



Saint Paul United Methodist Church  
1320 Fernwood-Glendale Road  
Spartanburg, SC 29307

Non-Profit  
Organization  
US Postage Paid  
Spartanburg, SC  
Permit No. 33

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### The Epistle

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News For The Weeks Of December 12, 19, 26, 2016  
and January 2, 9, 2017

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*Return Services Requested*

# THE *Wonder* OF CHRISTMAS

## Volunteers for December 18<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>

Bread Taker	12/18	Kay Berkeley, Frances Maness
	12/25	Darrell & Judy Querin
	01/01	Jean Ogden, Marilyn Glasgow
	01/08	Lillian Hudson, Dixie Hubbard
Communion Assistants	01/15	Jim & Marian Hampton
	01/01	Hank & Simons Welter, Dick Derrick
Nursery Aides	12/18	TBA
	12/25	No Nursery
	01/01	Page Candler
	01/08	Bonita Cash
Children's Church	01/15	Beth Hudson
	12/18	Diana Kershner
	12/25	No Children's Church
	01/01	Brenda Ethington
Worship Greeters	01/08	Helen Cribb
	01/15	Helen Cribb
	12/18	Kay Berkeley, Frances Maness
	12/25	Darrell & Judy Querin
Worship Ushers	01/01	Jean Ogden, Marilyn Glasgow
	01/08	Lillian Hudson, Dixie Hubbard
	01/15	Jim & Marian Hampton
	12/18	Lamar Davis, Mickey Wingo, Bob Curry, Ed Lamb
Liturgist	12/25	Robert Ezell, Phil Womble, Austin Birch
	01/01	Jim Hampton, Jay Hampton, Sam Foster, Darrell Querin
	01/08	Bob McFarland, Jon Schanen, Bill & Bobbi Duncan
Acolytes / Crucifer	01/15	Guy Davis, Delton Vereen, Bill Myers, Sam Whitt
	12/18	Jason Traxler
	12/25	Jean Ogden
	01/01-15	TBA
Sound System	12/18	Choir Member
	12/25	Ansley Vereen
	01/01	Natalie Koller / Lydia Vereen
	01/08	Ansley Vereen
Offering Depositors	01/15	Choir Member
	12/18	Don Wasness
	12/25	Phil Womble
	01/01	Guy Davis
Offering Depositors	01/08	A.D. Page, Jr.
	01/15	Don Wasness
	12/18	Hamp Lindsey
Offering Depositors	12/25	Richard Petty
	01/01	Mike Harpe
	01/08	Chip Steele
01/15	Kadi Traxler	

**Altar Guild - December:** Connie Muzzy - Chair; Bob Muzzy, Johnsie Page, Nancy Curry, Eileen Byers, Frances Maness

**January:** Kay Berkeley, Suzanne Seager - Chairs; Nancy Odom-Rayner, Betty Wilson, Laurie Wilson

## The Pastor's Pen

As I sit at my computer writing this note, I am surrounded by something.....tax notices. There is the notice of the tax on my house in Spartanburg. There are two, one for the boat and one for the motor. Then there are two for the parcels of my little tree farm. Thank goodness it is taxed as agricultural land. Then there is one more for a piece of not-so-good investment property which was supposed to support me and Marianne in our old age. I am only happy about the fact our vehicle taxes aren't also due in December.

As I reflect on these notices, I am struck by the fact that all of the seemingly significant things I "own" in life are taxed every year. Year in and year out, I wrestle with whether to pay the tax this year or right after the first of the year. Which will give me the best advantage on yet another tax, my income tax? What a bummer right at Christmas, right?

Isn't it odd that the very Christmas story in the Bible has as its centerpiece taxes? The King James Version renders the first part of the second chapter of Luke this way: *And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.* Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem to be counted. Why? For tax purposes, of course. Without the census ordered by Caesar Augustus, we would be singing, "O, Little Town of Nazareth." I suppose if that were what we have always been singing it would sound OK, but there is something about Bethlehem.

Bethlehem. In Hebrew it means *house of bread*. For tax reasons, Mary and Joseph had to travel to "house of bread" where Jesus was born. When I think about it, I begin to see a twinkle in God's eye. The one who gives the bread of life, indeed, is the bread of life. He was born where? House of Bread, Bethlehem. That very gift of life in Jesus Christ is the most precious thing I "own". I have looked all over my desk where I put my bills. I can't find the first tax bill for it. I know I own this gift. God has promised it to me. We Methodists believe that we can have personal assurance that salvation is ours. But the tax bill for that "possession" is nowhere to be found.

What an irony. All of those things I own in this world, and on which I pay taxes, will one day be left behind. The one thing which I own that will go with me forever is tax free. The price has already been paid by the babe of Bethlehem who became my Savior on the cross. I will render unto Caesar because I have to. I will render unto God because I want to. Thanks to God for the great Christmas gift offered to me and to you without price. See you Sunday, and if I don't see you before, Merry Christmas!

