



THE BEACON

Fall 2010

www.oconeestreetumc.org

Important Dates:

Sunday, Sept. 26

Homecoming
10:45 a.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 29

Christmas pageant practice
6 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 3

Fellowship meal
Christmas pageant practice
Noon

Wednesday, Oct. 6

Wednesday night supper
“When God comes to school”
6 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 14

UMW meeting
6:30 p.m.

Sunday, Oct. 17

Christmas pageant practice
Church Council meeting
Noon

Friday-Sunday, Oct. 22-24

Choir music weekend

Wednesday, Nov. 3

Christmas pageant practice
6 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 7

Fellowship meal
Christmas pageant practice
Noon

Nov. 7-14

Service at Interfaith
Hospitality Network

Tuesday, Nov. 9

Church Charge conference
5:30 p.m.

Homecoming

Rev. Overton-Garrett returns to Oconee St.

On Sunday, Sept. 26, 2010, Oconee Street will celebrate Homecoming. Our guest preacher will be the Rev. Dana Overton-Garrett.

Dana is a native of Wichita, Kansas. She graduated with a journalism degree from the University of Georgia and holds a master of divinity from Candler School of Theology of Emory University. Dana was ordained an Elder in Full Connection in 1986 and has served congregations in the North Georgia and Tennessee Conferences, including Oconee Street, from 1986-1988. It was during Dana’s tenure at Oconee Street that the first plans were formed for the ministry of Our Daily Bread and the partnership with Athens Urban Ministries.

Dana is currently serving her sixth year as pastor of St. Paul UMC in Marietta. She married her husband, the Rev. Dan Garrett, at Oconee St. on Oct. 17, 1987. Dan is a chaplain with the Infectious Disease Program of Grady Health Systems. Dana and Dan have two daughters, Kelly, who lives in Jacksonville, N.C., and Katelyn, who is a senior at Sprayberry

High School in Marietta.

Our choir has been hard at work preparing special music for this celebration, and the worship service will begin at 10:45 with the presentation of a selection of spirituals. After the service, we will share a covered dish meal together and have plenty of time for fellowship and conversation.

Since we will be acting as hosts for visitors and guests who are returning, please bring several dishes for our meal — enough for your family and to share with others.

On Saturday, Sept. 25, set up for Homecoming will begin at 9 a.m. There are many things to do to get ready – setting up tables and chairs downstairs in the education building, setting up the serving tables in the dining hall, making sure the sanctuary is in order. If you can help with any of these, please let Maxine Easom know. Homecoming is always a special day because it gives us an opportunity to remember and give thanks for the incredible history of our church, and also to celebrate and look forward with hope and confidence to an equally bright future.

Children’s church returns for Oconee St. kids

On Sept. 12, our 5- through 8-year-olds began attending Children’s Church during morning worship. The children remain in the sanctuary with their families until after the greeting. Then they adjourn to their own Children’s Sanctuary – a place where they will learn why we do what we do in “big church.”

The structure of our Children’s Church is a miniature replica of the adult worship service, including prayer for illumination, psalter, hymns, message, the sharing of joys and concerns, and an offering. Each of these pieces have been scaled back to be more appropriate for this age group. Although the Children’s Church curriculum follows the same lectionary as the adult service, it is taught in kid-friendly language.

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Pastor's Corner

Dear Church Family,

This edition of our newsletter is devoted to our children and youth ministries. There's a lot going on – Sunday School, Children's Church, Christmas pageant practice and youth activities. Everyone in the church needs to know what our young people are doing because there is nothing more important for us as a church than caring for and teaching our children. That is why the congregation is asked during the baptism of children, "Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and include these children now before you in your care?" And you answer together, "With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround these children with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their service to others. We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life."

I remember favorite Sunday School teachers from my childhood, and my children have their favorites. You probably have yours as well, people who made a difference in your life by spending an hour each week with you. I taught Sunday School for a number of years as Sean and Meg were growing up. The most amazing experience for me was teaching first graders. In September, they couldn't read, and I had to read Bible stories to them. But by the Spring, they were reading to me! A double blessing – they were enjoying and learning the stories and they were reading them for themselves!

Tom Long writes this about Sunday School teachers: "They dragged their week-day weary bodies, their sometimes halting knowledge of the Bible, their own struggles with doubt, and their clearly evident humanity into spare Sunday school classrooms and dared to talk to other people's children as best they could about the Christian faith. I look back now and realize how much what they did mattered, how much what they said continues to nourish what I believe and what I do with my life. Some people might point out that these people were not close to being Bible scholars . . . others might sniff at their primitive pedagogy . . . and their often futile struggles to instruct restless nine-year olds, and call it a waste of time. I don't. I call it courage. I call it love. I call it faithful testimony."

