



VOICE

of PROVIDENCE
United Methodist Church

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www.providencemc.org

Vol. 42 No. 25

Our Vision: A growing body of Christ glorifying God and serving others

December 14, 2011

Advent

December 14 Weekday School Christmas Program at noon in the sanctuary; POW Destination Mom's Kitchen Traditional Christmas meal

December 18 Fourth Sunday of Advent: Love Service of Lessons and Carols 8:30 & 11:00am; Lessons and Carols Reception, Atrium; Youth Christmas party

December 21 Service of the Longest Night at 7:00pm Dr. John Arey preaching

December 24 Christmas Eve: Light Services at 3:00, 4:00, 5:00 and 11:00 pm; Carols and Candlelight at 3:00, Chapel Communion at 4:00, Candlelight and Carols at 5:00, Rev. John Fitzgerald preaching. Candlelight, Carols and Communion at 11:00 Rev. John Fitzgerald preaching.

December 25 One worship service at 11:00am; Dr. Jeffries preaching

January 1 Epiphany Wesley Covenant Service at 8:30, Epiphany Covenant Service at 11:00am



A Service of Nine Lessons and Carols Sunday, December 18

On December 18 at the 8:30 and 11:00 am services of worship, we will have our Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols presented by our Chancel Choir, Junior Choir and Providence Handbell Ringers. This year's service will feature harpist, Julia Van Patter and violist, Martha Geissler.

In 1880, E.W. Benson, then Anglican Bishop of Truro, England, composed a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, based on ancient sources, for Christmas Eve. In 1918 it was adapted for the chapel of King's College, Cambridge, by its Dean, Eric Milner-White, who also wrote *The Bidding Prayer*. The Blessing after the Lord's Prayer, added by Milner-White, was first included in its present form in 1930. The Nine Lessons given this morning have been customarily used in recent years at King's College, Cambridge. The scripture lessons lead followers of Christ from the fall of mankind to mankind's ultimate salvation through Christ. Each carol is chosen to illuminate the scripture lesson that precedes it.

In this service, we connect to a century of liturgical tradition and celebrate the journey from Advent to Christmas in a very special way. Plan now to attend this favorite service of the Providence UMC year and bring friends and family.

Merry
Christmas

From Providence United Methodist Church Staff



Count Yourself Blessed Stewardship Estimate of Giving 2012
December 11 Number of pledges 379 Total \$1,445,464

from Pastor Fitzgerald . . . Gate of Humility

In the city of Bethlehem lies the Church of the Nativity. It is the oldest active Christian Church in the world. How old? Over 1,665 years old!

Emperor Constantine had the church built shortly after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. The front door of the church tells an interesting story.

Originally, the entrance was large – about the size that an 18-wheel truck could pass through (typical Byzantine Architecture). During the crusades, however, the Christians felt that this gaping doorway made the church vulnerable to attackers, so they enclosed the entrance and created a moderate gothic style passageway. It was during this time that another problem arose – knights were riding their horses into the church. Evidently all that shining armor made it difficult to dismount. Therefore, they enclosed the gothic entrance and created a doorway so small that everyone who enters must bow their heads. It is called the Gate of Humility.

That is fitting! For underneath the chancel of the Church of the Nativity there is a stairwell that leads to a cave where centuries ago cattle, sheep, and a baby slept. The Church of the Nativity was built over the stable where Jesus Christ was born.

How should we enter the season of Christmas? By bowing our heads in humility and lifting our hearts in praise for the coming of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. At the heart of the church is the birth of our Savior.

Merry Christmas,
John

WORSHIP at PROVIDENCE

Service of Lesson & Carols, December 18

- Hymns** No. 250 "Once in Royal David's City"
No. 215 "To a Maid Engaged to Joseph"
No. 238 "Angels We Have Heard on High"
No. 234 "O Come, All Ye Faithful"
No. 240 "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing"
- Anthems** "Still, Still, Still" arr Donald C. Hilsberg
"O Come, O Come Immanuel" arr. Robert Ivey
"Adam Lay Y'Bounden" by Boris Ord
"Veiled in Darkness" by Glenn L. Rudolph
"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" by Michel Praetorius
"O Come, O Come Emmanuel" arr. John Ferguson
"A Different Kind of King" by Ronald A. Nelson
"Child of Peace" by Jeffrey Van
"Salvation Is Created" by Paul Tschesnokoff
Providence Handbell Ringers, Junior and Chancel Choir

