

Star of Bethlehem

"Abiding in Christ, Loving as Christ, Inviting to Christ"



April 2011

SPOTLIGHT ON...



Charlene Abel

Right here. Right now. God has placed me exactly where I should

be —at Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in Fairview, N.C. I called out to the Lord, and the Lord answered.

For me, the Christian journey through life has been a work in progress. I was born a Southern Baptist. My father was a hard-shell fundamentalist minister. Although I was baptized at the age of nine, I confess I didn't like our version of the Baptist Church. At my house, we mostly talked about sin and hell and what we couldn't do. As a child I found it very worrisome. As a teenager, I felt out of place and restricted.

At Baylor University in Waco, Texas. I majored in secondary education, journalism and Spanish. (Don't ask me to say much in Spanish, it's been 40 years.)

At Baylor I met my husband, Wilton. He was a staunch Missouri Synod Lutheran who attended Baylor because it was near the family farm. We agreed that I was to be Lutheran when we married. Lutherans seemed to reflect a more positive side of Christianity. Sermons tended to be more about helping those in need rather than focusing on sin and weakness of character.

While living in Charlotte, we joined Ascension Lutheran.

In the late eighties, we moved to Union County. I commuted into town five days a week for work at Bell South. Very quickly, I grew tired of the Sunday commute to Ascension. I became an active member of Morning Star Lutheran, and ELCA church. I met many devout, supportive people at Morning Star. Finally in the deepest part of my heart I was able to accept the fact that there were more Christians in the world than just Southern Baptist.

I have many fond memories of Morning Star. Some sad ones also. Paul died in an accident in 1993 at the age of 16. It is a great comfort to me to know that he is in Heaven and that some day we will be united again. I look forward to the day.

After twenty years at Morning Star I left after a certain social statement passed at the national convention in 2009. Many of Morning Star's members wanted to ignore the situation so as not to become divisive. With a small group of about 50 members, I chose to stand for the Scripture. With great sorrow I trudged away from Morning Star. and happily landed in Bethlehem's lap. Thank you Lord. And thank you Mike and Donna Wilhelm. So, here I am, still gaining new insights in Christianity, in Christian people, and trying to live the Jesus Way.

This is how I spend my time: waiting on Wilton. (Just kidding, but not by much.), yoga classes at the Levine Center twice a week.; (I still can't meditate but I'm very flexible.); two book clubs because I'm a voracious reader; volunteering at Mint Hill Library; trying to learn to sew (My secret fantasy is to be the oldest contestant on Project Runway), painting a bit, singing in the choir and teaching Sunday School once a month.

My hobbies change often. Wilton says I have the mind of a hummingbird. He's right. God makes all kinds!



April 17 - Palm Sunday
10:30 am Choir Cantata— MPR

April 21—Maundy Thursday
6:30 pm—Jewish Passover in Fellowship Hall

April 24—Easter Sunday
7:00 am—Sunrise
7:30 am - Breakfast
8:15 am - Sunday School
9:30 am - Worship—Sanctuary



April 2011

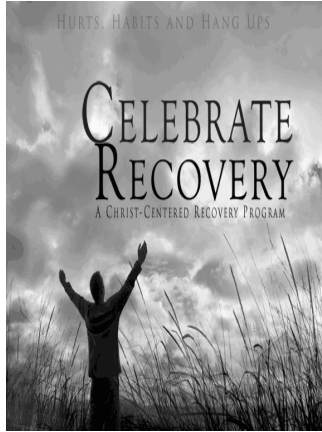
| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------|--|---|--------|----------|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 7pm— Evangelism MT | 5 | 6 7 pm – Presbyterian Women | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 7 pm—Session | 13 11:30am—Senior Lunch 7 pm—Mission & Service MT 7 pm— Christian Education MT | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 Palm Sunday - 10:30 am— 1 service in MPR (Choir Cantata) | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 Maundy Thursday 6:30 pm— Jewish Passover in Fellowship Hall | 22 | 23 |
| 24 Easter Sunday 7:00 am- Sunrise 7:30 am - Breakfast 8:15 am - Sunday School 9:30 am - Worship in Sanctuary | 25 | 26 | 27 10am – Congregational Care MT | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| | | | | | | |



Pastor's Message

I know you
have heard
about it.

