

BETHLEHEM STAR

The newsletter of Bethlehem Original Free Will Baptist Church Joe Ard, Pastor January-February 2010



Make it the Year of Following Jesus

Preacher Joe offers four ways to draw near to Jesus in 2010:

1. **Read the gospels.** Just half a chapter a day and you can read them through twice this year.
2. **Watch a movie about the life of Jesus** at least once a month.
3. **Read a biography of Jesus.** "The Hidden Jesus" is one suggestion.
4. **Be Jesus to someone.**



QUARTERLY MEETING

The quarterly business meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Wednesday, January 13.

Sunday school looks ahead

Wow! What a year the Sunday School Department has had. Thank you for your support through your prayers and attendance. We are looking for an even better year in 2010. It is very important that we continue to improve and expand our Sunday school ministry to meet the needs of our community.

February is designated Sunday School Month. As we did last year, we are planning an exciting month to highlight our programs. Mark Feb. 28 on your calendar for our annual Sunday school breakfast. For those who missed it last year, shame on you. We had a great time eating and fellowshiping with each other.

For those who grew up in our church, and even those who did not, you are aware of how very important Christian education was and is. It is even more important in the troubled times in which we live. What better way to start your new year out than to commit to equip yourself and your family to serve God. Our purpose statement says we are to lead people to Jesus; unite them into the family of God... But then, we have to empower (or equip) them to serve the Lord. We need to concentrate this year on



SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

the equipping. Once we equip them, that will bring Honor and Glory to God.

Every year, our Sunday School Ministry has a workshop at Mount Olive College to better equip those who are currently serving or who have an interest

in serving. If you don't feel capable, this is the workshop for you.

This year the workshop will be held Saturday, March 6. The theme is "Teaching and Learning for All with Earnestness (Connecting Church and Home)." Registration will be from 8 to 9 a.m. with the opening assembly starting at 9. The workshops will be over at 4 p.m. There will be a schedule of activities and a signup sheet posted in the vestibule. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask Rosa Craft or me. The only thing it will cost you is a little time. We will be fed at the college.

Spend a day with your fellow Christians and allow God to work through you. You will be amazed if you just give Him an opportunity. Allow Him to use your vessel.

— Rita Fountain
Sunday school superintendent

And then God became one of us

PHILIPPIANS 2:7

Father Damien was a priest who became famous for his willingness to serve lepers. He moved to Kalawao—a village on the island of Molokai in Hawaii, that had been quarantined to serve as a leper colony.

For 16 years, he lived in their midst. He learned to speak their language. He bandaged their wounds, embraced the bodies no one else would touch, preached to hearts that otherwise would have been left alone. He organized schools, bands, and choirs. He built homes so that the lepers could have shelter. He built 2,000 coffins by hand so, that when they died, they could be buried with dignity.

Slowly, it was said, Kalawao became a place to live rather than a place to die, for Father Damien offered hope.

Father Damien was not careful about keeping his distance. He did nothing to separate himself from his people. He dipped his fingers in the poi bowl along with the patients. He shared his pipe. He did not always wash his hands after bandaging open sores. He

got close. For this, the people loved him.

Then one day he stood up and began his sermon with two words: “We lepers....”

Now he wasn’t just helping them. Now he was one of them. From this day forward, he wasn’t just on their island; he was in their skin. First he had chosen to live as they lived; now he would die as they died. Now they were in it together.

One day God came to Earth and began his message: “We lepers....” Now he wasn’t just helping us. Now he was one of us. Now he was in our skin. Now we were in it together. (*From John Ortberg’s book, “God Is Closer Than You Think”*)

This passage reminds us of Paul’s words and the real meaning of Christmas, “He took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form.” (Philippians 2:7 NLT)

I hope you had a Merry Christmas and may God grant you the peace, joy and love, that Jesus Christ brings to all who love Him.

