
◆ The Congregational Connection ◆

Volume 61, Issue 5

December 2011



The Rev. Walter R. Patten, Ph.D.

PASTOR WALT'S CONGREGATIONAL CORNER

A MERRY
CHRISTMAS
AND A HAPPY
NEW YEAR!

THE ICE MAN: HISTORY SPLITS STARWISE

It was a slow, sweltering, thick morning in the little eastern North Carolina town of Mount Olive, my home. I was about 12 years old at the time and was

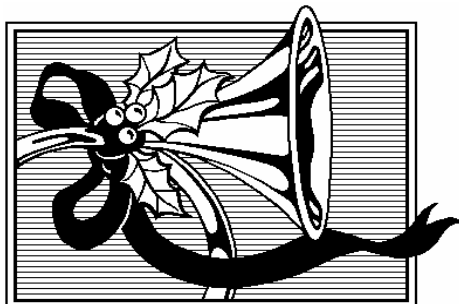
contemplating mowing a rather large yard that was already overgrown--the owner's oversight, mind you--since they had extended their two-week vacation to a third week and always insisted on seeing the lawn themselves before giving me permission to go ahead with the job. The immediate problem was that it was too wet to mow and my mowing would leave clumpy, icky grass wads with very mysterious interiors all over the place, an extra chore of arduous clean-up that I would just as soon avoid by waiting until the later afternoon, given my professional and personal preferences. And, in any case, the owners were not back yet, so I had some time on my hands. And like I said, it was a slow day...in Mount Olive...around the third week in July...and Lord it was hot...so humid that you could not even sweat...with the air so heavy it wore me out just to breathe. Who wants to mow a

yard in conditions like this anyway?! I was open to suggestions.

I meandered across the block to a nest of neighboring kids with whom I had adventures, great and small, real and imagined, from time to time, expecting little out of this lot today, given the heat. After our usual exchanges of lies and insults, we settled into the welcoming protection of the massive oak tree that was in my friend's back yard, bracing ourselves for indolent doldrums and perhaps a glass of iced tea--though, of course, we were not supposed to drink tea, but it was just so naughty and all our parents were mercifully pulled to the world's business.

Through a series of remarkable events which I did not fully understand at the time and certainly do not remember now, it came to our collective attention, with a certain urgency, that we needed to get ourselves down to the Geddy Ice Plant. An associate of ours had tumbled into what seemed to be an amazing situation, too fantastic to be believed, yet one offering the opportunity for filthy lucre for those who were not faint of heart. While I and

*Please call Pastor Walt
any time, day or night,
at
336-420-2728*



"The mission of the Community Congregational Church is to be a place to praise the Lord through Christian teaching, fellowship, and outreach."

we had been feeling very faint of heart, this news galvanized our focus on the opportunity of the moment, and the sweltering heat and our attending vapors all but vanished as we swooped upon our bicycles and made all due haste to the Ice Plant, a business which specialized in producing blocks of ice, of various sizes, mostly for vegetable trucks which needed refrigeration and for country folks who did not have refrigerators. And, it was not the least of our excitement that we were, literally, going, with an apparently open invitation, to the coolest place in town.

I had been in the Geddy Ice Plant a few times before, on errands for my mother, mostly, so I expected to enter by the side door toward the back of the two story brick building, avoiding the loading platform at the front, which was always busy this time of year...especially with men dropping heavy, slippery blocks of ice on their feet and such, generating a most colorful array of expletives undeleted. I do believe that my periodic schooling at the Ice Plant first planted the suggestion in me that the English language is limitless in its capacity for nimble and creative and vituperative expression.

There was already a line at this door when we arrived, reigning in our trusty steeds on the gravel parking lot and easing safely out of the way of considerable traffic, unusual volume even for this season. We assumed our places at the back of the line, though we were not the back-of-the-line for long. Ardent, excited fellows were packing in behind us and digging in their back pockets for their wallets, uprooting

soiled wads of sweaty cash with grunts rather the way pigs access their truffles, and doing some sort of tabulation which was unfamiliar to me. I thought that perhaps I should do likewise, though I had not the slightest idea why...also, my grunts were not as fulsome as those around me. My grass-mowing enterprise, while still humble in those days, had served me reasonably well as I produced evidence of my toil with a few crumpled dollar bills. My slothful companions had not been quite so industrious as your humble servant and were shooting nervous glances my way, as if to inquire about *what I was going to do* concerning their embarrassing predicament. I issued a stream of well-chosen, stern judgments about their idle ways, encouraged perhaps by the rich atmosphere of imaginative language which we were breathing, and gave each of them one dollar, with the understanding that unspeakable consequences would ensue if I was not repaid. Promises were made, informal covenants struck, and we all returned to the business at hand.

