

St. Stephen
United Methodist Church

YOUTH NEWS

November 2009

Can I Follow Christ Without Being Weird?

Lost at the U2 Concert

BRANDON DIRKS, MINISTER WITH YOUTH

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.

— 2 Timothy 3:16 (NRSV)

These articles are devoted to answering *practical* questions on how to be a faithful follower of Christ. Now, "How do I know where Christ wants me to follow him?"

A few weeks ago, my family went to see U2 in concert. Everyone knows what I nut I am for U2! In arriving
— *continued on next page*

Important Dates

November 6-8

Senior High Retreat

Wednesday, November 11

UMYF Closing Celebration Team

November 13-15

Handbell Retreat

Sunday, November 15

SAC Sunday

Thursday, November 19

Dinner-4-10

Sunday, November 22

Confirmation Parent University

Sunday, November 29

Family Advent Festival (No UMYF)

November 30

Youth Education Team meets

Discipleship Groups

We are starting some very exciting Discipleship Groups in January. Here is a preview:

**Take the
Next Step
in Your
Faith!**

Discovering Eternal Truths Through Games

We could not do this group last year because we could not find an adult facilitator. Let Brandon know if you find someone! Games can help us learn a lot about ourselves, our relationship with others, and eternal truths. Each week, a new initiative game will be presented to the group meant to challenge, frustrate, stretch and teach the participants to explore deeper who they are, what they value, and how they grow.

Rings

A new, intense Discipleship Group to help you understand the Bible. The curriculum was originally developed to be used in youth prisons, its popularity was quickly adapted for youth groups. But this group is not for everyone...it is for those who are ready to pick up their Bible and discover the amazing adventure. It is for those youth who want to read it, understand it, talk about it, and love it. It is for those youth who will commit to reading the Bible, attending every week, and supporting each other. RINGS is an innovative, fun, and meaningful approach to studying the Bible...but it requires that its participants do not enter the journey half-heartedly. Facilitated by Brandon Dirks.

Other Ideas? *If you have an idea on a topic or want to suggest a facilitator, please let Brandon know.*



CROP Walk Follow-up

Thank you so much to the 33 youth and adults who came out and walked with us on October 4, 2009. Because of your commitment to ending hunger in Charlotte and throughout the world, you and your supporters were able to raise \$2,500 for the cause. Although we fell a little short of our goal, the experience was unforgettable. The pizza party, bus ride and fellowship were a bunch of fun! However, the real impact was walking with 5,000 people through

the streets of downtown Charlotte and surrounding impoverished neighborhoods. Many families stood out on their porches and in their yards cheering us on and showing their gratitude for the effort of the CROP walkers. Overall the Charlotte area CROP walk is the largest in the country, and this year we should reach the goal of \$250,000 in donations (although they are still tallying the donations and won't have a final count until November). 25% of this amount will stay in Charlotte and the rest will go to aid in hunger relief around the world.

For the 2010 CROP Walk, St. Stephen UMYF will keep the same goals of 50 youth participants and \$4,000. Please plan to join us again and help us reach the goal next year!

Sunday Night UMYF United Methodist Youth Fellowship in November

Our regular UMYF schedule is:

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

November Large Groups

Nov. 1 — “Make Your Life Count!” (Come dressed in white to honor All Saints Day!)

Nov. 8 — “Traffic Signs” (Confirmation and MS only)

Nov. 15 — S.A.C. Sunday: “Dropping Nets”

Nov. 22 — “Crazy Shoe Day” (Wear some crazy shoes to UMYF!)

Nov. 29 — NO UMYF (Join the church for the Family Advent Festival)

Leadership Team Meetings

UMYF Closing Celebration Team

Wednesday, November 11, 5pm in the Confirmation Room. Chris Withrow will be joining us to help us make preliminary plans.

Youth Education Team

Monday, November 30, 6:15pm in the Confirmation Room. We will be making plans for new Discipleship Groups which will start in January. Bring your ideas for topics (and adult facilitators)!

