

Star of Bethlehem

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



February 2011

SPOTLIGHT ON...



Magda Thomas

You may have heard Ken say that I am from the most beautiful

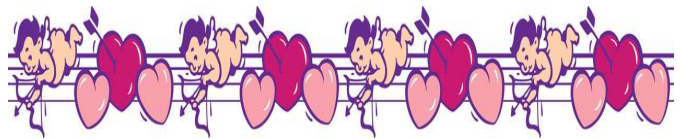
island in the world, and he is right! I was born and raised in Puerto Rico. After I completed my first year of college at the University of Puerto Rico I received a scholarship to attend Auburn University in Alabama. War Eagle!

After graduating from Auburn I joined the US Air Force and for the first thirteen years of my military career I was stationed in various places to include: Texas, California, Kansas, Arkansas, Germany, Italy, Turkey, England and South Carolina. While at Shaw Air Force Base, in South Carolina, I separated from active duty and joined the South Carolina Air National Guard where I worked for almost 15 more years, and also did a lot of traveling as a "Swamp Fox".

In 2000 my late husband Jim Schultz went to be with our Lord after fighting Melanoma for two years. We had no children of our own, but his daughter Tiffany, who has now a child of her own, is very dear to me. Little did I know that the Lord desired for me not to stay single, as I planned on doing. The Lord works in mysterious ways and so on 9 January of 2004 I said "I do" to my "Sweetie" and it has been a blessing to be his wife as well as to be a "Pastor's Wife". With Ken I also gained a few more children and grandchildren whom I also dearly love!

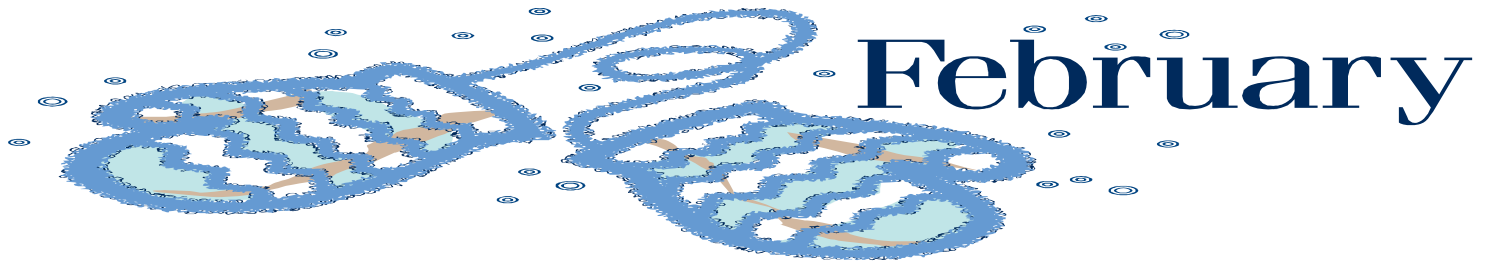
Now that I have retired from military service (big smile!), I'm planning on spending my time wisely in being the best wife and Pastor's wife that I can be, with the Lord's help. My new schedule of work will include, in addition to taking care of Ken, activities such as being more active in Church, finish moving into our new home (a couple of rooms and the garage are still disaster areas!), doing fun things like gardening, hiking and other outdoor activities,

reading, playing my Oboe, and putting about 15 years' worth of pictures in photo albums! I also have family in Puerto Rico and here in the US that I will love to visit more often. I don't think I'll be bored anytime soon!



The beginning of a new calendar year always brings about the idea of changing your life for the better by establishing new habits or by doing things differently! Most of those who orally admit to wanting to make a change are probably young people. Older folks have the attitude "been there, done that, no need to get another t-shirt"! Now God expects us to make it part of our day to draw closer to Him, through reading His Word in the Bible, and through prayer and meditation. With God's guidance in the forefront of our daily life, His peace will fold you into His waiting arms. Problems that arise will seem not at all like problems as you and God walk closer together and share your burdens. What a comfort! Resolve that you and God will walk hand in hand through whatever in 2011 and forever!

