

# December

## December Events

- 6<sup>th</sup> 4:00pm Cookie Walk Set-up
- 7<sup>th</sup> 9:00am Cookie Walk  
9:00am Red Cross Blood Drive  
2:00pm Bryson City Christmas Parade
- 10<sup>th</sup> 6:00pm UMM Christmas Dinner
- 13<sup>th</sup> 6pm BCUMC Leads Singing on the Square
- 20<sup>th</sup> 6pm Community Caroling on the Square
- 22<sup>nd</sup> 11:00am Service of Carols  
12:15pm Christmas Dinner
- 24<sup>th</sup> 6:00pm Christmas Eve Service

## Anniversaries:

- 12<sup>th</sup> Sam & Penny Brandt  
Bob & Elaine Ringelspauh
- 15<sup>th</sup> Jerry & Norma McKinney
- 27<sup>th</sup> Zeke & Nancy Jones
- 30<sup>th</sup> Brian & Jill Parker

## Birthdays:

- 4<sup>th</sup> Ann Cooper
- 5<sup>th</sup> Danny Iadonisi
- 6<sup>th</sup> Bob Miller
- 8<sup>th</sup> Frances Colville
- 16<sup>th</sup> Michelle Maness Stiles  
Clel Shore
- 17<sup>th</sup> Ross Clapsaddle
- 19<sup>th</sup> Kyle Smith
- 21<sup>st</sup> James Maness II  
Leigh Ann Reece
- 25<sup>th</sup> Seth Parker
- 28<sup>th</sup> Madilyn Segrist
- 29<sup>th</sup> Ray Don Letts
- 30<sup>th</sup> Carolyn Russell

## Weekly Events

### Sundays:

- Sunday School 9:45 AM
- Worship Service 10:55 AM
- Stone Soup 5:00 PM

### Wednesdays:

- WoW! (new time!) 6:00 PM
- N. A. 6:30 PM
- Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM

## Church Office Hours

Monday – Friday  
9 AM – 12 NOON

## THE UPPER ROOM

DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

### Thoughts about Christmas:

The real gift of Christmas is God's presence with us. – Dec. 13

God comes down, and hope is born among us. – Dec. 20

Don't forget to pick-up your free copy of The Upper Room in the narthex or back hall.

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# December 2013



## Newsletter



Join us December 7 for the UMW's annual Cookie Walk & Bazaar!

Want more photos? [See More](#) on our website.



# Memo from the Midbar



## Christmas Traditions

Back in the early 1700s, the English settlers in Williamsburg, the capital of Colonial Virginia, celebrated Christmas with customs they had brought from home.

There was no Santa Claus (Dutch tradition), no Christmas trees (German tradition), no Nativity crèches (Italian tradition), and no chimney stockings (American tradition).

Christmas in Colonial Williamsburg was chiefly a holy day, but the atmosphere was not solemn. Churches and homes were decorated with greens, while candles burned in all the windows to welcome carolers.

There was a public celebration too. Musicians played special concerts, and fireworks and cannon were exploded to heighten the general merriment.

Feasting was in order with dishes of roasted fowl and hare, marrow pudding, ham, oysters, sausage, shellfish, often capped by whole roast boar on a platter.

We have our own Christmas traditions in our church. Each year, we delight in decorating the sanctuary on the first Sunday of Advent (Dec. 1 this year). Through the “Hanging of the Greens” we anticipate the coming of the Christ child.

We light candles in the windows to symbolically share the light of Christ, as we commit to sharing the Good News, with the world. And we do that so well as we collect food, toys and funds for the needy in our community.

We even have our very own concert scheduled for Sunday, December 22 as the choir leads us in a musical celebration of Christmas.

And then there is the feasting after the worship service that Sunday. And oh, how we Methodists can feast! As far as I know, we haven’t had a whole roast boar, but anything is possible. We

might even have fireworks and cannons afterwards.