The line began to pick up pace as we moved up the wooden steps. I could hear a dull roar inside, suggesting that many people had indeed come to cool off at the Geddy Ice Plant. There was a tall, beefy man standing at the head of the steps who was taking money from everyone, though it seemed to be in sundry amounts. A fear seized me that perhaps my lowly dollar would not be enough and that I had foolishly given away my money. I wanted to ask for it back but it was too late for that; understandings had been reached. And, if I did not get in, then no one else in my crew would get in either.

At last, I reached the top of the

steps and the big man, cool on his right side which was inside the building and sweating profusely on his left side which was out in the sun, growled out his question: "Okay, kid, lemme see your money. Are you for the Ice Man or are you for the House?" Well, I confess that I wasn't even slightly aware that I was supposed to be "for" or "against" anybody, but I could discern that this was not a man given to debate, so I blurted out, "The Ice Man," which did sound cool. He retorted, "Okay, kid, it's your money." I handed him the bill and another fellow to his side wrote something down in a book after I gave him my name. I was ushered in with a "get moving" sort of shove, which I did not appreciate, being a paying customer and all.

The first thing I noticed was how cold my wet shirt became once inside the Ice Plant, even while my breath vaped in front of me. There was a lot of shuffling and jostling about as we tried to stay together, attempting to find someone in the know about just what was going on here that had attracted so many people. I finally sidled up to a guy I knew who worked there part-time during the "green season."

"What's going on here?" I blurted out, shivering somewhat. He looked at me, bewildered. "What's going on here?! Joe, the Ice Man, Joe is a wizard with ice, he can do anything with ice that you want done, anything, the guy is amazing. However, he's

bit off more than he can chew this time, for he claims that he can break the largest block of ice that we've ever produced here, 3 by 4 by 6 feet, larger than a coffin, with one blow, with a pick size not to exceed one foot. One blow!! Absolutely clean, perpendicular break, top to bottom, side to side, clean plane, no irregularities. Perfect. One blow. I tell you, it can't be done, and everybody here is betting with the House that it cannot be done!" Oops, I thought to myself, but it was only a dollar, and I felt kind of bad that apparently no one was betting that Joe could do this amazing thing...so I just kind of decided to leave my bet where it was, respect for the underdog and all.

Just then, a horn sounded off and everyone turned to the opening where blocks of ice emerged to roll down the chutes: the monster ice was coming to the party. It slowly rumbled out and down the central chute, appearing to me to be larger than the originally specified dimensions, and in fact it was, 4 by 5 by 7 feet, as I learned later when it was announced over the loud-speaker. That very announcement, by the way, set off a new flurry of betting activity as the odds against Joe seemed to be getting longer. The monster block crashed with a clanging thump in the major holding container in the very center of the huge room, causing the underpinning supports to groan and creak with the weight.

It was time for Joe himself. A spotlight shot to the first-floor door below the chutes and out he

strode like a champ, wearing blue-denim overalls, oversized white tennis shoes, and no shirt, beaming the broadest smile in response to the rousing applause of all the well-wishers who wanted him desperately to fail. He was the largest man I had ever seen in my life, not fat really, just huge, like the actor in the movie, *The Green Mile*, who was scheduled for execution and yet was able to heal people, a gentle giant who would never hurt anyone unless severely provoked. He looked and moved much like that man, with his incredible smile.

He boomed forth with his *basso profundo* laugh, directing with a swirling gesture for all the ceiling lights and the spotlight to be turned off even while reaching behind him and opening the lid of a large wooden box, producing a number of black blankets and four spotlights attached to long, black cables. He threw the large wool blankets over the massive ice block, taking the shining lights and positioning and repositioning them while he crawled on and around the ice and under the blankets, writhing about like some grotesque ice-creature trying to be born. Then he stopped, no motion, not even breathing, it seemed. A vibrant, almost ghastly, laughter of delight exploded from under his blankets, reverberating off the ice, making grown men and boys jump, and he sprang dramatically to his feet, throwing his blankets and lights every which way, busting a couple of the latter. Our silence was palpable.

The Ice Man jumped off the block and walked very deliberately over to the far wall, where there

hung every conceivable ice pick known to man, from the longest to the shortest. He stood where the longest pick was hung, placing his intentionally shimmering right hand over it while gazing at the crowd. Then he began to stroll some fifteen feet or so toward the other end of the picks, where the shortest ones were sequentially placed, keeping his hand above the handles of the picks, slowing down as he reached the pick that was one foot in length, the originally agreed upon choice for the bet. Only now, the block was larger, and the need for a single pick would seem to be for a longer one than that.