As you walk closer to God, think about how He wants you to live. Resolve to change this year by mending a quarrel, find a long lost friend, do away with suspicion and replace it with trust, encourage youth, share a treasure with someone, give a soft answer, keep a promise, find the time for a friend, forgive an enemy, listen, apologize if you were wrong, try to understand, appreciate, think first of someone else, be kind, be gentle, laugh a little, laugh a little more, deserve confidence, express your gratitude. go to church every Sunday, welcome a stranger, gladden the heart of a child. enjoy the beauty and wonder of the earth, speak your love, speak it again, and speak it still once again because God first loved you!



February

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Bible Study 10:00am & 6:45 pm 2:00 pm— Preschool Board Mtg.	2 7 pm— Presbyterian Women @ church	3	4	5
6 Boy Scout Sunday - 10:30 am Sanctuary JAMS 4:00pm	7	8 Bible Study 10:00am & 6:45 pm Session 7 pm	9 Noon - Senior Lunch at church 1:00 pm— Christian ED MT	10	11	12 Movie Night - <u>Blood Done</u> <u>Sign My Name</u>
13 Annual Congregational Meeting 10:30 am-MPR Worship MT - following Congregational Meeting	14 Dr. T. out of town	15	16	17	18	19
20 JAMS 4:00 pm	21	22	23 10:00 am - Congregational Care MT	24	25	26
27 PW Sunday 10:30 am Sanctuary 11:30 am - Prospective Members Class	28					



Pastor's Message

“Trimming the fat” – our United States President’s recent state of the union speech talked a lot about it. I will be pleasantly shocked if any of the folks in Washington actually do anything more than speechify about it!

Trimming fat is kinda like the weather. Everybody talks about it, but nobody does anything about it. Well, I’m trying to change it a bit. Not the weather, but the fat. I seem to have squirreled away for the winter just a bit too much barbeque, chicken and dumplings, and bread, and sweets. Stashed away, not in the pantry, but on my mid-section. In fact, it feels like I have stored enough in my person to get me almost all the way through the next era when the wooly mammoths roam about!

And now I am finally trying to do something about it. Exercising harder and more regularly. Eating smaller portions (except at Church dinners). Fewer desserts. Sigh.

How much better it would have been had I been a bit more concerned a lot earlier. At my age, fixing such things is a lot tougher than preventing them. Maintenance is a lot simpler than trimming. Harrumph. “So what does that have to do with me,” you may be saying? Hmmm. You have to deal with your own “body mass index” – or NOT, as you choose.

But I think it is a somewhat frustrating picture of what happens to us spiritually if we don’t focus to “stay in shape” in our Christian walk. God’s Word clearly says, “Let us lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us....” (Hebrews 12:2)

It is so easy to get out of the good spiritual habits, just a little bit at a time. Miss a morning devotional time of Scripture and prayer. Skip a Sunday School class because of being just too tired from Saturday evening’s activities. Not quite getting around to calling someone struggling with a hard time in their life. Continuing to slip in ever getting around to inviting that person who doesn’t go to church at Bethlehem or anywhere.

Such slippages over time make us sluggish and thick. Which are not qualities that help us do that “running with endurance the race set before us”, are they? May you and I spiritually exercise it out, and watch what we take in, that we might be the sort of people our Lord meant for us to be when He gave His life to rescue us from ineffective lolling about! And may we allow our Lord to take us further in His training program than we are used to, that he might make us more like Christ, and that we might be effective in doing what He has given us to do.

In Jesus,
Dr. T

February Birthdays...

6th ...Jan Haigler, Morgan Smith
 7th ...Banks Huntley
 8th... Vivian Belk, Ann Price
 9th... Kim Hinson
 10th...Mallory Wilhelm
 15th...Everete Hall, Louise Mullis
 18th...Hayden Clontz, Alison Hrischenko
 20th...Oscar Outen
 24th...Brenda Gaddy
 28th...Kerry Price

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!

