



Mullins Messenger

A Publication of
Mullins United Methodist Church
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Sunday Morning Worship Service
December 4, 2011

8:45 in Mullins' Chapel – 10:50 in Mullins' Sanctuary

Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-11; 11 Peter 3:8-15; Mark 1:1-8

Sermon: "Coming Home for Christmas"

Pastor's Corner

Dear Brothers and Sisters on the Way,

Yesterday I attended my son's Eagle Scout Court of Honor. Several members of Mullins UMC helped Daniel to achieve this rank and you know what was involved in his journey. During the ceremony, I was repeatedly struck by the same message of speaker after speaker.

Speakers noted the importance of humility in leadership and the need for leaders to use their power and intellect not simply to advance themselves but to care for those in need. "Oh my," I thought, "This Scout troop is in line with the best of Christian, especially Wesleyan, faith practices."

Consider the vows people make to God when they join a United Methodist congregation. We promise to support the church with our prayers, presence, presence, gifts, service and witness. We did not pull those vows out of thin air, of course. Here in the season of Advent we can easily see the model for our membership vows in the life of Jesus.

Every would-be leader of a United Methodist congregation needs a healthy and active **prayer life**. Public prayers and private devotions, using books and guides, or being spontaneously open to God are all good.

Prayer is our ongoing conversation with God. Prayer is essential to one's spiritual well-being. Nothing that has eternal value ever begins without prayer. Jesus prays for us without ceasing and local church leaders must learn to do that same. Sometimes that means

putting our pride aside and learning from another person. The payoff is well worth the time and effort to learn.

Presence with the faith community, especially the local church, is another behavior that we learn from Jesus. Jesus did not think his equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself out for us. God wants to be with us so much, that God becomes human. How can a leader not be present when the church gathers? How can a leader not be present when the church gathers to do ministry? **Presence** in a small group such as Sunday school has the added benefit of allowing leaders to deepen their **prayer life** as well.

Gifts are on everyone's mind now. "Jesus is the reason for the season" we see on bumper stickers and elsewhere. True. The incarnation, God in human flesh, is God's great **gift** to humanity. We give gifts because God first gives **gifts** to us. What kinds of leaders of a church withhold their monetary gifts from the church they claim to lead? Let everyone set aside part of his or her belongings to return to God on the first day, the apostle writes. Can we consider people leaders who withhold their financial support from the church? If we wish to model our leadership on the life and ministry of Jesus, God's gift of salvation, then our finances, in a manner consistent with one's lifestyle, need to be where one worships.

(Continued on page 2)

Prayers

As members of the body of Christ, we are always in prayer for one another. At this time our thoughts and prayers go out especially for:

Margaret Carbaugh, at home

NOTE: Prayer is a wonderful gift from God. We are always willing to add friends and family to our prayer list. However, please help us keep the prayer list up to date by letting the church office know when names can be removed from the list. Thanks for your help in this matter.



Reimbursements and Receipts

For your convenience, the blue forms for reimbursement of expenses are now available on the table outside the church office. Please complete the form, with your name clearly printed on the top line, and sign at the bottom of the form. Remember to attach your receipts to the back.

You may leave your completed copy in the tray or bring it by the office weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Announcements for Sunday

Please send all announcements for Sunday morning to the church office by Noon on Fridays. Email information to brad@mullinsumc.org. Thanks for your help with this important matter.

Pastor's Corner (Continued from page 1)

Service is so obvious a part of the ministry of Jesus that it scarcely needs to be remarked on. Healing, welcoming, caring, praying with and for, feeding and more are **service** in the name of the God of all eternity. Christian leaders find ways to be in service. Mullins UMC offers so many venues of service that anyone seeking leadership may easily find a place to put his or her body in the way of help to others.



Witness, is a new promise we make to God when we join a United Methodist church. We bear witness to what we know is true. The Apostles' Creed is a good place to start to answer the question, what do Christians believe. Those statements can begin many honest conversations. In addition to general Christianity, of course, local church leaders must be able to bear **witness** to the essential goodness of the congregation they lead. Mullins UMC is a place of hospitality and hope, a place that celebrates past gains and strains to reach the future needs. Mullins Church, like all churches, has its unique opportunities and challenges. Faithful leaders will, in the words of the old song, "Accentuate the positive/Eliminate the negative/Latch on to the affirmative/Don't mess with Mister In-Between." This is a wonderful place to learn and grow to be and to do. Leaders will give witness to that fact and joyfully invite the next person they meet to some and see what God is doing from this location.

Prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. The Scouts know that those are essential characteristics are essential in leaders if an organization is to grow. The older Eagles reminded the new Eagles about that fact at the Court of Honor. The United Methodist Church knows this as well. Leadership may confer privileges, but in the church, in any holy group, the privilege is to serve, to support, to build up the body. This Advent season, let us reflect once again on the model of ministry we have in Jesus, the one whose birth we celebrate. We will see once again that prayers and presence, gifts and service and witness are at the core of Christian leadership.

Grace for the Way,

Brad

Poinsettias

Poinsettias will adorn our Sanctuary on December 18 and 25. If you would like to order poinsettias in honor or in memory of loved ones, please complete the form and return it to the church office, with payment. The cost of each poinsettia is \$10.00, and the deadline to order is Sunday, December 11.



Name: _____

In honor () or memory () of: _____

Number of Poinsettias ordered: _____ Amount Paid: \$ _____

UMW to Have Holiday Lunch at Women's Exchange

On Tuesday, December 6, Mullins' UMW will carpool from church to have lunch at the Women's Exchange. We invite members, guests, and ladies in the congregation to join us for a delicious lunch, fellowship, and maybe a little shopping. At the Women's Exchange you are sure to experience Christmas cheer in decorations and holiday aromas. Oh yes, this is Dutch treat.

We will meet in the Walnut Grove parking lot at 11 a.m. We will be seated for lunch at 11:30 a.m.

If you are going to join us, please let Margaret Brown know no later than noon, Monday, December 5, that you will be attending. (Phone 388-9190; email: mbrown@dbrown.com)

Lifeblood

It's time once again to "roll up our sleeves" and donate some blood to replenish the Mid-South region's blood supply for the holidays. Did you know that 90% of everyone who lives in the Mid-South will need a blood transfusion before they turn 70? Unfortunately, less than 10% of the population actually donates.



The blood mobile will be in our parking lot on Wednesday evening, December 14. Sign-up sheets to donate will be located in the Hall of the Apostles on Sunday mornings and in the Fellowship Hall on Wednesday night.

Visiting Mullins?

Check out our Visitor's Center in the Narthex. Exit the Sanctuary out the back doors and look for the sign. Information and a gift for first-time visitors awaits.

Have questions about the United Methodist Church? Check out www.umc.org and explore the site.

2012 Flower Calendar



The Flower Calendar for 2012 is posted on the church office window. The cost for each flower arrangement is \$30. Please call or stop by the church office and sign up for dates you'd like to give flowers next year.

Note: The Sundays in Lent have been marked out—we will not have Chancel Flowers on those Sundays.

Members in Service for December 4, 2011:

Liturgist: Cyndi Watkins

Ushers and Greeters: John Weaver (Head Usher), Lisa Weaver, Wayne Brafford, Debi Gray, Sally Lehning, Terry Durham, and Rose Melsa

No Children's Message—Communion

Chancel Flowers for

December 4 are being placed to the glory of God in loving memory of my husband George in remembrance of his birthday, by Carol Ann Moreland.

Gluten-Free!

Gluten-free communion wafers are now available for those with special dietary needs. The gluten-free wafers will be in a bowl on the communion tray on first Sundays when we celebrate communion.

The Worship Committee

invites you to join us on Sunday mornings in the Narthex for coffee and conversation following the 10:50 worship service.



The Menu for December 7:

*Ham
Northern Beans
Turnip Greens
Salad
Bread
Dessert*

*Adults-\$6, Children 12 and under-\$4,
Family Max-\$23*

Dinner is held on Wednesday nights at 5:45 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall, followed by a brief prayer service and an interesting program. Everyone is invited to attend and to enjoy the fellowship. Your first dinner is complimentary! If you're not already on the list, please call the church office to let us know you're coming so we'll be sure to have plenty of food.

Community Thanksgiving, a Blessing to Many

On a rainy Tuesday evening, November 22, we gathered together and asked the Lord's blessings at Second Baptist church with new friends from nine other area congregations. Though the weather outside dampened attendance, the spirit of worship inside was warm and celebratory. The choir loft was filled with singers wearing the robes of their local congregations, and worship leadership was offered by the various clergy leaders, each wearing his or her particular robe and color. And the variety of visual messages—of seeing people we recognized intermingled with people we didn't know—reminded us of the variety of God's blessings.

The music was simply amazing. With accompaniment led by organ and piano, the Sanctuary was filled with the music of traditional hymns sung by the congregation, and the choirs offered beautiful anthems.