Joe paused, his eyes still on the crowd. He took one small step, his right hand hovering over the 11 inch pick. The room exploded. Money started changing hands as the House sensed his over-reaching, his arrogance, his confidence at something so clearly impossible. Joe just kept on smiling. The room settled down. Joe took another step, now his right hand poised over the 10 inch pick. The House exploded again and so he waited for them to conclude their fresh betting. This rhythmically intensifying process continued, with cascading and mounting fervor, until Joe's hand settled over the 5 inch pick...one blow to this 4 x 5 x 7 ice mass with a five inch pick! He slowly wrapped his fingers around the pick handle, starting with his little finger and gradually working all five digits around the wooden handle, closing decisively with his thumb, intentionally developing his hold, mouth agape, eyes blown wide open like a fool deranged. The Ice Man slowly raised his left arm and delicately placed the end of his index finger directly on the pick's point, emphasizing further its short length,

shaking his legs back and forth as if the very enormity of the thing would cause him to buckle and collapse. The House spasmed with renewed frenzy and it was all the record keeper could do to keep things straight. Me, I was going to let it ride. My one dollar had already delivered far more than I could have dreamed that it could, a dollar very well spent for such a show.

Joe waited until everyone had recomposed themselves. He said, very slowly and distinctly, "Allow me to add to the bet," his voice thundering in ricochet around the brick walls and metal chutes and painted black glass windows. "When I crack this block of ice, with one blow, with this pick, in a perfect plane, I will recover a dead insect, at the center of the block, and I will bring it back to life, before your eyes." Pandemonium ensued. The room imploded with gambling madness. The odds against Joe had gone to Mars as far as this crowd was concerned, and they were throwing everything into this bizarre game that they could scrape together. Eventually, out of weariness, everyone subsided.

He moved adroitly for a man his size and easily straddled the block. The Ice Man settled in the approximate place he wanted to be, though he shifted several times to refine his spot as his hands danced over the top surface and occasionally along the sides, dramatically closing his eyes and straightening his body as he simultaneously raised his right arm with the five inch pick cemented in his hand even as he allowed his left index finger to press on the exact point at which he would strike. While I did not time him, I know that Joe held this pose for at least 10,

maybe 15 seconds. No one was even breathing, except him.

With a thunder-clap shout, the Ice Man plunged his right hand so fast that I did not even see it, and I did not blink. No one did. Well...maybe we did blink, in shock...I don't know. A few seconds passed, then ten, then fifteen. Joe had not flinched a muscle, as fixed as black granite. Silence. Shades of cold gray permeated the darkened room. Joe was transfixed with the ice, as frozen as it was. A nervous laughter started to sputter to life as anxious betters were beginning to feel their oats, beginning to sense that this was indeed an impossible bet even for Joe to meet and that their efforts toward avarice in this matter were well placed. And then it happened, even as the crowd was beginning to roar victoriously, jeers and catcalls and expletives of derision filling the room, while Joe sat motionless. It was the sound of a single, clear, "crack" that broke their cacophonous momentum, the crisp sound you hear when you see videos of icebergs cracking just before they slam into the sea, or the sharp report that a large dead tree limb makes when it breaks, loaded with ice from a storm in the 2:00 a.m. stillness of the frozen night. An entire forest can sound like a warzone under such circumstances. Silence loomed again, the crowd growing both fretful and respectful, as if in the presence of greatness. Another crack sliced through the silence, this one louder, eliciting a gasp from us, then a series of cascading cracks, not unlike the noise you

can make with your mouth and throat, just short of a gurgling sound. This last series of splitting and spitting reports lasted perhaps for one minute.

Joe dismounted his block of ice just in time for the expanding clean break to reach the bottom and the sides of the new plane faces that were being created, with thousands of rays issuing from his strike-point, on both sides of the separating block, some of them streaming all the way to the sides and the bottom of the two new faces of ice that were being created. The Ice Man reached toward the center of the side he had straddled and plucked gently a small beetle that had been embedded, entombed, within the block of ice, now free to the air. He closed his hands around it and blew his warm breath into his chamber, cocooning the beetle for a time until he could begin to feel it moving in his palms. He opened his hands and smiled forth a sublime sort of enigmatic satisfaction, not unlike the Mona Lisa smile perhaps; in any case, a smile emanating from a mysterious, centered place.

The resulting silence was interrupted, slowly at first, and then more rapidly with clapping--the applause beginning, it seemed, with the biggest, loudest, most obnoxious losers. Others joined in, including myself, not yet realizing that I and my clueless friends were among the big winners of the day, in one sense anyway, maybe more. The Ice Man permitted himself a sweeping bow, still protecting his beetle with his massive hands closed

against his stomach, instinctively stepping aside so everyone could examine his new work of art first-hand. We all pressed around to inspect this amazing thing, these thousands of beautiful rays which emanated from a single strike-point, rays designed to rescue both a beetle and the Ice Man's reputation, rays spread/suffused through both new planes of ice with perfect symmetry, rays shining forth the entire spectrum of light at various angles of perspective, properly viewed. It was not lost on some of the cynics in the crowd that the Ice Man could have "planted" that living beetle while the block was being made, giving it enough time to survive to thaw out. Or maybe Joe had the creature on his person all along. Who knew? At this point, who cared?

