

BELL'S MESSENGER



The Newsletter of
Old Union United Methodist Church
& Surrounding Community



December 2013

Issue 12, Volume 2

Christmas Program

Christmas Program "Christmas in Black and White: Discovering the Real Story of Christmas" on Sunday, December 15th at 6:30 pm by the Youth Ministry.

There will be a Barbecue Meal (free for the community) by the Young Adult Sunday School Class after the program. We ask everyone to please bring a dessert.

Church Christmas Caroling

The Youth Ministry would like to invite everyone in the church to go Christmas Caroling with us on Sunday, December 1st. We plan to meet at 6 pm at the church and then leave shortly after for an evening of Christmas Caroling in the Sophia Community. We hope you will join us.

Christmas Special Singing

Christmas Special Singing will be Sunday, December 8th at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary. If you would like to sing or play an instrument, please see Gene Farlow.

Cooked Pork Shoulders

The Young Adult Class are now taking orders for Cooked Pork Shoulders. The price this year is \$40 each which includes 1 bottle of Barbecue Sauce. They are to be picked up between 3 pm and 5 pm on Sunday, December 15th. The last day to order is Thursday, December 12th. Let any Young Adult Class member know or call (336) 498-7102 to order.

Christmas Parties

It is that time of the year where Sunday School Classes and the Groups in the church will start having their Christmas Parties. The ones I know of are:

Sunday, December 1st: United Methodist Men Christmas Party at 8 am in Fellowship Hall

Sunday, December 1st: Youth Ministry will have their party from 4pm until 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Bring a \$5 gift. Then at 6 pm we will go Christmas Caroling in the Community.

Saturday, December 7th: United Methodist Women at 8:30am in the fellowship hall. We will be playing Dirty Santa with \$5.00 gifts. For food, each person that is able to is requested to bring some type of breakfast food. If you plan to attend, please let Beverly know what food you will be bringing

Saturday, December 7th: Adult Sunday School Class at 7 pm at Mayflower

Saturday, December 14th: Senior Adult Class Christmas Party at Pioneer Steak House in Archdale then come back to Fellowship Hall to play bingo. To ride the bus with Bill meet at church at 5:30 pm or you can meet the group at Pioneer at 6 pm



From the Pastor

To the Old Union United Methodist Church family:

Peace and Joy to you all as we enter fully into the Holiday Season! I hope you all survive this year! The holidays can be a minefield for many of us. Our "spirit" will be tested and strained by the pressure and panic of a packed *schedule*, the heightened need to keep everybody *happy*, and the deep desire to avoid the perennially *disagreeable* relationships and sore-spots that are a part of every holiday season.

Amid all this joy and travail, we scarce remember that the church is on a slightly different calendar than the rest of the society.

Instead of Holiday Season, the church celebrates the *Season of Advent*. Advent reminds us of God's coming. Its a season that looks back to the birth of Christ, looks around at the ongoing work of God, and looks forward to a triumphant fulfillment of all of God's promises. ADVENT - God is with us!

But, in some ways, the season of the church is a great deal like the holiday season - Advent is also filled with *joy* and *travail*. The story of God's coming, and the life of Jesus that unfolds throughout the pages of the New Testament is at many points an exhilarating, liberating, and miraculous wonder. But it is also a troubling story, filled with tragedy, violence, and grief. So, even if you find that the weeks ahead are a mixture of emotions for you, take time to remember that God is with us, and that God's story is very much like our story. Take time to give thanks and be generous in all circumstances, to seek peace by uncommon effort, and to look out at the world with expectation - with the expectation that God will soon appear!

Come to church during December. Remember who you are and where you belong. Listen to God's story all over again and see if you can hear your own life mixed in with the words.

Happy Thanksgiving to those I have not seen, and Merry Christmas to everyone.

Bro. Jake



Advent



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History of Old Union UMC

Trivia Question

November's Question: Who was the first person and date buried in the New part of the cemetery?

Answer: Rosina Adams Turner

Date of Death: Friday, April 3, 1959

Buried: Sunday, April 5, 1959

December's Question: When was the current church sign put up?

(Answer will be in the January's Bell's Messenger)

How to increase our Attendance?

We are asking everyone to continue brainstorming. These ideas will be discussed at future board meetings. Our goal is to become a growing church again. In order to do this we need everyone working together and praying.

United Methodist Women

The Old Union UMW

December meeting, which will be our Christmas meeting, will be on Saturday, December 7th at 8:30am in the fellowship hall. We will be playing Dirty Santa with \$5.00 gifts. For food, each person that is able to is requested to bring some type of breakfast food. If you plan to attend, please let Beverly know what food you will be bringing.