To avoid being consumed financially — and spiritually — consider these words from Jesus: “Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:20-21, NRSV).

Congregational Giving At A Glance

	<u>January 2011</u>	<u>2011 Year-to-Date</u>
Actual	\$ 24,329.00	\$ 24,329.00
Budget	\$	
Difference	-\$	



Happy New Year from the Preschool! This year we were able to kick off our snow unit with real snow. We are having fun learning about winter and how plants and animals adjust to the cold. We have studied polar bears and penguins, drawn pictures of our friends in the snow and made all kinds of snowmen.

We have several fun activities coming up in February. We will look for shadows on Groundhogs day, show our friends how much we love them on Valentines' Day and learn about the presidents on President's Day.

The preschool is now accepting registrations for the Fall Semester. Please call the church office at 704-73-4223 and ask for Robin to receive information and schedule an appointment.

We are trying a new reward system with the students using sticker charts. If anyone has any odds and ends mini stickers and would like to donate them, we would be glad to have them. We are also in need of any left over party favors, extra pencils out of gift packs, unopened kids meal toys or any small items to put in the treasure box that the children get to choose from when they earn enough stickers.

Thank you all for your support of the preschool and our mission.

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



Watch your bulletin for more information on these February events....

2/9/11—Senior Hobo lunch at the church
2/12/11—Movie night—Blood Done Sign My Name

Volunteer Schedule

February 2011

February 6 - *Scout Sunday—1 service sanctuary*
10:30 Ushers: Scott Cuthbertson
10:30 Nursery: Donna Wilhelm
Open Church: Danny Philemon
Close Church: Mike McConnaughey

February 13 - *Annual Meeting—MPR*
10:30 Greeters: Patricia Kindley
10:30 Nursery: Dona Shumate
Open Church: Don Price
Close Church: George Sloan

February 20
8:45 Greeters: McConnaughey Family
8:45 Nursery: Wilhelm Family
11:00 Ushers: Johnny & Carolyn Gordon
11:00 Nursery: Brenda Huntley
Open Church: Tom Aldridge
Close Church: Tilden Belk

February 27 - *Presbyterian Women Sunday - 1 service*
10:30 Ushers: B.B. Haigler
10:30 Nursery: Kerry & Jessie Price
Open Church: Scott Cuthbertson
Close Church: Gerald Gaddy

****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.**



February

2/14/1983 Bill and Cathy Deason
2/17/2001 Bill and Virginia Moss

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!



Finally, the results of the Chili Cook-off Fundraiser!

This year we had 12 different

chilies, ranging from mild to smokin' and lots of good things to go with the chili like cheese, sour cream, corn bread and the desserts!!

This year's winners were:

- 1st = The Winner by Tommy Brame
- 2nd = Jail House Chili by Marty Shumate
- 3rd = Fairview's Finest by Tana McConnaughey

We raised \$562.65 . . . With this money the Cornerstone Class was able to assist 4 families: 2 identified by Fairview Elementary, 1 identified by Central Academy and 1 family identified from within Bethlehem.

Imagine that – from a night of good food and good entertainment and a willingness to glorify God, we were able to help 4 families!

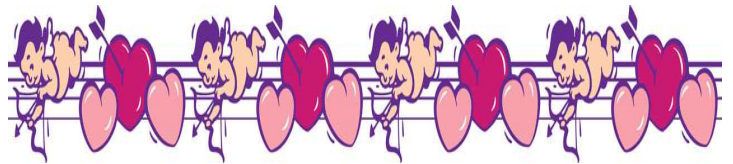


Heifer International Challenge

The JAMS Kids are issuing a challenge to the youth and adults of the congregation. We want to see how many animals we can send to impoverished families for Christmas 2011. We have 1 year to collect money and we hope we can reach our goals 2, 3, maybe even 4 times! Look for the Heifer Banks in the Fellowship Hall. Here are our specific goals:

- JAMS Kids to purchase 3 rabbits for \$60
- Youth to purchase a sheep for \$120
- Adult Team 1 (Cornerstone and Grant Duncan Class) to purchase a Llama for \$150
- Adult Team 2 (Frank Jones and Senior Citizen Class) to purchase a Llama for \$150

Heifer International is an organization that provides animals and training to folks in impoverished areas. Recipients are taught how to properly care for, breed, and use animals for their personal and their community's economic gain.