But in the midst of these wonderful traditions and celebrations, I am most grateful for these familiar words:

*The angel said, “Don’t be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your savior is born today in David’s city. He is Christ the Lord.*

I love the feasting, traditions, and festivities; but my prayer is that they don’t become the most important thing for us at Christmas.

Rather, during this season of expectation; may our focus be experiencing and sharing God’s ultimate gift of love for the world ... Jesus.



## Children’s Ministry

Our goal is to help the young ones among us feel and share God’s love.

The Children’s Ministry Team is excited about ministering to the kids in

new ways and new spaces.

The Thanksgiving Turkey above is an example of how the children learn and share about God’s blessings in their lives.

The CMT is also in the process of transforming the children’s care room into a place where they feel welcomed and encouraged to learn.



## New Time! 6 PM

Starting on December 4<sup>th</sup>, we are moving our weekly WoW! service in the Fellowship Hall each Wednesday to 6:00 PM.

We hope the new time will work better for the young families and choir members that would like to attend.

WoW! offers contemporary praise and worship songs combined with a current message of Good News.

You can find more details, photos, and videos about the service on the link:

[See More online.](#)



## Stone Soup

Join us each Sunday, starting at 5 pm for a fellowship meal and study of the Psalms.

We are continuing our study on Psalm 119 through December. Don’t worry, you can drop in anytime during the study and it will make sense.

Each week we cover an 8-verse section of the Psalm.

1. First we Reflect.
2. Next we discuss.
3. Then we dig deeper.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Verses</u>	<u>Letter</u>
12/1	25-32	⌈
12/8	33-40	⌋
12/15	41-48	⌌
12/22	49-56	⌍
12/29	57-64	⌎

Check the website or church bulletin to see the food “theme” will be for the week.

Click on the link below to:

[See More online.](#)



We would like to echo Dr. Eugene's thanks to all who helped give life through water to the people of Duty and Labruyere, Haiti:

Dear Rev. Wayner!

Good morning to you! Hope this finds you, the family and the people of River Of Life well, thanks be to God!

No words are enough to express our gratitude to you! It is so amazing to see all you and the people of River Of Life have accomplished for us here in Haiti. We do appreciate all that!!! YOU are a true blessing, believe me! Hope we will keep working together for the well-being of the Haitian people!

Please give my best regards to your family and to the people of River Of Life!

May God bless you all,  
Eugene Maklin MD

To follow the progress of the wells, water filter or donate online for even more hope:

[See More online.](#)

## Church News

### UM Women

Volunteers will be gladly welcomed Friday, December 6 at 4pm to set-up for the Cookie Walk.

The annual Cookie Walk & Bazaar will be on Saturday, December 7 from 9am until ? in the church Fellowship Hall. Cookies are \$6 per pound and a wide variety will be available and they can be easily frozen and saved for Christmas. There will also be crafts and gently used items for sale.

### UM Men

The annual UMM Christmas Dinner will be on Tuesday, December 10 at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall. Everyone is welcome to join us for dinner and fellowship.

There will be no meeting in December.

### Brass Reflections

At the beginning of the Sunday service on December 15, the brass group, called "Brass Reflections," will play Christmas music for about 15 minutes. Four trumpets, baritone, tuba, and French horn make up

this group, several of which are members of Bryson City UMC, others are from Waynesville and Sylva. They have been playing together for several years and frequently perform at area nursing homes and churches, and have even played with the Salvation Army at their battle site. Come and join us for this special performance.

### Christmas Dinner

On Sunday, December 22 we will have a Christmas lunch after our 11 am worship service.

Bring a pot-luck dish to share. Bring all of your friends and family! This will be one of our biggest celebrations of the year! Come and enjoy time together as we celebrate Emmanuel, God with us.

### Did You Know?

Singing carols changed Christmas! Before the advent of the Christmas carol, celebrations of Christmas had become so depraved and rowdy that the observance of the joyous season was once forbidden by the English Parliament.

