

St. Stephen

United Methodist Church

YOUTH NEWS

October 2009

Can I Follow Christ Without Being Weird? Nine Against One

BRANDON DIRKS, MINISTER WITH YOUTH

*So teach us to count our days that we
may gain a wise heart.* — Psalm 90:12

With the challenge this year to become faithful followers of Jesus Christ, I am haunted by a question once asked of me a long time ago, "Can I really follow Christ without being weird?" A legitimate and important question.

Therefore, over the coming year, I will be devoting my articles to answering *practical* questions on how to be a Christian. Feel free to send me your practical questions on how to be a faithful follower of Christ in today's world and you may find your answer in one of these articles.

As for now, *How can I follow Christ when it seems like no one else is?*

— continued on next page

Important Dates

Saturday, October 3

Jessica Barrow/Blair Stegall Wedding

Sunday, October 4

CROP Walk

October 9-11

Middle School FALL RETREAT

Sunday, October 25

SAC Sunday

We Walk Because They Walk

This year we are so excited that our youth group is getting involved in the CROP walk! "The Walk is part of a nationwide endeavor to raise money to alleviate hunger and poverty in this country and around the world. The concept is simple: We walk because they walk. Over 5,000 people will join together, walking a 6 kilometer route, the average walk a citizen of the developing world walks to obtain potable water." — Charlotte CROP hunger walk



Crop Walk October 4, 2009

It's easy and fun to help feed the hungry. If you are wanting to get out there and help people, get a packet at Youth Group and start collecting sponsors. Come to church wearing your Garden City 2009 T-shirt (or your own Royal Blue shirt), stay for pizza after church in the youth café (\$5) and bring your packet and donations (checks made out to CROP Walk), and we will leave by 1:00pm to go uptown to the Walk. We'll be back around 4:30pm. NO UMYF for Senior High and Middle School.

Please plan to bring:

- Garden City Shirt (wear)
- Appropriate clothing for the weather
- Comfortable walking sneakers and socks
- Sunscreen/hat/sunglasses
- Water bottle (if you think you'll need water and don't mind carrying it).
- Donation Packet and Money
- Pizza Money (\$5)
- Enthusiasm

Parents are welcome to bring youth directly to Grady Cole Center and pick up from there. However, in this case, please be sure to turn your packet in before October 4.

For additional information about this year's CROP walk, please visit www.cropwalk.com.



Sunday Night UMYF

This is a great time to get connected to our Youth Ministry! If you have never been or it's been a long time, we want to personally invite you to check us out ... and bring a friend. You will find...

- A youth group that is working hard to love God and love others
- A safe place where all youth are welcome!
- Fun, creative, and loving adults
- Some of the best youth around just waiting to make new friends

Now, doesn't that sound like a place you want to be? We hope to see you Sunday. Here's our schedule:

- 5:00** Snack Supper (bring \$5) in the Youth Café
5:30 Youth Worship/Large Group in the Youth Ministry Center
6:30 Senior High, Middle School, Confirmation (meeting rooms)
7:30 Closing



Nine Against One

My favorite sport is baseball. Yes, I know it used to be America's pastime, but now many prefer the constant action of football or basketball over the deliberate nature of a well-placed pitch in just the right spot. What I really love about baseball is the overwhelming DIS-advantage you have as a player. It's the only sport I know where it is you against everyone. You see, when you step into the plate, not only do you have to face a pitcher, but also eight other players who are trying to get you out. It's Nine against One! What other sport puts you at such a disadvantage?

It seems like this is the way it is in our world today when it comes to following Jesus. It seems like it is me against the whole world. Few hold Sunday as sacred, schoolwork never ends, there are temptations on every channel, our days and weeks are filled with activity after activity, and the never-ending entertainment choices constantly try to draw us away from our commitment to God. But, this is just one of the reasons I love being a Christian. It isn't supposed to be easy. If it were easy, then it wouldn't mean much.

Holly didn't know what to say to Mrs. Peterson. "I have piano on Mondays, ballet on Tuesdays, theater on Thurs-

days," she rattled off. "I babysit most Saturday nights, and I have gymnastics three days a week after school. And I get lots of homework, too."

"So you're saying you can't work on the yearbook just one night a week?" Mrs. Peterson replied. "You know that means you probably won't be able to work on the yearbook in high school? They want experienced editors."