Mission and Service Ministry Team plans for February's mission offering to go to Loaves and Fishes of Union County.

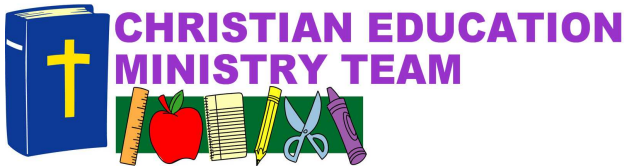
We, the congregation, bring food and collect it in a basket in the front vestibule of the Sanctuary. Each month it is taken

Mission & Service Ministry Team

to the Collection and Distribution Center at St Paul's Episcopal Church in Monroe., they run the food pantry for Union County. Local people in need can come by and get food for themselves and their family. This is a great program to help the needy in the county.

Submitted by Mission and Service Ministry Team.





Bethlehem's Adult Sunday School

If you are new to Bethlehem and have not yet chosen a class to attend on Sunday morning, there are many opportunities to consider! One thing that makes the classes on Sunday morning so unique is how each class is made up and what each class decides they would like to study. These classes are not limited to a particular age group for in most cases there will be a very wide range of ages in each class. There may be a wide range of God's Word being taught within these classes, using a variety of teaching/learning styles. A visit to these classes will help you decide where your interest is peaked!

The Cornerstone Class has been studying the "The Case for Christ", being led by Kara Lemon. The Grant Duncan Class has been studying the Prophet Isaiah and how God used Isaiah to tell His people of the hope in God. This series is from "The Present Word" of the Uniform Series of the International Bible Studies. Robin Castorina and Patsy Cuthbertson have led the class in this study. The Senior Citizens Class, led by Ann and Don Price and Charlene Abel, have also been studying Isaiah. The Frank Jones Class will continue the study of Isaiah until February.

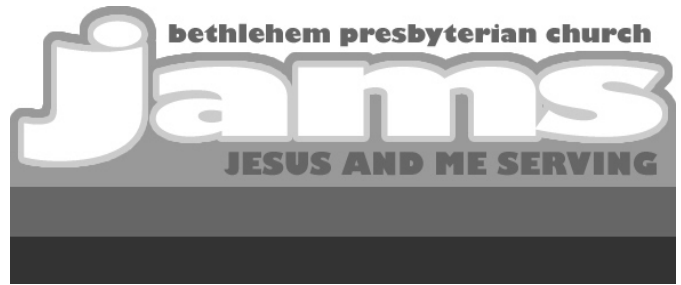
Then the Book of Mark will be used to learn about Jesus, the Promised Servant-Leader with Jan Haigler and Mike Wilhelm sharing the teaching duties along with other who volunteer to help. With this brief overview of the adult Sunday School Classes at Bethlehem, you will surely find a "home" where God will guide and direct you throughout the coming year! See you in Sunday School!



"Haiku for the Heart"

Listen to your heart
 For within there is an "ear"
 Attuned to God's voice.

—Peggy Ferrell



Children K-5 are invited to come explore their faith in AMAZING ways! We do service projects, play games, sing songs, and learn how to live our faith in everyday life. Last month we had a great time at the Extreme Ice Center in Indian Trail and we designed coin banks for our Heifer International Challenge. This month we have some great things planned so come to JAMS and find out what great adventure is next!