I have shared with you my own failings as a parent. My son, on his third Christmas thought all the presents under the tree were for his birthday. He hadn't been told about Jesus. I hadn't taught him. Very soon thereafter, he started to Sunday School and by the next Christmas, he knew whose birthday it was. You can make that same difference in a child's life. By Christmas, one of our pre-schoolers could know whose birthday it is because of you. Our 3- and 4-year-olds don't have a teacher. If you have the courage, if you have the love, will you share your faithful testimony with these little ones?

Grace and peace,
Lisa C.

2010 Church Leaders

Jonathan Biron
Council Chair

Sharon Pendley
Council Secretary
Membership Secretary

Mikell Gleason
Treasurer

Gloria Hall
Financial Secretary

Linda Burchfield
Lay Leader

Maxine Easom
PPR Chair

**Rebecca Alpaugh &
Meg Hines**
Children's Education/Ministry

Frankie Wylie & Joe Dennis
Youth Education/Ministry

Edwina Biron
Adult Education/Ministry

Chris Hall
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Ken Easom
Sun. School Superintendent

Beth Gavrilles
Ministry Chairs

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Worship Co-Chairs

Maxine Easom
UMW President

JoBeth & Lew Allen
Nurture Co-Chairs

JoBeth Allen
ODB Liaison

OCONEE ST. UMC

THE BEACON

Pastor: The Rev. Lisa Caine
Editor: Joe Dennis

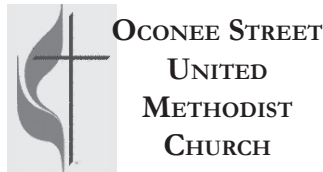
The Beacon is published quarterly as the official newsletter of Oconee Street United Methodist Church. For newsletter submissions, please contact Joe Dennis at 706-548-9359 or joe.dennis@yahoo.com.

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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Reaching out to our future

† † † † †

Rehearsals have begun for “**The Surprising Christmas Pageant,**” the story of the birth of Christ told with humor, mystery and awe! Save Dec. 12 at 7p.m. for this performance. You won’t want to miss it.

The first rehearsal for the angel and shepherd chorus (children ages 4-6) will be held Sunday, Oct. 17, rather than the originally scheduled date of Oct. 13. Angel and shepherd chorus practice will end at 1:30 p.m. Parents may pick up their children or the nursery is available. All crew members will need to be present at Oct. 10 tech meeting.

We still have some volunteer opportunities available. As of now there is no official leader of costuming. There are costumes from the previous pageant; the job would entail an inventory. I can provide a cast and crew list with costuming needs. Other needs for the pageant include: a spotlight, complete with operator available for Dec. 8 and Dec. 11 rehearsals. The stage assembly crew will put the stage together on Sunday, Dec. 5. If there are instrumentalists (middle school age and up) who would like to participate, a place can and will be made for you.

Finally, thank you to our September lunch ladies Sharon Pendley, Allyson Pennington and Carla Dennis. Make this Advent mysterious and awesome; get involved with and attend “The Surprising Christmas Pageant” on Dec. 12.

—Amanda Scott

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10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1....blast off! And that is exactly what we did....we had a blast! This past July, **VBS transformed Oconee Street into another world.** The cadets (our wonderful young people) voyaged into outer space praising God. Each evening after loading up at the Astro Bistro, cadets headed over to the Starship Galactic Station to sing praise songs, hear from Galileo the “Green” Gorilla and take on their daily mission from Commander Sharon. Groups then moved through various stations each evening hearing a Bible story in the Good News Galaxy, creating art in Cosmic Crafts, participating in a science experiment in the Orbital Observatory, burning fuel at the Rocket Rec, visiting the moon for a Bible Booster and closing with a “green tip” from Galileo. The cosmic combination of faith and fun demonstrated how we all can work at developing our personal relationship with God.

After having coordinated VBS for the past two years, I have truly seen the power of our small church do something extraordinary. I have been amazed at the way in which so many people have come together to make Vacation Bible School at Oconee Street a success on so many levels! From feeding the children, to playing character roles, to decorating, to leading the children in various roles, everyone who has participated has truly made a difference in the lives of our littlest Oconee Street-ers. I look forward to many more wonderful years of VBS!

