

The Vision

The Primary Weekly Communication Instrument of
The United Baptist Church of Northern Virginia

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The United Baptist Church Vision is "to develop an intentional relationship with God, as in Jesus, so that our lives demonstrate the transforming effect and supreme importance of such a relationship for us, our society, and our world."

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CONSOLIDATED MISSION OFFERING BEING TAKEN

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's Global Missions Offering is our highlighted mission partner for the month of December. Global mission giving and the Christmas season have a long history among most of us. Consider a gift that will make a difference on this holiday season.

RECEIVED TO DATE:

Alma Hunt Virginia Mission	\$650.25
World Hunger - Baptist World Aid	933.25
NorthStar Church Network Missions	528.25
CBF Global Missions Offering	628.25
TOTAL RECEIVED TO DATE:	\$2,742.00

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

*December 20 – 10:55 a.m. Worship
Choir Christmas Cantata*

*December 24 – 5:00 p.m.
Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
[Preceded by Organ/Piano Christmas Recital–4:45 p.m.]*

*Shepherd's Center of Annandale-Springfield
presents*

Lunch N' Life

Thursday, December 17, 2009

Noon - 2:00 p.m.

at

The United Baptist Church

Holiday Musical Program

presented by

The Annandale Singers

of Annandale High School

Register by December 11

Call 703-941-1419

Lunch – \$10 per person, \$9 member

CALLED BUSINESS MEETING

A business meeting has been called for Sunday, December 13, during the after-worship fellowship for the purpose of hearing and voting on the report of the Nominating Committee and an amendment to the 2010 budget.

Ponderings ... Gerald L. Young

A convenience store owner was getting ready to close his store on Long Island, NY, when a masked, bat-welding would-be robber entered the store. The owner pulled a rifle from behind the counter and ordered the man to drop the bat. The masked man dropped to his knees “crying like a baby,” according to the store owner, and begged for forgiveness. The robber told the owner that he was desperate and only trying to feed his starving family. Upon hearing the man’s story, the owner decided to show him mercy and gave him \$40 and a loaf of bread in exchange for the man’s promise that he would never rob again. Oh, yes. I almost forgot. The owner, Mohammad Sohail, is a Muslim who moved to the United States from Pakistan about twenty years ago. After receiving Mr. Sohail’s generosity, the robber stood and said he wanted to become a fellow Muslim.

That all happened last May, but I didn’t hear anything about it until this week when Act II made the news. Last Wednesday, a letter arrived at the store without a return address. Inside was a \$50 bill and a note apparently from the would-be robber. The note says that he was sorry for his actions of six months earlier, but at the time no job, no food on the table, and nothing for his family. He went on to say that he knew he was doing wrong but felt he had no choice if he was to feed his family. The note then concludes that Mr. Sohail and his mercy had changed the man’s life dramatically and inspired him to become a “True Muslim.”

I don’t like it that I found myself feeling a great sense of disappointment that the hero of the story (or the fool, depending on your point of view) was a Muslim. Why couldn’t it have been a Christian so I could use the story in a sermon or a column? His is not behavior that fits with what I find it easy to believe about Muslims when I hear about the severity of the laws in many Muslim countries. Then from somewhere within I remembered the disciples bragging to Jesus that they had stopped a man from doing Kingdom work because he was not “one of them.” Jesus rebuked them saying that those not against him were for him. And I felt guilty. I thought more about it. And I began to see something profound and affirming. Mr. Sohail acted in a Christ-like way. He did what I believe Jesus would have done. I’m sure that he would not say that – and may not even like me saying it. But it’s true. Jesus’ message was that the Way he lived and taught was the Way that leads to life. His was the Way of forgiveness and mercy rather than retribution and vengeance. And here is proof of the power of living that Way. One who doesn’t see Jesus the same way I do nevertheless behaved as Jesus called us to do, and in the process a life was redeemed. Now that *is* the Way!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday Bible Study – 9:30 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.

Worship Service – 10:55 a.m.

December

- 9 9:00 a.m. Sandwich Ministry
- 10:30 a.m. Instrumentalists’s Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
- 3:30 p.m. Knit & Crochet Club (Parlor)
- 5:45 p.m. Begin Serving Dinner
- 6:15 p.m. Youth Missions
- 6:30 p.m. Discipleship Study
- 7:35 p.m. Choir Rehearsal
- 10 11:15 a.m. Young-at-Heart Gadabouts Leave for Lunch
- 1:00 p.m. Women’s Bible Study (Conference Room)
- 2:30 p.m. Mended Hearts Ministry
- 12 9:00 a.m. Youth Paintball
- 13 8:30 a.m. Prayer Group (Conference Room)
- 10:55 a.m. Worship – *Third Sunday of Advent*
- 12:15 p.m. Called Business Meeting
- 14 11:00 a.m. Staff Meeting
- 16 9:00 a.m. Sandwich Ministry
- 10:30 a.m. Instrumentalist’s Rehearsal (Sanctuary)
- 5:45 p.m. Begin Serving Dinner
- 6:30 p.m. Discipleship Study
- 7:35 p.m. Choir Rehearsal

Welcome New Members ...