Our Bethlehem Session has said, "All systems go!" And I truly believe our Lord will use it to accomplish great and powerful things in us and through us – as individuals and as a congregation.



I'm talking about a ministry program called **Celebrate Recovery**. You have probably heard at least a little bit about it. But you NEED to know more.

The purpose of Celebrate Recovery is to fellowship and celebrate God's healing power in our lives through the 12 Steps of recovery and the "8 Recovery Principles" found in the Bible. This experience allows us to "be changed." By working and applying these Biblical principles, we begin to grow spiritually. At Celebrate Recovery, Jesus Christ is our one and only higher power.

The 12 Steps are adapted from AA and other similar organizations. The "8 Recovery Principles" are based upon Jesus' Beatitudes from His Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5).

The phrase you will often hear around *Celebrate Recovery* folks is that it designed to help us and any others who will come with **Hurts, Habits, and Hangups**. It is only for imperfect people. Which certainly includes me. And our neighbors. And those other people in the Church. And maybe even you.

What sort of issues can be addressed? We can all become free from our addictive, compulsive, and dysfunctional behaviors. This freedom creates peace, serenity, joy, and most importantly, a stronger personal relationship with God and others. As we progress through the program we discover our personal, loving and forgiving Higher Power - Jesus Christ, the one and only true Higher Power.

Our leadership team is getting training. Our start date is not yet firm. But we will let you and the whole community know well before the kickoff date.

So what do we need from you? Please watch for more *Celebrate Recovery* information in upcoming Bethlehem newsletters. We want you to know about it. We want you to invite your friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family members to come check it out. We want you to feel free to come see for yourself what it is all about. If you feel the Lord is leading you to help with this ministry in some way, contact me or any member of the *Celebrate Recovery* Team. And we need you to pray for this ministry, that God will do a mighty work as we seek to do His holy and transforming will.

In Jesus,
Dr. T



Passover



"CHRIST IN THE PASSOVER" - an experience of our Christian heritage as found in the Jewish Passover meal. All attending will participate, as they See, Hear, and Taste how Jesus, the Messiah, is the fulfillment of the promises of God to His people - promises given over a thousand years before the birth of Christ.

All present will take part in the meal; It will be an opportunity for deepening of one's faith. Open to the public, with a special involvement by all the children present. Mark on your calendars: **Thursday, April 21, 6:30pm** in the Fellowship Hall. A simple supper will be provided during the service itself.



Reservations required. Please call the Church Office

by noon on Monday, April 18 with the number

of those attending in your party.



Worship Committee

The Worship Ministry Team has been busy planning our upcoming Easter Season. On April 17th, Palm Sunday, the Choir will present the Easter Cantata "Here is Love" in the Multi-Purpose Room at 10:30 a.m. Please see the announcement with details of our Maundy Thursday Service. Easter Sunday schedule is as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------|
| Sunrise Service | 7:00 a.m. |
| Breakfast | 7:30a.m. |
| Sunday School | 8:15 a.m. |
| Worship (at the Sanctuary) | 9:30 a.m. |

Please pray that everyone will participate and be blessed in all of our Easter services.



| | <u>February 2011</u> | <u>2011 Year-to-Date</u> |
|-------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Actual | \$9,315.00 | \$37,176.00 |
| Budget | | |
| Difference | | |

Building and Grounds Committee

We are still working on contract extension for the Heating and Air Conditioning units in the Church, but no final decisions at this time.

We are planning to replace flooring in fellowship hall after the decorating comm. Finishes their recommendations.

Please advise Bldg. Comm. of needs you see for our Church property.

Thanks, B. B.