Lost

at the stadium late, I noticed that the concert had already started and I was becoming quite anxious. Traffic was crazy, so I pulled into the first gravel lot I could find and we hurried on the one mile walk to the stadium, singing along with the songs.

After the concert we started for the car. I knew the general direction in which to walk, but I quickly noticed that I did not remember specifically in which lot we parked. Like any man, I chose not to tell my wife of my concern. Then I saw a Port-a-Jon ... I knew that landmark! Then I saw a fence with some big trucks behind it ... I knew I was getting close. A few moments later, I stopped. Looked around and realized ... I have the right lot, but I have no idea where our car is. That's when I told Katie ... and, of course, ... I got “the look.”

I clicked the panic button on my keys. Nothing. I wandered around the lot for about 20 minutes, and still nothing. A strange feeling welled up in my chest. I started to panic. I admit my eyes started to sting with a few tears. I couldn't be this wrong! Was the car stolen? I am so stupid! I KNOW we parked in this gravel lot! I started to look in places that I already looked in three times!

Then Baxter said, “Daddy, I remember we parked on pavement.” We were in the wrong lot! The car was in the lot next to ours! Amazing relief!

Have you ever been lost? What do you do? Some people panic, like me. Others refuse to admit they're lost. But some people stay calm, like Baxter. Some people ask for directions. Some people admit they need help figuring out where they are and how to get where they want to go.

Similarly, the Bible is the Word of God. Because the Bible comes from a perfect God, it provides perfect directions. If we look to God's Word for directions, we can trust what it says. It is one of the first steps to understand God, who we are as God's faithful followers, and where we are to go ... and keeps us from getting 'lost.'

Do you have the courage to stop and ask for directions?

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.

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@ststephenumc.net.

Confirmation

Mark Casper - Coordinator

The first SSUMC retreat for the 2010 Confirmation Class at Camp Carolwood was very wet, but the retreat was filled with great food, lots of fun, and group sessions focused on our faith, prayer life and the Bible. Even though the entire weekend was spent indoors — including “campfire” and worship, with the exception of some football in the rain — it was easy to “see God” during the weekend and in the lives of our youth. Our Confirmands grew closer to one another and enjoyed getting to know Brandon. Thanks to the teachers, mentors, and our weekend chef, Chris Withrow, for making our trip an amazing adventure. Take a look inside the Confirmation classroom for pictures and “Faith Words” from the weekend.

In the coming weeks, we will welcome several guest teachers to our class. In an effort to help the Confirmands get to know our church staff, Tom Latimer, John Blizzard, Ruby Reinhard and Tom Schnitzlein will all have an opportunity to lead the class. In addition, Chris Withrow will be back by popular demand to reprise his soliloquy roles as Henry the VIII and Martin Luther.

Saturday, November 14

Davidson Football Game and Tailgate! Our plans are to travel to Davidson College to watch the Wildcats take on Marist. We'll meet at the church at 11:00am and travel together. We'll enjoy a delicious tailgate and then kickoff is at 1:00pm. Parents can plan to pick up their youth back at the church around 4:30pm. The details of the trip will be covered in our class, so for now just mark your calendars!

Middle School

Mary Owen - Coordinator

November is another busy month for Middle School UMYF. After a very exciting, and grace filled, mountain retreat in October we will be staying in town.

November 1

Lars is planning a games night and when Lars is in charge anything can happen! You won't want to miss it!

Saturday, November 7

We'll meet at the dollar theatre in Matthews (behind Kripsy Kreme) for a movie and then dinner at Chick-Fil-A. You will need \$2.25 plus money for food. Times TBA.

November 8

Mark Casper and the YouthWorks team will present the program for us. Come and hear about this very rewarding ministry.

November 15

SAC Sunday — be ready to Share-and-Care!

