

St. Stephen
United Methodist Church

YOUTH NEWS

January 2010

Can I Follow Christ Without Being Weird?

Why Would Anyone Want to See Jesus So Badly?

BRANDON DIRKS, MINISTER WITH YOUTH

I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

— Revelation 3:20

These articles are devoted to answering *practical* questions on how to be a faithful follower of Christ. Now, “*How could Jesus love me?*”

Did you go to the children’s Christmas pageant at the church? I have been to many, and I am amazed. Not just at the pageant (which was

— *continued on next page*

Important Dates

Sunday, January 3

Youth Covered Dish Breakfast
UMYF New Year Kick-off!

Wednesday, January 6

YET meets (6:15pm)

Sunday, January 10

New Discipleship Groups Start

Sunday, January 10

SAC Sunday!

January 16-17

Middle School WOW Lock-In

Sunday, January 24

Confirmation Parent University

Friday, January 29

Confirmation Lock-In



A prayer for the new year

Eternal God, thank you for bringing us once again to the threshold of a new year. Help us dedicate each day of 2010 to following your will for our lives. Guide us, Lord, in all our decisions and actions, day by day and hour by hour. Help us accomplish all that you desire for us to do, until our mission on earth is finished. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Discipleship Groups

New Series Begins January 10

Discipleship Groups are short-term intensive small groups that help participants engage the Bible and apply it to their lives. See the insert for the Winter series of Discipleship Groups. Turn in your registration card by January 3!

Take the Next Step in Your Faith!

Covered Dish Breakfast!

Sunday, January 3 from 9:45am-10:30am

Everyone loves breakfast! All youth, counselors, teachers, and especially former youth are particularly invited to bring a dish to share and celebrate with us a new year together! Drinks will be provided. Everyone is encouraged to bring something homemade, but if you are kitchen-challenged, feel free to bring ‘pre-made’ items. Ideas — egg casserole, sausage biscuits, french toast casserole, cinnamon rolls, bagels and cream cheese, fruit, coffee cake, muffins, biscuits and gravy, or whatever you’d like to share! Please bring your food by 9:45am. If everyone brings something great, it will be a feast to be remembered! Parents, please help your youth!

Garden City Beach Retreat

July 11-16, 2010

The St. Stephen Garden City Beach Retreat is one of the most significant Youth Ministry events for 6th-12th graders. Teenagers are a part of a Christ-centered community that strives to discover God in special and

amazing ways. The week includes intimate small groups where the older youth reach out to younger youth, amazing daily worship that challenges the heart, and incredible activities which bring laughter and joy to the deepest parts of the soul. This truly is a retreat not to be missed.

To officially register, you must complete and return the appropriate registration form with payment. (Note: if you locked in the “Super Early Bird” rate in July 2009, you need to turn in your form by 1/31/10.) Early-Bird discount deadline is 1/31/10. Deadline to register is 6/13/10. There will be no refunds after this date. Registration forms are available in the church office and at www.ststephenmc.net/youth.html.

For up-to-date Garden City news, join the GC 2010 Facebook group.

Practical Questions, from front

great), but at the audience! Parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other family members come 30, even 45 minutes early to the sanctuary so that they can sit in the front rows, rows that few people sit in the 51 other Sundays of the year! People are pushing into each other, cramming into the rows so that they can get closer to the pageant. (Wouldn't it be wonderful if this was the way worship services were *every* week?) Parents have their camcorders and cameras out and at the ready so that they get a better shot of their kids telling part of the greatest story ever told!

Why would these parents do that? Because they want to see their kids and to record the event to remember for all of time for they know that time passes quickly and this moment will never come again.

There's a story in the Bible like this. Check out Luke 19:1-10. Zacchaeus climbed a tree to see Jesus because he had heard that Jesus loved the unlovable — and Zachaeus knew he wasn't exactly adored by the masses. He was a corrupt tax collector, cheating his countrymen and aiding the occupying enemy, the Romans. But Jesus picked Zacchaeus to share dinner with Him. Why?

Jesus walked right by the people who stood on the ground laughing at Zacchaeus — people who thought they were better than the awful tax collector. Do you ever think that you are better than others?

Zacchaeus did something strange by climbing a tree to catch a glimpse at this Jesus because he knew he needed Jesus so badly. His hope for a new life lay in this one man! So, he was willing to have the crowd laugh at him, make fun of him just to get closer to Jesus because he knew that time passes quickly and this moment might never come again.

