



THE BEACON

Dec. 2006

www.oconeestreetumc.org

Important Dates:

Sunday, December 3

Fellowship Meal

(after worship)

Wednesday, December 6

UMW Christmas

6:30 p.m. covered-dish dinner at the home of Lorena Hughes

Sunday, December 17

Choir Christmas Music

Special music during 11 a.m. service

Saturday, December 23

Christmas Meal

for guests of Our Daily Bread 11:30 a.m. @ Tuckston UMC

Sunday, December 24

Christmas Eve Service

Special Candlelight Communion Service @ 5:30 p.m.

2007 calendar dates to be determined during the January meeting of the Church Council



Meaning of the season

Holiday decorations symbolize faith

Many of the decorations that we enjoy at Christmas have lost their original connection to traditional stories of the birth of Christ.

In our secular world we tend to equate them with Santa Claus and the North Pole more than baby Jesus and Bethlehem. It will make the season more meaningful if, as you decorate, you recall and share with your family the following information:

Red and Green: Green, represented by holly, ivy, other evergreens, were meant to remind us of eternal life. Red holly berries and other red accents were reminders to the early Christian church of Christ's blood shed on the cross.

The Christmas tree: with its

evergreen beauty, it was known as the tree of Christ, a reminder that the living Christ is always with us. The lights on the tree and star at the top say that Jesus is the Light of the World.

Wreaths: Wreaths of evergreen, shaped in a circle that has no end, call us to remember that there will be no end to the reign of Christ.

Poinsettia: Called Flor de la Noche Buena, "flower of the blessed night, the Mexican poinsettia's star-like shape remind us of the Star of Bethlehem.

The Nativity Scene: begun by St. Francis of Assisi in 1223 to visually depict the Christmas story to those who had not heard it or could not read about it.

Benevolence market to support community

The gift that keeps on giving, literally!

A unique shopping opportunity takes place from noon to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 3 with the Holiday Benevolence Market.

Held at First Baptist Church, 355 Pulaski Street (entrance on Hancock Avenue), money raised through the event supports local agencies and ministries that serve others, while honoring those on your gift list in a special way. Our Daily Bread is one of the ministries represented.

First Baptist Church will serve chili and cornbread, dessert and a beverage lunch for no charge, but donations are accepted. Holiday music will be provided by Athens area ensembles.

Pastor's Corner ...

Dear Church Family,

We enter the Advent and Christmas season remembering the greatest gift of all. John's gospel says "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son." The verbs in this sentence are "loved" and "gave."

Loving and giving seem to go together. The more we love the more we want to give of ourselves and of our resources. The ultimate gift of course is the gift of self, which we see in Jesus.

The weeks leading up to Christmas have become weeks of frantic shopping and buying, usually for friends and family. So maybe it's crazy to suggest that while we're spending money on ourselves and our loved ones, we also give thought to what we want to spend for our church and its service to the community and the world. But perhaps, such thinking will help us to balance our other gifts.

On Dec. 17 we will worship the Lord in music as the choir shares the story of Christ's birth through song. During that service we will also have the opportunity to give to God our pledge for 2007 for the work of the church. I hope you will consider this gift as seriously as you consider your other gift giving during this season.

Our Church Conference determined that in order to do our share of God's work we will need to raise \$88,696. What part of this will you make your responsibility, your gift?

Oconee Street UMC is a generous church with a huge heart for others; I am sure that the great love of God shown in the giving of God's self to us at Christmas will be reflected in what we choose to give to God and to those whom God loves in the year ahead.

Grace and peace,
Lisa C.

**"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son."
John 3:16**

**OCONEE STREET
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH**

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Work Area

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UMW President

OCONEE ST. UMC ***THE BEACON***

Pastor: The Rev. Lisa Caine
Editor: Joe Dennis

The Beacon is published semi-monthly as the official newsletter of Oconee Street United Methodist Church. For newsletter submissions, please contact Joe Dennis at 706-548-9359 or joe.dennis@yahoo.com.

