Happy Birthday Messy Church!
You Are 1-Year-Old!

See Page 9 for a Messy Church Update!
Food for Thought

By Senior Pastor Bill Jones

A pastor startled his congregation one Sunday morning by asking the question: “What have you done today that nobody but a Christian would do?” The obvious answer would be, “Well, pastor, I got out of bed and came to church today.” I have a feeling the pastor was looking for something a little less obvious. It is a good question to ponder as we begin the New Year. Every day God puts in front of us opportunities to serve the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The challenge for us is how we respond. As Christians are we alert to the opportunities to be Christ-bearers in the things we say and do – to do what nobody but a Christian would do?

As a single mother, she gets up at 5:30 each morning and gets herself ready for work. She dresses her sleepy children, gets them a bite to eat, drops them off at day care and school, fights the morning traffic, hunts for a parking space, grabs a cup of coffee, slides behind her desk. For the day, she endures the petty office gossip and deals with fragile male egos in order to make enough money for her struggling family. She finds time to take her daughter to flute lessons and her son to T-ball practice, although she has little time for herself. What makes her do it? She loves her children. That is what love does. Love finds a way to do what needs to be done.

Love is what motivates a Christian to do what needs to be done. Love came down at Christmas. For God so loved the world that God gave his only Son – to be a model for what love does. We sing, “They’ll know we are Christians by our love.” Many of us who call ourselves Christian long to become what we call ourselves.

I like the way Eugene Peterson translates 1 Thessalonians 5:15 in The Message: “Look for the best in each other, and always do your best to bring it out.” If we look for the best in each other what a difference we can make. God brings out the best in us when we encourage one another to be their best and to do what God has given one the ability to do.

The second Sunday in January is Baptism of the Lord Sunday. On this Sunday we remember Jesus’ baptism and renew our baptism. The story of Jesus’ baptism is a glorious one that sets the tone for our own baptism, even if that baptism occurred when we were infants. “When Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.’” (Matthew 3:16-17) God saw the best in his son Jesus. By the waters of baptism we are claimed as children of God. God sees the best in us no matter how inadequate we may see ourselves.

I read a story sometime back about former college pro football star Pat Haden. When Pat played football in the pros, he was small by today’s standards – only 5’ 10 ½”. He was also light – only 173 pounds. Still, he had a gift, besides his athletic ability. The gift was a voice inside his head that said, “Pat, you can do it.” “You can do it, Pat,” his two older brothers used to say to him when he was a little boy. “You can do it, Pat,” they told him when he was stuck on a school project. And they would encourage him to work harder. “You can do it, Pat.”

“I ended up knowing that I could do anything I wanted to do,” Pat remembered years later. And time after time Pat Haden beat the odds and proved the confidence of his older brothers to be correct, “You can do it, Pat.”

We could all use someone like those two older brothers standing behind us and saying, “You can do it.” The Christian walk is not easy. There are always obstacles getting in our way like pride, resentment, anger, worry, guilt, selfishness, busyness, even inadequacy. As baptized Christians we can do it when we remember who we are, that we belong to Christ and Christ belongs to us. We can do it, but we need the support and encouragement of fellow Christians in the church. With Christ and the church telling us, “You can do it,” then it is possible to do what nobody but a Christian would do. That’s food for thought as we begin 2016 together!
Thoughts from Kay

By Associate Pastor Kay Barré

As the new year begins, many of us are asking how we can be better people—what we can do to improve our health, our financial status, our household organization or our relationships. Some of our resolutions we’ll keep, but most will soon be relegated to the dust-heap of poorly remembered history. It actually makes sense that such changes aren’t always that meaningful. Jesus reminds us time and again that what we do on earth for ourselves is temporary, it is what we do for God and God’s people that really matters. So perhaps this year you can resolve to use some of that spirit of self-improvement to make a difference in the world in a real, tangible, and Spirit-filled way.

One of the most wonderful parts of my ministry here at Williamsburg UMC is having the opportunity to administrate the Pastor’s Discretionary Fund (PDF). Yes, it may sound boring and financial, but this program gives me the opportunity to meet many of the members of our community who are most in need. Individuals, couples, families—many who are working part-time and/or minimum wage jobs and living in hotels and even cars—can access this fund for help with food, rent, utilities, transportation and other daily needs. The PDF account is supported entirely by direct donations: remember you must note specifically “PDF” on your check or envelope, or give to the monthly Communion Offering which supports this outreach ministry. Think about making a small gift to PDF as part of your financial devotions.

