



Cornerstone United Methodist Church

1411 Rim Road Fayetteville North Carolina 28311 868-5686

January 2002

From the Pen of Pastor Ben

sundayschool@cornerstone.fun

Exciting things are happening in Sunday School! In fact our Children's Ministry is about to explode into a wonderful new direction. I must believe this is also pleasing to the Lord, because He energizes me each time I am at work on one of these new areas. Here's what's happening!

We are in the middle of a three phase implementation of the Faithweaver Curriculum published by Group Publishing. For more information go online to www.faithweaver.com.

Faithweaver teaches the same bible story each week to all students from ages 3 years old all the way through our adults. Each age learns how that week's bible story applies to them in their stage of life. Adults, you will be able to discuss first hand what your child learned in Sunday School because you learned

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Late this month or early next month we will be taking possession of our first church building. This is an exciting time for us! We have longed for this day since we began organizing Cornerstone UMC way back in October of 1995! There has been nearly a seven-year period of spiritual preparation, perfecting, and pruning that has brought us to this point. I want to offer my special thanks and appreciation to those of you who have been with Cornerstone UMC since October 1995. I pray that you realize the blessing God offers for such faithfulness. I am also deeply grateful to God for each of you God brought to us along the way since the conception of this congregation. I believe that God led you here at just the right time. God knew exactly the group of pioneers we needed to build this church and your prayers, presence, gifts and service have been vital to this endeavor. I wish there was some way I could express my profound gratitude for each of you.

Nevertheless, this exciting time is mingled with peril for the life and mission of our church. We have labored so long and so intensely we are naturally susceptible to the temptation to see the completion of the building project as the completion of our mission. Nothing could be more deadly to our call to make disciples of Jesus Christ! The tendency for us will be to put our hands behind our heads, prop our feet up, and sigh, "Well, that's done! Now we can rest." God will certainly supply each of us with the Sabbath rest we need when we are weary. However, as far as the life of our congregation goes, this is NOT a time for settling into some sort of predictable, static, routine. This is not the time to prop our feet up and relax.

There are still thousands of people who do not know Christ in our community. We are still surrounded by outposts of hell as demonstrated in strongholds of child abuse, family disintegration, addiction, pornography, ignorance, sloth, poverty, and racial hatred. If we take possession of a church building and turn it into a shrine where the change and challenge brought by ministry to the lost are refused, we will have rejected our God-given reason to exist. This has indeed happened to countless congregations before us. The result is that the blessing of the living God departs and "Ichabod" ("The Glory Has Departed") is written over such churches. If we let this happen to us we will become a self-centered, entrenched, congregation that is haunted by the stench of spiritual death and decay.

The way we avoid falling into this trap is by continuing to seek God's vision for ministry. What does God want us to do with **HIS** wonderful new building? (That's right! We need to remember that the building belongs more to God than to us!) As I have prayed and brainstormed with others in the months leading up to this time I have discerned a three-point vision for ministry that can help guide us into the future. Please pray about this vision for ministry and ask for God's guidance and discernment. If the vision is to become a reality it cannot remain merely the pastor's vision – it must be the vision for the whole church. The vision is comprised of three bold, audacious goals – three Faith Steps. These steps are challenging and they introduce change. They will involve an investment of effort and money. But I believe God will supply the resources of people and finances to do this work if we will be faithful to prayerfully move forward.

Faith Step 1: Add an early worship service on Sunday morning. (Of course

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| | |
|------------------------|---------|
| Sylvia Subong-Chambers | Jan. 5 |
| Jonathan Irizarry | Jan. 13 |
| Gary Taylor | Jan. 13 |
| Rebekah Sharpe | Jan. 17 |
| Lisa Sharpe | Jan. 25 |
| Sean Wiggs | Jan. 25 |
| Vicky Thomas | Jan. 26 |

Joe & Jamie Fancher Jan. 26

we would retain our traditional 11:00 a.m. worship hour as well.) The service will run from 9:30 to 10:45 a.m. The flavor will be a more contemporary worship style (while remaining faithful to the Tradition of the Church.) Young children would be excused at 10:00 a.m. for Sunday School. This ministry will:

- F bring more worshipers before the Triune God,
- F reach more people for Jesus Christ,
- F provide more options for worship styles and times,
- F bring more families into our Church,
- F generate more resources for more ministry.