Hope To See You Sunday,

*Big John*



## Children & Youth Birthdays

Dec. 29 Heyward Nettles    Jan. 22 Natalie Koller  
 Jan. 21 Cammie Myers

## Birthdays

December 15 Jim Hampton, Tony Thrift  
 December 16 Alma DuPont, Conrad Glasgow  
 December 18 Bob Muzzy  
 December 20 Bill Berkeley  
 December 24 Jay Hampton  
 December 25 Doris Luther, Jeff Newman  
 December 26 Diane Remeta, Chris Freeman  
 January 2 Lillian Hudson, Linda Whisnant  
 January 3 Denny Hatchette, Kirsten Button  
 January 4 Marian Hampton, Charlie Milford  
 January 5 Nancy Omer, Rob Byers  
 January 9 Fern Powell  
 January 10 Robert Little  
 January 11 Vahl Wilson, Louise Hull  
 January 13 Harriette Lazzo  
 January 16 Shirley Pridgen  
 January 17 Kemp Sigmon  
 January 18 Jane Pittman, Sharon Spencer  
 January 19 Theresa Lassiter  
 January 21 Don Williams  
 January 22 Ray Parker  
 January 23 Kadi Traxler  
 January 25 David Whisnant  
 January 26 Beth Walsh, Danny Scales  
 January 27 Ro Johnson  
 January 29 Caroline Greer  
 January 31 Peggy Rinehart, Hazel Francis, Laurie Wilson

## Upcoming Events

Each Wed. Disciple I Bible Study 6:30-8:30pm  
 December 16 Wrap & put out poinsettias 9:00am  
 December 16 Annual Blanche Greer Holiday Lunch 11:30am  
 Dec. 18-25 Poinsettia Pick-up (after Services, if Sunday)  
 December 24 Christmas Eve Service 5:00pm  
 December 25 Christmas Service 10:00am  
 Dec. 26-30 Preschool Completely Closed  
 Dec. 26, 27 Office CLOSED for Holiday  
 January 1 UMM Breakfast 7:30am  
 January 2 Office CLOSED in observance of New Year's  
 January 10 49ers 12:15pm

## Financials & Attendance

	<u>November 20</u>	<u>November 27</u>
Received	\$10,176.00	\$7,091.00
Restricted	\$199.79	\$0.00
Non-Restricted	\$163.00	\$130.00
Total	\$9,814.00	\$6,961.00
Sunday School	71	63
Worship Service	159	138
	<u>December 4</u>	<u>December 11</u>
Received	\$37,919.00	\$20,578.30
Restricted	\$2,600.00	\$1,060.00
Non-Restricted	\$516.00	\$262.00
Total	\$34,803.00	\$19,256.30
Sunday School	69	69
Worship Service	157	164

**Thank You** to everyone at Saint Paul UMC for all your kindness shown during my recent illness. The prayers have especially been felt by my family and me. We also appreciate all the food, cards, and inquiries regarding my health. Saint Paul members hold a very special place in my heart!  
*Jill Thrift and the Thrift Family*

## Altar & Narthex Flowers

**Altar Flowers** are given on December 18<sup>th</sup> for the Glory of God by Bob and Sandra Powell in celebration of the birthday of their daughter, Roberta McKinney.

**Altar Flowers** are given on December 25<sup>th</sup> for the Glory of God by our wonderful Altar Guild!

**Altar Flowers** are given on January 1<sup>st</sup> for the Glory of God by Bill and Lillian Hudson in memory of

The UMM would like to thank everyone for their generosity providing Angel Tree gifts! You have given a wonderful Christmas to 25 homeless or sheltered children this year! What a blessing for those who are unable to provide for themselves at this time. Thank you so very much!

**In Recognition** of the dedicated work of our church staff, the Church Council is encouraging you to contribute to a love offering to be shared among our wonderful staff members for Christmas. You may make contributions to this fund through the end of the year, by marking your gift as "Staff Love Offering". We would suggest that you do so with the collection this Sunday, December 18, if possible.

The UMW requests help for wrapping and placing poinsettias at 9am this coming Friday, December 16, in the sanctuary. Any questions, please call Diane Remeta at 590-0169.

**The Annual Blanche Greer Holiday Lunch** will be at the Piedmont Club on Friday, December 16, at 11:30 AM. Circle members will meet in the Kate Barry Room. Cost is \$22, all inclusive. Make reservations with Barbara Barnes (583-4192) before December 13.

**Offering Envelopes:** Please pick-up your 2017 Offering envelopes in the Narthex foyer. If you can't find yours, please let us know and we'll get a box to you. If you're unable to get to the church, give us a call and we'll mail them to you.

## Church Member Altar & Narthex Flower Sign-ups 2017

If you would like to provide Altar or Narthex flowers for the worship services during 2017, please call the Church Office if you will be unable to fill out a bulletin insert. We'll check if your requested date is available and help you make your arrangements. Thank you.

## Picnic In The Gym

The UMM would like to invite everyone to a Picnic In The Gym immediately following the January 8<sup>th</sup> worship service. Our menu includes Hamburgers and Hot Dogs, Side Dishes and Cookies for dessert. So you may be asking yourself, "Wow, why is the Men's Club tempting us with food?" Well, we are Methodist and known for our casseroles, but more importantly, we're Methodist and known for helping others.

The Men's Club would like to sponsor a church-wide outreach mission in conjunction with Total Ministries known as a Mobile Food Pantry. This program feeds over 100 families in need and it's a project that all ages of our church family can participate in.

Traci Kennedy of Total Ministries will join us to explain how we our church family can host a Mobile Food Pantry this upcoming Spring. The exciting part of this outreach is that young to young-at-heart can participate.

You will find sign up forms on the back of the white sheets in the bulletins to help us know how many to prepare for. You only need to sign up once on the white sheet and we want to thank you in advance for joining us for this time of fellowship and for helping those in need.

*Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. Hebrews 13:16*