Welcome
Our New
Members

Lea Walker
605 Buford Street
Indian Trail, NC 28079
704-275-4054

Charles & Sharon Robinson
15214 Cabarrus Road
Charlotte NC 28227
704-806-3738

1st ...Tana McConnaughey
3rd ...Pat Sloan
8th... Dowd Presson
14th...Deanna Outen
16th...Kyle McConnaughey
20th...B.B. Haigler
30th...Audrey Ferreira

If your birthday is not listed or if you are not sure we have your birthday, please call the church office so we can make sure we have it for the future!



Evangelism Committee

I would like to thank all of the evangelism members and others who assisted with our new members luncheon on February 27 and March 6. The food was delicious and fellowship was gratifying. We would like to welcome our 3 new members: **Lea Walker** and **Charles and Sharon Robinson**. Looking forward to working and fellowshiping with you in the future. Bethlehem received fifteen new members in 2010!

Our committee will have a card for inviting people to our Easter Celebrations available the first of April. Please ask for or take some to invite others. If you know of someone our committee can contact please let a member know.

"Putting people in relationship with JESUS" Evangelism Team.



March brought a whirlwind of excitement both inside and out. The weather is finally nice enough to play outside and the wind definitely blew our windsocks! We had a grand parade for Mardi Gras with the custom mask each student made and streamers fling on their riding toys. Once again the elusive leprechaun slipped through our fingers leaving havoc in the classrooms. We did find his pot of gold however. Maybe next year we will find him to!

The preschool welcomed a new student, Stephen, during the month of March! Stephen is in our four year old class.

The preschool is now accepting registrations for the Fall Semester. Please call the church office at 704-753-4223 and ask for Robin to receive information and schedule an appointment.

I am seeking a person with knowledge of grant funding and writing. If you or anyone you know would be able to help me please call the church office Monday through Thursday.

Thank you for all your support of the preschool and our mission. Here are a few items we are in constant need of and would appreciate any donations:

- Paper towels
- Copy paper

Please note that we have a peanut allergy alert this year. If any group is using the preschool rooms remember to wash the tables and chairs when food is served and take out the trash.

In Christ's love,
Robin Graham

Volunteer Schedule

April 2011

April 3 -

8:45 Greeters: The Brame Family
8:45 Nursery: The Sherwood Family
11:00 Ushers: Bill & Virginia Moss
11:00 Nursery: Brenda Huntley
Open Church: Don Price
Close Church: George Sloan

April 10 -

8:45 Greeters: Robin Castorina
8:45 Nursery: Donna Shumate
11:00 Ushers: George & Pat Sloan
11:00 Nursery: Kerry & Jessie Price
Open Church: Tom Aldridge
Close Church: Tilden Belk

April 17 - *Palm Sunday - One Service MPR*

10:30 Greeters: Ann Cuthbertson
10:30 Nursery: Wilhelm Family
Open Church: Scott Cuthbertson
Close Church: Gerald Gaddy

April 24 - *Easter Sunday - One Service Sanctuary*

10:30 Ushers: Mike & Donna Wilhelm
10:30 Nursery: Faye Vicars
Open Church: B.B. Haigler
Close Church: B.B. Haigler

****Please Note: Please exchange dates with someone if you can not be at church on your assigned Sunday. Thanks you for your help and cooperation.**



April

4/23 Ron and Lea Walker
4/27/1962 B.B. and Jan Haigler

If your anniversary is not listed or if you are not sure we have your anniversary, please call the church office so we can make sure we have it for the future!



You will be seeing the **PRAYER FORCE ALERT** regularly.

What is it?

Mission & Service Ministry Team



Open Doors

It is a monthly prayer request bulletin for persecuted Christians worldwide published by the ministry of Open Doors. The following information, as well as their bulletin, is used with permission from Open Doors.

