

## From the Pastor's Pen...

“God has made everything suitable for its time; moreover he has put a sense of past and future into their minds, yet they cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil. I know that whatever God does endures forever, nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it; God has done this, so that all should stand in awe before him. That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already is; and God seeks out what has gone by.” *Ecclesiastes 3:11-15*

I hope that you and yours have had a wonderful Thanksgiving. And now the decorations have been put up and our eyes are turning toward Christmas. But please, not just yet. I know the Christmas season has arrived in the stores...well, in some stores it arrived back in October. The countdown to gift getting is already in full swing...just how many shopping days are left until Christmas and will there be even better bargains to come? I'm sure the tired pundit fueled “war on Christmas” will be finding its way onto the airwaves soon...as well as all kinds of wonderful tips and morning news fluff pieces on how to have that ultimate Christmas celebration. Fa la la la la la la la.

But on Sunday mornings in December, our worship will not reach Christmas until close to...well...Christmas. This is now the season of Advent, probably one of the most maligned seasons in the church calendar because it doesn't fit neatly into our holiday expectations. The church calendar does not follow our cultural calendar and the result is this bind over Advent where we are ready to bring our Christmas celebrations into our church and the church keeps telling us “no, not yet”.

However, let me speak a word on behalf of Advent. Advent is the beginning of our year-long worship journey. Advent sets the stage by splitting our vision into what God has done, what God is doing, and what God will do. And we learn that throughout it all, God works through the same sovereign principles of election and steadfast love to continually challenge all of humanity to grow into God's creative vision. For most of this Advent season, the prophet Isaiah will speak to us, teaching us, and framing our theological vision so that when Christmas finally does arrive we will hopefully know better the meaning behind Christ's birth...of the Word becoming flesh...of how that birth is to impact our lives today and how it is still shaping our future. Advent helps to remind us that Christmas is so much more than our surface celebrations, as wonderful and fun and as important as they may be. Christmas is God loving us with God's whole heart...of setting the example that we are to return through loving God with our whole heart and loving our neighbor as Jesus did and still does. Advent reminds us that the future will be consummated in the same whole-hearted love as the past of Christmas, as this child born will continue to work for our redemption and reconciliation in the days to come. Advent teaches us a hopeful anticipation making it more than just those four candles counting us down to the big day.

So this month as Christmas celebrations inevitably will put the season of Advent in the shadows...keep an eye and an ear out for Advent's message of moving from the darkness of sin into the light of God...yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Yours in Christ,  
Thom



## Special Events in December!

**December 2nd, 9:00 am to noon**

Wrap Christmas Child gifts at Family Central  
(Come for all or part of the morning!)

**December 4th, 12:00 pm**

Joy Gift Covered Dish Dinner  
Fellowship Committee will provide drinks

**December 11th, 3:00 pm**

*Joyous Sounds of Christmas*  
WJ United Methodist Church Hensley Hall  
A musical presentation by the Baptist, Methodist, & Presbyterian Choirs  
(no tickets needed this year)

**December 18th, during Fellowship**

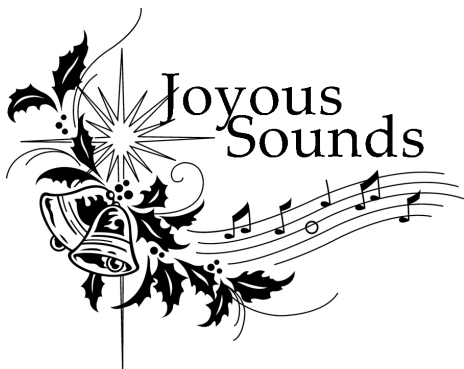
A visit from Santa!  
Please bring your favorite snacks  
Fellowship Committee will provide drinks

**December 24th, 7:00 pm**

Christmas Eve service

**December 25th, 11:00 am**

Christmas Day service



The *Joyous Sounds of Christmas* annual concert presented by individual musicians and the choirs of First Baptist Church of West Jefferson, West Jefferson United Methodist Church and Mount Jefferson Presbyterian Church will be held at the West Jefferson United Methodist Church in Hensley Hall, Sunday, December 11th at 3:00 p.m.

The concert will begin with selections performed by a variety of solos, instrumentalists, and small ensembles (including our own Terri Mork and Betty Upchurch) as well as each choir.

After a short intermission, the concert will conclude with the combined choirs singing the cantata, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day: Celebrating Peace on Earth" composed by Dennis and Nan Allen.