"I know," Holly said. Then she decided to tell Mrs. Peterson the real reason. "It's just that it's the only night of the week I can go to youth group."

Holly said no to a good activity so she could say yes to a better one — staying involved with her Christian friends.

You see, you need a team to help support you, to stand behind you, to accept you just as you are, and to be there for you when the world seems against you. A good youth group, and your commitment to them (and theirs to you), can make all the difference when you are striving to be a faithful follower of Jesus.

Wherever you will go.
— Brandon

Youth Ministry Staff

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You can get this newsletter, registration forms, health forms, picture galleries, updated information about our youth and recreation programs by going to the website and clicking either "YOUTH" or "RECREATION."

If you would like to help us keep this website exciting and current, talk with Brandon Dirks or e-mail Kelly Keesling at kellykeesling@ststephenmc.net.



Confirmation

Mark Casper - Coordinator

We are so excited to welcome 14 new Confirmands into the Youth Ministry! The Confirmation Class of 2010 is proving to be thoughtful, curious, and fun! We are learning what it means to “Claim the Name” of Christian and to claim the history and heritage of the United Methodist Church. We’re also learning to claim each other’s names as we get to know one another on a more personal level. I hope all youth will stop by the bulletin board outside the Confirmation classroom to look at the Confirmands’ pictures and begin to learn their names. They are already making their presence known during large group with their enthusiasm, singing and sharing God Moments.

Our September outing was “Dinner and a Movie” — dinner at Anzi’s and seeing G-Force. We had great fun seeing how many Confirmands we could get into a photo booth. The Confirmation Class will be at Camp Carolwood from September 25-27 for our first retreat. Camp Carolwood always proves to be a fantastic experience for our youth as friendships are formed and connections are made among Confirmands, teachers, mentors and Brandon. This irreplaceable bonding time remains foundational to our ministry.

Throughout October we will be treated to several “guest” teachers including The Reverend Tom Latimer in addition to the infamous Chris Withrow who will once again delight us with his costumes and set as we learn about our Protestant heritage. We will also have the annual visit with our Jewish friends at Temple Israel. Rabbi Cantor will give us the tour again this year. October will also be a time for our Confirmands to begin developing relationships with their mentors. We are blessed at St. Stephen to have so many faithful and dedicated adults who are willing to serve in this most important mentor role – you all are most sincerely appreciated.

Middle School

Mary Owen - Coordinator

October will be a little different month for Middle School.

October 4, we will be involved in CROP walk, either as walkers or as sponsors. This is a great way to demonstrate our pledge to be involved in monthly service projects. Be sure you are involved!

Our first retreat will be the weekend of **October 9-11**. We will be going to Elk Shoals. This retreat will be so awesome — YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS IT!!! Be sure you are signed up.

Since there will be no regular Sunday meeting for Middle School these two weeks, **October 18** will be our first Sunday of the month to have UMYF. We will be talking about what we believe. You might even hear the words Wesleyan quadrilateral — think Confirmation.

October 25 will be our second SAC Sunday. Get ready to share and care.

October will be a unique and fun month. Be sure to join in all the activities and remember—Love is all around!

Discipleship Groups Take the Next Step in Your Faith

Discipleship Groups are off to a great start! If you did not get a chance to sign up for a small group that meets on Sunday mornings, there are still a few slots available. Check out the Discipleship Group bulletin board in the Youth Wing for more info.

Senior High

Kelly Keesling - Coordinator

Make a BIG note on your calendar: the fall retreat has been changed to **NOVEMBER 6-8**. The retreat team met after we found out about some conflicts, and decided that moving the retreat was the best option. We’re listening to you! We hope that you will make every effort to go on the retreat — it will be the best way to get to know the group this year.

We will be communicating a lot with our Facebook group – so join it for updates and information: **St. Stephen UMC - Senior High UMYF**

Now, for October...

The first Sunday in October is the Crop Walk, so our schedule will be adjusted that day. Meet in the youth wing after church for a pizza lunch (\$5) and then we’ll head out to walk together for a great cause. (Make sure you are collecting money!)

Since we’re not going on the retreat in October, we WILL have youth group on **October 11**. As this newsletter “goes to press,” we’ve just made this change, so we’ll be adjusting our programming and will let you know what’s up for that evening!