The evening's offering was received and given to The Hunger Banquet, a consortium of religious institutions and community agencies coming together to address the severe hunger issues in our city. Memphis has been ranked number one for food insecurity in our nation, and donations that supply meals to hungry people through the Food Bank and MIFA are down. More information about how we can participate in The Hunger Banquet will soon be available.

Participating congregations included Balmoral Presbyterian, Church of the Holy Communion (Episcopal), Church of the Holy Spirit (Roman Catholic), Emmanuel United Methodist, Germantown Cumberland Presbyterian, Kingsway Christian, Lord of Life Lutheran, Mullins United Methodist, Second Baptist, and Temple Israel. Mullins was well represented in all aspects—in the pews, in the choir loft, and in worship leadership—and all seemed to feel the Community Service had been a wonderful experience.

A nod gratitude goes to Rev. Gabriel who, as Mullins' pastor, received the invitation for Mullins' participation and moved the conversation forward.

Mark your calendars now and plan to attend next year's Community Thanksgiving Service on Tuesday, November 20, 2012, at Balmoral Presbyterian Church.

Letter of Thanks

Friends,

Thank you for your participation in a wonderful service of worship together last week! I am deeply grateful for each one's participation in the service and the energy you gave to promoting this and getting members of your congregations to come. We were honored to play host to you all. Please convey our thanks to your faith community for joining us in the special season of reflection and remembrance.

You will be pleased to know that the offering we collected totaled \$2,561.12 for The Hunger Banquet.

Blessings to you all in this season of gratitude and new beginnings that lie ahead.

Stephen H. Cook
Senior Pastor
Second Baptist Church

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Volunteers Needed

We need volunteers to assist with Worship hour kids. Additional volunteers are needed on Wednesday nights to work with kids and youth for the Christmas pageant. Please contact Vicki Gandee to volunteer your time.

Church Christmas Dinner and Choir Cantata

We hope you will join us for our Christmas Dinner on Sunday, December 11, at 6 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We will enjoy Christmas songs, a special program by our children, and a visit from Santa himself! Please contact the church office by December 7 to make your reservations.

Preceding the Christmas dinner, the Chancel Choir will present its Christmas cantata in the Sanctuary at 5 p.m.

We look forward to seeing you all there!



Ministry Thrives at Mullins UMC in 2011

The annual meeting of Mullins UMC's Charge Conference was held in connection with our 10:50 worship on Sunday November 20. As is always the case, the Conference included a review of the ministry events of our church over the preceding months. This year we celebrated the ministry of this community of faith with a litany that used the song "Seasons of Love." The ministries lifted up were as follows.

2011 Ministry Review: A Year in the Life of Mullins UMC Church/Charge Conference

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes how do you measure, measure a year?

In an updated web site, newsletter and signage, in committing to apportionments and understanding why.

Never stopping until the right combination allowed the strong creation of a Sunday small group for Generation Y.

In dinners on Wednesdays with wide-ranging studies, Companions in Christ, Soulful Readers and more.

In animal blessings, in beading and in Maanza a Leza, and when our neighbors needed prayer, opening our door.

In a hands-on youth trip that worked with the needy, and in adults giving time to children and youth who grow here.

In church wide events that celebrate our family, biological or baptismal, they are living parts of Mullins whether far or near.

In the Crafts Fair harnessing work from the whole congregation, to raise money for missions so that right might stop wrong.

In worship, that merges traditional with modern, with passion and love, singing from Fanny Crosby to Charles Wesley, from Rutter to Armstrong.

In baptizing babies, youth and adults, seeing that growth is not a program but a means of grace. In the witness of the Saints all around us, whether still striving on earth or in heaven, having finished their race.

In the ashes of Wednesday, the dying of Friday, the sunrise of Easter the choir's leading roles. In studying Five Practices so that we may be fruitful, and serving our city to strengthen our souls.

In our re-commitment to God's Commission and Commandment, serving God, loving neighbors and baptizing the world.

In learning of Wesley so that we are the people whose methodical witness is like a banner unfurled.

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes. Five hundred twenty-five thousand moments so dear.

Five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes how do you measure, measure a year?

In daylights, in sunsets, in midnights, in cups of coffee, in inches, in miles, in laughter, in strife.

In five hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred minutes how do you measure a year in the life?

How about love? How about love? How about love? Measure in love. Seasons of love. Seasons of love.