PLEASE NOTE: there is only one performance and there will not be tickets issued this year. Admission is on a first come, first served basis...so come early to ensure a seat!

### December Flower Calendar

- 4     Evans Leslie
- 11    Jim & Aimee Miller
- 18    Sherlyn Blevins
- 25    open

Sign up on the Flower list on the bulletin board, or call the church office.

## Worship

Al Farthing & Rusty Barr

### Thanks!

We would like to thank all of our adults and youth who helped Hanging of the Greens get-together on Sunday afternoon, November 20. The generous supply of soup, sandwiches and desserts were just delicious and were ample reward for our labor. We all enjoyed a lot of fun and Christmas anticipation.

We thank Rusty and Ann Estes for furnishing the Chrismon tree in the Sanctuary.

We thank Lee and Mannon Eldreth for the Fellowship Hall tree.

We thank Rusty and Melissa Barr for the wreaths to decorate our front entrance ways.

Our small children decorated the Fellowship Hall tree and did a great job. We all pitched in on the Chrismon tree and it is a beautiful celebration of Jesus' birth.

Communion was served on November 20.



### Orleta Demuth

1918 - 2011

Our church family is saddened by Orleta's death. She has been a pillar of MJPC since she and her husband Herb moved to Ashe County in 1980. Orleta's life was truly an example of Christian service to her community. She was a retired educator; but she never retired from learning. She entered into every facet of her adopted community – serving the church and many civic organizations, and volunteering at the hospital and library for untold numbers of hours. These are just a few areas where she selflessly served. She was especially proud of the young people at MJPC. When the youth participated in worship services, Orleta beamed with pride as much as if they were her own. She will be sorely missed by our community and our congregation in particular. We all are enriched and blessed to have known her. The memorial service will be February 23, 2012.



Memorials may be sent to:  
 Ashe Memorial Hospital Foundation  
 200 Hospital Ave., Jefferson, NC 28640

## *Mission*

Evans Leslie

### Pastor's Discretionary Fund

MJPC has had a Pastor's Discretionary Fund (PDF) for a number of years, and with it, we have helped a lot of people with urgent needs.

The current economic situation has **greatly** increased the needs. In 2011 alone, we have spent about \$6,500 mostly helping people keep their electricity on, but also with water bills, rent, food, gas, and even funeral expenses.

We've starting putting the current balance of the PDF in the bulletin just to keep you aware of where we stand.

If you feel led to help, please make your check to MJPC and designate it for PDF.

### Sharing Center Needs

With winter coming on, the Sharing Center has a need for coats & blankets. And, of course, food is always needed.

Feel free to bring these items to the church & some of our folks who volunteer at the Sharing Center will pick them up.

## *Fellowship & Hospitality*

Wanda Gervasi

### Note from Wanda

Next year we will have fellowship after Worship as weather permits during January & February. The Fellowship Committee will do this if no one signs up & it will be very simple. If you want, you can always contribute snacks or money to the Fellowship Committee.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped make this another good year. Special thanks to all the committees, Directory, Decorating, and to my hard-working Fellowship Committee. To the congregation, a special THANK YOU for all your support. May God Bless you and I look forward to working with all of you next year.

### December Fellowship Calendar

- 4 Joy Gift
- 11 no Fellowship
- 18 Santa
- 25 no Fellowship

We encourage you to sign up to host Fellowship! The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board near the water fountain, or call the church office. **Remember, Keep It Simple!**

## Care

Sherry McNeill

**In case of an emergency...**  
 ...call the interim pastor, Thom  
 Burleson, at 859-640-2493.

Albertine Blevins  
 Doris Dickson  
 Gertrude Francis  
 Max Smith  
 Ben Winters



The Care Committee visits our homebound members during the month. The committee members who are unable to visit in person call or send cards. The homebound really appreciate being remembered in any of these ways.

If there are any members that need to be added to the list please contact a Care Committee member or the office.

## MJPC Committees & Chairs

**Building & Grounds:** John Reeves

**Fellowship & Hospitality:** Wanda Gervasi

**Care:** Sherry McNeill

**Discipleship:** Lew Mullinax & Leeann Cronk

**Finance & Administration:** Anne Crawley &  
 Steve Murphree

**Leadership:** Mike Knight

**Mission:** Evans Leslie

**Worship:** Al Farthing & Rusty Barr

**Session** (which meets 3rd Sunday at 12:45 pm)  
 Joe Blevins, Clerk

## Session Notes

Joe Blevins

The Session met on November 13<sup>th</sup>. The meeting opened with prayer by Dr. Burleson.