— Preacher Joe

*It's hard to put the love of God into words
... because God meant for us to put it into action.*

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Resolved: Draw closer to God in 2010

As the New Year begins it is a time to reflect on things we would like to change and resolve throughout the New Year.

I am sure we are all thinking of our New Year's resolutions and what we are going to try to work on this year. The top ten resolutions are:

Spend more time with family and friends

Get fit by exercising

Lose weight

Quit smoking

Enjoy life more

Quit drinking

Get out of debt

Learn something new

Help others

Get organized

Whatever your resolution, statistics show most of us will not

accomplish our goal. If you take a close look at all these resolutions, none of them have anything to do with God. Have you ever stopped to think about why we cannot accomplish our goals?? One reason is because we have them in the wrong order. We should all want to work on our relationship with God, our father, first. I challenge you to make your New Year's resolution to work on your relationship with God. Spend time reading your Bible and praying.

Here are a few suggestions for resolutions to try this year:

Don't worry about the wicked.

Don't envy those who do wrong.

Trust in the Lord and do good, then you will live safely in the Lord and prosper.

Take delight in the Lord and he

will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit everything you do to the Lord. Trust in him and he will help you.

Be still in the presence of the Lord and wait patiently for him to act.

Stop your anger! Turn from your rage.

Be obedient to God and his laws.

Give.

Fill your heart with God's Law.

Remember: It is better to be godly and have little than to be evil and possess much.

God promises "That we will survive through hard times; even in famine we will have more than enough."

— Mallory Jones

Let the Waters Rise — by Mikeschair

Don't know where to begin

It's like my world's caving in

And I try but I can't control my fear

Where do I go from here

Sometimes it's so hard to pray

When You feel so far away

but I am willing to go where You want me to God, I Trust You

There's a raging sea Right in front of me Wants to pull me in Bring me to my knees



So let the waters rise
If You want them to
I will follow You

I will swim in the deep
Cuz you'll be next to me

You're in the eye of the storm and the calm of the sea

You're never out of

reach

God You know where I've been

And You were there with me then

You were faithful before You'll be faithful again I'm holding Your hand

There's a raging sea Right in front of me Wants to pull me in Bring me to my knees

So let the waters rise If You want them to I will follow You

God Your love is enough

You will pull me

through

I'm holding onto You God Your love is enough

I will follow You

There's a raging sea Right in front of me Wants to pull me in Bring me to my knees

So let the waters rise If You want them to I will follow You

Mallory Jones highlights a song for each issue of the newsletter. For more about Mikeschair, look for the band on Myspace and Facebook.

News, notes & tidbits

Shoebox success

A big thank-you to all who participated in the Operation Christmas Child shoebox program. We collected 57 shoeboxes this year. Just think, that means 57 children somewhere around the world will be blessed by our simple gifts that we sent from our church family. That is a great feeling!

The Baptist Center in Jacksonville served as a dropoff point for us. They collected 3,825 boxes from area churches and individuals.

Keep an eye out during the next several months for back-to-school and end-of-season sales, and any other good bargains you can purchase for your shoeboxes. Maybe we can double the number

of shoeboxes for 2010!

Once again, thanks for your gifts, financial donations, prayers and good thoughts during our shoebox collection time.

—Diane Dail

Heartfelt thanks

Thanks to all of those who have rendered special music at Bethlehem in the year 2009. To the singers and musicians, God bless you! I have truly been blessed.

Thank you to Jan (Jones) who teaches my Sunday school class; who gives of his time and knowledge. If one feels that their knowledge of the Bible is lacking, I would suggest they should come hear him. It will truly bless your heart and life.

Also, I appreciate those who took the time to send me a Christmas card. If I don't say "thank you," it's because I just cannot put your face to your name. So if you say, "I sent you a card," I will say, "Thank you!"

Each of you have helped to make me feel really blessed.
—Margaret Ard

Cookie time approaches

Girl Scout cookie time is coming up. Sierra Young will be tempting us with Thin Mints, Carmel De-Lites and other yum-mies. Cookie sales help fund Girl Scout camps, programs and fun.