But there are sometimes other needs that go beyond a check to a landlord or utility. In December 2014, we asked for gift card donations for the homeless guests staying in the winter shelter. There was such an overwhelming response that we were not just able to give those gifts, but had hundreds of dollars in cards left over for other homeless and needy persons throughout the year. Those gift cards helped your neighbors to: purchase shoes for bare feet, pick up needed prescriptions, get feminine hygiene supplies, put food in hungry bellies, afford uniforms for new jobs, chose a Thanksgiving turkey, buy Christmas gifts for their children and so much more. Your generosity touched lives, and made a difference in a powerful way.

Those gifts were such a blessing in 2015, but now they are almost all gone. So if you are called and able to give a gift card or cards to Target, Walmart, Food Lion or another grocery store, or even fast food like McDonalds or Subway, please leave them for me in the church office with a note they are for PDF. I invite you to join me in this important outreach ministry for people right here in Williamsburg.

Jesus says in Matthew chapter 25 that “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” As we all journey together into a new calendar year, let’s fill that blank page with kindness, with service, and with care. What we do together to reach those who are most at need may not make us thinner, or richer, or even better organized—but it will count in ways that are life-changing, not just for those we help, but for our own souls. Happy New Year!

What a comfort it can be to have a concerned person willing to stay with you through trouble. A Stephen Minister can be that person who will be by your side and listen to you.
News from United Methodist Women

During our Board Meeting at the end of November, the Williamsburg United Methodist Women made their annual donations to United Methodist Women National Mission Institutions and to local Williamsburg non-profit organizations. This year’s Global UMW sponsored recipients are Red Bird Mission in Kentucky, Cookson Hills Center in Oklahoma, Alaska Child and Family Services in Anchorage, AK and Wesley Community Service Center in Portsmouth, VA.

Local non-profit recipients in Williamsburg are Avalon, Faith in Action, The Harbor, and Latisha’s House. The Williamsburg UMW could not have made all of these donations without the support of everyone at Williamsburg United Methodist Church. We sincerely thank you.

Bonnie Knizatko
UMW President

---

Carol Scott Circle
Tuesday, January 12 at 1:00 p.m. in the Church Den. Ruth Anderton is responsible for the program.

Sisters-in-Faith Circle
Tuesday, January 12 at 7:00 p.m. in Room 309. Deborah Maviglia Podish from Hospice House will be the guest speaker.

Williamsburg Landing Circle
Tuesday, January 19 at 10:30 a.m. at the Williamsburg Landing Main Building in the Auditorium (on the kitchen side).

---

Olive Casey Circle
Monday, January 4 at 9:30 a.m. in the Church Den.

Clarke/Heritage Circle
Tuesday, January 5 at 9:45 a.m. in Room 309. The topic for the meeting will be “Stone Soup - getting off to a good start by working together” presented by Mera Hughes.

Jean Craig Circle
Tuesday, January 5 at 1:30 p.m. in the Activities Room at Brookdale (formerly known as Chambrel). The program will be “Hunters for the Hungry”.

Susanna Wesley Circle
Wednesday, January 6 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 309. The program will be presented by Deborah Maviglia Podish from the Hospice House.

Friendship Circle
Monday, January 11 at 10:30 a.m. in the Church Den. The speaker will be Barbara Hamson, who will share all her knowledge about UMCOR and its many relief programs.

---

UMW Book Club

The UMW Book Club will meet on Monday, January 12 at 7:00 p.m. at the home of Karen McPherson, 3296 Reade’s Way. We will be discussing *January First* by Michael Schofield. Start the new year out by joining the book club. All are invited! *January First* is in the Nurturing for Community category.

Looking ahead to February, we will be reading and discussing *I Am Malala*, by Malala Yousafzai, in the Leadership Development category.

For more information about the UMW Book Club, contact Carol Brinkley (258-0617).
United Methodist Day at the General Assembly

We invite you to join us for United Methodist Day at the General Assembly Thursday, February 4. This is our opportunity to help faith communities become empowered to serve as missionaries of justice, as well as the more traditional missionaries of mercy.

You may register online at www.vaumc.org. Click on conference Calendar (top right of page), go to February 4, click on “United Methodist Day at the General Assembly”. Follow the link to register or pick up a form on the UMW Bulletin Board.