All ladies are encouraged to attend our meetings.

We would like to thank everyone that helped in any way with the 10th Annual

Country Buffet and Auction. We raised \$1819.65.

United Methodist Men

The United Methodist Men met Sunday, November 3rd at 8 am in the Fellowship Hall. Gene Farlow was our host. At this meeting we decided the dates for the Country Breakfasts for 2014. The dates are Saturday, March 22nd, Saturday, May 17th and Saturday, September 20th.

The United Methodist Men would like to thank everyone that purchased a Cooked Pork Shoulder. We did raise \$715.11.

The December meeting will be Sunday, December 1st at 8 am in the Fellowship Hall. At that meeting we will be having a Christmas Party. All men are welcome to our meetings.

United Methodist Youth Ministry

The United Methodist Youth Ministry had it's meeting on Sunday, November 17th at 6 pm. We will be cleaning the church the month of December since we are doing the Christmas Program. We also decided sometime in January we will be having a lock in at church one Friday night.

The Youth Ministry will be presenting the Christmas Program "Christmas in Black & White: Discovering the real story of Christmas" on Sunday, December 15th at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary.

Our Christmas Party will be Sunday, December 1st from 4 pm until 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is to bring a \$5 gift which can be a boy or a girl. We will go Christmas Caroling in the Community at 6 pm after our Christmas Party. Everyone in the church is welcome to go with us caroling.

We are continuing to sell the Rada Knives etc. The new books have been given to each of the Youth Ministry members and there are also books on the desk of the Financial Secretary. If you would like to purchase see any of the Youth Ministry members.

Our next meeting will be a Lock-in on Friday, January 10th or Friday, January 24th. The exact date will be announce the first of January.

Christmas Card Box

The Christmas Card Box is in the hall under the bulletin board. It has been updated to the best of our knowledge with at least one person in each household. Start you Christmas Cards now.

Christmas Play Practices

The dates and time for play practices are:

Sunday, December 1st at 3 pm to 4 pm

Tuesday, December 3th at 6 pm to 8 pm

Thursday, December 12th at 6 pm to 8 pm

Saturday, December 14th at 5 pm - until

Other Churches Christmas Programs in the Community

Glenola Baptist Church- Live Nativity Scene: Friday, December 13th, Saturday December 14th and Sunday, December 15th, 6:30 pm – 9 pm

Fairview UMC- Christmas Cantata “The Light of Christmas”: Sunday, December 15th at 6 pm

Sophia Baptist Church- “The Shepherd’s Play” Sunday, December 23rd at 6 pm in their Family Life Center.



A Question for All:

Can anyone offer a convincing explanation for the origins of our name - Old Union? The word "Union" had a particular meaning in the church in the years between the Revolutionary War that the Civil War, a meaning that carried special emphasis within the revivalist tradition. Do you know, or can you find out what that meaning was? And do you think this meaning might be what stands behind our church's name, *Old Union*?

If you have answer's to this either send an email to bradyjake@hotmail.com or jws13@northstate.net or in writing to Jake or Jeffrey.

Meals After Church

We will continue our tradition in 2014 as we have the last few years. A group or Sunday School class in the church will take one Sunday a month to fix a meal after church for a Fund Raiser.

We need someone to sign up for the month of February. Just let Jeffrey know if your group would like a month and what Sunday you will be doing it.

Sunday, January 12th : Young Adult Class will have Chili Beans, Vegetable Soup, Pimento Cheese Sandwiches, Dessert and Drink. Price: Donation

March: Adult Sunday School Class

Committees of the Church

This is a reminder there is a list of the Committees of Old Union for 2014 on the Bulletin Board. Please check to see what committees you are a member of. All Officers and Committees take effect January 1, 2014.

Missing You Mission

Please remember that if there is any person that you have noticed that is not at church and would like a card sent to them, please write their name on paper provided in the pews and give them to Linda Byrd or place them in the offering plate.

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Dustin's Address

A1C Spillman, Dustin L
101 Airman Circle 2112
Offutt AFB, NE 68113-2070

Scheduled Board Meetings 2014

Sunday, January 12th at 2 pm
Sunday, April 6th at 2 pm
Sunday, July 13th at 2 pm
Sunday, October 19th at 2 pm

Shut Ins Addresses

Mabel Farlow
5080 Walker Mill Road
Sophia, NC 27350

Church Cleaning Schedule

December: Youth Ministry
January: Jeffrey Smith

We are starting fresh with who is cleaning up the church for next year. I have posted a new sign up sheet on bulletin board. If you are willing to take a month, please sign up on sheet. The months that are left are September, October and November.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Please forgive me if your Birthday or Anniversary has not been included in the Newsletter. I only publish the ones that I have been given. If you would like yours to be included please give all your family's birthdays and anniversary on an index card or piece of paper. Thanks.