Robert Banks, who was baptized Sunday morning after indicating his commitment to following Jesus Christ as Lord, and

John Upton, Sr., who came Sunday morning on promise of a letter from the Woodland Heights Baptist Church in Chesapeake, Virginia.

We welcome these two who have been part of our faith community into full fellowship.

Update on Women’s Bible Conference Study Topic

The Women's Bible Study, which meets on Thursdays at 1 p.m., will be discussing William P. Young's book, *The Shack*, in **January**. Please come and join us for this discussion. If you need a copy of the book, please see Twyla Turner.

Youth News...Twyla Turner

There will be **Youth Missions** on Dec. 9 to be working on our Christmas mission project painting ornaments for children in the hospital. There will be a specific pattern to follow. Call or email Twyla by Wednesday, at noon, if you need a ride. I'm looking forward to seeing you there.

Join us this Sunday in **Youth Sunday School** as we start on this new part of our Bible study. Your input is very important. Come with ideas of topics to discuss as we look at how God's word can help us find answers to daily living.

Throughout Advent our children will be learning in **Children's Church** about the spiritual meaning behind many of our Christmas traditions. This week we will talk about the Advent wreath that we made after church last Sunday.

Christmas Card delivery is here, The Youth will once again be delivering your Christmas greetings to other church members during this holiday season. We will begin the first Sunday of Advent and continue to deliver greeting through the Christian season of Christmas, which ends January 6th with Epiphany. Any cards not able to be delivered in person by January 3, will be mailed. The youth accept donations for this service which they will use for their winter project.

This winter project is unlike others we have done in the past. We will not be working with one or two families, but will instead work with the **Bailey's Crossroads Hypothermia Program** which operates out of the **Baileys Crossroads Homeless Shelter**. With the money that we raise from our Christmas card delivery, we will purchase food that can be used to make breakfasts and lunches. We would also like to purchase or collect donated personal items that are needed at the shelter. These items include towels, socks, aspirin, shaving cream, umbrellas, wash cloths, deodorant, pens, pencils, toothbrushes, toothpaste, razors, and combs. Our goal is to collect enough money to provide breakfast and lunch (for 50 people) twice between now and March and also to donate some of the items listed that are needed in the shelter. We have also had some adults volunteer to help with preparing dinner, so we hope to be able to help in that way as well.

Please help us to be able to take on this project by allowing us to deliver your Christmas cards to other church members during the holiday season. If you do not see the box in which to drop your cards on Sunday morning, ask Twyla.

Make some plans to spend some of your Christmas break from school with some of the special activities we will have planned for the week after Christmas. **A day in NYC, Youth Paintball and Kid's Club** will all be happening the week after Christmas!!

Major Dec. Student Ministry Events---

- Nov. 29-Jan. 3 Christmas Card delivery
- Dec. 20 Youth Christmas Event
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Service -4:45 p.m.
- Dec. 27 Kid's Club
- Dec. 28 or 29 A day in NYC!!
- Dec. 30 or 31 Youth Paintball

Thoughts on Advent by Bobby Joe Small...

I was reminded by the Apostle Paul that the word of God is worthy to pass on. And I have been finding what little things I can do to pass on the word of God's love. I must look for these little things to keep hope alive for the rich and the poor alike, in these hard times. Christmas as the world sees it is not good for all. For those who are not sure of bare necessities from one day to another Christmas can be dark, lights can be dim. I hope I can make this a true Christmas. I will try to keep my focus on the coming days and hope that the baby Jesus will be born again in my heart. The meaning of Christ to me is charity, serving and giving of myself, helping those who are less fortunate. I will need help to see that this year I see those around me. I need to be aware of what is going on around me in the lives of family, friends and strangers. Will I just look at them as I did last year, or will I take the time to see the needs around me? Those needs are closer than I may know. It's the small things I do that may help someone through the year. Just giving someone a hug or saying a kind word to someone; giving up a parking place or giving up your place in line, or just holding the door for someone or buying someone a cup of coffee at 7-11 may be what will make a big difference in the year for someone. These are some of the forms of agape love. Do you have such love? Merry Christmas.

Love, Rev. Bobby Joe (John 3:16)

(If you have such "prompting" Advent Thoughts, write them and give them to a pastor for possible sharing in *The Vision*.)

LAST CALL TO ORDER POINSETTIAS

The Sanctuary Decorating Committee will be adorning the sanctuary with Poinsettias for Christmas as in years past. If you would like to make this wonderful addition to our Christmas worship experience possible, you may sign up using this form. The cost of each Poinsettia is \$7.00. You may mail in your check or use one of the Pew Envelopes. In either case, please clearly mark the envelope "Christmas Flowers."

Name of Person Ordering _____

Number of Poinsettias Ordered _____

Number of Poinsettias X \$7.00 each _____

Amount Enclosed _____

Given in Honor of _____

Given in Memory of _____

Given to the Glory of God _____