But this clean, masterfully controlled break could not be faked...that was the real deal here and quite astonishing in itself, that such a wondrous thing could be wrought in a mere split-second and in such squalid, unpromising, chaotic conditions. I do remember musing, as I shuffled toward the door where the hot/cold man handed me a rather bulky, sticky wad of my ill-gotten gains, acknowledging my obvious acumen as a gambling-sophisticate by grunting out "Way to go kid!"...I do remember musing, shuffling down those wooden steps, how much that mysterious pattern resembled a star.

It would be fully some 25 years before this time-bomb of a memory exploded onto my consciousness, during Advent, actually, when I saw a star in a shopping mall that was *exactly* like the one that the Ice Man had presented to us on a sweltering-hot July day of my boyhood, radiat-

ing from one point and touching everything and everyone in its path. It was an improbable, if not impossible event, from so long ago, and yet there it was, waiting for me as an exquisite epiphany gift, for it is at Advent/Christmas/Epiphany—the Christian Festival of the Night—that human history splits starwise, that time itself, the calendar itself, divided from B.C. to A.D., as we used to say before more letters were added.

One of the many joys of this revelation to me, and it did have the force of a revelation through the eyes of faith, was for me to realize that the rays of the Christmas Star illumine not simply the darkness of the *past* as well as the darkness of the *future*, but also the darkness of the "beetle" in the *present* (the invisible "plane of ice" that is often the hardest to discern)—that there are, so to speak, three planes of radiating light, not just one. It is one of the most powerful symbols and metaphors we have for God's dramatic intervention into history through Jesus Christ, giving us an intuitive grasp on how it is that at Christmas: we feel the frozen misery of the centuries begin to crack and break apart, we feel the frozen misery of a hopeless future beginning to crack and break apart, we feel the frozen misery of the hopeless present begin to crack and break apart. Our surrender and yielding to God's grace in Jesus Christ allows His healing light to permeate our lives with new love, new purpose, new vision, new hope, new peace, new beginnings...new resolution with our past by accepting God's graceful resolution of our past wounds and sins through forgiveness and

reconciliation...new resolution with the future through new plans, new insights, new possibilities, new ministries, new life in our congregations...new resolution in our present through our openness to loving, servanthood relationships with all kinds people in all kinds of circumstances.

As I have slowly matured in the Christian faith, I have learned both to preach and to expect that the Christ Child is coming to each of us this season, almost always in a way that we will not recognize at the time. It will be like Scripture says, unexpected, surprising, like a thief in the night, like a landlord returning home after a long journey, like a late bridegroom. He may come as a beckoning opportunity to assist charities, to serve in a soup kitchen, to reconcile with a relative or friend with whom you believed you were impossibly alienated, to write a long-deferred letter of inviting grace and acceptance. Toward the conclusion of Jesus' earthly ministry in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us that if we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome a stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, visit those in prison, then we have done those things to Him, we have met Him as He has come to us—whether we discern His presence at the time or not. Mary Magdalene supposed Jesus to be the gardener at the tomb, and she only recognized Him when He called her by name. There is the story of the two disciples on their dusty walk to Emmaus; the risen Jesus encounters them and they do not recognize

Him until His breaking of bread with them. Even the closest friends of Jesus did not recognize Him initially, so why should we, unless, of course, we are actually looking for Him, searching for Him, *as He repeatedly encouraged us to do*. This, I'm afraid, is not advice from Him that we take seriously enough, especially at this time of year when we are told that He has come and is coming again, both here and not yet.

Through spiritual direction, prayer and disciplined, even painful remembering, I have identified at least six times when Jesus Christ came to me personally in my childhood, visited me and my situation personally through the actions of other persons, though I did not discern His presence in those events until many years later, through the eyes of faith. For all I know, there were many more times than that, but I have identified not less than six times. The story of the Ice Man that you just read is my seasoned and authentic account of one of those times. Some of you heard my sermon here about Will As Boone, the itinerate, mentally challenged laborer who became a Christ-figure for our entire town after his death, and especially for me. Well, this story of the Ice Man, for all its flaws and ways in which even the best metaphor is limited when it purports to speak of how the Realm of God intersects with our own lives, bringing gifts which may sit quietly unappreciated and unacknowledged for years, nonetheless did and does this for me. Without it, I could never have known how profoundly true it is that history splits starwise, and I pray that this is an appropriate and suggestible

truth for you as well.