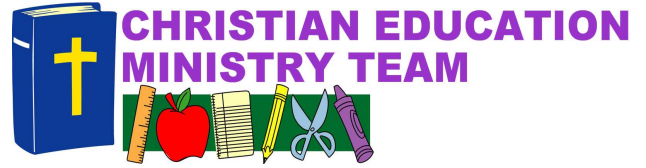
Open Doors works in the world's most oppressive countries, strengthening Christians to stand strong in the face of persecution and equipping them to shine Christ's light in these dark places. One of the greatest challenges to Christians living under tyranny and oppression is isolation - from God's word and from the body of Christ.

Where other Christian organizations cannot enter or have been forced to flee by oppressive governments or cultures, Open Doors can be found - supplying Bibles, training Christian leaders, developing Christian communities and ensuring prayer, presence and advocacy for these suffering believers.

When the Christians are strengthened in the Lord, they begin to demonstrate God's forgiveness and reach out in love, even to their oppressors. The witness of the persecuted church has a unique power to reach lives and communities that would otherwise never be open to the gospel - but they cannot do it alone. They need our prayers!

Open Doors' mission statement is: Serving Persecuted Christians Worldwide; we are an organization aimed at strengthening persecuted believers worldwide through community development, Bible & literature distribution, leadership training & education and ministries of prayer and advocacy. The Open Doors ministry has been embraced by other countries. More information on Open Doors may be obtained at <http://www.opendoors.org>.

We encourage everyone at Bethlehem Church to use the PRAYER FORCE ALERT bulletin each day to lift up in prayer our brothers and sisters in Christ who are undergoing persecution for their faith. Prayer works!



The Christian Education Ministry Team is already working away on VBS that is coming up the first week of August. This year there will be a movie shown on Sunday night July 31 that introduces the theme for VBS. Then Monday, August 1 through Wednesday, August 3 will be our outstanding learning experience for children and adults. There will be supper served Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights. Thursday will be our "Sharing the Treasure" concluding program. Someone will be contacting you asking for your help with this project. If you want to volunteer, just contact Magda Thomas or Alison Brame. They will welcome your help!

"Stand Back!" GET READY! There is a "STATION ROTATION" coming to Bethlehem! On April 17, 2011 right after church, kids K-5 need to meet in the old Fellowship Hall for lunch and some fun on the "Station Rotation!" Come and bring your "giggles"!



Friends are like balloons! Once you let them go, you might not get them back. Sometimes we get so busy with our own lives and problems that we may not even notice that we have let them fly away. Sometimes we are so caught up in who's right and who's wrong that we forget what's right and wrong. Sometimes we just don't realize what real friendship means until it is too late.

So tie your friends to your heart so that you will never lose them! Life is too short!



Session Briefs for March 8, 2011

Stated meeting of the Session of Bethlehem Presbyterian Church was held in the Frank Jones Classroom. Eight Elders present, one excused. Rev. Thomas opened the meeting with prayer and Don Price presented the devotion.

Pastors Report:

Rev. Jason Haas was installed as Minister of First Presbyterian Church, Monroe, N.C. on March 6, 2011. Carolyn Gordon, Elder at Bethlehem was part of the Installation Team. We celebrate with 1st Pres. Over their new beginning!

Treasurer's Report:

- A. Anthea Aldridge memorial gifts to the Music Fund totals \$2,048.11 as of March 7, 2011.
- B. Approximately \$2600.00 profit was made from Chicken/Dumpling Supper and will be used toward the Fellowship Hall carpet and Preschool program.

Ministry Team Reports:

Building and Grounds

Annual golf fund raiser planned for May 4 at Charlotte National Course. All golfers: get your team together and be ready to sign up!

Christian Education

Pre-School: Robin Graham, Director of Preschool, would like to have a "Pumpkin Patch" in the field back of the church for Preschool use. Look for the Pumpkin Patch!

Congregational Care

The Team has plans for the following:

- A. In April, visit Cannon Memorial Gardens, Concord, with lunch at Troutmans.
- B. In June, a singing, featuring Deeper Shade of Blue.
- C. In September, picnic at Reed Gold Mine.
- D. In October, mountain trip/lunch.
- E. In November, dinner at church.

