



The Challenger

January 11, 2010

Gordon Street Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

"In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity."



FROM THE PASTOR

Since this is the first newsletter of the year, let me offer a word of thanks on behalf of the staff of Gordon Street. We appreciate the many expressions of kindness that we received during the Christmas season by way of gifts, goodies, cards, dinners, and warm greetings. It truly is one of the best seasons of the year, and especially so at Gordon Street. Thank you.

I also want to commend you on your faithful giving in 2009. These are tough economic times that we are living in, and yet we once again covered our expenses in their entirety (as of Sunday we were a few hundred behind, but one family in our church has made a generous gift to cover the difference). We can now celebrate eight straight years of meeting expenses!

We are a good giving congregation, as I have reminded you each year. Only Laura, as Office Manager, knows the particulars of who gives what. It's confidential information, as in most congregations. But we can see the trends: in 2009, we brought in about 35% of our budget in December; about 6% of our membership gave over \$10,000; 2% gave 5-10 thousand; 41% 1-5 thousand; and 51% gave less than \$1000. Together, we made it a faithful year of giving. Let's make 2010 another good year, and let's each try to grow in our stewardship so that we don't sweat out the final weeks.

This coming year also brings some new faces in leadership. You'll note in this newsletter that we are about to ordain Debbie Casey and Billy Parrott as elders. We welcome them, along with a new class of deacons. We have a new Executive Committee as well, consisting of Beth Heath, Charles Yarbrough, Ginger Johnson, and Kathy Riggs; plus, we have some new committee chairs—Kim Scarborough (Evangelism), Anne Vincent (Membership), Gene Rybolt (Property), Lyle Holland (Stewardship), Jane Rybolt (Memorials), Lee Johnson (Scholarship), Reid Taylor (Aesthetics), and Wanda Scarborough (Personnel). Let's support and pray for them in their work.

Finally, this is a big year for me as I endeavor to complete my final project for my Doctor of Ministry. It's a big undertaking and will involve the congregation, especially those of you that serve in my pilot group. Be watching for more information, and keep me in your prayers as I embark on this. Right now it all seems a little overwhelming, but I know with yours and God's help, it will be a good experience.

Glad to be your pastor, GSCC.

REGIONAL NEWS

Congregational revitalization will be the focus of a regional workshop being offered at Barton College, January 22-23. The registration cost is \$40, which includes all meals. If you are interested in attending, contact Mark a.s.a.p. as the deadline has already passed. The Rev. Bill McConnell, a Disciples pastor in Harrison, OH, and noted author, will be the keynote speaker. Also, the Regional Assembly has been slated for April 16-17, in Wilmington, NC. GSCC is entitled to four delegates, Contact Beth Heath, moderator, if you are interested in serving in this capacity. More information later.



BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Please join us on Sunday, January 17 for the 167th birthday of GSCC. We will be celebrating after church with a covered dish dinner. We are expecting guests so please bring enough food to feed a family, and stay and celebrate this great church.

HANDBELL AUCTION FUNDRAISER

The bell choir is sponsoring their annual dinner and auction on Sunday, February 28th at 6 p.m. The proceeds from this fundraiser support the handbell choir's spring tour and will enable them to deliver their ministry of handbell music to retirement communities, churches and a soup kitchen in Washington D.C., New Jersey and NY City. The bell choir is seeking items to be donated for the auction which will be greatly appreciated. So start now to look for wonderful items to be auctioned off. Plan to join us Sunday evening, February 28th, for an evening of lively entertainment with a talent show performed by members of the Sanctuary Bells, delicious food, and great fellowship. Tickets will go on sale for \$8 beginning February 28th and may be purchased from any member of the Sanctuary Bells.



ORDINATIONS

The ordinations of Debbie Casey and Billy Parrott as elders of Gordon Street Christian Church have been set for Sunday, January 24, during morning worship. All elders are encouraged to be present for the laying on of hands. Be sure to be here to greet and support these two new elders. James White will also be recognized as Elder Emeritus during the worship service. James has served as elder for 47 years.

CWF NEWS



GSCC's CWF has arranged to have Woman-to-Woman participant Jeanne Robertson come to Gordon Street for a Sunday evening presentation, January 24, 6 p.m., in the fellowship hall. Ms. Robertson visited Bosnia and will speak on the struggles of the people there as they recover from years of war. All men, women, and young people are encouraged to attend. For more information, speak with Hazel Yarbrough, CWF President. Refreshments will be served.

BIBLE STUDY

The Wednesday evening Bible study class will begin a new study on January 20, 5:30 p.m., on the Gospel of John. If you have been wanting to learn more about the Bible, this would be a good time to get started. If interested, contact Mark a.s.a.p. so that he can order you a study booklet (cost- \$13) or stop by the church library to read the one on reserve.



YOUTH NEWS

Youth groups have resumed for the winter/spring season with the promise of lots of fun, fellowship, and learning. The program is designed for all young people grades 1-12, meeting each Sunday evening for supper at 6 p.m. (\$2), followed by study, music, recreation, or mission from 6:30-7:30. By now, everyone should have received their schedules. The CYF ski trip to Wintergreen (VA) is slated for February 12-14. Details will be forthcoming; deadline to sign up is Jan. 31.

CHURCH STAFF

Mark A. Benson	Senior Minister
Joanne M. Heath	Minister of Music
Gail J. Cooper	Organist
Laura J. Clark	Office Manager
Thurman Pate	Church Steward
Tina Faulkner	Nursery Attendant
Church Office	252-523-4143
Minister's Cell	252-468-1022
Minister's e-mail	mark@rustikat.net or markgsc@embarqmail.com
Minister's Home	252-523-5472
GSCC Website	gsc.kinstonlc.com

ABOUT THE DISCIPLES

Born in the early 1800s, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is the oldest Protestant Church to have been founded in the United States. Its symbol of the chalice emphasizes the central place of communion in worship, as well as the Scottish Presbyterian roots of the denomination (the cross of St. Andrew). Disciples confess their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and seek unity among all believers.