Treasurer's report was received and is posted on the bulletin board in the hall.

The standing committee reports were received.

The Pastor Nominating Committee presented the Church Information Form for Session approval.

The Session approved the recommended asking budget for 2012.

The job description for the K-6 Discipleship Leader was approved.

The motion to pay off the remainder of the building loan (\$22,924.74) from the Yadkin Valley Bank general money market account was approved.

The meeting closed with prayer by Evans Leslie.

The next stated Session meeting is scheduled for December 18.

If you have concerns about the church or business that needs to be brought before the Session, please contact me or any member of the Session.

Grace and Peace,  
 Joe



## *Finance & Administration*

Anne Crawley & Steve Murphree

### October 2011

#### General Fund

Beginning balance		\$ 66,856.40
Income	\$23,335.65	
Expenses	\$20,047.27	
Ending balance		\$ 70,144.78

Two-Cents-a-Meal (received YTD) \$ 2,339.76

#### Pastor's Discretionary Fund

Assistance was given to individuals to help with various needs, as listed below:

BREMCO	\$	545.19
Water bill	\$	48.04

### Update on the Loan Balance!

At the November Session meeting, Session voted to pay off the building loan using money from our YVB Money Market account.

It was paid in full on November 16th.

The Building Fund will remain open for people who wish to contribute to our future building needs.

### Offering Envelopes

At the end of the year, we will make available boxes of offering envelopes, on a table in the hallway. Feel free to pick up a box whenever you need a new supply. If you need a box mailed to you, just let the office know, and we'll be happy to mail you a supply!

## *Church Communications*

### Thom's Sermons

Go to our website at [mjpc.org](http://mjpc.org), then to "Worship", then "Pastor's Sermons", and click through to "Thom's Sermon Blog".

At the bottom of each of Thom's sermons, the blog has a "Leave a Reply" feature for comments & discussion. He encourages you to make use of this feature!

### MJPC Church Directory

Go to [mjpc.org](http://mjpc.org), then the News tab, & click on "Directory login" on the drop-down menu.

The log-in info is sent each month in the email telling you that the newsletter has been uploaded. Call Doris (846-7481 or [wjeffpres@skybest.com](mailto:wjeffpres@skybest.com)) if you need help accessing the directory.

Copies of the directory are also available in the literature rack near the water fountain.

### MJPC Calendar

We have a more detailed, printable calendar on our website ([mjpc.org](http://mjpc.org)). Go to the News tab, & click on "Calendar" on the drop-down menu. Check it out!

### The MJPC Newsletter is...

...in the **literature rack** near the water fountain.

...on the **website** ([mjpc.org](http://mjpc.org)); go to the News tab, click on Newsletter on the drop-down menu.

...by **mail**: call Doris at 846-7481 or email [wjeffpres@skybest.com](mailto:wjeffpres@skybest.com).

## *Church Staff*

Dr. Thom Burleson	Interim Pastor
Kermit Dancy	Pastor Emeritus
Terri Mork	Choral Director
Betty Upchurch	Interim Accompanist
Erin Menear	Youth Director
Doris Facsko	Secretary/Bookkeeper



# December 2011



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>Each Sunday:</b> Sunday School 9:45 Worship 11:00 Fellowship 12:00	<b>*Youth!</b> <b>Supper @ 5 pm</b> <b>Meeting @ 6 pm</b>	<b>Each Wednesday:</b> Choir Practice 6:00		1	2	3
4 Joy Gift dinner after worship <b>Youth!</b>	5	6 Church breakfast, 8:30 am	7	8	9 Gift-wrapping at Family Central 9am to noon	10 Community Meal at WJ Elem. 10:30 am
11 <i>Joyous Sounds of Christmas</i> 3:00 pm (see p. 2) <b>Youth!</b>	12	13	14	15	16	17 Adopt-a-Hwy 9:30am
18 Santa at Fellowship Session 12:45 2 Cents a Meal <b>Youth!</b>	19	20	21 Newsletter deadline	22	23 Office closed	24 Christmas Eve service at 7:00pm
25 Worship service at 11:00 am with Communion (no Sunday School)	26 Thom on vacation this week Office closed	27	28	29	30	31