- **Early bird** registration and payment of $25 per person must be received by **Friday, January 15** (Early registrants will be entered into a drawing for two one-year subscriptions to the Virginia Advocate). **Final registration** date will be **Friday, January 29** and will cost $35 per person. **No refunds will be available.** Space is limited to 300; every person MUST register and pay by January 29!

United Methodist Day and other avenues of faithful advocacy help us to look beyond mercy ministry to ask: “What caused this problem? What causes hunger? Global warming?” By joining together and establishing relationships with our elected officials, we empower members of our congregations to wonder, “How can I make a difference? How can I be a Good Samaritan in our world to its fullest sense?”

This event gives congregations a vehicle for reaching beyond themselves and introduces them to the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church in a meaningful way. Last year 6 UMW and 4 UMM from WUMC attended. Transportation to and from Richmond will be provided. Contact Mary Jo Bennett (229-2601) for questions.

Human Trafficking Awareness Day

Monday, January 11

Human trafficking is a form of modern day slavery and is the second largest criminal industry in the United States. Estimates are that more than 27 million people worldwide are trafficked, and more than 100,000 children each year are trafficked in the United States. Human trafficking is a crime fueled by global poverty, inadequate education and opportunity, ethnic discrimination and societal inequity between men and women and by the demand for cheap labor and cheap sex.

Human trafficking occurs everywhere in the world, here in Virginia and even in our own area. Fortunately we have Latisha’s House in our community helping these young victims to have the opportunity for a better life.

On Sunday, January 11 please pray for human trafficking victims near us and all over the world.
Emergency Shelter for the Homeless

Winter is the most difficult time for those in our community who don’t have stable, reliable housing. That’s why more than 30 churches in Williamsburg, James City County, and York County have joined together to open their doors to the homeless and provide hot meals and a safe place to sleep. Williamsburg United Methodist will partner with St. Stephen Lutheran and King of Glory Lutheran to host a week of emergency shelter in the week of January 17-24. If you have signed up to help, thank you. There are still opportunities to serve and we especially need volunteers for: overnight (9:00 p.m. – 2:00 a.m. & 1:00 a.m. – 6:00 a.m.), and check-out (5:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.). Also, if you have a group that can prepare and serve breakfast, please sign up by calling the Church office.

We are also collecting for our guests: DVDs, puzzle books, paperback books, magazines, and clothes (heavy coats and sweats sizes L-XL-XXL, socks, and rain gear). Place items in the designated bin in the atrium closet.

The shelter is a blessing to the ones who are served as well as to those who serve. It is a success because we all work together. Thanks and Peace.

Your Local Outreach Team

Lenten Shoe Box

Shepherd’s Fold Ministry will deliver 25 wrapped shoeboxes filled with modest gifts to members who are no longer able to attend worship. The intent is to include one gift to unwrap each day of Lent. The shoeboxes contain items from the below list. Place your contribution of any of the below items in the designated bin in the atrium closet by January 27. All items should be unopened and unused. Contact Vikki DiToto (903-4976) or Vikkilynn@cox.net with questions or to ask for more specific needs.

Two each of the following:
- combs
- ink pens
- Chapsticks
- small note pads
- post-its

One each of the following:
- nail file
- cork-back coaster
- toothbrush
- washcloth
- small Easter-related trinket, solar toy figure or stuffed animal
- package of greeting or note cards
- scotch tape; potpourri-filled sachet

Travel sizes of the following:
- shampoo
- hair conditioner
- soap
- deodorant
- bath powder
- toothpaste
- mouthwash
- hand lotion
- pack of Band-Aids
- Woolite pack
- hand sanitizer
- Handi-wipes (singles or travel pack)

Do you have an article for the Newsletter?

If you would like to submit an article for publication in the Messenger, the deadline for submittals is the 15th of the month. Articles submitted should be typed or neatly printed, limited to a 1/2 page in length and are subject to editing for grammar, spelling and content. Please submit by e-mail to Lianne Koch at lkoch@williamsburgumc.org. Questions? Please e-mail Lianne or call (229-1771).
A HUGE Thank You 
from your Local Outreach Team!