The meaning of Christmas had become

lost in a frenzy of reveling, drunkenness, rioting, and depravity. "Decent people" found it necessary to stay indoors for safety.

The situation became so appalling that in 1644 Parliament passed strict laws making it illegal to commemorate the season in any way whatsoever!

Of course we wouldn't want that to happen here in Bryson City. So join us for ....

### Christmas Singing

On Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday nights during December, local churches will be leading "Carols on the Square" from 6-7pm in front of the old courthouse. BCUMC will be leading the singing on Friday, December 13. On Friday, December 20 there will be a joint event of all churches singing together. All voices are welcome to join in.



## Advent Giving

### December 1:

*Items for the Food Pantry*

The Food Pantry helps provide meals and pantry staples to many people in Swain County throughout the year.

### December 8:

*Financial Contributions to the Family Resource Center*

Share some love with children that wouldn't even have a new pair of socks this Christmas without you.

### December 15:

*Toys for Foster Children*

Bring in a toy for children of any age and help bring a smile to the foster children cared for by the Department of Social Services in Bryson City.

### December 22 & 29:

*Our Gift to Jesus*

Currently, we are \$8,218 behind in our conference "apportionments" for the year. Your donation helps us meet our promise of commitment to:

*World Service (missions is equivalent to all other categories combined), Ministerial Education, Episcopal Endeavors, Black College Fund, General Administration, Africa University and Interdenominational Cooperation.*

## Hope for Africa

The tea, silent auction, and presentation on Pam Jarrett's work in Africa November 17 in the Fellowship Hall was a great success. The twelve people who attended were entertained by a slide show and African music, a myriad of antiques and quality furniture up for bidding, and a 40-minute description of the problems and solutions that people face in Uganda and Kenya. The main issue is tuition. Like many countries, Uganda caretakers have to pay for children's schooling. Many cannot afford to do so. Malaria is another big problem.

Pam introduced, via slides and videos, the exceptional people helping her in mission work. They include Ssentamu Simon, a pineapple grower turned social worker, who watches over and cares for the welfare of 16 people in his Bible study class in Nkoma, Uganda. He checks on their families and school progress.

Ssentamu recently diagnosed malaria in a three-year-old-boy, got him to a clinic, and paid for medicine for him. The child's mother is recently deceased (of malaria) and

the father was not home. Ssentamu is applauded by Pam for his many efforts.

Henry Mayamba is the director of a Foundation that cares for 28 orphans near Kampala, Uganda. A deeply religious man, he raises these children as Christians. He has a few regular contributors, but could use more help. He has a loyal staff of five Ugandan volunteers. His biggest challenge is raising funds for tuition every four months. A long-term goal is getting electricity into the library that Pam created.

The participants were introduced to a place in Nairobi, Kenya called Kibera. It is the largest slum in Africa and is dismal and incredibly poor. In it lives Millicent Auma Otieno, a peace negotiator and mentor for negotiators for peace.

(Continued on pg. 3)



## Hope for Africa (cont.)

This is necessary at various times, but especially during elections. In 2007-2008 there was mass violence at and after election time. During that time, Millicent lost her business, her house and all her belongings. Her daughter missed a year of school. Instead of self-pity, Millicent established a nonprofit organization for displaced women, girls with early pregnancies, and rape victims. She provided guidance in getting education and work.

She works and volunteers for an American peace-building organization and goes to school at Kenya Methodist University. She is studying community health and needs help with tuition.

Kevin Aloo is one of many children in his family. He traveled from a subsistence farm to Kibera, worked odd jobs, went to college until he ran out of funds, and decided to help his poor community by forming a nonprofit organization, B-Attitudes, helping people establish and build businesses. He also founded Happy Feet African Sandals and now employs 28 people,

including Florence, a woman with no fingers who makes beaded necklaces. He is studying community service and administration of nonprofits. He is in night college and needs help with tuition.