Blessings and Shalom, Pastor Walt

MODERATOR'S MESSAGE

Hopefully you had a wonderful Thanksgiving shared with family and friends. We all have so much for which to be thankful. It is hard to believe that a month has passed since the last Newsletter. It has been a very busy month.

Unfortunately because of inclement weather the Pumpkin Open golf tournament had to be called off. However, the Men's Fellowship had a very active month. Scott Newton and crew cooked and served an excellent spaghetti dinner following our church service on November 13. This dinner was paid for from the Men's Fellowship treasury. All diners were asked to make a contribution to a Christmas gift fund for our hard working staff. Through your generosity \$1,325 has been raised to date. If anyone did not get a chance to contribute, it is still not too late. **Next on our schedule is the annual Christmas dinner that will be served following the church service on Sunday December 11. This is a catered meal consisting of turkey with all the trimmings. The Women's Fellowship will be providing dessert. Cost will be \$15 per person. Children 12 and under are no charge. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board. Entertainment for this dinner will be provided in the form of a Christmas sing-along by the dynamic duo of Shelton Raynor and MariJo Brown.**

The Women's Fellowship wrapped

25 shoeboxes full of toys they had collected and sent them off to Operation Christmas Child, a part of Samaritans Purse. Photographs of these wrapped shoeboxes are on the bulletin board. The Women's Fellowship will be decorating the church for Christmas on Friday December 9, starting at 9am. They are looking for help so put on your decorating clothes and come on out. Ingrid Leeper and Frances Monroe made a beautiful display that enhanced our Thanksgiving service. We thank them for that.

The Prayer Shawl group meets at 2pm on the 4th Wednesday of each month. Lois Vollmer tells me they have a good time knitting shawls to be given to those in need, as well as solving the world's problems. If you enjoy knitting or just want to join in the conversation you are more than welcome.

Through the Empty Stocking Fund, The Board of Christian Education has adopted three families for the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. They are accepting contributions.

Jane Newton and Jack Barron of the Nominating Committee have talked to a few people about becoming a member of the many Boards and Committees required for the functioning of our church during the next year. Should any of you want to become involved, please let them know.

By now you all received a letter sent by the Stewardship Committee asking for contributions of time, talent and resources. If you

haven't already responded, please give this very important part of our church life serious and prayerful consideration.

You can see that our church is a place with a lot of different activities. This translates into a number of ways to become involved. We hope you will.

God Bless us all,
Wade Vollmer, Moderator

Minutes of the Congregational meeting of the Church October 30, 2011

Prior to the beginning of the meeting, Wade Vollmer discussed the November 13 Spaghetti Dinner. The Men's Fellowship will be paying for and hosting the dinner with the Women's Fellowship supplying the dessert. Donations will be accepted to be used for a Christmas bonus for our hard working staff.

Copies of the Proposed Budget for 2012 and the changes suggested for the Constitution were handed out to all members present.

It was determined that a quorum was present and Moderator, Wade Vollmer called the meeting to order.

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2012:

Shelton Raynor, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, presented the Preliminary Budget for 2012. Jack Barron moved and Dick Strine seconded that the Preliminary Budget be accepted. Wade

asked for any discussion. There being none, Wade called for a vote on the motion to accept the Preliminary Budget. The motion carried.

CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION:

An Ad Hoc Committee had been established by the Council to review amendments, changes and conformity with the Constitution. The committee presented its recommendations to the Council on October 13, 2011, and the Council approved the recommendations.

Shelton Raynor and Wade went over each change to the Constitution explaining the reasoning for such changes. Shelton moved and Jack Barron seconded that the changes be accepted. Wade asked for discussion. There being none, he called for a vote on the motion to accept the changes to the Constitution. Motion carried.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Lois Vollmer, acting secretary

Minutes of the Church Council Meeting October 13, 2011

Present: Wade Vollmer, Scott Newton, Nancy Hilmer, Shelton Raynor, Ursula Mannix, Ingrid Leeper, Kay Harrop.

Wade called the meeting to order and Kay offered a prayer. Wade then welcomed Scott as the Men's Fellowship chairman.

There was a motion to approve the Agenda which passed.

Minutes of September 19, 2011: Kay pointed out that the word "not" should be included in the sentence regarding the number of ushers saying that the Deacons did not think it was necessary to increase the number of ushers. Scott made a motion to approve the Minutes as corrected, Nancy seconded. Motion passed.

Old Business:

Bell Tower Inspection – Shelton said that as soon as the weather improved a cherry picker would be rented.

Nominating Committee – The committee consists of Jack Barron and Jane Newton. Wade will talk to them about their progress.

