has come to us in costly love to redeem, heal, rescue, restore and save. If you are overwhelmed with the ruin, and looking for something to give your life to; if you long to be washed and clean; if you wish you could lay down the dark crushing load and receive in exchange fulfillment that money can't buy; contentment that political power is helpless to grant; satisfaction that eludes sensory experience; significance that fame cannot give, then yield your life's primary allegiance to the risen Christ—the embodiment of the Gospel of God.

One of the reasons I was at that location on that early Sunday morning in Manhattan was to walk across Central Park to the east side and worship at the Church of the Redeemer—one of the most effective churches on this Earth. Faithful to the Gospel, multiple thousands in attendance, partnering with dozens of other ministries and agencies, spinning off congregations and sending missionaries all around the metro area and around the world, they are characterized by a passion to be the hands and feet and voice of God's redeeming work in the dense population centers of the world. Later, after worship, on my sunny, shivery walk back across the park, eating the lunch I had purchased from a street vendor, I was captured by the sound of angelic music. Following the sound, I found, near a monument in the park, a guitar player and an African American Christian family consisting of parents, three daughters and two sons, singing and praising and glorifying God in magnificent artistry of dancing intricate melodies, harmonies and rhythms. My heart was full, and further blessed when I had the opportunity to talk with them during one of their breaks. We have what matters. Notwithstanding everything that's wrong in this sin-infected human story, the infection is under attack. The antibodies have been injected. The disease is doomed. God is alive and well, even in Manhattan; even in Lynchburg. The Gospel is loosed. Salvation is afoot. God is calling us to consciously, intentionally assume our place in the same grand plan that is unfolding wherever there are people whom God seeks to save. The mustard seed is planted and watered and breaking through. The yeast is hidden in the dough. The Kingdom is within you. There is the One Truth that trumps all others, and we get to be included in the telling. We get to be the Church of Advent—expressing hope, peace, joy and love. Each of us. All of us.

I wish I had space for the full text of Longfellow's *Saint John* poem in which he adjures us to be not mere talkers of the talk, but doers of God's will. Let me close with at least this section for your pondering. Overlook some of the archaic language and hear this message.

*And Him evermore I behold, walking in Galilee,
Through the cornfield's waving gold—in hamlet, in wood, and in wold,¹
By the shores of the Beautiful Sea.
He toucheth sightless eyes; before Him the demons flee;
To the dead he saith: Arise! To the living: Follow me!
And that voice still soundeth on, from the Centuries that are gone, to the centuries that shall be!

~Doug

*Format modified for the sake of space. ¹ *Wold* means a piece of high, open uncultivated land or moor. (Oxford dictionary)

Mayor to Visit JIFF

When Mayor Joan Foster was invited to visit with JIFF participants, she readily agreed and will be their guest speaker on December 14. First elected as an at-large Lynchburg City Council member in 2002, she served eight years as vice mayor and mayor (2004–2012). Elected a second time, Council chose her as mayor for the 2016–18 term.



Foster has initiated a number of significant programs, among them the Dialogue on Race and Racism, Live Healthy Lynchburg, and a preschool literacy initiative known as The Amazing Mayor's Book Race.

She currently serves as Director of Development with Lynchburg Beacon of Hope, an organization aimed at moving ALL Lynchburg City School graduates toward post-secondary education. Such a program is a natural for a woman holding three degrees in education from Lynchburg College.

So what message will Mayor Foster have for our JIFF kids? As a mother, grandmother, educator and two-time mayor, you can bet she will have good advice to share!

Support Our Food Pantry

Being hungry is a huge problem in our area. Want to help? It is as simple as bringing a couple of cans (or any nonperishable food items) to church to load up the shopping baskets located at the Marshall Street door or on the second floor each Sunday. Another option is to add a few dollars to your offering and mark it for the Food Pantry.

A couple of weeks ago when our church was responsible for filling orders, we provided food for over 50 families, many of which had five or six children. This is a small effort that makes a big difference in peoples' lives. We deliver the food to the Rivermont Area Emergency Food Pantry housed at Holy Trinity Lutheran which is supported by eight member congregations. We can do our part to help our neighbors.

Property Committee Updates

By Mike Reeves, *Property Committee Chair*

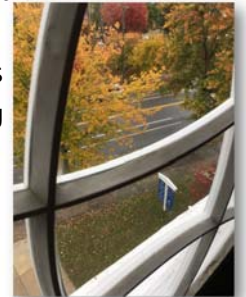
Now that the exterior painting is done, we are concentrating on some interior work. Work began during Thanksgiving week to repair the ceiling and walls in the back balcony, to be followed by repair of the plaster ceiling above the choir loft. This work should be finished in time for the Lynchburg Church Tour Open House on December 16th.