The entire congregation then joined in singing from the great Wesleyan anthem *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling*. Truly, loving ministry is thriving at the corner of Mendenhall and Walnut Grove. We see well-established ministries that help to shape our spirits and form our Christian outlook. In addition, we see several ways that ministry in and through Mullins has taken on new looks. So, we may not always see the thriving ministries of this congregation. In this season of Advent, though, look around and see what is well rooted and well established. Also, give a look to what is fresh at this corner of God's world. You will see that all of it is good.

Advent

Sunday we began Advent, a season and a journey that takes us into increasing darkness. Literally, days grow shorter and the duration of darkness increases. For most of us, this seasonal increase in the length of darkness can be reversed with the flip of a switch, flooding our environment with light. Convenient and inexpensive lighting makes it possible for those of us who live in industrially developed countries to extend the day; we can continue to easily move about inside our homes, our locations of work, and with our shopping. However, this convenience can so amend the darkness that we lose sight of its rich spiritual importance. Darkness has important messages to offer us, and we are wise to not rush past them in haste.

Darkness is a time of mystery, when actions and objects can't be clearly perceived. And since we rely on our sense of sight to help us identify potential dangers on our path, darkness can cause us to stop and freeze rather than risk taking a step. Injury or misstep might be the result, and we sense fear rising within. Unable to safely move in any direction, we howl our unhappiness and demand "Somebody turn on the lights!" Darkness teaches us about vulnerability, and invites us to touch our human response of becoming frozen, stuck, and paralyzed by our fear.

Darkness is a time when listening becomes more important than sight. Listening becomes a tool of navigation and helps us get our bearings. However, listening also can increase our fear, because we attend to sounds that we usually dismiss in the light. "What just brushed against the window? Was it the wind blowing in the bushes? Or an animal? Or a person?" In the darkness, even ordinary sounds can be heard with greater clarity because WE listen more attentively. Darkness teaches us to listen actively and with expectation.

Darkness is a time when we try to map the space around us with our sense of touch. We reach out our arms and explore the darkness with our fingers, trying to find doorways and walls with our hands before we find them with our foreheads. If we have the good fortune to share the darkness with another person, we automatically try to join hands and travel forward together. Darkness teaches us about the gift of community.

We often hear counsel offered at this time of year about how to find meaning in Christmas. Hmm. I think that may be placing the cart before the horse. In order to find meaning in Christmas, we must first touch the experience of traveling the journey in deepening darkness. We can reflect on the words of Isaiah 9:2 (see side bar) and invite our imagination to teach us what it's like to walk in darkness or to live in a land of deep darkness. We can touch and remember that darkness creates within us feelings of fear and vulnerability, that darkness causes us to feel isolated and helpless, and that we tend to become motionless in our fear and to howl our unhappiness.

When we connect to those spiritual touchstones, we are ready to shiver away our fear as Light comes into the darkness. We are ready to embrace hope, even though the Light may seem ever so small. We are freed of the bonds of fear-filled paralysis and can move and dance with joy. We are filled with gratitude and can meet and embrace others around us with love instead of criticism.

Darkness is a holy time, a spiritual time, that strengthens us for the journey as God's people. No, these aren't fluffy, easy phrases. Darkness is a time of testing, a time when spiritual muscles will be stretched and when weaknesses will be revealed. It is, however, the holy landscape from which the stories of Christmas emerge.

Blessings of this holy season,

Scottie



*The people
who walked
in darkness
have seen a
great light,
those who
lived in a
land of deep
darkness --
on them
Light has
shined.*

Isaiah 9:2

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

Here is a list of Mullins members with birthdays and anniversaries in December. If you know of someone who is not on this list and who should be, have that person call the church office. We want to celebrate EVERYBODY!

Birthdays:

<u>Name</u>	<u>November:</u>		
Taylor Richardson	1	Carolyn Carter	12
Imogene Joyner	1	Brooke Lacaden.....	12
Pete Westergaard	1	Betty Jeffrey	14
Stephanie Mason.....	1	Ann Smith.....	16
Margaret Grace	2	Robbie Hill.....	17
Tracy Bryant.....	4	Reid Williamson	17
Jay Finzel	4	Austin Walker.....	17
Melissa Boam.....	4	James Williams	17
Miranda Goldsby	5	Lana Gardner	19
Pat Bryant.....	7	Gracie Cheshire	20
Corran Espey	7	Sara Oaks.....	21
Allison Gardner.....	7	Vivian Rushing	22
Evan Furst.....	7	Callie Dawkins.....	24
Charles Bradley	8	Missy Williams	24
Erin Edmiston	8	Debi Gray.....	24
Betty Smith	9	Shawn Brown	25
Suzanne Barnett	10	Natasha Griffin.....	25
		Sally Lehning	27
		Kimberly Alston	27
		Megan Lacaden.....	27
		Rebecca Edmiston	28
		Linda Gabriel	29
		Colleen Mason.....	29
		Caitlin Smith	29

