Memo from the Midbar

Have you been blessed? (Pause for a moment and consider that question.) What’s your reaction to that question? Is it easy to see how you’ve been blessed? Or, is it difficult, possibly because of struggles over the past year or watching others who seem to have been blessed more?

We have all been blessed. It may be in unique ways and in varying degrees, but we’ve all been blessed … abundantly. So, how then should we think about these blessings as we enter a new year? How can we reconcile the fact that we’ve been blessed with so much more than countless men and women alive right now in other parts of this country and around the world?

Our blessings call to mind these words from Jesus:

Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back. (Luke 6:38 NLT)

How could we ever conclude that we’ve been blessed simply so that we may live in comfort and security? It is clear that the best way to think about our blessings, is as means to bless others. And the best way to be blessed ourselves is to bless others. Because if we do, Jesus makes it clear that our blessings will be so great that we’ll need a poncho to cover ourselves from the many blessings God will pour out on us.

Pause and Reflect:

What are the blessings that God has given you? There may even be blessings that you have become so accustomed to that you have forgotten they are even blessings at all.
What’s Coming Up?

January, 2014

### January Events

1\textsuperscript{st}  5:30pm WoW! New Year’s Celebration
7\textsuperscript{th}  1:00pm No Idle Hands
       6:00pm Trustees Meeting
12\textsuperscript{th}  12:15pm Worship Committee
19\textsuperscript{th}  12:15pm Church Council
21\textsuperscript{st}  1:00pm No Idle Hands
23\textsuperscript{rd}  5:30pm Finance Committee
26\textsuperscript{th}  8:00am UMM Breakfast

### January Birthdays

2nd  Arthur Tribble
3rd  Sandra Whatley
4th  Beth Pedersen
       David Russell
6th  Beth Maennle
7th  Dixie DeHart
       Wyatt Outlaw
8th  Emelene Crouch
9th  Alan Carvalho
       Steve Maennle
11th Miles Gentry
13th Jean Heffner
18th Dyan Carvalho Newlin
19th Janice Sutton
20th Jill Parker
23rd Sandy Cloer
24th Tim Cooper

### January Anniversaries

11th  Steve & Ann Cooper
21st  Bick & Lorene Bickerstaff

Thank you to everyone that made the UMW Cookie Walk & Bazaar a wonderful success!

### Church Council

The Church Council meets after church service on the 3\textsuperscript{rd} Sunday of the month – January 19\textsuperscript{th}. Any member of our church is welcome to attend these meetings. All committee chairpersons and appointed group leaders are automatically voting members. To kick the year off right, we will have a light lunch while watching a training video from GBOD along with other discussion. We are looking forward to a wonderful 2014.

### Board of Trustees

The board of trustees will have their first meeting of the year on Tuesday, January 7 at 6pm in the conference room.

### United Methodist Men

The Ladies’ Christmas Dinner last December 10th was a great success with lots of good food, fellowship, and enjoyment for everyone who could attend. A BIG Thank You to all who helped and worked so hard to make it a success!

The Bryson City United Methodist Men will resume their regular monthly meetings on January 26, 2014 at 8:00 AM in the Fellowship Hall. After our breakfast prepared by Kevin Phillips, Alan Carvalho will provide our Devotions and Jim Gribble will share some of his wisdom with the group.

Our meetings are open to all men who care to join us; United Methodist Church membership is not a requirement and dress is always casual. Come check us out!
What’s Coming Up?

January, 2014

Training “Webinars”
The UMC Global Board of Discipleship is hosting two webinars (seminar on the web) that will be beneficial to our church. If you are in one of these leadership positions, please plan on attending.

Church Council Leadership
Sunday, Jan. 19 – 12:15 p.m. The training will help our church council leadership team in overseeing a comprehensive plan for ministry and discipleship. A light lunch will be served.

Stewardship and Finance
“How to Get It Right at the Starting Line,” Thursday, Jan. 23 - 5:30 p.m. will help us plan for a financially healthier year.

Staff Parish Relations Committee
Tuesday, Jan. 21 - 5:30 p.m. we meet to begin a 6-session series that ties the committee’s responsibilities back to our spiritual beginnings.