To reserve your boxes and help Sierra earn her patch, see her mom, Aleisha, at church or e-mail her at aliyoung27@aol.com.

Remembering Opal Brown

Bethlehem lost a quiet but rock-solid pillar of the church when Opal Jones Brown died Dec. 26. She was 93.

Among her many talents, Opal was famed for her chocolate pies. They were the highlight of many a fund-raising auction. Opal was the daughter of Zackie and Lizzie Jones. Her mother Lizzie gave the land that Bethlehem church is built on.

Opal was preceded in death by her husband, Raymond Brown, and her daughter, Delma Brown Albertson.

Survivors include her son, Terry Brown of Chinquapin; grandchildren Kent Albertson, Bart Brown, Ryan Brown and Metta Cavanaugh; and six great-grandchildren.

She was one of 14 children. Two sisters, Maxine



Southerland and Peggy Williams, also survive her. Her other siblings were brothers Johnnie, Lloyd, Gurman and O'Brian Jones, and sisters Mae Jones, Elma Brown, Elizabeth Raynor, Sina Harrell, Zoa Bryan, Alda Wainwright and Angeline Curtis.

Opal's funeral was held at the church and she was buried at H. Birch Brown Cemetery in Fountaintown. The family suggested that in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Bethlehem Church, 1743 S. NC 111 Hwy, Chinquapin, NC 28521.

Thanks to volunteers for children's church

I would like to thank Marcia Jones, Sandy Miller, Nancy Ripley and Reba Fountain for their service in children's church. They are stepping down for now.

And I would like to extend my gratitude to Ashlea Jones and Angel Jones for stepping up to take a Sunday each month for children's church.

For children's church, youngsters age 3 to 7 leave the regular worship service (following the choir's presentation) for activities and lessons designed just for them.

— *Mallory Jones*

Children's church director

Prayer requests

Bob Adams	Velma Horne
Johnnie Albertson	Faye Ives
Tammi Albertson	Tim Jarman
Josiah Allen	Jennifer Johnson
Billie Ard	Geno Jones
Joe Ard	Leslie Jones
Margaret Ard	Louise Jones
Sam Baker	Reba Jones
Joe Batts	Fallon Lanier
Shelby Boone	Rose Manning
Mertie Brinson	Suzie Marshburn
Chris Brock	C J Mercer
Chasity Brown	Bill Nobles
JoAnne Brown	Bobby Patterson
Opal Brown family	Bryan Raynor
Van Brown	Cecil Raynor
Kimberly Bryan	Jeraldine Raynor
Nancy Bryan	Melanie Sanderson
Cathy Burnette	Trent Sanderson
Gloria Dail	Julie Shay
Teresa Dempsey	Dee Dee Sloan
Beulah Dixon	Bernie Smith
Darrell Edwards	Judy Smith
Doris Fountain	Bill Voss
Sherwood Fountain	Frances Voss
Sutton Fountain	Zack Willaford
Lynn Grady	Guy Williams
Courtney Harvell	Jolly Williams
Janet Heaton	Jo Wood
Peggy Horne	Aleisha Young



January

2 - Stanley Craft
7 - Dawn Byron
8 - Diane Dail
8 - Timmy Wood
11 - Shonnon
McClenny

14 - Allen Pickett
15 - Caden Lanier
17 - Durwood

Williams
20 - Mary Hudson
20 - Kathleen

Southerland
20 - Truman Waller
21 - Guy Williams
21 - Jonathan

Dempsey
21 - Haley Lanier
23 - Caron Fountain
25 - Mark Lanier

27 - John Bryan

30 - Reid
Southerland
30 - Ricky Dempsey

February

3 - Ella Fountain
3 - Garrett
McClenny

3 - Linda Whitehurst
4 - Geno Jones
5 - Caleb Ard

12 - John Wayne
Southerland

17 - Mike Greene
20 - Victoria Melton
23 - Brittany Brock

23 - Tony Jones
24 - Chasity Brown
26 - Carson Brown
28 - Annette Brown
28 - Zelma Martin