It would be greatly understated to say that our congregation has been both busy and generous during the last quarter of this year. Here are some highlights:

**Kairos Cookies**

Lyman Hubbard represented our church at the October Kairos Retreat in the Greensville Correctional Facility. People prayed for the success of the retreat during every minute of the 3½ day spiritual experience. Thank you if you prayed. The second Kairos Bake-a-Thon in our church kitchen yielded 65+ dozen homemade cookies. Congregants added dozens and dozens more. Thank you if you baked cookies. Members of the Fellowship Class and families attending Messy Church created spiritual placemats using recycled calendar pictures. Thank you if you cut and pasted. You are a blessing bringing hope and comfort.

**Winter Coat Drive**

Our congregation gave 62 winter coats to Head Start in Williamsburg to warm our little ones heading to pre-school. The Head Start administrative staff is most appreciative. Thank you if you provided warmth and protection for a local child on cold winter mornings.

**Teddy Bears**

Thirty teddy bears were “dressed” by our congregants to raise funds for the Salvation Army. Bears were auctioned or sold at the Teddy Bear Tea on November 10. All of the funds will be used to send local children to Camp Happy Land in the summer. Thank you if you dressed a bear and contributed to the camping experience.

**Thanksgiving Mission Morning**

160 volunteers, including a number of Boy Scouts, helped make our Thanksgiving Morning Ministry both fun and fulfilling. 450 meals were prepared, packaged and delivered to people in need. Many went to folks living in motels and shelters because they are temporarily homeless. Others went to individuals who are homebound, too ill to cook or don’t have enough food. Our congregation received a note from a gentleman living at Motel 6 who described the meal as thoughtful, loving and generous and noted that it was food that he can’t afford to buy. Thank you if you cooked, packaged, loaded or delivered meals.

While the meal was prepared, willing hands pitched in to create blessing placemats to include with the meals; Christmas stockings for a small Methodist school on the Eastern Shore; toy bags for Erase the Need; spiritual placemats for the Kairos Prison Retreat at Greensville; toiletry kits for the winter shelter and a transitional housing program for men released from jail; birthing kits that UMCOR will distribute around the world; and gifts called “blessing bags” for our December guests when WUMC hosts the winter shelter. So thank you if you colored, pasted, wrapped, assembled, or otherwise helped expedite our outreach in Greater Williamsburg, our state and around the world.

All extra donated food was delivered to the Community Action Agency, FISH and Erase the Need and any “extra” money from the special Thanksgiving offering will be contributed to local food programs.

As the gospel writer says “From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded.” (Luke 12:48b)

Thank you again.
Warm Up Williamsburg

A Winter Fundraiser for Community of Faith Mission (COFM)

Join us for a special soup tasting event . . . Warm Up Williamsburg. Fifteen local chefs are donating their tastiest soups for this event, which will be held Friday, January 29 from 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at Williamsburg United Methodist Church. As well as soups, there will be bread, dessert and live music provided by the JNM Band. This year we have added a Bake Shop selling delicious home made treats. For reservations go to COFM.info or (220-0484). Help support the Community of Faith Mission Winter Shelter! Call (200-0484) if you have any questions or wish to volunteer at the event.

2015 Alternative Giving Fair Update

The Alternative Giving Fair was held on December 6 this year in the Fellowship Hall and was a great success. A total of 30 organizations were represented at this year’s Fair, including 5 new to the event. A special treat this year was the presence of Albert and Shirley Kalaskas, our missionaries to the Philippines. They were able to update us on their latest endeavors, including the status of the newest church they are building.

A total of $24,647 was collected in sales and donations. A big thank you to all involved. Hope to see you at next year’s Fair, always held the same day as Grand illumination.

United Methodist Men

The next breakfast meeting of the United Methodist Men will be Saturday, January 9, at 8:00 a.m. in Fellowship Hall. The cost is $5.00. For reservations, contact Charley Skillman (258–4930).

Silver Saints Luncheon

The Silver Saints (50-plus) will meet on Wednesday, January 13 at noon in the Fellowship Hall. Mary Brett Wright will present the award winning AARP program: “Preparing to Care”, concerning the important role of caregiving.

Please bring a dish to share, $1.00 for the chicken, and food items for FISH. All are welcome!! Questions? Contact Art & Loretta Heezen (565-2518) or lorettaheezen@gmail.com.
A Year of Messy Church!

As we held our first Messy Church at Williamsburg UMC on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, we had many unanswered questions before us. How many people would show up? Were the crafts age-appropriate? Did we have enough food? Would our Celebration Time covey the Biblical story of friendship and still be just entertaining enough to hold the attention of a 3-year-old? To our unceasing surprise, we survived that first evening with 119 participants and volunteers attending, and so we enthusiastically begin plans for our next Messy Church in February. Messy Church was off and running!