Anniversaries:

Bob and Cyndi Watkins.....	8
Dave and Margaret Brown.....	9
Charles and Kathy Carter	10
John and Helen Russell	16
Taylor and Mary Beth Richardson.....	17
Camille and Charles Bradley .	20
Brenda and Wayne Carson....	21
Elmer and Hazel Wrobley.....	29

For your December Birthday



Don't forget to sign up for the **"Dine and Drive"** event on Saturday, December 10. We're meeting in the Fellowship Hall for a soup/chili meal at 5 p.m., and then driving to the Memphis Zoo to look at the lights.

Everyone is welcome!

Memphis Junior Academy Craft Fair

If you haven't quite finished your Christmas shopping yet, please be advised that Memphis Junior Academy (our neighbor just to the north on Mendenhall) is having its "Holiday Bazaar" this Sunday, December 4, from 10 until 2 in the gymnasium and auditorium. This event is sponsored by the 8th grade class.

Items for sale at the bazaar include children's gifts, crafts, floral arrangements, food, gift baskets, Mary Kay products, Miche bags, Pampered Chef stuff, professional services, stuffed animal kits, etc.

CHURCH STAFF:

Senior Pastor:

Rev. Dr. Bradley W. Gabriel
brad@mullinsumc.org

Minister of Spiritual Formation:

Rev. Scottie Brafford
scottie@mullinsumc.org

Director of Children's Ministries:

Vicki Gandee
vicki@mullinsumc.org

Director of Music Ministries:

Bryan R. Dunn
bryan@mullinsumc.org

Director of Parents Day Out:

Kimberly Alston
kimberly@mullinsumc.org

Church Secretary:

Susan Tutt
susmullins@bellsouth.net

Organist:

Aaron Foster
aaronf@bellsouth.net

Custodians:

Geraldine Finley
David Campbell

This Week at Mullins:

Sunday, December 4

- 8:45 a.m. Worship—Chapel
- 9:40 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:50 a.m. Worship—Sanctuary
- 3:00 p.m. Children's Basketball
- 4:00 p.m. Youth—Fellowship Hall
- 4:00 p.m. Kids Konnect
- 5:00 p.m. Yoga—Room 117
- 6:00 p.m. New Directions Christmas Party—Fellowship Hall

Monday, December 5

- 9:00 a.m. Walking in the Gym
- 9:30 a.m. Church Women United—Buntyn Presbyterian
- 6:00 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal—Sanctuary
- 6:30 p.m. Cub Scouts—Fellowship Hall

Tuesday, December 6

- 6:30 a.m. Career Support Group—Gym
- 9:00 a.m. Walking in the Gym
- 7:00 p.m. Yoga—Fellowship Hall

Wednesday, December 7

- 7:00 a.m. Men's Prayer Breakfast—Fellowship Hall
- 9:00 a.m. Walking in the Gym
- 5:45 p.m. Fellowship Dinner—Fellowship Hall
- 6:15 p.m. Children/Youth Programming
- 6:30 p.m. Adult Program—Fellowship Hall
- 6:30 p.m. Choir Practice

Thursday, December 8

- 9:00 a.m. Walking in the Gym
- 10:00 a.m. Bible Study—Parlor
- 6:15 p.m. Wind Ensemble—Choir Room

Friday, December 9

- 9:00 a.m. Walking in the Gym

Saturday, December 10

- 11:00 a.m. Yoga—Fellowship Hall
- 5:00 p.m. Parents' Night Out
- 5:00 p.m. Dine and Drive (Memphis Zoo Lights)—see page 7

Upcoming Events:

Sunday, December 11

- 5:00 p.m. Choir Cantata
- 6:00 p.m. Church Christmas Dinner—see page 4

Wednesday, December 14

- 5:00 p.m. Lifeblood—see page 3

Tuesday, December 20

- 7:00 p.m. Grace Notes Concert

Saturday, December 24

- 3:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service
- 6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 25

- 10:50 a.m. One Worship Service—No Sunday School

Sunday, January 1

- 10:50 a.m. One Worship Service—There WILL be Sunday School



OUR PRESENCE (LAST WEEK):

Sunday:

8:45 Worship Service 17
 10:50 Worship Service 70