By meeting at 9:30 a.m. we multiply our Sunday School potential as children from both services attend the 10:00 a.m. Sunday School. An Adult Discipleship Class will be offered at 11:00 a.m. for adults attending the early service. Moreover, "Early Church" attendees would be guided into our church's small groups and classes during the week to meet their needs for Christian education. I would like to see this new service started between 2 and 4 weeks after taking possession of the new church building.

Faith Step 2: Cornerstone Family Night. This would be a full-service, family ministry for Wednesday nights. This evening ministry would incorporate fellowship, worship, small group meetings, children and youth ministry, and a nursery. Families with small children and infants will now be able to participate in ministry and worship beyond Sunday mornings. The plan for Wednesday evenings would look something like this:

F 5:30-6:30 p.m. Fellowship meal (soup, sandwiches, tacos, etc. . . We would request a donation of \$2 per person and no more than \$10 per family for the meal – no donation would be required if a family could not afford it. This is a time for fellowship with friends and new folks. The atmosphere would be relaxed and informal. This would be an especially positive setting for single-parent families.

F 6:30-7:00 p.m. Informal praise and prayer in the Sanctuary. This would be a time to focus our gathering on God.

F 7:00 -8:30 p.m. Small groups meet for all ages. A nursery would be provided for ages 0-2.

F Small groups may include:

1. "FW Friends" Children's ministries for 3-year-olds to Grade 5. This ministry is already in development by Debbie Hill and is going to be GREAT!!!
2. Youth Groups for Jr. & Sr. High
3. Scouts
4. "Welcome to the Family Class"
5. "Disciple Bible Study"
6. "Cornerstone Bible Study"
7. Choir and praise team practice
8. *Other groups that want to start meeting on Wednesdays.*

A reasonable objective for a date to begin this ministry would be 6 to 8 weeks after we take occupancy of the building. Not every facet of this ministry needs to start all at once. Different components may be added as the resources become available.

Faith Step 3: Postmodern Saturday Night. This ministry is targeted towards the "Postmodern generation". One description of the postmodern generation would be those persons born since 1980.

F 5:30-6:30 p.m. "Unplugged" worship that focuses on the mysterious and contemplative. This worship would be designed to connect with postmoderns, but would remain faithful to the Tradition of the Church.

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Youth Group News

With the new building almost near completion, the youth have already started plans for their room! If anyone in the church has any old furniture, old couches, chairs, rugs, etc that they would like to donate, please contact Katie Wiggs at . Any donation would be most appreciated!

Next, a date for Youth Sunday needs to be set, and I ask that all youth interested in participating give me a call so we can start making plans as soon as possible. We need ideas for skits, music, and most importantly our theme!

Finally, we would all like to thank all of our Sunday School teachers that have helped us over the past few months. We really appreciate and love you, and the time you give is a special blessing to us. Thank you so much!!!

Kate Wiggs



Nursery News

A well run nursery is vital to the future growth of our church, and I would like to thank everyone who continues to support the nursery program with such enthusiasm. You all are wonderful examples of true Christian servanthood!