Reports:

Joni Mawyer was unable to attend the meeting. Wade handed out the Treasurer's Report in her absence, and the Council reviewed it.

Nancy had a question concerning the reports that the members receive concerning their pledges as to why the total amount pledged was not in the report. Shelton explained that for privacy reasons it was not spelled out exactly.

Board of Christian Education:

Ursula announced that the annual community cleanup would be October 15. An application for a family empty stocking has been submitted. The children are working to design a Church logo. Plans are being made for a family Thanksgiving meal.

Women's Fellowship:

Ingrid announced that at the November 9 meeting the women will be wrapping shoe boxes and filling them

with gifts for children from 2 to 14 for Operation Christmas Child. Lynn Hammond will be heading this up and will see to it that all items are taken to Boone where her daughter works on this project.

Ingrid also announced that the Prayer Shawl group has been very busy and delivered their first shawl to Veta Gorman at Penick.

Altar Flowers: Ingrid expressed concern that not enough people are signing up to provide flowers for the altar. Several suggestions were made including having a beautiful silk arrangement for those times when no one signs up. Everyone liked that idea.

Men's Fellowship:

Scott announced that the Men's Fellowship had a meeting on October 4 to elect officers and review projects for the year. The following officers were elected:

Chairman – Scott Newton
 Vice Chairman – Mike Garber
 Treasurer – Bill Hilmer
 Secretary – Jack Barron

Future meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month at 12:00 noon at the Church for a lunch meeting.

Activities: Pumpkin Open – October 29 at Midland Country Club.

Spaghetti Luncheon after Church on November 13 with the men paying for the lunch and asking for a Love Offering from everyone for a Christmas bonus for the Church staff.

Scott mentioned that members should consider bringing a friend or neighbor to the spaghetti dinner. He asked if the Women's Fellowship would supply the dessert.

Christmas Dinner on December 11. He also said that Walt Snyder submitted a copy of the decal to be used for bumper stickers, and he said that others would be considered.

Board of Deacons:

Kay stated that one member has resigned from the church – JoAnn Slayton. She has joined another church where several of her neighbors belong.

Jack Barron has helped move Polly Schechter's possessions from Belle-Meade and visited with her husband, Hans. He also visited Betty Thomas and helped Ursula move her storage contents to her new home.

Dot Hannah has been visited at Quail Haven and Veta Gorman at Penick. Lois and Kay presented Veta with a prayer shawl.

The Deacons have decided to sit in the front row for the Communion Service instead of walking down from the back.

The door Deacon will also serve as a greeter at the Atrium door. Prayer cards are being collected at the beginning of the service and given to Rev. Patten.

Kay also thanked everyone for all their help in the clean up on Sunday.

Board of Trustees:

Shelton suggested that we keep our money local and mentioned that the First Bank does not charge us any fees. Because of this, it was suggested by members of the Council that we consider moving the Men's Fellowship account there also.

He also discussed the fact that we need to replace windows to cut energy costs, but unfortunately at this time there are no funds for this.

A stewardship questionnaire was discussed by the Trustees as it had been done before, but in the past there was no follow up as some people had offered to do certain jobs but the nominating committee did not do anything about these suggestions.

The insurance has been renewed at a premium because of having a claim and the cottage is under an umbrella policy.

Amendments to the Constitution: The Trustees unanimously voted to approve the amendments to the Constitution.

Preliminary Budget: The Trustees also approved the preliminary budget.

Members at Large:

Nancy said that there was one person who came to her to state that once a month was too often for Bunch for Lunch.

Scott stated that he forgot to add that members should consider bringing a friend or neighbor to the Spaghetti Dinner.

Kay thanked everyone for all their help in the clean up on Sunday.

NEW BUSINESS:

Preliminary Budget: Shelton went over the proposed budget. He explained that the budget did not cover a full time minister. There was a 2% increase in salary for the staff. The Church was able to save money by hiring Dr. Patten. He also explained several other items in the budget.

Shelton moved and Ursula seconded that the Council approve the Proposed Budget. Motion passed.

Constitution Changes: Constitution changes were presented and Shelton moved and Scott seconded that the Council approve the Constitution changes. Motion passed.

Advertising:

Ideas for advertising in PineStraw Christmas Church Services, the Pilot Christmas Church Services page and the Sandhills Guide were discussed and everyone approved our going ahead with this. It was also mentioned that we contact Embarq. Shelton mentioned that Madeleine can do an excellent job for us with this advertising.

There being no further business Kay moved and Ingrid seconded that meeting be adjourned. A prayer followed.