By Ann Steele

"You probably should come now," Barb said on the phone. It was the good friend of my daughter, Beth, who had gone with her in the ambulance to the Naval Hospital in Norfolk. She didn't mention that Beth's heart had stopped on the way. Beth had been on tour with a music group in Colorado when suddenly she was terribly ill and the doctors there couldn't seem to help her.

So I caught the first plane from Atlanta and Barb picked me up to go to the hospital where I found Beth in agony, not only from whatever had attacked her, but from being dropped on the stretcher after having had a spinal tap. Every culture and blood test known to science must

have been run the next few days, and every department head at the hospital gathered every morning to discuss and speculate about what the problem was. Sometimes there were 10 or 12 doctors there, and she was isolated for Rocky Mountain spotted fever one day, even though she hadn't been anywhere to be exposed to it. All that was certain was that she couldn't lift her head from the pillow, couldn't lift her arms to feed herself, could only see blurry double images and was developing a hideous, red raised rash over all her body that itched relentlessly. She had been in a trial drug program some months earlier for multiple sclerosis patients and it seemed to have totally wiped out her immune system.

The World Series was on TV and Beth could hear, even though she couldn't see. Then, on August 8, we had a little birthday party. A few friends were admitted and we fed a little ice cream to Beth. It seemed to raise her spirits. We prayed a lot. Everyone prayed a lot. I lost track of how many prayer lists she was on, but we began to get messages from all over

the world: by mail, phone, e-mail; and the flowers and gifts were stacking up. I thought, "we'll have to rent a truck to take it all home if she lives." If she lives. One morning the report showed that some vital fluid, whose name I can't remember, was supposed to be about 172 and Beth's was over 12,000 and climbing. 14,000 was the maximum known to let anyone survive. It was the only time Beth said she thought she was going to die. The doctors were flooding her body with fluids by IV, but there never was a diagnosis or other treatment. It simply remained a mystery.

Sleep was impossible at night; the nurses' rounds commenced between shifts at 11 and 7 and at 4 a.m. the trash staff came, easy to empty everything when nothing was going on. But Beth was improving a little, so we decided to take her home. "We" were her big brother, Steve, and I. Barb helped with a big van to hold all the gifts, flowers, balloons and cards. We rigged some light metal pans together that Beth could bang in the night to wake us when she needed us. We spent lots of time

spreading the lotion over her bright red rash and she slept more. Very gradually her muscles seemed to respond some. She could see a little. Visitors came and people still called and prayer groups contacted us to say they were active.

It was six weeks later that Beth was able to walk from the parking ramp to the neurologist's office without a wheelchair. The doctor was amazed that she did that. He really never expected her to recover, you could tell.

Since that date, 2004, she has had an incredible career. The final four years in her 25 in the Army were as the Commander of the US Army Europe Band and Chorus. She led the group in concerts in 42 countries, including the first time any Americans had performed in Red Square in Moscow. The Queen of England came backstage to meet her after she conducted in London. On international TV, we saw her behind President Obama and the other four heads of state as she conducted the music on Memorial Day in Normandy. Because of fostering international relations, she is the only American bandmaster to

receive Germany's Silver Cross, the highest peacetime honor they award.

Now retired, she and her husband have settled in Colorado, back in the area where the 2004 illness started. She is conducting, teaching, playing and, again, to the amazement of the doctors, has accepted a job as ski instructor in Breckenridge. Amazing because she still has to give herself injections three times a week for MS that is always present. Often there is fever and pain, many times since 2004 (and before) there are episodes where vision is affected, maybe for months, or limbs don't work.

What is the secret that has kept her alive and more able to be active than the majority of MS victims? Well, neither she nor I were expected to live when I was carrying her, and after she was born, very prematurely but wholly operational, the doctors called her the miracle baby. I think her whole life has been the reflection of a miracle, looked after and directed by that mystical supreme being to whom we and many, many others pray.