—Meg Hines

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The youth Sunday School class, led by Sharon Pendley, has begun an exciting new curriculum titled, BL4Y, (Bible Lessons for Youth). These lessons are designed to help youth apply the Bible to their lives. They are encouraged to dig into the Scriptures and then live them out. This quarter they are studying scriptures from the Old Testament. Rumor has it that the kids have had a chance to listen to different types of music, do a little bit of rapping and hear their teacher imitate a chicken. This class is not for kids who like to be bored in Sunday School!

The elementary kids will begin another Power Xpress session titled “Jesus and the Children.” They will be led by Gail and Jim Hanula for the next six weeks. The children will learn how Jesus proclaimed through his words and action that children are valued by God and how children have important roles to play in the community of faith. This curriculum uses art, music, science, technology, and even cooking to help children the experience the Bible in a fun, multi-sensory way.

We are still hoping to find someone to volunteer for the Nursery Sunday School class. We have several curriculum choices available. Their lessons are only 15-20 minutes long, and because we have nursery workers, the teacher would then be free to join the adult class. If you are feeling called to this position, let Meg, Rebecca, or Pastor Lisa know as soon as possible.

Teaching Sunday School is a rewarding experience in which the teacher almost always seems to learn more than the kids. It is how we pass our Christian knowledge on to the next generation. The newer type of Sunday School curricula really do make it teacher friendly and no previous teaching experience is necessary. Please consider being a Sunday School teacher for a six week session.

—Rebecca Alpaugh

Sunday school enriches faith with contemporary saints

Sunday School for 65 years! WHEW! That's a long time! I have recently been working on a history of Carr's Hill, of which our church is an integral part. Sharing memories with other people about our neighborhood and the impact of those wonderful people with whom I grew up certainly was centered on those saints in our church.

My memories start in Sunday School – in those classes in the balcony, where we could run up and down the steps – run all around the sides – open those pointed windows in each little room – hide in concealed corners. Then my memories move to Ms. Bertha, Ms. Lil, Ms. Jessie – those saints who taught me that Jesus loves me, and what I must do in response to that. And to my parents who taught me that education at my church was just as important as education at my school. It may be that the church's education program may have really provoked my long time interest in education – period.

Those memories of my childhood have made it clear to me that my faith was planted and watered in those early years, and that my commitment to learning about the Christian faith began right there – around that balcony. Because of those years throughout my youth, I believe that the most important times of learning through the Sunday School do not stop with children and youth. My

early grounding in being a part of a Christian learning community (Sunday School) has evolved into knowing that I must be a part of Sunday School as an adult. I do not believe that I was taught everything I needed to know about how to “live faith” between the ages of 0 and 18. I believe that every day I meet challenges that I need to talk with other people about. So I continue to go to Sunday School - to share – to agree – to disagree – to be challenged – to hear ideas that I had never thought of before. I go to be with contemporary saints – Edwina, Jonathan, Sharon, Joe, Carla, Michael, Allyson, Sharon, Amanda, Rebecca, Meg, Steven, Enrique, Mikell - those of this day who continue to teach me that Jesus loves me, and what I must do in response to that.

While I love everything about being a part of church, being a part of a Sunday School class community may be at the top of my list. And that grounding started because my parents understood the importance of Christian education. Being a part of this small group setting with others who are seeking to grow as Christians and be Christians in 2010 is a call from God to me. There is nothing better than Sunday morning at 9:45 – whether you are 8 or 80! My prayer is that I will continue to learn about God all the days of my life!

—Maxine Easom

Engraved Bibles presented to Oconee St. UMC 3rd graders

On Aug. 29, Oconee St. UMC presented Bibles to three rising third graders. Here's a little information about the recipients:

•**Samuel Ethan Pennington** attends South Jackson Elementary School. His favorite subject is reading. He takes Tae Kwon Do and just

recently received his senior red belt. His next test will be for his brown belt! Sam enjoys playing tennis, listening to all different kinds of music, reading, and building with his legos.

•**Casey Harper Pendley** attends Gum Springs Elementary School in Jefferson. She enjoys dancing ballet

and tap, swimming and spending time with her family.

•**Chandler Patricia Pendley** attends Gum Springs Elementary School in Jefferson. She enjoys anything having to do with music or art and spending time with her family.

Children's Church to acclimate youth to regular church services

Continued from page 1

During this time, the children will focus on one aspect of the worship service to “master,” such as The Lord's Prayer, The Affirmation of Faith, or being able to explain why we take an offering as part of our church service. From time to time, they will share what they have learned with the congregation during our Communion Sunday time together. The offering collected in Children's Church will be money earned throughout the week by the children and will be used to adopt a child during the Christmas season.

We hope that by offering Children's Church to our young ones that we will be providing them with a firm foundation in the ways we worship together.

—Angie Pendley



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