Are you "up in a tree?" Do you want to be? Jesus is about to pass by.

Wherever you will go. — Brandon

Sunday Night UMYF

United Methodist Youth Fellowship in December

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

January Large Groups

January 3 – NEW Year Kick-off with guest band, Travis Avenue! We will meet in the gym for dinner at 5:00pm, concert, and Large Group.

January 10 – **SAC Sunday*** – note different schedule (No Large Group)

January 17 – Bigotry, Racism, and Prejudice. Oh my!

January 24 –How to tell between right and wrong.

January 31 –Running the Race! Athlete Day. Dress up in your athletic gear. If you have one, bring a trophy, medal, or any other athletic recognition you have!

*SAC Sunday, January 10

Special schedule

- 5:00** Snack Supper in the Youth Café
- 5:30** Senior High, Middle School, Confirmation (meeting rooms)
- 6:30** SAC Groups
- 7:30** Closing

Leadership Team Meetings

Youth Education Team

The YET will meet on Wednesday, January 6 at 6:15pm in the Confirmation Room. We will be assigning Discipleship Groups which will start January 10.

Senior High Planning Teams

The Senior High teams (Programming, Outings, and Retreat) will be meeting together MONTHLY starting in January. This month, we'll meet on Wednesday, January 13 at 5:30pm in the Senior High Room.

Youth Ministry Staff

Brandon Dirks	Utes Minister
Julia Hubbard	Muzik Minister
Kelly Keesling	Info Minister
Nancy Baum	Administer



Contact Information

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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

It is hard to believe that we are half-way through our Confirmation year! There is still so much fun ahead ... parents please continue to support the Confirmation program by encouraging perfect attendance in 2010. Participating in all activities will ensure the fullest experience possible.

The race is on between the Watermelon Airheads (melon-heads as they like to call themselves) and the Blue-Raspberry Airheads! Our two teams continue to challenge one another through scavenger hunts and trivia contests and the next great battle soon to come ... the MONSTER SUNDAE CHALLENGE!

Friday, January 29

Extreme Bowling Lock-in and the Monster Sundae Challenge This night always ranks as a Confirmation favorite! Meet at the church on Friday night at 8:00pm and we will travel to AMF Carolina Lanes for extreme bowling. We'll return to the church where our two teams will have their opportunity to create the most colossal, creative, obnoxious ice cream sundae in history! We'll also enjoy a late night snack, games, and a movie. Parents plan on picking up their Confirmand around 8:30am on Saturday morning. Everyone needs to bring warm sleepwear, sleeping bags, pillow, and toiletries.

Parents: Please send a variety of ice cream sundae toppings. Teachers will provide the ice cream.

Mentors: This is a great opportunity to have some fun with your Confirmand and we can always use adult volunteers to help with the evening.

Cost: The total cost is \$20 which includes bowling (and shoes), food, and transportation. (The cost is \$15 for adults.) Please make every effort to join in and RSVP to Mark at 704-846-6088 or mcasper@terrapower.com so that we can plan appropriately. What a great way to bring in 2010!

Middle School

Mary Owen - Coordinator

Welcome to 2010!! Wow, that is hard to believe. Speaking of WOW, that is what January is going to be for Middle School UMYF. We will be holding our Weekend of Worship (WOW) on January 16-17. So make plans to be there!

Sunday, January 3

The first UMYF of 2010 will begin with a special Chris Withrow dinner in the gym and then special music. Our Middle School program will be a discussion about the different denominations we will be visiting during the WOW program.

Sunday, January 10

SAC Sunday with a new format.

January 16-17

This is our Weekend of Worship. We will not meet on Sunday night.

Sunday, January 24

The introduction program for 30 Hour Famine 2010.

Sunday, January 31

Activities with Lars in charge.

This is a month you do not want to miss. So start the New Year off right. Find the Joy in Jesus at UMYF!!

Senior High

Kelly Keesling - Coordinator

We've got a lot planned this month, and a lot more in the works! Keep your eyes on your e-mail and the Facebook group (**St. Stephen UMC - Senior High UMYF**) for up-to-the-minute information.

Sunday, January 3

We're going to have some time to unwind after the holidays! We'll start off with a concert in the gym by Travis Avenue, and then games and activities with our Senior High group.