Haiti Mission Trip
Pastor Wayner will be going on a mission trip to northern Haiti on February 19-24 to visit the River of Life wells. See the pastor if you are interested in joining this trip.

Stone Soup
Join us Sunday evening for food, fellowship and study! We will focus for eight weeks on the subject of “Christianity’s Family Tree: What Other Christians Believe and Why” in the hopes that we will come to a greater understanding of the beliefs and practices of our Christian brothers and sisters from other denominations, how those differ from our own beliefs and practices, and what we share in common, and what we can learn from one another.

This small-group study features videos, Bible study, and discussion. Here is our tentative schedule:

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Denomination</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 12</td>
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<td>Jan 19</td>
<td>Catholic</td>
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<td>Jan 26</td>
<td>Lutheran</td>
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<td>Presbyterian</td>
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<td>Feb 23</td>
<td>Pentecostal</td>
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<td>Mar 2</td>
<td>Methodist</td>
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December in Review

Hanging the Greens
Special thanks to Jim Gribble for the beautiful Christmas tree and all of the wonderful ladies that decorated the sanctuary for Advent and Christmas seasons. The congregation did a superb job of completing the decorating by placing Chrismons on the tree.

Cookie Walk, Bazaar & Blood Drive
The UM Women had a record breaking year for the Cookie Walk and Bazaar. They raised over $1,500, and all money raised will be used in refurbishing the Fellowship Hall kitchen. The American Red Cross also exceeded their goals in donations during their first annual blood drive at the same time. Thanks for making a difference everyone!

UMM Dinner for the UMW
Each year the UM Men host a Christmas dinner in appreciation for all of the hard work and good love the UM Women pour into our church. We had a tasty meal, good fellowship and enjoyed singing Christmas carols led by Ralph Murphy. It was a real blessing!

Brass Reflections
We are grateful for the beautiful worship music shared by Brass Reflections during our service on Sunday, Dec. 15. If you would like to hear the music, there is a CD available in the church office.

Church Cantata & Christmas Dinner
We hate to brag but, “How about that Cantata!” Our church is blessed in so many ways by the beautiful voices and music during our service on Dec. 22. It was so special that we almost forgot about the fellowship dinner that followed which completed the day of celebrating Emmanuel perfectly.

WoW! a New Year Celebration
Thanks to everyone who joined us for the New Year celebration dinner of traditional southern fare of collards, black-eyed peas and ham. Dinner was followed by a “service of encouragement” designed to help everyone have a great new year experiencing God’s love in every way possible.
Church Council Chair: Catherine Cuthbertson
Lay Leader: *Rick Colcord (16)
Recording Secretary: *Mikki Phillips (14)
Financial Secretary: Nancy Woodard (14)
Treasurer: *Jerry McKinney
Membership Secretary: *Betty Sandlin (14)
Finance Chair: *Alison Woodard (15)
Worship Committee Chair: *Arthur Tribble
Church Historian: *Betty Sandlin
Health & Welfare Representative: *Carole Maennle
Sunday School Superintendent: *Linda Dills (14)
District Mission Society Representative: *Lorene Bickerstaff
Brother/Sisterhood Representative: *Bick Bickerstaff
UMM President: *Sam Brandt
UMW President: *Nancy Jones
Lay Delegate to Annual Conference: *Catherine Cuthbertson (16)
1st Reserve Lay Delegate: *Rick Colcord (16)
Finance Chair: *Alison Woodard
Young Adult Representative: *Meagan Pederson
Building Committee: *Os Waters
Scout Representative: *Kevin Phillips
Pastor: *Wayne Dickert

**Church Council Members at Large**


**Board of Trustees**

2014: Roberta Means, *Jim Gribble, Chair, Os Waters
2015: Dave Gingrich, Ray Don Letts, David Outlaw
2016: Sam Brandt, Christine Colcord, Lori Tribble