Respectfully submitted
Lois Vollmer, secretary

THE BOARD OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The BOCE is proud to announce the success of adopt a family for a Thanksgiving dinner donation. This year was especially significant in that we were able to adopt two families in need; one from Robbins and one from Seagrove. Help from our generous congregation and Food Lion, (they gave us a special price on two HUGE turkeys—one for each family) allowed us to provide wonderful meals. Other items given to the families were stuffing, sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes,

vegetables, and a pumpkin pie. Included with each dinner donation was a lovely card with the image of our church (stained glass picture of Christ) lovingly signed by the children. The gratitude and kind words expressed by the families was truly a blessing to our children.

Natalie Richardson

The Board of Christian Education is gearing up to help a needy family through our participation in Moore County Empty Stocking Fund. We have been selected to bless a single family of five. We are currently looking for donations of winter clothing, shoes, household items, and toys. The ages of the family members/sizes are: Female parent/size 18. female child six years/size 8-9 girls, female child two years/size 4T-5T, male child 1 year/size 24 month, male child new born/ size 6 month. Your donations will greatly benefit this family at Christmas. *“Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.”*

For additional information, please contact Ursula Mannix (910-315-5923). Please make cheques payable to the Church, indicate “Empty Stocking Fund” and include your pledge number.

Ursula Mannix

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

The Board of Directors of the Southern Conference is pleased to announce that Rev. Dr. Edward Davis has been called to be the

Designated Conference Minister of the Southern Conference.His background in finance, pastoral experience, doctoral work in collaborate leadership, and time as an interim associate conference minister are enough to recommend him highly.Rev. Davis’ references spoke highly of him as a person of great faith able to be a peaceful presence in the midst of strife. The Search Committee especially noted his ability to connect with individuals and his gifts for working toward unity of mission in a diverse setting.

We do not expect Rev. Davis to fix all problems in the Southern Conference or to have all of the answers. What we hope for is inspired leadership to help guide and facilitate the transformation that is underway in the Southern Conference. We look forward to being in ministry with Rev. Davis over the next three years and invite all members of the Southern Conference to offer their support to our new leadership and to work with him in revitalizing the ministry of the conference, associations, and local congregations.....

Rev. Dr. Lilton J. Marks, Sr.
President,
Southern Conference UCC

ALTAR COMMITTEE

Talk about being thankful.....

The Altar Committee wishes to thank the Men’s Fellowship for helping us out with altar flowers when we did not have anyone on our sign up sheet for the last Sunday in October. It has been a blessing and a worry off our minds. Thanks again!

Ingrid Leeper

TOYS FOR TOTS

Christmas will be here before we know it! Support the Toys for Tots program, operated by the Marine Corps League. 8,000 toys were delivered last year by the Marine Corps! Just one toy will provide a joyful Christmas for a needy child! A container is located in the Atrium. *Please do not wrap the toys.* If you cannot provide a toy, cheques may be made out to the church and marked "Toys for Tots". Thank you!

TRANSITION TEAM UPDATE

Our Team met this past Monday evening, November 28, 2011 for a stimulating and lively discussion, which is what we usually have with our Team.

We have consolidated our insights into our congregation's past, present and future and have decided to spend our next few meetings, any-

way, on a *thorough editing and refinement of our present Congregational Church Profile.* We have been in conversation with Anne Ryder and the Search Committee and do have their blessing to make editing suggestions *all subject to the Search Committee's final review and decisions.*

This Profile is the official document that will ultimately be submitted to the entire UCC system through the search process, to be read probably by scores or even hundreds of clergy who are seeking pastoral calls within the UCC. It is vitally important that this document be as positive and accurately representative of our reality as is humanly possible, greatly increasing the chances of guiding ministers to our attention who feel that they would be a good "fit" for our church.

By proceeding in this manner, our TT feels that we can double up on our own work by using this Profile as a guide to all relevant discussions that we would have had anyway, one way or another, with the

additional benefit of assisting the Search Committee in such a way. When the Search Committee has reached the goal of creating a thoroughly updated, accurate, and positive Congregational Profile which they are ready to submit to the UCC system in Cleveland for adjudication, preparing to become published, for example, in the UCC *Employment Opportunities* which helps searching clergy and searching congregations to find one another, then the work of the Transition Team should draw to a close shortly thereafter, if it has not already done so. Please keep both your Transition Team and our Search Committee in your prayers as we both make every effort to do what you have asked us to do. On behalf of our Transition Team, I submit this report wishing you and yours a very Merry Christmas.