We had to postpone a planned work day on November 18 due to a memorial service at the church, but we hope to make it up on a Saturday in December, depending on the weather.

After repairing a defective section of buried wiring, new LED lights have been installed for the church sign and the sunken garden area. These long-life lights will provide needed dusk-to-dawn illumination as well as savings on maintenance and energy costs. Other lighting projects on the list include repairs to lights at the side entries to the narthex, lights atop the brick posts at the Marshall Street Entrance, completion of window candle installation in the sanctuary, and new poles and floodlights for the back parking lot.

Thanks to everyone for your work and continuing contributions toward maintaining and improving our church!

Here's a view from the attic area over the front porch, looking out the new circular window.



JIFF Christmas Gifts



Once again we are providing each JIFF kid a \$10 gift card as a small gift from the Centenary congregation. You can buy the cards yourself or you can give a donation to any JIFF volunteer and we will purchase the cards. The kids especially enjoy cards for movies, Walmart, McDonald's or Target. Thank you for helping to make Christmas a little more special for our kids.

JIFF Sails On Despite Absent Leaders

What happens when nearly three quarters of JIFF's regular leaders are away? On October 19 Paula and Carl Howell, Belva and Melva Shelor and Reba Gurdal traded Centenary's local mission duty for work at the church's national UMCOR mission site. Other regulars Denise Bryson and Delores Toler were away with family concerns. So what happened at JIFF?

That evening went amazingly well. Melva Shelor's Bible study was led by Karen Bell, veteran educator of more than 40 years with life-long United Methodist attendance at Sunday School and worship. Mari and Rick Smallshaw, along with Betty Wooldridge, took care of Belva's K-12 "little ones." Ida Powell took Reba's place with the young girls. Denise was replaced in the media room by nephew Jacob Howell, very competent at handling IT duties while Chris Howell provided commentary on the evening's messages. Chris and Jacob showed Sager Brown Mission Depot videos including photos of JIFF leaders taken a few days earlier, the work underway, and even a brief history of the Sager Brown site. Thus youngsters were ready for their leader's return, being able to say "I know where you went and what you were doing!"

That evening some folks did two jobs while some leaders had two replacements. Susan Howell covered Paula's job of checking in youngsters at the Marshall Street entry, then raced upstairs to replace Delores with the older girls. In the game room Carl was replaced by Gordon Howell and David Williams, both of whom were patient tutors at the pool tables.

Bill Roseveare was in his usual place with the boys. And Pastor Doug distributed pizza. After learning of David William's newly disclosed talent, he declared, "If he challenges me to a game of pool, I'm not accepting!" Nurse Lila Peake was present for her monthly session. Since many basic health lessons are covered in school, her choice has been to expand youngster's familiarity with healthy foods. By trying a variety of fruits and vegetables, many health issues can be avoided or alleviated. Lila is offering a different color each month,

naturally choosing orange for October. She came laden with oranges, orange juice, cantaloupe, orange bell peppers, and carrots. While she handled the knife for slicing, her students practiced preparing carrots with the vegetable peeler. Though no one was compelled to taste unfamiliar foods, several were pleased when experiencing new tastes.

Yes, so many leaders were away but JIFF experienced smooth sailing. Just remember you, too, can be part of the crew! Why not call Paula and sign on? 434-665-8183 or paulahowell44@gmail.com.

Your Trash, Their Treasure

There is current great need for many, many plastic bags at Park View Community Mission. A hundred or more families gather food there through the Food for Families program which provides supplemental groceries on a monthly basis to food insecure neighbors. This is one of the many services available through this Lynchburg District mission. Just bring bags to the church office for delivery by Park View volunteer Virginia Saville, who serves there each week. Keep them coming until further notice, thus supporting a vital community mission.

At the December 19 Central Lynchburg Cluster Charge Conference Food for Families received \$10,000 raised by churches in our cluster!



The beautiful Chancel Arrangement for Thanksgiving reminded us of the abundance God provides for us.