As we progressed through 2015, we came to understand that Messy Church was attracting young families with young children to our church. Every Messy Church night, these young families enjoyed crafts, games, worship celebration and dinner together. Messy Church was providing these families an opportunity to be together in church not only enjoying themselves but also learning a bit about the Christian faith. A monthly “Take It Home” page provided ways to extend the Bible learning experience at home.

Most importantly, we (church volunteers) were developing relationships with our Messy families. We began to see the same faces month after month, and these faces became familiar to us, each telling a unique story: the single mom or dad, the grandparent parent, the family with a parent on military deployment, the student parent, the special needs children, the working couples and the unemployed/homeless. As one volunteer said so simply, “It’s about families coming back to the church through this service, and about building relationships with these new families.” Messy Church is profoundly grounded in inviting ordinary people to come just as they are, recognizing God is at work in ordinary everyday ways. This “family” stage of life is often quite “messy,” so Messy Church allows families to feel right at home and places them in a comfortable space to experience God together. We all look forward to another year of Messy Church and hope that 2016 is the messiest yet!

2015 Messy Church by the Numbers:
Average monthly attendance: 110
Average number of volunteers (monthly): 34
Number of different volunteers for the year: 60
Total number of families attending: 104
Number of families attending at least 5 times: 15

Messy Church Volunteers . . .
The Key to Our Success!

As you may well imagine, many volunteers are needed to undertake a successful Messy Church. We are blessed with numerous people who come to help us be messy each month. Our average number of volunteers is 34 per month, and each one works non-stop all evening! There are many tasks to be done: crafts, registration and welcome, games, Celebration Time, and of course, food preparation. And everyone works together to clean up the crafts and then reset for dinner. Watch us put out 16 tables and 128 chairs and set all the tables for dinner – plus set up serving tables and put out the food – all in less than 15 minutes! It’s a feat not easily duplicated by those less committed to Messy Church!

We have had many visitors from other churches come to observe how we do Messy Church. Their first reaction is always to marvel at the number of volunteers needed to put on this program successfully. Not only do our helpers ably work at their assignments, but they also take the opportunity to interact with all our guests. This hospitable spirit is especially evident during our dinner time as volunteers help children with their plates, set up high chairs, serve drinks, and always make sure no one is eating alone. Volunteers are also happy to hold a fussy baby, too! Finally, we must not forget the Messy Chefs, our army of cooks who are always ready to supply a casserole or side dish or dessert. These are the faithful who serve Messy Church from their kitchens and help to make sure our guests enjoy quality homemade meals.

If you would like to be a part of our Messy Church team of volunteers, please contact Cindy Banek (229-1771), or cbanek@williamsburgumc.org.
Young Professionals Sunday Lunch

Join us each week beginning January 10 immediately after the 11:00 a.m. service for a time of bible study, reflection, fellowship and food. Led by Pastor Kay, we’ll start out by meeting in the narthex at noon after worship and head out from there. Bring your bible, your bulletin, and come share some great conversation. For more information, call or text Kay (775-6898).

Senior Pastor’s Mid-week Bible Study

Meets in Fellowship Hall Wednesday evenings from 7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. & Thursday mornings from 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

The Acts of the Apostles, the fifth book of the New Testament, is a valuable tool for understanding the growth of the Church following the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We will begin each session with Dr. James “Mickey” Efird’s video lectures on this book of the New Testament to help us understand and apply the Biblical story to our own life and the life of our church, followed by an in-depth look at one of the biblical passages led by Senior Pastor Bill Jones. Our first class of the New Year will be on Wednesday, January 6, and Thursday, January 7.