January

7 - Vernie & Susan Fountain
21 - Danny & Carolyn Brown

February

11 - Gene & Lesley Shepard
11 - Herb & Nancy Ripley
12 - Freddy & Marcia Jones
22 - Micky & Hilda Southerland
28 - Don & Alyce Horne

**Information is taken from the church directory.
If you know of a name that's missing, see Gail
Walton to update the listing.*

Senior Ministry begins new year of fellowship

As we begin a new year here at Bethlehem, my wish for each one of you is a happy new year and a new beginning as we serve God together. If we do God's will this year, great things *can* and *will* happen as we give God the praise that He deserves.

Our Christmas celebration in December was a great success. We had a good crowd and great fellowship. The Primitive Baptist Singers sang Christmas carols, the Rev. Jeff Banks spoke about the Twelve Days of Christmas, and our meal was delicious.

We will return to our fourth-Thursday schedule as we meet at 6 p.m. Jan. 28. Soup and sandwiches will

be on the menu.

Thanks to all who made our Senior dinners such a success last year!

As always, I encourage anyone who is not a senior to come and help as we minister to the seniors in our church and our community. You will receive a blessing as we serve others.

May God bless all of our ministries here at Bethlehem.

Happy New Year to you all!

— Rick Dempsey

Life is a marathon

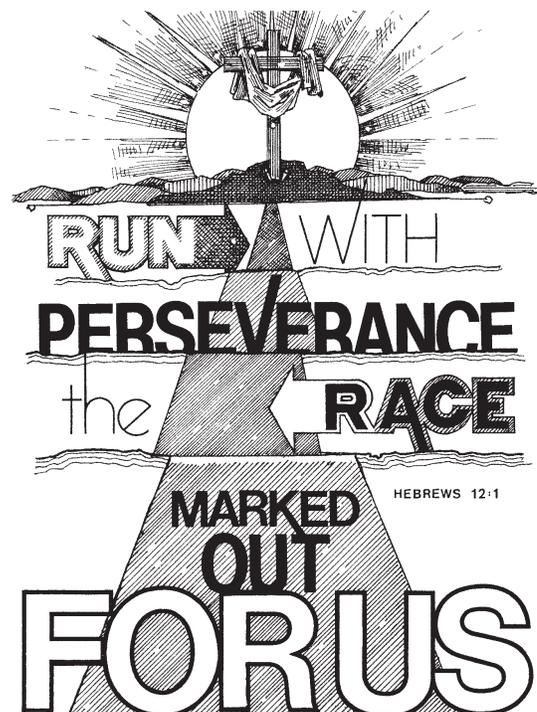
Hebrews 12:1 *Let us run the race with endurance.*

When we gauge ourselves against Jesus, it can be very overwhelming. We fall so short so much of the time, but something my sister said to me was so comforting. "Life is a marathon, not a sprint."

Sometimes we are so ready for the end result that we miss the endurance part of spirituality. I know I often have struggled with wanting to see instant results, but being transformed into the likeness of Christ is a continual process. We have to run through life with a more steady pace. Though the sprints are really exhilarating, too many of them would exhaust us. We are making progress if we just don't give up.

Life is a marathon and God is training us for the ultimate prize.

— Caron Fountain



Children present 'Birthday of a King' Christmas pageant

Our youth worked really hard on a Christmas program this year. They performed "Birthday of a King" on Dec. 20. If you were unable to be there you really missed an awesome experience because the children did a fantastic job. We had 24 children and two adults in the program and another 12 adults who helped make this program happen. It was such a blessing and a great



experience. It has been a long time since we have had a children's Christmas program. We would like to thank everyone for their help and all the parents and grandparents for bringing the children and working with them at home. It was awesome to have all those children at church getting involved and having a great time.