November 22

This is the Sunday before Thanksgiving and we are planning a service project. Every youth should bring \$2 that evening, and we will go shopping for food. Teams, representing a family, will shop for a day's worth of food with the money they have. This is an activity that will make you truly thankful for all you have.

November 29

Advent Festival — plan to attend with your family!

Senior High

Kelly Keesling - Coordinator

Make sure you join the Facebook group for updates and information: **St. Stephen UMC - Senior High UMYF**

Here's what's up for November:

November 1

A representative from the Urban Ministry Center will join us with a program about “Faces of the Homeless.” Come and ask questions!

November 6-8 FALL RETREAT!

We're heading to the Blue Ridge Assembly in Black Mountain for our first retreat of the year! It's a laid back retreat with lots of fun activities planned, time to get to know each other, devotions and worship. No UMYF on Sunday (rest and catch up on your homework!).

November 15

SAC Sunday!

November 22

We'll be preparing exam care packages for our college students and military family members. We're also planning to do some projects for Room in the Inn. The more people helping, the more fun it'll be!

Other upcoming stuff:

Friday, December 11

We'll be hosting all aspects of Room in the Inn (bedding, dinner, breakfast, lunches, overnight host, van driving). Sign up in youth group for one of these areas.

Sunday, December 13

Senior High Christmas Party!

DINNER-4-10 is BACK!

After 4 years off, we are bringing it back! Be looking in your e-mail or Facebook messages for YOUR invitation to have dinner at YOUR Youth Minister's HOUSE! (If you have not added Brandon as a Facebook friend, now is the time!) Each month, a different SAC group will be invited. If you miss your month ... well ... there's always next year ... maybe. This month's dinner is on Thursday, November 19 at 6:00pm. The SAC group invited is the WYWG-Group!

Missions

YouthWorks

Mark Casper – Coordinator

YouthWorks 2010 will be June 27 – July 2. We will be returning to Charleston, WV for a fantastic week of relational mission. YouthWorks will be the topic of discussion during the November 8 Middle School UMYF. There will be a Parent Information Meeting following UMYF on November 8 in the Senior High classroom – 7:30–8:30. The brochure is now available. Contact Mark Casper at 704-846-6088 for more details or talk to me on Sunday nights. You know where to find me...

ASP Date Set

Clonnie Lambert – Coordinator

ASP has accepted our application for the week of June 20, 2010. We are set to go. Remember, this is our 25th anniversary year with ASP. Don't miss out.

Youth Recreation

Fall Basketball Has Begun!

Practices begin the week of November 9, and games begin the week of December 1. If you missed the registration deadline, there MAY be room on a few teams. Contact David Walker (704-367-1074). The Recreation Ministry seeks to give youth opportunities in small groups to learn how to meet the intensity of competition with Christian sportsmanship.

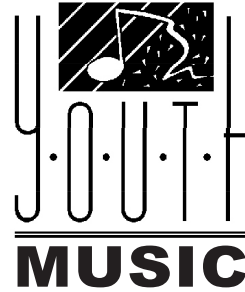


AGAPE BELLS 6-6:45pm, room 6

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. Music reading skills are required. We will be going to the Annual Youth Handbell Festival in Richmond November 13-15.

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. 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@ststephenumc.net or 704-364-1824) NOW to sign up for one of these needed dates: **February 14; March 14, 21; April 11, 18, 25; May 2, 16, 23.** A volunteer schedule and a list of parent phone numbers is included with this newsletter. Please keep them by your calendar.

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.

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| Rachel Friel | Nov. 9 |
| Joshua Wilkenloh | Nov. 14 |
| Josh Walker | Nov. 16 |
| Eli Walker | Nov. 16 |
| Caroline Fletcher | Nov. 17 |
| Tate Heisler | Nov. 18 |
| Matt McCormick | Nov. 19 |
| Melissa Freeman | Nov. 20 |
| Nick Sizoo-Roberson | Nov. 24 |