December 25 11:00 Service only

- Preacher** Rev. John Fitzgerald
- Sermon** "For Those Who Receive Him"
- Text** John 1.1-5. 10-14
- Hymns** No. 246 "Joy to the World"
No. 251 Go Tell It on the Mountain
No. 218 "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear"
Soloist, Teresa Robertson

Epiphany of the Lord, January 1

- Preacher** Rev. John Fitzgerald
- Sermon** "Two Kings"
- Text** Matthew 2.1-12
- 8:30 Wesley Covenant Service**
- Hymns** No. 57 "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing"
No. 606 "Come Let Us Use the Grace Divine"
No. 413 "A Charge to Keep I Have"
- 11:00 Epiphany Covenant Service**
- Hymns** No. 245 "The First Noel"
No. 254 "We Three Kings"
No. 258 "O Wondrous Sight! O Vision Fair"
- Anthem** "Epiphany Alleluias" by John Weaver
"No Small Wonder" by Paul Edwards
Chancel Choir, 11:00

End of Year Giving *Robin Furr, Business Manager*

A number of important questions related to end of year giving —

1. All donations received by December 31, 2011, are credited for IRS purposes in 2011. Your contributions will meet this requirement if they are (a) placed in the offering plate on or before Sunday, December 25, 2011; (b) delivered to the Business Office no later than 3:00 pm on Friday, December 30, 2011; or (c) postmarked by December 31, 2011.
2. You may donate stocks and bonds to the church, and gifts of appreciated assets may bring significant tax advantages to the donor. Additionally taxpayers age 70½ or older may make tax-free distributions from their IRAs. These gifts can be used to fulfill 2011 Pledges, Capital Campaign commitments or to prepay 2012 pledges. Please speak with your financial advisor and allow sufficient time (approximately two weeks) for the transfer to occur by December 30. Please notify the church office of the stock donation.

We need to receive approximately \$259,000 (this is approximately 13% of our annual budget) within the next two weeks to fulfill our 2011 Budget. Thank you all for your continued support and generosity. For assistance contact me at rfurr@providenceumc.org or 704.714.9366.

Children’s Ministry

Children’s Sunday School features ‘Come to Bethlehem’

Throughout the month of December, our Children’s Sunday School will invite our children to ‘Come to Bethlehem and See.’

Our special Christmas plans include:

Sunday, December 18: *The Manger and Baby Jesus* and the story of *The Little Drummer Boy*, and a Christmas story drama. Our little ones will see the Veggie Tale’s *The Little Drummer Boy* at 11:00am. Art projects include: a sticker nativity scene.

Sunday, December 25 – Christmas Day, we will not have Sunday School or Nursery. Children are invited to attend the worship service at 11:00 with their families.

January 1, we will celebrate *Epiphany* and feature the **Wise Men and the Star**. All of our children will meet in the Discovery Center at 9:45am to see the movie, *The Very First Noel*. Art projects include: prism crowns to make and wear. Our little ones will also meet at 11:00am in the Discovery Center for a sing-a-long and New Year’s Day party.

Visitation Ministry

December 18

First Time Visitor Peggy & Phil Adams, Kathy & Tim Harris

Bread Bakers Regina Thompson

December 25 No Visitation Scheduled

Begins
January 8
In Room A104



...is a casual Sunday school class dedicated to the renewal of mind, body and spirit. Our focus explores faith through devotions, fellowship and great coffee! Come as you are and grow spiritually with Soul Purpose!

A Note of Appreciation . . .

Elizabeth would like to thank each and everyone of you— your prayers, cards, and calls mean a lot to her. May God bless my big family Providence United Methodist church.

Thanks again, *Elizabeth Wabella, Custodian Staff*

CONTRIBUTIONS

2011			2010			YTD
Date	Week total	YTD	Date	Week total	YTD	Comparison
4-Dec	\$ 56,126.31	\$1,656,508.69	5-Dec	\$ 40,589.25	\$1,580,199.32	\$ 76,309.37
11-Dec	\$ 50,812.56	\$1,707,321.25	12-Dec	\$ 75,533.21	\$1,655,732.53	\$ 51,588.72

ATTENDANCE

December 4
8:30am—148:11:00 am—694
Sunday School—636
December 11
8:30am—242:11:00 am—579
Sunday School—671

December 25 Adult Sunday School

Contact your Sunday School leader for the December 25 schedule. There is only one worship service at 11:00am.