Introduction to the Lands Of The Bible

Meets the following Sundays: January 23, 30 & February 6 from 9:30 a.m. — 10:30 a.m. in Fellowship Hall

In the church we often think of Jerusalem as an ancient city filled with donkeys, Pharisees, and Roman soldiers. The modern city of Jerusalem has a population of almost 1 million people – bigger than Norfolk or Richmond. Three of the world’s great religions – Judaism, Islam, and Christianity – identify several sites in Jerusalem as revered, holy, and precious. Modern skyscrapers, freeways, and airports exist not too far from the Dome of the Rock Mosque, the western (or wailing) wall that was part of the second Jewish temple (destroyed in 70 AD), and long stretches of the feet-thick stone wall that once surrounded the ancient city of Jerusalem (on top of which tourists can walk). Visitors can savor foods much like the Disciples would have eaten and feast on fusion cuisines on par with those in any other international city. The juxtaposition of modern life, ancient holy ruins, powerful world religions, the competing trends of secular commerce and technology, and questions of faith and identity for individuals and nations are as palpable in the Lands of the Bible today as 2,000 years ago. This short-term class is equally suitable for anyone interested in joining the group from Williamsburg UMC touring The Lands of the Bible in late October 2016 and for anyone who wants to learn more about how Galilee, Capernaum, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem shape our lives and faith today as in the past. Join us for all three sessions, or for just one or two. We’ll meet in the Fellowship Hall, close to the coffee and cookies, during the Sunday School hour. Rev. Barre and Rev. Casey-Rutland are teaching – all are welcome.
“THE SOUP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE SWIM IN”

That’s a quote from Walt Mueller, from the Center For Parent Youth Understanding. His mission is to help us understand that soup and youth culture. If he tweets it, it’s usually worth a read.

Now, some of us tweet, some of us don’t. Some Facebook, some don’t. Even if you do though, it’s hard to keep up with all things tech and “youth”. Over the last few weeks I’ve noticed some really good stuff online and re-tweeted it or shared it on Facebook. Sometimes though, you just need to stick to good old paper and pen. Ironically, this paper and pen piece is all about online. If you are online, you might be aware of some of these websites, if you’re not and want to be aware of what’s going on around young people and youth culture, these websites are well worth keeping an eye on.

- **Center For Parent Youth Understanding** – my top pick. [www.cpyu.org](http://www.cpyu.org) is overflowing with relevant “now” stuff – advice for parents on sexting, cyber-bullying, how to talk to your children about difficult issues, responding to current events and a huge amount more.

- **Sticky Faith** – another good one. [www.stickyfaith.org](http://www.stickyfaith.org) has information for families and youth leaders, all aimed at making faith stick. Growing faith isn’t something that just happens at church, it’s an every day, at home, at school thing. Well worth a look to help you grow your faith and your children’s faith in your daily life as well as small groups.

- **Netsmartz** – all about staying safe online and offline – these two worlds blur and overlap so much nowadays. What goes online, stays online and goes much further than you think. [www.netsmartz.org](http://www.netsmartz.org)

- **Remedy Live** – [remedylive.com](http://remedylive.com) – an online support service for teenagers to talk to trained counsellors anonymously. Not quite as good as face to face support but a very useful and trustworthy starting point.

When I come across something good online I usually tweet it or share it on Facebook. But I don’t see all the good stuff. However you do it, I’d recommend keeping an eye on the output of these websites. As I come across more, I’ll at least post them online!

Grace and peace to you all, in your online and offline worlds!

Andy Glascott,
WUMC Youth Director

---

**Thank You**

The Church Staff would like to thank the Staff Parish Relations Committee and the congregation for the generous love offering we recently received for Christmas. We sincerely appreciate the ongoing support of the congregation as is evidenced in many ways throughout the year. However, Christmas is a special time of gift giving as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The church staff remains dedicated to fulfilling the mission of the church, and we work tirelessly in the hope that all persons may come to know Jesus Christ. We are all truly grateful and honored to receive such a monetary gift in recognition of the ministry we undertake to make disciples of Jesus Christ in Williamsburg and beyond.
Sixth Annual Sweetheart Banquet

Remember to Purchase Your Tickets for the Sweetheart Banquet!

Don’t miss Sweetheart Banquet 2016. It will be Friday, February 12 from 5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. in Fellowship Hall, starting with yummy appetizers in the atrium, compliments of Food for Thought restaurant.

This year’s elegant affair will feature the mouthwatering cuisine of Mary Liz Sadler and sparkling entertainment by the ECMS Singing Servers and talented alumni. The Banquet is a benefit for Elliot’s Song.