Evangelism

Donna Wilhelm has joined the Evangelism Team. The team had a luncheon on February 27 and March 6 for the new member classes. A total of ten visitors have been contacted during February.

Personnel and Finance

Linda Purser, our church secretary, has been away for three weeks starting March 11; thank you for your patience, and special thanks for all those who volunteered to help in her absence.

Mission and Service

- A. During the month of March, the focus was on the Crisis Pregnancy Center, with team member Mary Ann Cuthbertson urging the congregation to fill baby bottles with change to help the center.
- B. In April, the focus will be on the Easter offering "One Great Hour of Sharing" with team member Bob Currie leading.
- C. The team recommends our congregation be in prayer for the countries that are experiencing problems and turmoil as well as prayer for their evangelistic needs. Magda Thomas will lead this cause.

Preschool

A new student has been enrolled.

Worship

Homecoming will be on September 11, 2011.





**BETHLEHEM
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**8TH ANNUAL
GOLF OUTING**

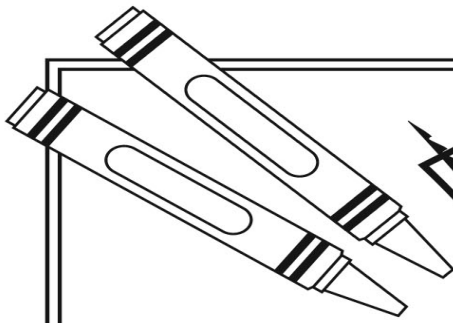
**CHARLOTTE
NATIONAL GOLF CLUB**

**MAY 4, 2011
1:00 pm Tee Time**



Box lunch, dinner, 2 mulligans, 1 skirt, ice cream, door prize drawing and entry into team putting contest included in entry fee of \$75.00.

**Call for more information or to register:
704-221-2874 or 704-753-1834**



PUZZLE

FIX YOUR EYES ON JESUS

Remembering Jesus' life, death and resurrection helps us live with gratitude every day.

Use the picture and number code to fill in the blanks for Hebrews 12:2-3, NIV.























- | | |
|---------------|-------------|
| 1. Jesus | 5. cross |
| 2. weary | 6. endured |
| 3. endured | 7. scorning |
| 4. opposition | 8. shame |



- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| 1. Jesus | 5. perfecter |
| 2. lose | 6. him |
| 3. pioneer | 7. faith |
| 4. sinners | 8. hand |



- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. eyes | 5. right |
| 2. us | 6. grow |
| 3. joy | 7. God |
| 4. heart | 8. throne |

"... fixing our  1 on  1, the  3 and
 of  5. For the  7 set before  3
 he  3 the  5,  7 its  8, and
 sat down at the  5 of the  8 of  8
 Consider  6 who  6 such  4
 from  4, so that you will not  6
 and  2  4." HEBREWS 12:2-3, NIV

Answer: "...fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." Hebrews 12:2-3, NIV

Bethlehem Presbyterian Church
7608 Concord Highway
Monroe, North Carolina 28110
(704) 753-4223
www.bethlehemchurch.net

Star of Bethlehem

Bethlehem Presbyterian Church

Mission:

To glorify God
by leaving a legacy of faith
to succeeding generations through
the proclamation of the good news of Jesus
in word and deed,
by the power of the Holy Spirit.

We will accomplish our mission by:

Abiding in Christ - *I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing* - John 15:5

We are a community of believers who seek to dwell in the presence of Jesus and who strive to grow into maturity in our relationship with God in Christ. We will encourage others to do the same.

Loving Others as Christ - *This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.* - John 15:12-13

We are a community of believers who seek to respond to Jesus' grace in our lives by loving others with his love.

Inviting others to Christ - *"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? - Romans 10:13-15a Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* Matthew 28:19-20

We are a community of believers who blessed by the presence of Jesus and provision of God the father will invite all those within our sphere of influence into the saving presence of Jesus.