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday, December 11th, 11:00 a.m.
Christmas Turkey Dinner,
sponsored by the Men's Fellowship

Sunday, December 18th, 11:00 a.m.
Special Christmas Music Program

Christmas Eve Worship Service, 7:00 p.m.
Communion and Candlelight,
with special music by our Choir

Christmas Day Service, 11:00 a.m.
With scripture readings

IN MEMORIAM

The sympathy and prayers of the congregation go to the friends of:

George Wentland
(Former Member)
11.9.2011

Kendra Ethel Mann
11.27.2011

Carol Maley
(Former Member)
11.27.2011

Recipe
TURKEY CHILI

10 oz. lean turkey
 1 medium onion, diced
 2 (28 oz.) cans diced tomatoes
 2 medium zucchini, diced
 2 medium yellow squash, diced
 1 (15 oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed
 1 (15 oz.) can reduced sodium beef broth
 4 celery stalks, diced
 2 green peppers diced
 1 (1.1/4 oz. pkg.) dry chili seasoning
 Spray a large skillet with nonstick spray and set over medium heat. Add turkey and onion sauté until browned about 5 minutes. Transfer to a large soup pot; add tomatoes, zucchini, squash, beans, broth, celery, peppers and chili seasoning. Bring to a boil and simmer for about 30 minutes.
 Makes 20 servings
 Enjoy!

Jane Newton



*Birthdays in
December*

12/02 Betty Tate
 12/04 Barbara Motsinger
 12/06 Veta Gorman
 12/09 Katie Larsen
 12/12 Kim Cameron
 12/15 Gregory Wilson
 12/16 Winter Keeler
 12/17 Benjamin Reid
 12/20 Tracy McInnis
 12/20 Robert Johnson
 12/24 Edgar Smith
 12/24 David Hudson
 12/26 Patricia Brindle
 12/27 Virginia Swayne
 12/27 Ernest Hanford
 12/27 John Read
 12/28 Joyce Baker
 12/28 Alex Cameron
 12/29 Lois Vollmer
 12/29 Stephanie Reid
 12/30 Lillian Richardson



**CARING
AND
SHARING**

The Deacons ask you to remember the following in your thoughts and prayers: The men and women of the armed forces, stationed at home and abroad. All emergency, humanitarian and environmental rescue efforts throughout our nation and overseas.

Edith Fullenwider (Magnolia Gardens), Veta Gorman (Penick Village Skilled Nursing), Jeff Gunter, Jr., Dot Hanna, Ora Jean Hunt (Penick Village), Jane Knudsen (Penick Village), Todd McDonald (Patsy's son), Joan Pottle (Wilmington), Gertrude Skinta (Penick Village), Betty Tate (Sneads Ferry, NC), Ceil Trimm, Maggie Vaughan, Pat Wilson.

Special requests: Tate Baker, Paul Long, Joyce Aubrey Tysinger, Jeff Eubank, Ray Whisenend.

Remember the joy that can be shared in a telephone call, card or visit!

If you know of anyone who wishes to receive communion, please contact Kay Harrop, Chairman of the Deacons (215-0414) or the Church office (692-8468).

Due to the implementation of the Healthcare Information Privacy Protection Act (HIPPA) several years ago, we wish to remind everyone that it is the patient and/or immediate family members and/or person holding a power of attorney who must notify the hospital and/or health care facility of the patient's religion and the desire of the patient to receive visits from the Minister or Deacon.

OPERATING INCOME AND EXPENSE

As of November 27th:

Total operating income: YTD \$153,596.
 Total operating expense: YTD \$134,245.
 Membership total: 187

STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Pledges received to date: 25
 Amount: \$42,275

In order to assist the Stewardship Committee, please return your pledge card as soon as possible. Thank you for your support!



**Community Congregational Church-
UCC**
"The Church of Wide Fellowship"
P.O. Box 62
Southern Pines, NC 28388-0062

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit Number: 35
Southern Pines, NC

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Office Telephone Numbers

Church Office 692-8468
Church Fax 692-8468
Kitchen/Preschool 692-9106
e-mail: cccspnc@embarqmail.com
Website: www.communitycongregational.org



Our mission is "To write about the happenings and the membership of the congregation"

IN THIS ISSUE

- Page 1** *Pastor Walt's Congregational Corner - "The Ice Man: History Splits Starwise"*
- Page 6** *Moderator's Message*
- Page 7** *Minutes of the Congregational meeting, October 30th*
- Page 7** *Minutes of the Council Meeting, October 13th*
- Page 9** *Board of Christian Education*
- Page 9** *News from Southern Conference*
- Page 9** *Altar Committee*
- Page 10** *In Memoriam*
- Page 10** *Toys for Tots*
- Page 10** *Transition Team Update*
- Page 10** *Christmas Worship Services*
- Page 11** *Recipe from Jane Newton*
- Page 11** *Operating Income and Expense/Stewardship*
- Page 11** *Birthdays—December*
- Page 11** *Caring and Sharing*



*Community Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
1895-2009*

*"Feed My Lambs" Stained Glass Window
William J. and Hattie E. Stuart—1940*

May you always have in your arms the one who is in your heart.