

# The First-Centurian

Volume 2, No. 41

December 12, 2008

## A Christmas Carol

Oak Street Playhouse  
Dinner Theatre production

*'Tis the season for holiday traditions and one of those traditions is watching A Christmas Carol at the Oak Street Playhouse Dinner Theater!*

**December 12, 13**

Dinner at 6:30, show to follow.

**December 14**

Matinee lunch at 1:30 p.m.,  
show to follow.

**\$17.50 per person for dinner  
and the play.**

**Call 756-2428 for reservations.**

## Support Youth Missions

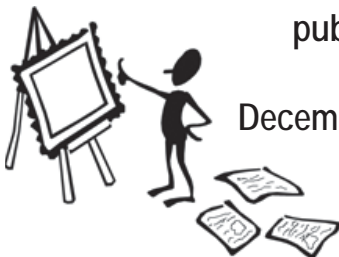
*Christmas  
Coffee Special*  
Buy three bags  
of coffee, pay  
only \$25!!!

Order now to  
get it in time for Christmas!  
Individual bags, \$10

Contact Rev. Clair Travis at  
ctravis@fcumc.org or 756-2021.



There will be no  
*First-Centurian*  
published  
for  
December 26.



## Advent continues . . .



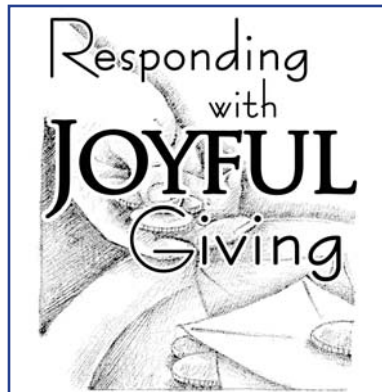
On **December 14**, Mike Davenport, Julie Ratliffe and Ann Heys will offer their musical gifts in the 8:30 service. At 10:45 the Chancel Ringers will participate along with music by The Chancel Choir.

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, **December 21**, the Chancel Choir will sing in the 8:30 and 10:45 services. All children are invited to come in costume as a person or animal present at the birth of Jesus and participate in the Children's Christmas Pageant at 10:45 in both the Sanctuary and Vine services. Please call the church if you need more information.



A very special worship service will take place on Saturday, **December 20** at Noon. This is an opportunity for care givers and care receivers unable to regularly attend worship to share in a service of Holy Communion. The sanctuary will be decorated with the poinsettias. Lunch will be served in the Narthex following worship.

**Christmas Eve Communion Services** are planned for 5 and 11 p.m. Music will precede worship at 4:45 and 10:30 p.m.



At the end of the third week, our stewardship campaign has been very successful.

To date, we have received 329 Adult commitments for \$1,495,798 toward the 2009 budget. Last year, we had received 331 commitments for \$1,445,790 at this point.

Children/Youth Commitments:  
\$1,060.

We want to give every member an opportunity to participate in the campaign. Even if you plan to continue to give as you are now, returning your commitment card is important. The commitments we receive enable us to plan our budget for 2009. Return the card to the church by mail, drop into the collection plate on Sunday, or bring by the church office.

If you have any questions about the campaign or the finances of the church, please call or email Barbara Berwanger or Dwight Kilbourne.

## From the Pastor



Dwight Kilbourne

### Christmas Gifts and Tough Economic Times

In recent days, many have focused on how much money consumers are spending for the Christmas holidays. Because of the economic downturn and difficulties, many fear US citizens will spend much less. If this happens, it will have an impact on our national, local and personal economies.

Given this possibility, does spending less for Christmas decrease the Christmas spirit? Should it have a negative impact on us?

The first Christmas story tells of a situation where a humble young couple had little. Their situation of being away from home and having no reservations forced them to take shelter in a cave where domesticated animals were sheltered. It was there, the young expectant teenager gave birth to her son and named him Jesus.

The richness of experience did not come in the form of money everyone spent. Angels from heaven sang of the birth of this child. Shepherds, who heard the angelic song, came in search of the child. After they found him, they returned home praising God. Later stargazers came bearing gifts for this special child who was born. While their gifts were expensive, they provided the funds needed for a refugee family to escape harm from a jealous ruler for a period of time.

Perhaps our present economic situation and all the concern of its impact during these holidays is a gift to all. Perhaps it will

## Prime Time Wednesday

December 17

The Poetry of John Milton led by Bill Cushman  
6:20 p.m. in the Oak Street Center, Room 101-102  
**(No meal will be served on December 17.)**

Considered to be the greatest poet writing in English since Shakespeare, John Milton was also one of the 17th Century's leading thinkers and writers about Christian doctrine, human freedom, education, and the relationship between church and state--topics of undiminished importance today.

### Coming Winter 2009

during Prime Time Wednesday

"A Look at Lincoln's 'Values'"  
led by Bill Cushman

The bi-centennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, February 12, 2008, will offer an appropriate opportunity for asking yet again why this person still fascinates. His frame, his face, his suffering, his wit, his reading, his wisdom, his religious associations (or lack of them), his handicaps, his accomplishments: they challenge us to wonder, to think, and to feel as much now as they challenged citizens during the conflict that marked his presidency.

## From the Pastor

(continued)

cause us to peel back the layers and think again about the true Event of Christmas and its meaning. If that happens, our joy will be multiplied significantly.

## 'Man cannot live by bread alone'

. . . but man will certainly live when touched by the hands of love serving him that bread.