Birthdays

December:
12/3: Toni Brown
12/4: Lukas Blakely
12/5: Jeffrey Smith
12/12: Brayden Gladden
12/20: Zackary Stinnett
12/21: Nellie Johnson
12/27: Amber Parrish
12/28: Dalton Spillman

January:
1/6: Darrell Spillman
1/8: Lovier Stephens
Luke Johnson
1/9: John Johnson
1/15: Jaylyn Gladden
1/18: Tommy Johnson
1/19: Chris Stinnett
1/23: Robin Parrish
1/24: Alex Johnson
1/28: Michele Blakely
1/31: Lynda Spillman

Anniversaries

December:
12/2: Burt & Michele Blakely

January:
1/21: John and Jan Johnson

Newsletter Submissions

Please have all newsletter submissions for the January edition of the Bell's Messenger to me by Sunday, December 29th. Remember my email is jws13@northstate.net .

John Wesley's Aldersgate Experience

From *An Extract of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Journal: from February 1, 1737-8, to His Return from Germany*

What occurred on *Wednesday*, 24, I think best to relate at **large**, after premising what may make it the better understood. Let him that cannot receive it ask of the Father of **lights**, that He would give more **light** to him and me.

1. I believe, till I was about ten years old I had not sinned away that "washing of the Holy Ghost" which was given me in baptism; having been strictly **educated** and carefully taught, that I could only be saved "by universal obedience, by keeping all the **commandments** of **God**;" in the meaning of which I was diligently instructed. And those instructions, so far as they respected outward duties and sins, I gladly received, and often thought of. But all that was said to me of inward obedience, or holiness, I neither understood nor remembered. So that I was indeed as ignorant of the true meaning of the **Law**, as I was of the **Gospel** of Christ.

2. The next six or seven years were spent at school; where, outward restraints being removed, I was much more negligent than before, even of outward duties, and almost continually guilty of outward sins, which I knew to be such, though they were not scandalous in the **eye** of the world. However, I still read the Scriptures, and said my prayers, morning and **evening**. And what I now hoped to be saved by, was, 1. Not being so bad as

other people. 2. Having still a kindness for religion. And, 3. **Reading** the Bible, going to church, and saying my prayers.

3. Being removed to the University for five years, I still said my prayers both in **public** and in private, and read, with the Scriptures, several other books of religion, especially comments on the New Testament. Yet I had not all this while so much as a notion of inward holiness; nay, went on habitually, and, for the most part, very contentedly, in some or other known sin: Indeed, with some intermission and short struggles, especially before and after the holy communion, which I was obliged to receive thrice a year. I cannot well tell what I hoped to be saved by now, when I was continually sinning against that little **light** I had; unless by those transient fits of what many Divines taught me to call repentance.

4. When I was about twenty-two, my father pressed me to enter into holy orders. At the same **time**, the providence of **God** directing me to Kempis's "Christian Pattern," I began to see, that true religion was seated in the **heart**, and that God's **law** extended to all our thoughts as well as **words** and actions. I was, however, very angry at Kempis, for being too strict; though I read him only in Dean Stanhope's translation. Yet I had frequently much sensible **comfort** in **reading** him, such as I was an utter stranger to before: And meeting likewise with a **religious** friend, which I never had till now, I began to alter the **whole** form of my conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new **life**. I set apart an **hour** or two a **day** for **religious retirement**. I communicated every week. I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. I began to aim at, and pray for, inward holiness. So that now, "doing so much, and **living** so good a **life**," I doubted not but I

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was a good Christian.

5. Removing soon after to another College, I executed a resolution which I was before convinced was of the utmost importance, — shaking off at once all my trifling acquaintance. I began to see more and more the value of time. I applied myself closer to study. I watched more carefully against actual sins; I advised others to be religious, according to that scheme of religion by which I modeled my own life. But meeting now with Mr. Law's "Christian Perfection" and "Serious Call," although I was much offended at many parts of both, yet they convinced me more than ever of the exceeding height and breadth and depth of the law of God. The light flowed in so mightily upon my soul, that every thing appeared in a new view. I cried to God for help, and resolved not to prolong the time of obeying Him as I had never done before. And by my continued endeavor to keep His whole law, inward and outward, to the utmost of my power, I was persuaded that I should be accepted of Him, and that I was even then in a state of salvation.

