



# Thus Far...

*Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us." 1 Samuel 7:12 (NIV)*

## Autumn 2019

It is appropriate that Thanksgiving falls just before the start of Advent. As Christians, we spend the Thanksgiving holiday with friends and family – and church family – expressing our gratitude for all that God has provided for us. And this year, just 3 days after Thanksgiving, we celebrate the beginning of the Advent season, preparing to receive the greatest gift God provided to us: His son Jesus Christ. (This brings to mind another event that started with a family dinner on Thursday and resulted in great rejoicing the following Sunday!)

Jesus came to live among us, to experience what we experience, to tell us the truth of God’s kingdom, and to offer us salvation through believing in Him. Thanks be to God! So, during this season – and always – be thankful to God for His enduring love, His abundant blessings, and His grace without end. And show that gratitude by sharing His love with others at every opportunity. God will provide the opportunities; be ready to respond!

*“Thus Far...” in your inbox!*

Starting with this issue, “Thus Far..” is being distributed via email to all who have an email address listed in church directory. Paper copies are being mailed to those on our distribution list with no email address and will also be available at the church. ***If you wish to receive a paper copy, just let us know;*** send email to [ThusFar.EUMC@gmail.com](mailto:ThusFar.EUMC@gmail.com) or drop a note in the offering plate any Sunday.

## “LOVE MOVEMENT” On the Move

The “Love Movement – Reaching out into the Community,” chosen as the theme of this year’s Revival and Homecoming celebrations at the beginning of November, is only the beginning of an intentional outreach program by Ebenezer United Methodist Church to continue to spread God’s love and comfort to people in our community. In order to continue the momentum from the Revival and Homecoming, church members gathered on Sunday, November 17, to discern what God would have us do to forward His kingdom and to plan how we can make those things happen.

This issue of “Thus Far...” includes articles on many outreach activities currently going on at Ebenezer, and the weekly church bulletins (read your bulletin!) will keep you up to date on the latest plans and happenings. It takes a Church to raise a community (to borrow a phrase), and we encourage everyone to participate in some way. What are your gifts and talents? Whatever they are, God – and Ebenezer – can use them to His service. Think hard about this, and then jump in. You’ll be blessed, and so will the community.

*[Editor’s Note: For more on the “Love Movement,” see Ralph Fallin’s article on page 4.]*

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A new edition of the ***EUMC Directory of Members and Friends***, updated as of November 2019, is available in the vestibule of the church. Pick one up!  
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## Pastor's Ponderings ...

– by Pastor Rebecca Rumburg

The journey is about to begin! We are invited to journey together to the manger, where Christ our Savior was born. In worship, we will be spending time remembering the journey recorded in Scripture. Remembering is merely the first step, however! Christ our Savior is still inviting us to come alongside him in our personal journey with him.

I recently read that a journey begins with a choice. We have to choose whether to take the first step, a step that may lead to something unknown and unfamiliar or potentially something wonder-filled and awe inspiring. We can choose to remain exactly where we are, based on an array of reasons, or we can choose to journey with Christ Jesus our Savior, the very light of the world himself!

This journey will continue each day of Advent. There will be times when Christ will bring us to his side apart from the larger group. In those times, too, we must choose individually to slow down and linger a bit longer with the Lord. Our Savior will not force us to come to him. He extends the invitation, but ultimately the choice is ours.

The journey is before us. Will you come and see Christ the Lord, the newborn King?

Praying for you,  
Rebecca

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**Thus Far...** is a periodic publication of Ebenezer United Methodist Church, 144 Ebenezer Church Road, P.O. Box 70, Oldhams, VA 22529.  
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Many thanks to those who contributed to this issue of **Thus Far...**: Betty Bailey, Amanda Birdsall, Kim Shortell, Dave Croson, Mina Croson, Ralph Fallin, Kevin Potts and Pastor Rebecca.

## Coats Project Final Count

For a number of years, Ebenezer has provided winter coats for the children of Westmoreland County. This year, thanks to your generosity, we purchased 46 coats to keep kids warm. The coats are distributed to those that need them by Westmoreland County Social Services.

Special thanks to Ralph and Linda Fallin, who purchased the coats and brought them to Worship service in November to be blessed before delivering them to Westmoreland County.

## Operation Christmas Child

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Ebenezer participated in this year's Operational Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, that provides shoeboxes stuffed with goodies, including toys, hygiene products, school supplies and other useful things, to boys and girls in countries around the world. Kim Shortell, who spearheaded our participation this year, reported a total of 30 boxes to be sent. Our Change for Change collection on the third Sunday in November was donated to the project to pay shipping expenses.

## Community Supports Food Pantry

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The Community Thanksgiving Service, held this year on November 24 at Yeocomico Church in Kinsale, donated the offering collected to the Ebenezer's Food Pantry.

Christmas in Kinsale, an annual event to be held this year on December 7, donates a third of their proceeds to Ebenezer's Food Pantry, as well. Last year, Christmas in Kinsale gave a total of \$3,160 to our Food Pantry.