- Feb 6 Super Bowl Party @ the Price's
- Feb 20 JAMS, 4pm
- Mar 6 JAMS, 4pm
- Mar 13 JAMS, 4pm

Anyway

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered;
 Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish ulterior motives;
 Be kind anyway.

If you are honest, people may cheat you;
 Be honest anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, people may be jealous of you;
 Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;
 Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;
 Give the world the best you've got anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God;
 It was never between you and them anyway.

—"The Paradoxical Commandments," Kent M. Keith

Session Brief—January 18, 2011

Stated Session meeting was held in the Jones Classroom. All elders were present and Rev. Thomas opened the meeting with prayer.

Judy Johnson presented the devotion entitled “From Defeat to Victory” with scripture from Joshua 1:3.

Rev. Thomas led the Session:

- A. Reviewed the main points from the study of Twelve Keys to an Effective Church.
- B. Challenged the Session to encourage one another in our church life.
- C. February 14 - 25th, Pastor and wife to travel to Puerto Rico to visit with family.
- D. April 25—May 6, Pastor goes on backpacking trip with fellow Pastor.
- E. May 17 - Charlotte Presbytery meeting - Be in prayer concerning the agenda.

Ministry Team Reports:

Finance: Bill Moss and team working on 2011 church budget.

Building & Grounds: B.B. Haigler and team will be considering the following projects for 2011:

- A. Lights inside & outside church
- B. Fellowship Hall carpet
- C. AC/Heat duct work under church office.

Preschool: Carolyn Gordon’s team hopes to increase enrollment. \$2,000.00 transferred from the church general fund to Preschool to help with expenses.

Congregational Care: Polly Knight and team will be planning for a covered dish meal on Scout Sunday, February 6, following the worship service. Scout parents and congregation will bring food.

Worship: Faye Vicars states that the Presbyterian Women will assist in the worship service on February 27th.

Old Business: Celebrate Recovery program is still being considered. The Adult Sunday School Classes will be given information concerning this program during Sunday School on January 23rd and January 30th.

New Business:

- A. Presbytery Meetings:
 1. February 12 - Concord -
Commissioner Don Price,
Alternate Patsy Cuthbertson
 2. May 17 - Albemarle Road
Commissioner - Judy Johnson
Alternate—Carolyn Gordon
- B. February 13 - Congregational Meeting to consider 2011 church budget and ministry team reports.

C. Church volunteers who offered to help in various areas in 2011 are encouraged to participate in a service to our Lord this year.

Prayer Concerns: Bob Currie, Sr. (Bob Currie’s father), Ronald Walker (Ron Walker’s father), Gary Thomas (Pastor’s brother)

The next scheduled Session meeting will be February 8, 2011 at 7:00 pm in the Jones Classroom.

In Christ,
Don Price



Terrorist Groups Operating in Churches

Latest news reports are that five terrorist cell groups have been operating in many of our churches.

They have been identified as: Bin Sleepin, Bin Arguin, Bin Fightin, Bin Complainin, and Bin Missin. Their leader, Lucifer Bin Workin, trained these groups to destroy the Body of Christ. The plan is to come into the church disguised as Christians and to work within the church to discourage, disrupt, and destroy.

However, there have been reports of a sixth group. A tiny cell known by the name Bin Prayin is actually the only effective counter terrorism force in the church. Unlike other terrorist cells, the Bin Prayin team does not blend in with whoever and whatever comes along.

Bin Prayin does whatever is needed to uplift and encourage the Body of Christ. We have noticed that the Bin Prayin cell group has different characteristics than the others. They have Bin Watchin, Bin Waitin, Bin Fastin, and Bin Longin for their Master, Jesus Christ to return. This sixth group is somewhat secretive, not advertising their presence; but they are very effective! (However, you have a better chance of spotting them if you bin lookin and bin goin).



“THE PATH OF
THE RIGHTEOUS
IS LIKE THE
LIGHT OF DAWN.”