6. In 1730 I began visiting the prisons; assisting the poor and sick in town; and doing what other good I could, by my presence, or my little fortune, to the bodies and souls of all men. To this end I abridged myself of all superfluities, and many that are called necessities of life. I soon became a by-word for so doing, and I rejoiced that my name was

cast out as evil. The next spring I began observing the Wednesday and Friday Fasts, commonly observed in the ancient Church; tasting no food till three in the afternoon. And now I knew not how to go any farther. I diligently strove against all sin. I omitted no sort of self-denial which I thought lawful: I carefully used, both in public and in private, all the means of grace at all opportunities. I omitted no occasion of doing good: I for that reason suffered evil. And all this I knew to be nothing, unless as it was directed toward inward holiness. Accordingly this, the image of God, was what I aimed at in all, by doing his will, not my own. Yet when, after continuing some years in this course, I apprehended myself to be near death, I could not find that all this gave me any comfort, or any assurance of acceptance with God. At this I was then not a little surprised; not imagining I had been all this time building on the sand, nor considering that "other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid" by God, "even Christ Jesus."

7. Soon after, a contemplative man convinced me still more than I was convinced before, that outward works are nothing, being alone; and in several conversations instructed me, how to pursue inward holiness, or a union of the soul with God. But even of his instructions (though I then received them as the words of God) I cannot but now observe, 1. That he spoke so incautiously against trusting in outward works, that he discouraged me from doing them at all.

2. That he recommended (as it were, to supply what was wanting in then) *mental prayer*, and the like exercises, as the most effectual means of purifying the soul, and uniting it with God.

Now these were, in truth, as much my own works as visiting the sick or *clothing* the naked; and the union with God thus pursued, was as really my own righteousness, as any I had before pursued under another name.

8. In this *refined* way of trusting to my own works and my own righteousness, (so zealously inculcated by the mystic writers,) I dragged on heavily, finding no *comfort* or help therein, till the *time* of my leaving England. On shipboard, however, I was again *active* in outward works; where it pleased God of his free mercy to give me twenty-six of the Moravian brethren for companions, who endeavored to show me “a more excellent way.” But I understood it not at first. I was too *learned* and too wise. So that it seemed foolishness unto me. And I continued preaching, and following after, and trusting in, that righteousness whereby no flesh can be justified.

9. All the *time* I was at Savannah I was thus beating the air. Being ignorant of the righteousness of Christ, which, by a *living* faith in Him, bringeth salvation “to every one that believeth,” I sought to establish my own righteousness; and so labored in the *fire* all my days. I was now properly “under the *law*;” I knew that “the *law*” of God was “spiritual; I consented to it that it was good.” Yea, “I *delighted* in it, after the *inner* man.” Yet was I “carnal, sold under sin.” Everyday was I constrained to cry out, “What I do, I allow not: For what I would, I do not; but what I hate, that I do. To will is “indeed” present with me: But how to perform that which is good, I find not.

For the good which I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. I find a *law*, that when I would do good, evil is present with me:” Even “the *law* in my members, warring against the *law* of my mind,” and still “bringing me into captivity to the *law* of sin.”

10. In this vile, abject *state* of bondage to sin, I was indeed fighting continually, but not conquering. Before, I had willingly served sin; now it was unwillingly; but still I served it. I fell, and rose, and fell again. Sometimes I was overcome, and in heaviness: Sometimes I overcame, and was in joy. For as in the former *state* I had some foretastes of the terrors of the *law*, so had I in this, of the comforts of the *Gospel*. During this *whole* struggle between *nature* and grace, which had now continued above ten years, I had many remarkable returns to prayer; especially when I was in trouble: I had many sensible comforts; which are indeed no other than short anticipations of the *life* of faith. But I was still “under the *law*,” not “under grace:” (The *state* most who are called *Christians* are content to live and die in:) For I was only striving with, not freed from, sin. Neither had I the witness of the Spirit with my spirit, and indeed could not; for I “sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the *law*.”

11. In my return to England, January, 1738, being in imminent danger of death, and very uneasy on that account, I was strongly convinced that the cause of that uneasiness was unbelief; and that the gaining a true, *living* faith was the “one thing needful” for me. But still I *fixed* not this faith on its right object: I meant only faith in God, not faith in or through Christ. Again, I knew not that I was wholly void of this faith; but only thought, I had not enough of it. So that when Peter Bohler, whom

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God prepared for me as soon as I came to London, affirmed of true faith in Christ, (which is but one,) that it had those two fruits inseparably attending it, “Dominion over sin, and constant Peace from a sense of forgiveness,” I was quite amazed, and looked upon it as a new Gospel. If this was so, it was clear I had not faith. But I was not willing to be convinced of this. Therefore, I disputed with all my might, and labored to prove that faith might be where these were not; especially where the sense of forgiveness was not: For all the Scriptures relating to this I had been long since taught to construe away; and to call all Presbyterians who spoke otherwise. Besides, I well saw, no one could, in the nature of things, have such a sense of forgiveness, and not feel it. But I felt it not. If then there was no faith without this, all my pretensions to faith dropped at once.