2017 Operating Budget Through November 30

Receipts:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| Offering | 165,631 |
| Loose Plate Offering | 831 |
| Church School Offering | 1,650 |
| Miscellaneous Income | 585 |
| Easter/Thanksgiving/Christmas | 1,032 |
| Shortfall | 20 |
| From Memorials | 9,123 |
| Steeple Rental | 18,250 |
| Total Receipts..... | 197,122 |

Expenses:

| | |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Support Staff Expense | 74,072 |
| Pastor Expense | 63,111 |
| Trustees | 55,504 |
| Apportionments | 4,388 |
| Office - Admin | 7,408 |
| Programs/Worship | 6,426 |
| Total Expenses..... | 210,909 |

Benevolence Receipts 2017

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Sager Brown | 4,275 |
| Fellowship Fund | 902 |
| JIFF | 2,495 |
| Pennies with a Purpose | 408 |
| Local Benevolences | 1,893 |
| Operation Teddy Bear | 214 |
| Lambuth Clarke Scholarship | 1,182 |
| UMCOR | 1,024 |
| TOTAL | \$12,393 |

Stewardship - November 2017

| | Operating | Painting | Other |
|---------|-----------|----------|-------|
| Nov. 5 | 7,726 | 985 | 432 |
| Nov. 12 | 1,623 | 200 | 577 |
| Nov. 19 | 4,573 | 330 | 514 |
| Nov. 26 | 5,091 | 690 | 376 |

MEMORIALS

In Memory of Jane Blankinship

Rebecca Stack

In Memory of David Armistead

Joe Reed
Josephine Morris
Rodney and Karen Bell
Virginia Saville
Ida and Bill Powell
Ernest and Elizabeth Miller
Margaret Newland

In Memory of Tommy

Wooldridge

Betty Wooldridge

In Memory of Nancy Burnett

Joe Reed

Chase the Chill Lynchburg

Chase the Chill will happen Thursday, January 4, 2018! We are planning to share our items at TWO



locations. We are returning to the Human Services building (9th and Commerce) and at Parkview Community Mission on Memorial Ave. We invite all who are interested to knit, crochet, or otherwise create warm items for us to share with our neighbors. Give items (including donations of yarn) to Chris Howell (434-665-8138).

IOA Open House

Interfaith Outreach Association will hold the 3rd Annual Greater Rivermont Congregation Open House on Saturday, December 16 10am-2pm. Centenary's beautiful sanctuary will be one of ten churches on the self-guided tour. Proceeds from the \$20 ticket (kids 10 and under free) will benefit the programs of IOA that include emergency aid including heating assistance, home repairs, furniture and furnishings, vision program and progressive release program.

Help IOA celebrate 35 years of serving our community and visit First Christian, Church of the Covenant, Fellowship Church of Christ, St. John's Episcopal, First Presbyterian, Peakland Baptist, Agudath Shalom Temple, Peakland UMC and Holy Trinity Lutheran.

To volunteer as a greeter/guide at Centenary contact Chris Howell at 434-665-8138.



We had a church member step up with a matching gift up to \$10,000 towards the Paint Fund! Every gift given between September 1 and December 31, 2017 designated for the Paint Fund will be matched up to \$10,000.

Thanks to everyone who gave toward the Paint Fund! We have received over \$10,000 in gifts since September 1! We can now receive a \$10,000 matching gift!

Please continue to give to the Capital or Building Fund - We still have lots to maintain around here!

Lectionary Readings for December 2017

Dec. 3: Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37
Dec. 10: Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13; 2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8
Dec. 17: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28
Dec. 24am: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:47-55; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38
Dec. 24pm: Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20
Dec. 31: Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

**Centenary United Methodist Church
1501 Rivermont Avenue
Lynchburg, VA 24503**

**Non-Profit Organization
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Return Service Requested



December 2017

| sunday | monday | tuesday | wednesday | thursday | friday | saturday |
|--|---|--|--|--|----------------------------|--|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 9 am UMW Advent Brunch & Service @ Rustburg UMC |
| 3 7:30 pm Christmas Vesters at Randolph College | 4 | 5 6:30-8 pm Girl Scouts (FH) | 6 | 7 5:30 pm JIFF 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir | 8 | 9 |
| 10 5 pm Youth Group 6:30-8 pm Girl Scouts (FH) | 11 | 12 8:30 am Centenary Breakfast @ Famous Anthony's | 13 10:30 am Frances Allen Circle (P) | 14 5:30 pm JIFF 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir | 15 | 16 10 am- 2 pm Open House Christmas Tour @ Centenary 7 pm Bells of the Blue Ridge |
| 17 Pennies with a Purpose 4 pm Christmas Play followed by Birthday Party for Jesus | 18 | 19 6:30-8 pm Girl Scouts (FH) | 20 | 21 5:30 pm JIFF 7:00 pm Sanctuary Choir | 22 | 23 |
| 24 7 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service | 25 Church Office Closed <hr/> Jan 1 <hr/> Church Office Closed | 26 Church Office Closed | 27 Church Office Closed | 28 Church Office Closed | 29 Church Office Closed | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |

Each Sunday:
9:30 am Sunday School 10:30 am Fellowship Time 3rd Floor 11:00 am Worship in Sanctuary