We look forward to keeping this excitement going by having many more programs in the years to come.

— Mallory Jones

Praise God from whom all blessings flow

Have you ever wondered where our hymn “Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow” originated? We sing this song every Sunday, but do we know why?

The song originated in 1674, written by Thomas Ken. Who was Thomas Ken, you ask? Well, he certainly came before the time of Isaac Watts or Charles Wesley and could be considered “England’s first hymnist.”

Thomas Ken was born in London in 1637 in a town called Little Berkhamstead. He was an orphan and taken in by a half-sister. She enrolled him into the well known school for boys, Winchester College. He returned to Winchester after becoming an ordained minister.

In an attempt to encourage the young men at Winchester with their devotions, he wrote music to be sung by the young men. Prior to this time, only the Psalms were sung in public and no English hymns had been written. Therefore, he suggested they sing his songs in private, within the confines of their rooms; one for the morning, one for bedtime and one if they could not sleep. The morning hymn:

“Awake, my soul, and with the sun thy daily stage of duty run;

Shake off dull sloth and joyful rise, to pay thy morning sacrifice.”

This was only two lines of thirteen for the morning worship. The second hymn to be sung before bedtime:



PSALM 150:1,3

“All praise to Thee, my God, this night, for all the blessings of the light!

Keep me, O keep me, King of kings, beneath Thine own almighty wings.”

Lastly, but the most commonly known and used:

“Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow; / Praise Him, all creatures here below; /

Praise Him above, ye heavenly host; / Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

If we pay close attention to each hymn, it becomes obvious that Thomas Ken was right on target! He began each day with praise time and ended each day the same. As God would

have us to do, he wanted the young men to get it into their minds and hearts to “joyful rise” each day and to remember Who to give the glory and honor to in praises and worship!

So, when you sing our stanza on Sunday morning, “Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow,” will you sing with true praise in your heart? Will you recognize and give this glory to the One who allows you to see the light of day? Will you thank Him for the blessings He has allowed you to have? Or will you simply mouth the words and hope it is over as soon as possible?

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” Ephesians 1:3

— Vicky Quinn

Correction and apology

A photo of a years-ago youth trip was printed in the November-December newsletter. Vicky Quinn submitted the photo and challenged readers to identify the people in it. I put words in Vicky’s mouth and wrote that she’d ID everyone. But Vicky never promised that. I apologize to Vicky (and thank her for forgiving me and submitting another article!).

— Jeri Fountain



The Star of Christmas

Back during World War II, a little boy and his daddy were driving home on Christmas Eve. They drove past rows of houses with Christmas trees and decorations in the windows. In many of the windows the little boy noticed a star. He asked his father, "Daddy, why do some of the people have a star in the window?" His daddy said the star meant that the family had a son (or daughter) in the war. As they passed the last house, suddenly the little boy caught sight of the evening star in the sky. "Look, Daddy, God must have a Son in the war too! He's got a star in His window!"

Smart little boy! Yes, God has a Son who also went to war. The war Jesus came to wage is against sins, injustices, prejudices, traditions and unbelief. And that war took Him all the way to a cross and tomb from which He burst forth on Easter day in victory for you and me!

— submitted by *Billie Ard*

from 'Moments for Christmas,' by Robert Strand

I created nothing, yet I have everything

There is nothing I have that exists because of me.

I did not create my own body. My heart and mind are not of my creation. I did not conjure up my own talents. Not one single blessing did I bestow, yet I am given everything.

All of mankind and I were given the most beautiful, priceless gift in the form of a baby. Then that baby grew and finished His work by His own death and resurrection.

With that sacrifice, we gained access not only to salvation, but also access to Jesus' inheritance.

I have nothing given of myself, yet I am given everything. It is not because of my goodness, but because God is good. It is not because of my love, but because of God's love. It is not because of my sacrifice, but because of His ultimate sacrifice.