Thanks to the loving efforts of Marion & Nancy Morgan, the Inner City Ministry was blessed to receive homemade bread from the Bread Basket. Charlie, Marie & Anson Hyde donated bread the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. Due to their generosity, we were able to deliver the bread to needy families in our community. It was beautiful to serve such a diverse group of people . . . Iraqis, Burundians, Somalis, Liberians, Hispanics & African Americans . . . for some of these families this was the first time they had experienced the celebration of Thanksgiving. What an amazing way to welcome God's children into our city! As I looked at all the wonderful food decorating my Thanksgiving table this year I had to pause . . . I had not touched one dish placed in front of me and yet I felt incredibly full.

As we approach the Christmas season, I pray that we all feel that same fulfillment that comes from sharing our blessings with one another.

**Yes, surely man cannot live by bread alone . . .**

Karen Fletcher  
Director, Inner City Ministry

Have you included the church's Permanent Endowment Fund in your will?

## Fall 08 Summary – How Many Really Take a CDF Class?



Have you ever wondered how many people are really involved in First-Centenary's "Center for Discipleship Formation" programs? Maybe not, but as a way to keep you informed, listed below are the 18 classes and small groups sponsored by CDF this past fall season. Of the 18 classes offered this fall, 8 of them (44%) were in the category of biblical and theological studies, while 5 of them (28%) were in the category of spiritual formation, and 5 of them (28%) were in the category of practicum studies (parenting, marriage and family, finance, etc.). Overall, we had 355 registrations this past fall season and 15% of these registrations were from people who were not members of First-Centenary, but came for classes we partnered with outside groups like First Things First. You can see the actual breakdown as it is listed below.

### CDF Lay Institute Classes & Small Groups

Sunday Evening New Testament Survey (w/ Downtown Singles) – 14  
 Monday Afternoon Beth Moore Bible Study Series – 13  
 Monday Night How to Read and Study the Bible (w/Singles Ministry) –10  
 Tuesday CIC Formation The Way of Transforming Discipleship– 11  
 Tuesday CIC Formation The Way of Forgiveness – 12  
 Tuesday Managing Our Finances God's Way (w/Lkt Mtn UMC) – 22  
 Wednesday CIC The Way of Discernment – 17  
 Wednesday Alexian Village Bible Study (at Alexian Village) – 14  
 Prime Time Wednesday Is Evangelical a Dirty Word? – 45  
 Prime Time Wednesday How to Talk with Others about Jesus 16  
 Prime Time Wednesday Listening for God, Volume 4 – 12  
 Prime Time Wednesday Why I'm Not a Calvinist – 12  
 Prime Time Wednesday How to Recognize and Respond to Cults – 40  
 Prime Time Wednesday The Poetry of John Milton – 31  
 Thursday Tai Ji – 10  
 Thursday Who Wants to Be a Millionaire (For Inner City Ministry) –10  
 Friday 4 Great Dates (w/Parents Night Out) – 14  
 Saturday Prep for Marriage w/Engaged Couples (w/First Things First) – 52

Grand Total – 355

## Heartfelt Thanks

Thanks to all who participated in the December 7 Festival of Lessons and Carols. We are blessed with wonderful lay readers, musicians of all ages, and those willing to graciously serve as ushers, greeters, acolytes, sound technicians, decorators, hosts and hostesses. I was especially touched by the joy and smiles sparkling on everyone's faces as the Inner City gifts were presented. It was truly a wonderful day of fellowship and joyful celebration.

- Jan McNair

## Meet Our New Members



Sieglinde Wallis joined December 7 by Profession of Faith.



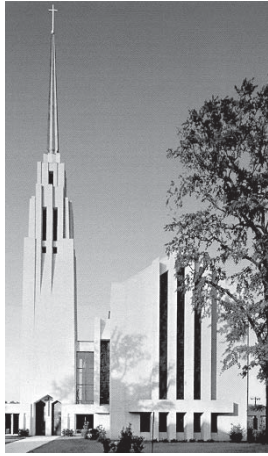
Joe Wilson transferred December 7 from Salem Baptist Church in Dalton, Georgia

## Within the Church Family

## FIRST-CENTENARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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### Year End Contributions

Typically we receive almost 20% of our total pledged amount (and additional gifts) in the month of December. We trust, and pray, that your generosity will continue this year.

As you know, utility costs increased this year. Any additional gifts will be used to help offset these increased costs and are greatly appreciated.

**Contributions** for 2008 must be received in the church Business Office by December 31 or be postmarked no later than December 31 in order to be counted as a 2008 contribution.

**Gifts of Stock** – It will be helpful if gifts of stock are made in time for us to receive confirmation from brokerage firms so that we can sell the stock and include the proceeds in 2008 revenue.

## Sunday Worship

December 14, 2008

Third Sunday of Advent

### Sanctuary

**at 8:30 & 10:45 a.m.**

*Coming of the  
Powerful One*

Mark 1:1-8

Dr. Dwight Kilbourne

### The Vine

**at 10:45 a.m. in the  
Oak Street Center**

*Preparing Our Hearts  
for Christmas*

John 1:29-42

Rev. Brian Davis

Televised sermon by Dr. Dwight Kilbourne

– *Prepare the Way.*

Channel 12, WDEF-TV

at 11:30 a.m. each Sunday.

### Reading from the Lectionary

- Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
- Psalm 126
- John 1:6-8, 19-28