12. When I met Peter Bohler again, he consented to put the dispute upon the issue which I desired, namely, Scripture and experience. I first consulted the Scripture. But when I set aside the glosses of men, and simply considered the words of God, comparing them together, endeavoring to illustrate the obscure by the plainer passages; I found they all made against me, and was forced to retreat to my last hold, “that experience would never agree with the *literal interpretation* of those scriptures. Nor could I therefore allow it to be true, till I found some living witnesses of it.” He replied,

he could show me such at any time; if I desired it, the next day. And accordingly, the next day he came again with three others, all of whom testified, of their own personal experience, that a true living faith in Christ is inseparable from a sense of pardon for all past, and freedom from all present, sins. They added with one mouth, that this faith was the gift, the free gift of God; and that he would surely bestow it upon every soul who earnestly and perseveringly sought it. I was now thoroughly convinced; and, by the grace of God, I resolved to seek it unto the end, 1. By absolutely renouncing all dependence, in whole or in part, upon my own works or righteousness; on which I had really grounded my hope of salvation though I knew it not, from my youth up. 2. By adding to the constant use of all the other means of grace, continual prayer for this very thing, justifying, saving faith, a full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for me; a trust in Him, as my Christ, as my sole justification, sanctification, and redemption.

13. I continued thus to seek it, (though with strange indifference, dullness, and coldness, and unusually frequent relapses into sin,) till Wednesday, May 24. I think it was about five this morning, that I opened my Testament on those words, Ta megista hmin kai timia epaggelmata dedwrhtai, ina genhsqe qeiov koinwnoi fusewv. “There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine

nature.” (2 Peter 1:4.) Just as I went out, I opened it again on those words, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.” In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul’s. The anthem was, “Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice. O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? For there is mercy with thee; therefore shalt thou be feared. O Israel, trust in the Lord: For with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his sins.”

14. In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

15. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, “This cannot be faith; for where is thy joy?” Then was I taught, that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation: But that, as to the transports of joy that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsels of his own will.

16. After my return home, I was much buffeted with temptations; but cried out, and they fled away. They returned again and again. I as often lifted up my eyes, and He “sent me help from his holy place.” And herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace. But then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; now, I was always conqueror.

17. *Thur . 25 .* — The moment I awaked, “Jesus, Master,” was in my heart and in my mouth; and I found all my strength lay in keeping my eye fixed upon him, and my soul waiting on him continually. Being again at St. Paul’s in the afternoon, I could taste the good word of God in the anthem, which began, “My song shall be always of the loving kindness of the Lord: With my mouth will I ever be showing forth thy truth from one generation to another.” Yet the enemy injected a fear, “If thou dost believe, why is there not a more sensible change?” I answered, (yet not I,) “That I know not. But this I know, I have ‘now peace with God.’ And I sin not today, and Jesus my Master has forbid me to take thought for the morrow.”



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Young Adult Class Decorating Church



Pork Shoulders



OLD UNION UMC

2014

(as of Wednesday, November 27, 2013)

THRU December 2013

- **Sunday, December 1: United Methodist Men Christmas Party at 8 am**
- **Sunday, December 1: Youth Ministry Christmas Party and Christmas Caroling**
- **Saturday, December 7: United Methodist Women Christmas Party at 8:30am in the fellowship hall. We will be playing Dirty Santa with \$5,00 gifts. For food, each person that is able to is requested to bring some type of breakfast food. If you plan to attend, please let Beverly know what food you will be bringing.**
- **Sunday, December 8th: Christmas Special Singing at 6:30 pm**
- **Sunday, December 15th: Christmas Program “Christmas in Black and White: Discovering the Real Story of Christmas” at 6:30 pm by the Youth Ministry followed by Barbecue Meal (free for the community) by the Young Adult Sunday School Class. We ask everyone to please bring a dessert**

- **Sunday, January 12: Young Adult Class Meal after Church. Menu: Chili Beans, Vegetable Soup, Pimento Cheese Sandwiches, Dessert and Drink. Price: Donations**
- **Sunday, January 12: Regular Scheduled Administrative Board Meeting at 2 pm in Sanctuary.**