**Finance Committee**

Chair: *Alison Woodard
Trustees: Jim Gribble
Church Council Chair: Catherine Cuthbertson
Financial Secretary: Nancy Woodard
Treasurer: Jerry McKinney
Lay Delegate: Catherine Cuthbertson
At Large: Margaret Varner, Charlie Saunooke, Linda Dills, Dolores Price

**Lay Leadership and Development Committee**

Bick Bickerstaff, Linda Dills, Ralph Murphy, Catherine Cuthbertson
Missions & Outreach Committee

2014
Pam Jarrett
Cathy Outlaw
Margaret Varner, Good Samaritan
Terry Cotton, River of Life
Wayne Dickert, pastor

2015
Jeanne Keller
Carole Maennle, Chair

2016
Mikki Phillips
Pat Looney

Nominations Committee

Beverly English
Jan McGregor
Sandy Cloer
Wayne Dickert, Chair (pastor)
*Wayne Dickert, Chair (pastor)
*Rick Colcord, Co-chair (Lay Leader)

Nurture Committee

*Penny Brandt, Chair
Shirley Waters
Carolyn Blanton
Os Waters
*Rick Colcord, Co-chair (Lay Leader)

Parsonage Committee

Evan Clapsaddle
Penny Brandt
Ann Medford
*Mikki Phillips, Chair
Doreen Gingrich
Dolores Price

Staff/Parish Relations Committee

Dolores Price
Nancy Jones
Sandy Cloer
*Terry Cotton, Chair
Jeanne Keller
Ray Don Letts

Worship Committee

Chair: *Arthur Tribble
Music Director: Ralph Murphy
Acolyte Coordinators: Penny Brandt
Banner Chair: Terry Cotton
Organist: Ann Steele

Altar Guild: Shirley Waters
Flowers: Pam Jarrett
Pastor: Wayne Dickert
At Large: Carole Maennle
Head Usher: Sam Brandt

Names with an * indicate voting members of the Church Council.
In Other News

January, 2014

Next Steps Team

Our church has been selected as one of 3-4 in our district to receive some special help and training for our leadership to grow our church. This is quite an honor for our little church. A few leaders from our church will work, study and plan together through guidance of resources from the Western NC Conference. We will be attending a 2-day training retreat at Hinton Center later this month. Please pray for our team as we learn about new ways to grow our church and ministries.

A Simple Plan for Reading Scripture in 2014

Bishop Ken Carter (our past district superintendent) along with several others invite you to consider reading through Luke and Acts this year. Each week, you will read one chapter and are also encouraged to journal about it. An added discipline is to invite one other person to experience this spiritual practice with you. As Bishop Carter noted in his December 31st blog, “The renewal of the church has always arisen from a fresh and disciplined engagement with the scriptures.” Luke and Acts can teach us all more about what it means to be disciples who are called to be a part of God’s work in transforming the world.

If you undertake this spiritual practice, Bishop Carter invites you to begin with Luke 1 on January 5, Luke 2 on January 12, Luke 3 on January 19, and onward. Ask Mikki if you would like a detailed schedule so you can follow along.

Enjoy Southern Fried Humor

If you enjoy good southern humor mixed with a little wit and wisdom, Rev. Harold Bales offers daily reflections on his website at www.TheSouthernFriedPreacher.com. Here’s a sample:

I heard someone say: "I used to think I was indecisive but now I'm not so sure." I have never had trouble making decisions. However, I have sometimes decided I was wrong in my decisions. That's okay with me. It has enabled me to deal easily with ambiguity. The ability to admit that you were wrong helps reduce the time you waste paralyzed by indecision. I like that.

“Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.”
~Mark Twain

I will
Love
Give
Be Gracious
Be Humble
Practice Kindness

Because
I Can

Congratulations Nathan and Leigh Boike (Luke’s parents) on the addition of Andie Corrine on January 3rd. We look forward to meeting her!
Weekly Events

Sundays:
Sunday School 9:45 AM
Worship Service 10:55 AM
Stone Soup 5:00 PM

Wednesdays:
WoW! (new time!) 6:00 PM
N. A. 6:30 PM
Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM

Church Office Hours:
Monday – Friday
9 AM – 12 NOON

Enjoy this month’s WordFind from words found in Luke 6:32-38.