*With much gratitude & appreciation,
Kim Gordner*

Nursery Schedule

| | | |
|---------|----------|----------------|
| January | 6 | Fox |
| | 13 | Hamerly |
| | 20 | Todd |
| | 27 | Irizarry |
| | February | 3 |
| | 10 | S. Upchurch |
| | 17 | Harro |
| | 24 | Fancher/Kocher |
| March | 3 | Blake |
| | 10 | Chambers |
| | 17 | Gordner/Hall |
| | 24 | Hill |
| | 31 | Dye |

January 2002 February

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|--|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|---|----------|
| | | 1 <i>Happy New Year!</i> | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6 Cornerstone Pizza Sunday @ Two Brothers! | 7 Pastor's Day Off | 8 Women's Bible Study | 9 Cornerstone Bible Study 7:00 | 10 Promise Keepers 7:00 | 11 Friday Night Bible Study 7:00 | 12 |
| 13 | 14 Pastor's Day Off Church Council Mtg 7:00 pm | 15 Women's Bible Study | 16 Cornerstone Bible Study 7:00 | 17 Promise Keepers 7:00 | 18 Friday Night Bible Study 7:00 | 19 |
| 20 | 21 Pastor's Day Off | 22 Women's Bible Study | 23 Cornerstone Bible Study 7:00 | 24 Promise Keepers 7:00 | 25 Friday Night Bible Study 7:00 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 Pastor's Day Off | 29 Women's Bible Study | 30 Cornerstone Bible Study 7:00 | 31 Promise Keepers 7:00 | 1 Friday Night Bible Study 7:00 | 2 |
| 3 Cornerstone Pizza Sunday @ Two Brothers! | 4 Pastor's Day Off | 5 Women's Bible Study | 6 Cornerstone Bible Study 7:00 | 7 Promise Keepers 7:00 | 8 Friday Night Bible Study 7:00 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 Pastor's Day Off Church Council Meeting 7:00 | 12 Women's Bible Study | 13 Cornerstone Bible Study 7:00 | 14 Promise Keepers 7:00 | 15 Friday Night Bible Study 7:00 | 16 |

Notes: For more information on the above Bible studies, please call the Cornerstone office at 868-5686.

There's always something happening at Cornerstone!

Pastor Ben

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F 6:30-10:30 p.m. Coffee house. The Coffee House is an informal time to gather around coffee for conversation and the arts in a Christian context. If you interested in what this would look like check out the "Coffee Scene" at Westwood Shopping Center. The coffee house would feature poetry readings, alternative music, jazz, speaking forums, serious conversation, etc. in a Christian context.

I would hope that we would be able to start this ministry sometime by late spring this year.

This is the vision that I believe God has led me to cast for our church during 2002. I look forward to communicating this vision in more detail, so please do not hesitate to ask questions and offer your ideas. God may be speaking to you to add clarity and direction to this vision. Pray about the vision and listen to the Holy Spirit. Then, let me know where you think you have sensed His guidance regarding what has been presented. (The more I pray and observe Providence at work, the more I am led to think that children's ministry is a central part of what God is directing us to pursue in the context of this vision.) As we move forward I am certain that the vision will become more defined while the Holy Spirit guides and directs us into God's will for our future together in ministry. All the while, let's keep in mind the encouragement and promise St Paul offers: "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." (Galatians 6:9 NKJV)

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it in class too. So grown-ups, if you haven't been attending Sunday School here's the reason you've been looking for. You're never too old to learn what God has to teach you. The new Faithweaver Sunday School curriculum will begin on the first week of March for all ages.

The really great thing is that with our new My Own Worship Children's Church curriculum (already in use), the children hear the ~~same~~ bible story in Children's Church that they heard in Sunday School. This is because it is a complementary curriculum to our Faithweaver Sunday School curriculum. And with the puppet Theophilus the Faith Retriever (Theo for short), the little guys are sure to have a great time. This fluffy guy is also used in the 3-4 year old Sunday School class.

Last, but definitely not least, FW Friends will begin in February. This is a midweek (Wednesday evenings) small groups for kids program. As you guessed it, FW stands for Faithweaver. It's like having one night of VBS every week teaching the same bible story yet again in an interactive and upbeat way that is sure to send the point home with the kids. See flyers at church telling more about this awesome addition to our Children's Ministry.

Have a blessed new year and make a resolution to serve God through serving our children!

Fantastic!