On **October 18**, our program will be *A Picture Tells a Story*. For part of the program, we’ll be doing something fun with our baby pictures. We need to get yours BY October 11 — bring it to youth group or put it in my box at the church by October 11; or you can e-mail a digital version to KellyKeesling@ststephenumc.net. The picture should be of you between age 1 and 4. Let us know if it’s OK to keep the picture all year.

Other things to put on your calendar:

- **Sunday, October 4** Program team meets (when we get back from Crop Walk)
- **Saturday, October 24** Night-time Corn Maze outing
- **Sunday, October 25** SAC Groups
- **November 6-8** Fall Retreat

Missions

YouthWorks

Mark Casper – Coordinator

YouthWorks – the summer 2010 edition – has been set. Keep June 27 – July 2 clear on your calendar as we will be returning to Charleston, WV for a fantastic week of relational mission. Additional information will be during Youth Group and we'll have a parent info meeting in November. Contact Mark Casper at 704-846-6088 for more details or talk to me on Sunday nights. You know where to find me...

Youth Recreation

All youth, boys and girls, are invited to join youth basketball this winter. Deadline to register is October 18. Practices begin November 9, and games begin December 1.

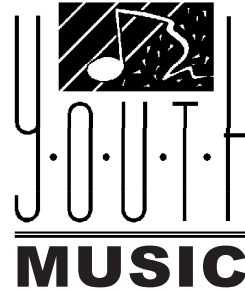
The Recreation Ministry seeks to give youth opportunities in small groups to learn how to meet the intensity of competition with Christian sportsmanship. If you have any questions regarding basketball or the recreation ministry, please contact David Walker (704-367-1074) or Brandon Dirks in the church office. Registration forms can be picked up at the church or downloaded from the recreation website at www.ststephenmc.net/recreation.

AGAPE BELLS 6-6:45pm, room 6

This beginning bell choir teaches the fundamentals of handbells, note reading skills and techniques. We play in worship many times during the school year.

YOUTH CHOIR 6:45-7:30pm, choir rm

All youth (6-12 grade) are invited to be a part of our growing program, as we lead worship and provide music for special youth events. Bring a friend!



ALLELUIA RINGERS 7:30-8:15pm, room 6

This advanced handbell choir plays often in worship and attends the annual youth handbell festival in Richmond,

Virginia. Music reading skills are required.

If you are interested in playing handbells, or if you have any other questions, please call Julia Hubbard at church (704-364-1824) or at home (704-321-5415.)

Parent Volunteers Needed For UMYF Meals

We need EVERY parent to help for at least one or two Sunday night meals. You would arrive at 4pm to meet the meal coordinator, help prepare the food, serve it, and clean up. Every volunteer is needed desperately. This is a great way to meet other parents and to help support our dedicated Kitchen Coordinators! Contact Nancy (nancybaum@ststephenmc.net or 704-364-1824) NOW to sign up for one of these needed dates: October 25; November 15; January 3; February 13; March 14, 21; April 11, 18, 25; May 2, 16, 23.

Youth WRAP-Up (Wednesday Rest & Play!)

5-7:30pm in the Youth Café

Join us on Wednesday evenings to “Wrap-Up” your busy schedule at school and come and hang-out with your friends at church. Come to the Youth Café and bring your homework if you want, grab a snack, check out the wireless internet, TV, video games, etc. Bring your families to the Wednesday Night Live suppers. WRAP-Up is open any Wednesday that the youth choirs rehearse.

Wednesday Schedule

- 5:00pm Café opens
- 6:00pm Agape Bells (Rm 6)
- 6:45pm Youth Choir (choir room)
- 7:30pm Alleluia Ringers (Rm 6)

WRAP-Up Adults Needed

Contact Brandon if you can volunteer on Wednesday evenings by ‘hanging out’ with youth: helping with homework, helping to fix snacks in the youth café, or just being a good role model.



Sid Dixon	Oct. 1
Madeline Courtney	Oct. 1
Ally MacLaughlin	Oct. 3
Caroline Dennehy	Oct. 4
Kyle Lubinsky	Oct. 7
David Hart	Oct. 7
Kathleen Dennis	Oct. 9
Erin Bisette	Oct. 12
Daniel Nix	Oct. 15
Robert Fairman	Oct. 19
Andrew Fairman	Oct. 21
Mack Walker	Oct. 24
Matthew Enten	Oct. 25
Ian Johnson	Oct. 27
Wyatt Maxey	Oct. 28
Alexa Roseman	Oct. 28