Ebenezer's Food Pantry, one of six pantries in Westmoreland County, is open on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month from 9 to 11 am. Our own Scott Flickinger works at the Healthy Harvest Food Bank, which provides the food, and Debbie Messick is the point person for EUMC's Pantry. Volunteers are always needed to help on Food Pantry weekends.

## Welcome, Reverend Bates!

Reverend Charles F. Bates, who became the new Rappahannock River District Superintendent, effective July 1, 2019, was welcomed at Ebenezer on October 12, 2019, when we met for our Charge Conference. Rev. Bates visited each church in the District this Fall to get to know a little more about his new charge.

We hope to see him again soon ... and often! ... at Ebenezer worship services and other events.

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## Leaders for Our Children!

In the last issue of "Thus Far...", Pastor Rebecca wrote about our need for a Children's Ministry:

"Here at Ebenezer, we have all the elements needed to develop an amazing Children's Ministry, starting with the most important element ... children! We have the desire to be good stewards of the gifts God has given us. And, gratefully, we have the facilities and the financial resources to support a quality program. **What we need is Leadership!**"

God has blessed us with two people who have answered that call: Amana Birdsall and Kim Shortell. Amanda and Kim will be co-leading a Children's Ministry that will show our children God's love, teach them about God, and guide them to become little disciples of Jesus. Mina Croson has also stepped up as part of a brain-storming team to come up with ideas to enrich the Children's Ministry.

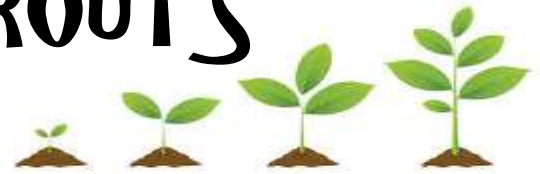
These leaders are jumping right in, preparing a special Christmas activity, "A Charlie Brown Christmas," which should be a joy to the children and adults as well.

We are thankful for this response to a long-time need, and we encourage everyone to support this effort. Their first column, SPROUTS, about the new ministry follows.

*"Suffer the little children to come unto me ...  
... for of such is the kingdom of heaven."*

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# SPROUTS



– by Amanda Birdsall and Kim Shortell

[Editor's Note: With this issue of "Thus Far...", we are beginning a new column, "Sprouts," which will cover news about our new Children's Ministry.]

"When we do our part to teach our children the ways of the Lord ... by showing them that walking with God will bring love and joy ... our children will develop a hunger for learning the ways of the Lord."

– Stormie Omartian

The Children's Ministry team is searching for volunteers to help plan and assist during a Christmas celebration on December 14th. Our theme is **A Charlie Brown Christmas!** We plan to have crafts, cookie-making, caroling and other fun activities. Please contact Amanda Birdsall or Kim Shortell if you are interested in volunteering!

A Children's Christmas Program is also being planned. The program will include three beloved Charlie Brown characters, along with the traditional nativity scene. If you have a child or children willing to participate, please join us for the first practice on Sunday, December 1st, during children's church.





## *Revival and Homecoming at Ebenezer*

– by Ralph Fallin

Revival is a time for believers, who may have become complacent and weak through sin and neglect, to renew their commitment to spiritual health. It is a time to restore our relationship with God, to show humility, to pray, to forgive and to repent.

Spiritual Revival includes a renewed appreciation for our blessings, a renewed love for God and a renewed love for ALL of our neighbors. Revival helps restore our love and passion for Christ and helps us experience the real joy of serving with love. It is our renewed passion and commitment to serve with love that led to our theme, “**The Love Movement – Reaching Out into the Community,**” for Revival and Homecoming.

Consistent with our theme, Dr. Michael Perry, Superintendent of Westmoreland County Public Schools, was invited to be our guest speaker for both nights of **Revival**, Nov 1-2, 2019. Dr. Perry is pastor of Foster Memorial Baptist Church in Rocky Mount, NC. He earned a BS degree in Theology and Teacher Certification from Cairn University in PA and earned his Master’s Degree in Elementary Education and his Doctorate in Educational Administration from East Carolina University.

Dr. Perry provided inspirational and thought-provoking messages that captivated everyone in attendance both evenings of revival. Dr. Perry reminded us that God’s people must do more than simply sit, talk and listen – we must act. Dr. Perry made it clear that we must reach out into our community with passion and commitment if we are going to bring all of our neighbors together to worship Christ.

On the first evening of Revival, beautiful and lively music was provided by K-K King, our Worship Team and the Men’s Chorus from Jerusalem Baptist

Church. On the second evening, in addition to K-K and our Worship Team, the Youth Choir of Siloam Baptist Church also provided lively, spirit-filled music. At the end of the worship service, Siloam’s Youth Choir, our Worship Team and the entire congregation joined together for the closing songs in a genuine display of love and praise.

In another show of love, revival offerings in the amount of \$1,006.00 were donated to the Westmoreland County Public Schools to be used to purchase books for our school children.