Tickets are $35 per person and will be available at the Crossroads Table, January 24, 31 and February 7 or by calling Donna Herman (291-9082).
A Prayer From Billy Graham

written for “The Saturday Evening Post” in 2008, is just as relevant this year:

Our Father and our God, as we stand at the beginning of this new year we confess our need of Your presence and Your guidance as we face the future. We each have our hopes and expectations for the year that is ahead of us — but You alone know what it holds for us, and only You can give us the strength and the wisdom we will need to meet its challenges. So help us to humbly put our hands into Your hand, and to trust You and to seek Your will for our lives during this coming year. In the midst of life’s uncertainties in the days ahead, assure us of the certainty of Your unchanging love. In the midst of life’s inevitable disappointments and heartaches, help us to turn to You for the stability and comfort we will need. In the midst of life’s temptations and the pull of our stubborn self-will, help us not to lose our way but to have the courage to do what is right in Your sight, regardless of the cost. And in the midst of our daily preoccupations and pursuits, open our eyes to the sorrows and injustices of our hurting world, and help us to respond with compassion and sacrifice to those who are friendless and in need. May our constant prayer be that of the ancient Psalmist: “Teach me, O Lord, to follow your decrees; then I will keep them to the end” (Psalm 119:33).

We pray for our nation and its leaders during these difficult times, and for all those who are seeking to bring peace and justice to our dangerous and troubled world. We pray especially for Your protection on all those who serve in our armed forces, and we thank You for their commitment to defend our freedoms, even at the cost of their own lives. Be with their families also, and assure them of Your love and concern for them. Bring our divided nation together, and give us a greater vision of what You would have us to be. Your Word reminds us that “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord” (Psalm 33:12).

As we look back over this past year we thank You for Your goodness to us — far beyond what we have deserved. May we never presume on Your past goodness or forget all Your mercies to us, but may they instead lead us to repentance, and to a new commitment to make You the foundation and center of our lives this year.

And so, our Father, we thank You for the promise and hope of this new year, and we look forward to it with expectancy and faith. This I ask in the name of our Lord and Savior, who by His death and resurrection has given us hope both for this world and the world to come.

_Amen_

For more information about our Prayer Ministry, contact Cindy Banek (229–1771) or _cbanek@williamsburgumc.org_.

---

Thank You

We wish to thank everyone for the prayers, cards, and expressions of sympathy at the time of John Brinkley’s (Kent’s father) death on November 6.
Kent and Carol Brinkley

Condolences

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of those who have passed away during the month of December:
Bob Hunt
Doris Herrick, Respite Member
Continuing our series about hospice, this month’s article looks at bereavement. Grief is a normal human process. It takes time. It doesn’t look the same for everyone. Many books, articles, and classes provide guidance for those grieving a loss. Hospice House and Support Care of Williamsburg offers a number of bereavement programs and services – all free of charge – for anyone in the community dealing with grief. The article below was written by the new chaplain at Hospice House, Hannah Creager. For more information about hospice or about Hospice House and Support Care of Williamsburg, contact Rev. Helen Casey-Rutland (229-1771) or the Hospice House (253-1220).

"Even the darkest night shall end, and the sun shall rise." ~ Victor Hugo, Les Misérables

Hospice House & Support Care of Williamsburg recognizes that caring for the survivors of loss is just as important as caring for those who are on the end-of-life journey. Hospice House cares for the families and loved ones in a specific way: by meeting and joining those bereaved as they embark on their grief journey.

Grief is a natural response to loss, and it is a part of a normal healing process. Grief is highly individual. It varies from person to person.

The grieving process presents a variety of emotional and social challenges to the newly bereaved as they work to recreate their identity after their loved one’s passing. Initially bereaved individuals may be in complete shock, feeling numb and indifferent. They may withdraw from company or become overly dependent upon others.

Over time bereaved individuals may be encompassed by anger – anger with themselves for things left undone or anger at God for taking their loved one. They may even be depressed, longing for their loved one’s presence and finding comfort only under their duvet. They may find that they need company, but don’t know how to ask for it or they might rush into new relationships without thinking them through.

Eventually those who grieve may be peaceful, expressing thanks for the time that they were given with their loved one. They will feel that they are “coming out of the fog,” reaching out to others and regaining energy for social relationships.

This emotional and social movement does not happen overnight, however. It takes time and support.

People will often ask: “How long will this take to get over?” Grief is not something to get over, but something we learn to move through as human beings. The work of grief is ongoing; it takes as long as it takes.

The Bereavement Services Program has been implemented to help meet the individual needs of those who are grieving within the greater Williamsburg community. This program consists of resources ranging from condolence cards and follow-up phone calls to meditation and walking groups.