PROVERBS 4:18, NRSV

P.O.W.E.R. PRAYER

Praying Our Way to Easter Radically spells P.O.W.E.R.!

Our Session is asking each of us to be prayed for DAILY throughout the forty days prior to Easter. But for that to happen, we need your help, by your doing three things:

On one of the **P.O.W.E.R. PRAYER** cards, Sign your name, and check where it says “Yes, I will participate in our Bethlehem **P.O.W.E.R. PRAYER Program**. Then place it into the offering plate either Sunday, Feb. 20 or Feb. 27. Or you may mail it to the Church office (there is a space on the card for specific prayer requests, if you would like to use it – requests will NOT be made public);

As you leave the March 6 morning worship service, take one card from the basket at the door and then:

PRAY for that person **beginning Wednesday, March 9** (the 1st Day of Lent) each day until Easter (**guidelines and suggestions will be provided in the bulletin for those who may not feel fluent in “prayer”**). Know that someone else will be praying specifically for YOU each day!

That’s it! It’s as easy as 1-2-3! It is our hope that **EVERY ONE OF YOU** will take part. This is a simple opportunity to minister to one another at a profoundly spiritual level. Prayer changes things!

Special note for those who cannot get to Church: We especially want you to be able to participate! We will see that you soon get a card to fill out and will deliver to you one from the congregation after February 6!

Note to Parents: Please help your child(ren) participate; a child’s prayers are special: they tend to be unencumbered by the anti-believing stuff that too often rattles around in our adult heads! So please see that each child has a card filled out for them and that they take one on March 6.



Love conquers all

The love for equals is a human thing — of friend for friend, brother for brother. It is to love what is loving and lovely. The world smiles.

The love for the less fortunate is a beautiful thing — the love for those who suffer, for those who are poor, the sick, the failures, the unlovely. This is compassion, and it touches the heart of the world.

The love for the more fortunate is a rare thing — to love those who succeed where we fail, to rejoice without envy with those who rejoice, the love of the poor for the rich The world is always bewildered by its saints.

And then there is the love for the enemy — love for the one who does not love you but mocks, threatens and inflicts pain. The tortured’s love for the torturer.

This is God’s love. It conquers the world.

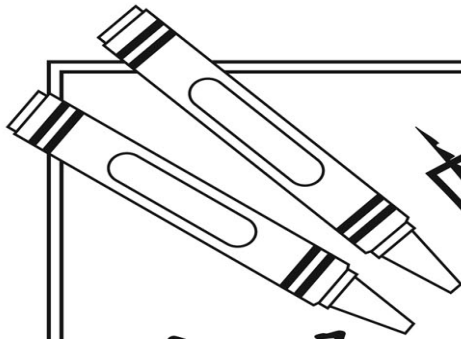
—Frederick Buechner,
The Magnificent Defeat



Thinking about joining Bethlehem Presbyterian Church? Join us for a two-part seminar. It is designed to be an opportunity for finding out about who we are and what we believe. It is designed for those ready to join this Church as well as those who just want to find out more.

The seminar will be held Sunday immediately after morning worship, February 27 and March 6 (Parts I and II).

Please notify Dr. T, Patsy Cuthbertson, or the church office to register. Lunch will be provided. There will be an opportunity to join the Church at the end of the second seminar for those who are ready to do so.



PUZZLE

A Love Letter

In the New Testament, John writes a letter about God's love and the love we should show to other people.

DIRECTIONS: Working from left to right, write down all the 1's in the word blanks. Continue with the 2's and finally the 3's. Then read about love, from 1 John 4:11-12, NIV.

lives 3	in 3	us 3	Since 1	and 3	God 1	so 1	loved 1	his 3
us 1	love 3	we 1	If 2	also 1	is 3	made 3	we 2	ought 1
to 1	love 2	love 1	one 1	complete 3	one 2	another 1	in 3	us 3
another 2	God 2							

1 John 4:11-12, NIV

Answers: Since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. If we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

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

Valentine blessings to...

St r 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.