**Homecoming**, on Sunday, Nov 3, began with fellowship and light refreshments and was followed by an enjoyable “**Song Service**” featuring talent from Ebenezer along with guest musician Sharon Mann. Our own Rebecca Rumburg, Ebenezer’s pastor since 2014, led our Sunday’s Homecoming service. Pastor Rebecca is a graduate of Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC, where she received her Master of Divinity degree.

It was wonderful to see the sanctuary filled with neighbors and guests and some of our own that we hadn’t seen in a while as well as our “regulars.” The Homecoming spirit was palpable!

A Homecoming offering in the amount of \$6,321.00 was collected, with \$3,497.03 designated for our new community playground, currently under construction. Homecoming concluded with a luncheon featuring our traditionally great food and wonderful fellowship.

Thanks to all who were involved in the planning and execution of these soul-stirring events, from the singers and musicians who shared their talents, to everyone who contributed food for the luncheon, to those “behind the scenes” making sure everyone attending felt the love of the Love Movement. And of course, many thanks to Dr. Perry and Pastor Rebecca for the spiritual messages they shared.

The excitement of revival and homecoming continues, and the passion and commitment to move forward with “**The Love Movement**” is evident. On Sunday afternoon, Nov 17, we held the first of what will be a number of gatherings to develop an action plan for our next steps in reaching out into the community. Join the Movement. Be blessed ... and be a blessing!

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# Grace Notes

## Beulah Baptist Welcomes Worship Team

Ebenezer's Worship Team was on the road again sharing God's love through music and fellowship, this time at Beulah Baptist Church's Homecoming, held on November 10, 2019.



Dave Croson writes, "The folks at Beulah welcomed us with open arms. We could see the glory of the Lord shining on their faces as we all worshiped our Lord together. We are grateful to our brothers and sisters at Beulah for inviting us to be a part of their homecoming."

Members of the Team said that they had a wonderful time at the Homecoming (and that the food was excellent!).



Our Worship Team

(Left to right) Kevin Potts, K-K King, Rob Fontana, Fran Taylor, Dave Croson, Cindy Flickinger, Daniel Clarke, and Mary Sudduth

Our Worship Team leads Ebenezer in praise on the second and fourth Sundays of each month. We are blessed by their talent and spirit of love.

## Abundant Joy Prepares for Christmas

Abundant Joy, our Ebenezer choir, is preparing to sing "Changed by a Baby Boy," this year's Christmas cantata, which will be presented at the regular Sunday worship service on December 15th. That particular Sunday is the Third Sunday in Advent, which is the Joy Sunday.

"Changed by a Baby Boy" tells the nativity story in songs that incorporate different musical styles, from "island swing" to Appalachian folk. The cantata features soloists K-K King, Kevin Potts, Jeanne Axtell, Vicky Shaw and Fran Taylor. It will get your toes tapping, your hands clapping, and your spirit soaring!

Join us to celebrate this wonderful season through music.



## More than Just Food

Ebenezer is one of seven Westmoreland County churches that participate in the Meals on Wheels Program. Volunteers deliver food to seniors each



Friday. Churches sign up for a month, and Ebenezer's month is March, 2020.

Established in 1974, Meals on Wheels America is the "oldest and

largest national organization supporting the more than 5,000 community-based senior nutrition programs across the country that are dedicated to addressing senior isolation and hunger." Through more than two million volunteers, the organization delivers meals and drops by for friendly visits and safety checks on seniors.

Kacky Sanford is Ebenezer's lead for Meals on Wheels. Call her if you would like to participate in this important outreach program.

## *Ebenezer Playground Construction Underway!*

Fun is under construction at Ebenezer! Thanks to the labor of many and the generosity of the entire community, our new children's playground is taking shape. Special thanks to Bruce Beahm, Bill Taylor, Smitty Smith and Kevin Potts for their tenacity in interpreting the instructions. Bruce writes, "We'll get 'er done, but could use some young men to assist." Contact Bruce for the work schedule.

Our playground, which is used by neighborhood children as well as by the young children of our own congregation, now has new swings, slides, and fun stuff to climb on, and special groundcover to prevent injuries from falls (and rough-housing!).



We still have a way to go to finish the construction, and also a way to go to cover the costs. The Church Council approved a budget of \$20,000 for the

project, and to date we have raised a little more than two-thirds of that amount, including a donation of over \$3,000 from our Homecoming service.



Robert H. Gawen and Sons, Inc., donated their services for site preparation. Beasley Concrete, Inc., of Callao, contributed concrete and donated the delivery fee.

Contributors include the Jim and Martha Kee estate, the Moose Lodge in Callao, the UMM, the UMW, and the Church Council, as well as the many individuals who have given so generously to make this happen. Thanks to you all!

When the playground construction is complete, we will have a ribbon-cutting ceremony, inviting all the children of the community to come and "test-drive" the new equipment. Watch your church bulletin for more about this celebration.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A DONATION, see Bruce Beahm or Linda Fallin, or drop it in the offering plate any Sunday. Be sure to designate it for the Playground Project.