**Church offices will close for the holidays
December 26, 27 and January 2**

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Dec 14	Mark 9.9-13	Dec 23	Psalm 96
Dec 15	2 Samuel 7.1-11, 16	Dec 24	Titus 2.11-14
Dec 16	Luke 1.46b-55	Dec 25	Luke 2.1-14 (15-20)
Dec 17	Romans 16.25-27	Dec 26	Isaiah 62.6-12
Dec 18	Luke 1.26-38	Dec 27	Psalm 97
Dec 19	1 Samuel 1.1-18	Dec 28	Titus 3.4-7
Dec 20	1 Samuel 1.19-28	Dec 29	Luke 2.(1-7) 8-20
Dec 21	Mark 11.1-11	Dec 30	John 1.1-14
Dec 22	Isaiah 9.2-7	Dec 31	Psalm 148



POW's 'Destination Station' Returns
Wednesday, December 14, bring your PUMC passports to enter a drawing for prizes as we arrive at *mom's kitchen* for a delicious Christmas meal and carol sing-a-long to wrap up our travels for this year. *Destination Station* will return on Wednesday, January 11. Make plans to get on-board and set sail with us for more travel fun, food, as continue our Bible study with Rev. John Fitzgerald.

Charlotte District Office News

Mark your calendar and plan to attend our District Leadership Conference Sunday, January 22 from 3:00-5:30 pm at Myers Park UNC. This year's DLC is called *Vitality Rally* as we put emphasis on how we can be vital congregations. Dr. Mark Ralls will be our keynote speaker. A list of the workshops will be published in early January.

Prayers for Peace and Safety

We pray for all persons serving in the military, for their safety and protection, and for their families, that they would be encouraged, Sean Barrow, Christopher Brinkmann, Greg Fisher, George Gouge, Tom Jewell, Bill Keever, and Troy Ledford. *If you are aware of PUMC members serving in the military, please call 704.714.9368.*



**MUSIC MINISTRY
UPCOMING EVENTS**

On Wednesday, December 21, Providence UMC will host a "Service of the Longest Night." This is an offering for many who move through the holidays with great difficulty due to divorce, grief, loss of employment or illness. The service will begin at 7:00pm in the Sanctuary, and is designed to offer consolation and hope. Dr. John Arey, Executive Director of the Methodist Counseling and Consultation Services, an ordained Elder in the United Methodist Church, and an active participant in Providence UMC will speak. Paul Bonsall, a gifted soloist, and Dr. Adam Ward will provide special music. The service will conclude with an invitation to light a candle as a sign of hope. Please attend and invite someone in your life who would benefit from this service. A nursery is provided.

Give a Special Gift this Christmas

'Shepherd's Gift' holiday cards are available again this year. Still wondering what the Shepherd's Gift is? Here's how it works: You contribute to a church mission of your choice in honor of someone else, then send the honoree a beautiful card that lets them know the gift was given. This year's card has been redesigned and features our church's beautiful stained glass window on a glossy red card with meaningful inscription inside. Cards will be available in the atrium this Sunday or from the business office weekdays leading to Christmas and related donations can be made in any amount to the church mission(s) of your choice. Please contact Mary Rantala (704.552.9557) with any questions or to volunteer with this meaningful program. This is a wonderful way to honor a friend or loved one and support the missions of Providence.

Save the Date

"The Balancing Act"

First Annual Women of Providence 2012 Retreat
March 9-11 2012
Black Mountain, NC

For more information contact
Rev. Stephanie Moore Hand

shand@providenceumc.org or 704-714-9378

2012 CALENDAR ISSUE VOICE December 28
Submit VOICE articles Friday, Dec 30, 2011 for
Jan 4 VOICE to cgrinham@providenceumc.org

BUSINESS OFFICE TELEPHONE NUMBER 704.714.9366

PROGRAM STAFF
Rev. John Fitzgerald, Senior Pastor; Dr. Bill Jeffries, Senior Associate Pastor; Teresa Dunn, Minister with Youth and College Students; Cindy Smith, Director of Children and Family Ministries; Stephanie Moore Hand, Minister of Evangelism & Discipleship; Carol Shinn, Director of Missions; Anna Smith, Weekday School Director; Dr. Adam Ward, Director of Music Ministries; Charlotte Judge, Associate Director of Music Ministries; Robert Ivey, Organist/Music Associate; Marcia Conston, Student Assistant Pastor.

A Stephen Ministry Congregation

Providence United Methodist Church
2810 Providence Road
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