



Messenger

Volume 15, Issue 12

December 2015

Coming Events

Board Meeting
January 11 @ 7pm
Windsor UMC

January Gathering
Dalzell UMC
Dalzell SC
Meal @ 7 Worship @ 8

Board Meeting
February 8 @ 7pm
Windsor UMC

February Gathering
First Christian Church
Columbia, SC
Meal @ 7 Worship @ 8

Board Meeting
March 14 @ 7pm
Windsor UMC

WORDS FROM THE COMMUNITY LAY DIRECTOR

Wishing a joyous Christmas to all of the Emmaus of the Midlands Community from the Board of Directors. God sent Christ into the world as our Savior. That's what Christmas is all about. In turn, Christ sends us into the world. But do we really understand how, where, and why we are sent? It truly is the season to be thankful. I want to remind you in the coming weeks of the Christmas season to take the time to be the hands and feet of Christ. There are many people or families right here in South Carolina that are in need due to the economy. A hand or a little help will bless both them and you. God is always great.

My Sunday School Class is studying the Advent program "Sent." One important lesson that we have learned is that we should refer to people first before their circumstances. For instance, rather than refer to a homeless person, we now name a person who is "experiencing" homelessness. This can apply to any individual experiencing living in stifling circumstances. We are sent to offer empowering and enabling words to people who feel stifled in life circumstances. Ask yourself, "what difference does it make in our perspective if we use "people first" language?"

During coming week, observe people you encounter in daily interactions whom you customarily may not notice: store clerk, people stocking shelves, waiting in line at the bank, etc. Discern God's light in those people and offer a brief silent prayer for them.

And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Luke 4:17-19

Come, Lord Jesus. Make me aware of your light shining in everyone I meet. Guide me as I seek to discern those people and places in need of restoration and newness of life, including myself. Give me insight into where you would have me go and what you would have me do as your disciple. Amen.

Charles



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Christmas Memories

When you hear the word *holiday*, what comes to mind? If you're like most people, shopping, parties, sales, and catalogs rank near the top of your list. The truth is, many holidays are becoming so commercialized that our proud traditions are in danger of becoming trivialized.

Holiday traditions represent a critical piece of our culture. They help form the structure and foundation of our families and our society. They remind us that we are part of a history that defines our past, shapes who we are today and who we are likely to become. Tradition contributes a sense of comfort and belonging. It brings families together and enables people to reconnect with friends. Tradition offers an excellent context for meaningful pause and reflection and serves as an avenue for creating lasting memories for our families and friends.

Someone at a recent Board meeting said "wouldn't it be fun to hear about all of our Christmas traditions and memories?" For many of us, Christmas memories from our youth bring about an instant smile, as we remember loved ones and a time when life seemed simpler.

I remember one Christmas when we were on an assignment with the U.S. Air Force and my kids were in middle school and we had this tradition of inviting folks from work that may not be near their families to come to our house for Christmas Eve and celebrate the holiday. We would decorate with lights and tinsel, and poinsettias. We cooked for days to provide a veritable feast with various meats, dips, breads, cakes, cookies, and all manner of finger foods.

A friend of our children had come over to spend some time with us and was fascinated with all of the food. Now Chris wasn't necessarily an overweight kid. He was just a little husky. But looking at Chris's eyes darting all over the tables of food and trying not to be obvious was just too much. We asked him if he'd had dinner and answering "no," we couldn't refuse. We had made a friend for life. Now, we still have our Christmas "feast" every year. But, we're always looking out for the one among us who was "seen but not seen" and extend a hearty invitation.

Read on for some other traditions and memories from your Emmaus family:

Our family tradition was participating (not just attending) in Christmas Eve Services) usually as Advent Wreath lighting of the Christ candle. After returning home, have a snack/meal, and watch back-to-back videos of Garfield Christmas and Claymation Christmas. What fond memories.

DeColores Gary Hartman



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Charlie and I and our five boys (when they were growing up) always gathered at First Christian Church for a Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service. We then went home to egg nog and sausage balls and lots of chips and dip for the boys. We opened our gifts to each other on Christmas morning and what a chaotic, happy mess we had with our family, plus the dogs and cats, and always some spilled hot cider on the carpet. And then Christmas dinner, usually at our house, with cousins, aunts and uncles, grandparents, and other extended family members. What joy and what love we shared as we celebrated the birthday of our Lord and Savior! Now that all our boys are grown with families of their own, we still celebrate, a bit differently, perhaps, but still with lots of love and joy. Carolyn McLean

Mine were very normal with trips to both Grandparents, one at the beach and one at the edge of the mountains. The one in upstate South Carolina with tons of cousins and uncles and aunts. The one at the beach with my grandparents and an aunt. But they were both about family and celebrating the birth of our Savior. Thad Hinnant

My favorite Christmas memory is Christmas Eve. My mom and Dad started a tradition the year they got married in 1944 of having their best friends over for a drop in—that grew and continued until my Mom died on Christmas Eve morning in 1997. That was the first year the lights were not on since 1944. Christmas Eve is bitter sweet for me. Susan Matthews

When our girls married and left home, decorating the tree and having a tree didn't seem to have the same significance. Both of us were working and we would put the tree on the back burner. All of a sudden it's almost Christmas. Several years ago realizing we were going to Atlanta for Christmas, trees were thirty plus dollars, and I don't want to stand every tree up on the lot for Stella to view, I decide on a change. I remembered my daddy use to go into the woods and cut a slash pine every year. So that's what I did. It had four limbs and no symmetry was to be found. But it grew on us and became the norm. Neighbors would take pictures and send to their friends. The annual tree has morphed into, what's next. Last year I used a seven foot gum: no leaves, lots of limbs, easy to light, no problem hanging ornaments, definitely a conversation piece. It looked like the typical Charlie Brown Christmas Tree. We even called it that. They even call and ask when the tree is going up! Now someone wants to break the new tradition and put up a real tree because their family is coming for Christmas. All in all, it's not about trees, it's not about Emmaus, it's not about your church, and it's not about so much other "stuff", it's about the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May the Love of Christ be with you and your family throughout this season. DeColores and Merry Christmas Billy McCoy

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