Sunday, January 10

Senior High will meet at 5:30pm in our room and do a special program to prepare for our SAC groups. This is a different schedule, so be sure to come on time!

Sunday, January 17

Dinner OUT!! We'll let you know the details on where to meet and how to RSVP soon! Senior High will NOT meet at the church this day.

Sunday, January 24

The 30-Hour Famine Team will give us an introduction to this year's Famine – you won't want to miss it! You'll also get your donation forms so you can start collecting!



St. Stephen UMC Treasure Sale May 1, 2010

When your parents are making you clean your rooms after Christmas, consider saving some things for the SSUMC Treasure Sale in May! Things

to save include video games, CD's, DVD's, purses, games, books, crafts, jewelry. (Donate your old clothes to Crisis Assistance — the box is in Holy Grounds.) If you have questions, contact Susi Robinson at susi-rob9@gmail.com.

Dinner Help Needed!

Every parent should help with Sunday UMYF meals. It's easy! Just arrive at 4pm to meet the meal coordinator, help prepare and serve the food, and clean up. Contact Nancy (nancybaum@ststephenmc.net or 704-364-1824) NOW to sign up for one of these needed dates: February 14; April 11; May 2, 16, 23.

Youth Recreation

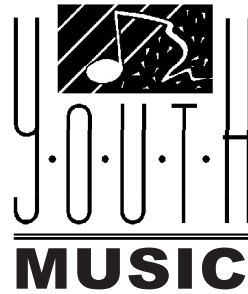
St. Stephen basketball is off and running. Come out to the games to support your friends and your church. Check the Sports Ministry bulletin board in the gym for schedules.

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 also go to the Annual

Youth Handbell Festival in Richmond each November.

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.)



Walk with Emily's Entourage!

The JDRF Walk to Cure Diabetes is Saturday, April 17, 2010 at Carowinds. The 4 mile walk begins at 8:30 am (arrive by 7:45 am) and ends by 11:30 am. (Youth can be picked up at the front gate at 6pm if they can stay and ride!)

Collect \$200 (or more!) to help find a cure for Juvenile Diabetes, turn it in at Carowinds before the Walk on April 17 and receive: 1 free Carowinds pass, 1 free t-shirt, 1 free Charlotte Checkers ticket, 1 free Bobcats ticket, and more!

After the JDRF Walk to Cure Diabetes ends, we'll enjoy a complimentary lunch from JDRF sponsors underneath the Emily's Entourage Tent, and then we'll use the tickets you've earned or purchased and spend the day at Carowinds! If you already have a 2010 season pass, save your ticket for a friend on another day and still join us for the afternoon to ride everything we can!

Watch 2009's highlights: www.youtube.com/watch?v=z8vLaA6imTg

More information about registering and team t-shirts will be sent later. If you have questions, call Elizabeth Barger at 704-841-8936 or email bbarger@carolina.rr.com.

Missions

30-Hour Famine 2010

Although The Famine is not until Mach 5-6, we have the congregation kick off on January 31. Be sure to wear a Famine t-shirt and bring your packets. Ask everyone to donate or make a pledge!! Remember, it is about saving kids.

YouthWorks

Mark Casper – Coordinator

YouthWorks 2010 is June 27-July 2 to Charleston, WV. Your \$50 commitment payment is due NOW (no later than January 8!) The \$225 remaining balance is due no later than February 5 or you can pay the total cost of \$275 now. The signup pamphlet can be found in the kiosks in front of Brandon's office, at the Youth Café or at the YouthWorks bulletin boards. Contact Mark Casper at 704-846-6088 for more details or talk to me on Sunday nights.

ASP

Clonnie Lambert – Coordinator

We will be going to Appalachia the week of June 20, 2010. This is our 25th anniversary year with ASP. Don't miss out.



Anna Harden	Jan. 1
William Hutto	Jan. 2
Morgan Tate	Jan. 2
Josie Sewell	Jan. 4
Maddie Coggin	Jan. 7
Chandler Shuford	Jan. 10
Sarah Nix	Jan. 13
Sam Carlton	Jan. 13
William Griffin	Jan. 17
Blake Hoffler	Jan. 18
Nicholas Pelone	Jan. 20
Marisa Reece	Jan. 28
Maddie Conti	Jan. 29
Alex Wilson	Jan. 30