Oconee Street United Methodist Church welcomes all people regardless of age, color, race, ethnic background, economic status, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, struggles with addiction, physical and mental challenges, or educational level. We come seeking the healing balm of salvation through Jesus Christ. Please talk to the pastor or lay leader if you wish to join this fellowship through Baptism or transfer membership from another church.

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www.oconeestreetumc.org



**OCONEE STREET
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH**

Bulletin Board

E-mail bulletin board items to joe.dennis@yahoo.com or call 706-548-9359

- Oconee Street's Charge Conference was held on Nov. 8.

The following persons were elected to serve on our Church Council for 2007: Beth Gavrilles, church council chair; Sharon Pendley, council secretary; Mikell Gleason, treasurer; Lew Allen, financial secretary; Jacki and Kevin Wood, lay leaders; Jonathan Biron, PPR chair; Chris Hall, trustees chair; Ken Easom, Sunday school superintendent; JoBeth and Lew Allen, ministry co-chairs; Steve Williams, worship chair; Mikell Gleason, study chair; Sharon Pendley, membership secretary.



- At the Charge Conference, the following budget was approved for 2007:

LOCAL CHURCH MINISTRY

Ministry Work Area

General Expenses, \$250; Our Daily Bread (food & supplies) \$750

Nurture Work Area

Wednesday Night Suppers, \$500; Newcomer Events, \$200; Notes and cards, \$100

Study Work Area

Church Retreat \$1,500; Sunday School literature, all ages \$1,500

Worship Work Area, \$2,500

Music \$1,000

Substitute Pastors, \$400

Pastor's Discretionary Fund, \$750

subtotal \$9,700

MINISTRY BEYOND THE LOCAL CHURCH

Conference Apportionments, \$8,585

District Work Fund, \$912

Lay Delegate Annual Conference Expenses, \$100

Monthly Missions, \$1,200

subtotal \$11,296

OPERATING EXPENSE

Janitorial, \$2,400

Postage/Office Supplies/Communications, \$2,400

Lawn Maintenance, \$1,500

Insurance, \$6,000

Repairs & Maintenance, 6,000

Utilities: Gas/Electricity/Water, \$11,000

subtotal \$29,300

STAFF EXPENSE

Pastor's Salary, \$25,200

Pastor's Reimbursement (Education & Travel), \$3,200

Childcare, \$3,000

Organist (possible staff addition), \$7,000

subtotal \$38,400

TOTAL EXPENSE \$88,696



Parking for God

Oconee Street members park cars for local charities

When the Georgia Bulldogs were playing football in Athens, Oconee Street UMC members could expect to see a message from Lew Allen titled "Parking for God" in their e-mail box.

Though God didn't literally need a parking space for the home football games (though the Bulldogs could have used a little divine intervention this season), many of his people did. More importantly, several charitable organizations in Athens and the people they serve needed financial help.

Located just a few blocks from Sanford Stadium just across the river, Oconee Street UMC sits on land that is prime parking space for Bulldog (or opposing team) fans.

With the organization of Lew Allen and Enrique Alpaugh, several church members volunteered a part of their Saturday to assist parking cars at the church.

At \$15 to \$20 per car, dozens of vehicles were

directed around the church, utilizing every foot of space around the church.

At maximum capacity, 40 vehicles can be squeezed onto the Oconee Street UMC lot. Volunteers collected money and directed the drivers to their parking space.

Hundreds of cars were parked and the church raised several thousand dollars, all of which is going to support local charities that serve the impoverished, including the Athens Nurses Clinic.

Consistently, nine church members assisted throughout the year, but more help is needed in the future. Games with later start times require several volunteers who work in shifts of three, as football fans begin arriving in the morning regardless of the game's start time.

For more information or if to become a future parking attendant for God, contact Lew Allen at lewallen@uga.edu.

**"Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God ...
for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else."
2 Corinthians 9:13**



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MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!