Anyone who is grieving a death loss in the greater Williamsburg area is eligible to receive bereavement services from Hospice House & Support Care. This may include loss of siblings, spouses, parents, children or friends. Clients do not have to have any prior relationship with Hospice House to join any of the bereavement programs or to receive bereavement services. There is no fee to participate, and programs are funded through public, private and philanthropic gifts.

If you would like more information on Hospice House Bereavement services, please contact Hannah Creager (253-1220).
Honorarium Giving

given to Heifer International in honor of Mr. John Alexander from
  • Mr. & Mrs. Dick Spaulding

given to Respite Care in honor of Mrs. Marijane Harper from
  • Toano Garden Club c/o Beverley Smith

given to the Music Program in honor of David Lee from
  • anonymous

given to Philippine Mission in honor of Mrs. Carolyn Spaulding Wright from
  • Mr. & Mrs. Dick Spaulding

Memorial Giving

given to Hope Center Latvia & The WUMC Memorial Garden in memory of James Lee 'Jim' Brown from
  • Mr. & Mrs. Al Golding

given to Respite Care in memory of Emily Marchi Crinklaw from
  • Mr. & Mrs. Mark Hughes
  • Mr. & Mrs. Joshua Crinklaw

Given to Respite Care in memory of Thomas R. Rosché from
  • Dr. Martin Mathes
  • Edwina Smith
  • Mr. & Mrs. Zorn
  • Jann Bellamy & Carol Lees Gregg
  • Mr. & Mrs. Van Geeker
  • Mr. & Mrs. Paul Stockmeyer
  • Norm and Jane Seidel

given to Leonarda’s Home of Hope in honor of Mrs. Katherine Alexander from
  • Mr. & Mrs. Dick Spaulding

given in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Hill from
  • Ann and Bill Suit

given to FISH in honor of Mr. Craig Holm from
  • Mr. & Mrs. Dick Spaulding

given in honor of Helen Casey-Rutland from
  • Sally Burri

given to Hospice House in honor of Ms. Kristin Spaulding from
  • Mr. & Mrs. Dick Spaulding

given to Respite Care in honor of Mr. John Wright from
  • Mr. & Mrs. Dick Spaulding

given to Hope Center Latvia in memory of James Lee 'Jim' Brown from
  • Mr. & Mrs. Lorne Moon

given in memory of Karl & Anna Krueger from
  • Mr. & Mrs. Norman Fashing

given in memory of Joseph M. Sizoo from
  • Mr. & Mrs. Chris Hailey
  • Mr. & Mrs. Phil Magruder, Jr.
  • Mr. & Mrs. Norman Ahlheim
  • Mr. Robert Caswell
  • Mr. & Mrs. Jim Branski
  • Mr. & Mrs. Tony DiToto
  • Charlotte Sizoo Whitenight

given to Early Childhood Music School in memory of Darrel E. Burri from
  • Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Abbitt
  • Mr. & Mrs. Gilbert Snow
  • Marilyn Cederwall
  • Mr. & Mrs. Lee Hauser
  • Mr. & Mrs. Lee Barnes
  • Lisa Conner
  • Bette Mae Schintzel
  • John and Trudy Sowers
  • Jon Allen

given to the Music Program in memory of Alice Vivian Marshall from
  • Mr.& Mrs. Peter Morgan
Library News

It has been said that our church library is Williamsburg’s best kept secret. Don’t let it be so! Bibliophiles spread the word. Treasures abound on our shelves with new ones being added frequently. If you’ve never visited our library, put doing so near the top of your new year’s resolution list. It’s a resolution you can keep with little effort and great rewards. Consider, for example, SURPRISED BY WORSHIP by Travis Cottrell, an uplifting, meaningful and potentially life-changing celebration of worship. “No matter the circumstance,” Cottrell writes, “in every surprise of life a celebration can happen. God’s voice can be heard, His hand can be felt, and His heart can be seen. Especially when you least expect it.” Check out this book and be prepared to be surprised.

While a children’s book, Kobi Yamada’s, WHAT DO YOU DO WITH AN IDEA?, is a story for anyone, at any age, who’s ever had an idea that seemed too big, too odd or too difficult. What do you do with such an idea? This is the story of one brilliant idea and the child who helps to bring it into the world. Children will be inspired to welcome their ideas, give them space to grow and see what happens next . . . something perhaps truly amazing!

“There’s always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.”
– Graham Greene