I am eternally grateful to you, God.

— *Caron Fountain*



In loving memory of our grandson, Nicholas Mercer

June 28, 2005 - November 17, 2009

God gave us four wonderful years. He took you home for a very special reason. Only He knows the answer. You will always be in our hearts. I know you are up in heaven with your Granddaddy Jimmy and he will watch over you.

Grandson, you are a very special blessing that is a precious gift. You fill my heart with love, and bring special joy to my life. A grandson is a treasure and a blessing to adore. After all that's what grandparents are for, to spoil and love their grandchildren. I will miss you more and more. But you will always be in my heart.

I love you, my precious grandson.

— *Grandma Jo and Papa Timmy (Wood)*

* A JAR OF *
**Love and
 Appreciation**



Sometimes we forget to show love and appreciation to people who are closest to us. Use this fun craft to let everyone in your family know how much you care.

What you need:

- Plastic jar with lid
- Heart-shaped foam pieces
- Heart-shaped stickers
- Glue
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Pencil or crayons

What you do:

1. Decorate the jar and lid with heart-shaped foam pieces and stickers.
2. Cut out 2" or 3" heart shapes from the construction paper.
3. On each paper heart, write what you appreciate and love about your family and each member. Have all family members do this, too.
4. Place the heart messages inside the jar. Fold them in half, if necessary.
5. On each day in February, pull out one heart and read the message aloud to the family.
6. Notice the changes in your family when everyone feels loved and appreciated!

Share your ideas, news and milestones with the church family in the newsletter. Send your articles to jerifountain@yahoo.com.

Encourage with forgiveness

Every person at some time in his or her life faces the need to forgive or to be forgiven.

So why is it such a struggle to forgive? And why do we sometimes not even want to try?

Are we waiting until we feel like forgiving? The feeling may never come. Forgiving someone is an act of the will. We choose to forgive. When I choose to forgive, I'm choosing to obey the Lord's directive: "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievance you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (Colossians 3:13)

Our sinless Christ loved us and gave Himself on the cross for our sins. The more we focus on the tremendous price He paid for our forgiveness, the less likely we are to be judgmental and the more likely we are to forgive those who cause us pain. Let's remember that God was willing to forgive us, even though we didn't deserve it. So how could we be a higher judge than God himself?

When I refuse to forgive, I inflict more pain on myself than on the one who needs to be forgiven. Unforgiveness breeds bitterness, and bitterness can hurt those we love. When I refuse to forgive, a root of bitterness takes hold and begins to gnaw away at my emotional system. When I refuse to forgive, I rob myself of peace and joy. In fact, an unforgiving spirit poisons every area of my life — my actions, attitudes, emotions, relationships and spiritual growth — and even my body. Most importantly, when I refuse to for-



*Be kind and compassionate
 to one another;
 forgiving each other,
 just as in Christ
 God forgave you.*

Ephesians 4:32

give, I deliberately disobey the God who has forgiven me. In Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:13 we are told to forgive one another.

Is there someone you need to forgive? Or do you need to ask someone's forgiveness?

Let's be like God. A wise believer once said, "We are most like beasts when we kill. We are most like men when we judge. We are most like God when we forgive."

— *Harold and June Critcher*

June Critcher is the daughter of former Free Will Baptist pastor Fred Rivenbark. The late Rev. Rivenbark preached for 60 years and was pastor of Sherron Acres FWB Church in Durham. (Submitted by Rick Dempsey.)

Just for KIDS

Our first love

In Deuteronomy 10:12 (NIV), Israel is asked a question that's also for us to answer: "What does the LORD your God ask of you?"

To find the answer, write the words from the puzzle pieces on the matching shapes in the completed heart.

... your heart and with all your soul ...

Answer:
 "... fear the LORD ...; to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all ..."

Bethlehem Original Free Will Baptist Church
 c/o Jeri Fountain
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I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ...



may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.



Ephesians 1:17

