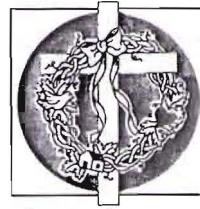


Hope Mills
United
Methodist
Church

January, 2012
Newsletter



Begin the year
with God.

“So Ezra brought it to the place where the people had gathered—men, women, and the children who were old enough to understand. There in the square by the gate he read the Book of the Law to them from dawn until noon, and they all listened attentively.” (Nehemiah 8:2-3) Nehemiah says that this reading took place on the first day of the seventh month (Tishri) which coincides with the time of the New Year on the Jewish calendar. What a way to start a new year! The people began the year with a renewed dedication to listen to the “Word of God” as it was read to them. Please notice that everyone that was old enough to understand the readings were there. That tells you how important they thought listening to God was. After all when they first returned from the exile to rebuild Jerusalem, which was in ruins, their first efforts were marked by failure and disappointment. They could not seem to get organized, they could not get along, and they could not therefore find common ground on which to live and work. They realized that what was missing was God in the center of their lives and God’s guidance for them. So they turned to Ezra the Priest and asked him to read to them the Book of the Law (most likely Numbers and Deuteronomy). He read to them from the Book of the Law from dawn to midday. That was at least a four hour stretch of listening to the word and perhaps even longer. It was this pattern of listening to God that led to the re-formation of the people of Israel into a new community that would be built on the common ground of God’s will for the people. It was a new day, a glorious day, a wonderful day. As we ponder this new beginning for our Hebrew ancestors we can learn some valuable lessons from them. First we can learn that we too need to begin to listen to God. I want to invite you to spend 2012 listening to God’s word for us. You may begin by reading the Bible all the way through this year. You can begin attending Bible Study, a good place to listen to God. You can begin by being faithful in worship where God speaks in music, prayer, praise, and the word read and proclaimed in our midst. As we listen to God, his word will take root in us and give us a whole new vision of what God wants to do in our hearts; in our lives; in our church; and in our world. Just as God wanted a new Israel to be built on the ruins of the old one so also God wants to build his kingdom on the ruins of the kingdom of this world. It is fascinating to me that for 50 years now a growing chorus of people have yearned and labored for a world without God, believing that a world without God will be truly free and would allow humans to rise to their higher selves. The result has been that the less we focus on God in our world the higher the crime rate has grown, the greater the influence of the narcissism that has invaded our culture, and the immorality that is constantly in our faces has grown ever bolder. If we focus on listening to God and following his will this year we can reverse those growing trends and impact the world for God. Let’s make 2012 the year that we started to listen again and the year that we saw God working in new ways in our lives.

Dennis

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS IN JANUARY

- | | | | | | | | |
|-------|---------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | HAPPY NEW YEAR! | 11:00 | Worship, Fellowship | 15 | 8:30 | Worship | |
| | | 8:00 | AA Closed Discussion Group | | 9:45 | Sunday School | |
| 2 | Office Closed | 8:00 | AA Big Book | 11:00 | Worship, Fellowship | | |
| 3 | 9:00 Parent's Morning Out | 9:00 | Parent's Morning Out | 8:00 | AA Closed Discussion Group | | |
| | | 6:00 | Cub Scouts | 16 | 9:00 | Parent's Morning Out | |
| | | 7:30 | Boy Scouts | | 8:00 | AA Big Book | |
| 4 | 9:00 Parent's Morning Out | 9:00 | Parent's Morning Out | 17 | 9:00 | Parent's Morning Out | |
| | | 10:00 | Bible Study | | 6:00 | Cub Scouts | |
| | | 1:00 | Senior Yoga | | 7:30 | Boy Scouts | |
| | | 6:00 | Wednesday Dinner | 18 | 9:00 | Parent's Morning Out | |
| | | 6:30 | Children's Bible Activity | 10:00 | Bible Study | | |
| | | 6:30 | Hand Bells | | 1:00 | Senior Yoga | |
| | | 6:45 | Bible 101 | | 6:00 | Wednesday Dinner | |
| | | 7:00 | Adult Choir | | 6:30 | Children's Bible Activity | |
| 5 | 9:00 Parent's Morning Out | | | | 6:30 | Handbells | |
| | | 7:00 | Bible Study | | 6:45 | Bible 101 | |
| | | 8:00 | AA Alanon | | 7:00 | Adult Choir | |
| 6 & 7 | 6:00 Scout Lock-In | 19 | 9:00 Parent's Morning Out | | 9:00 | Parent's Morning Out | |
| 7 | 9:00 Taking down the greens | | 7:00 Bible Study | | 7:00 | Bible Study | |
| 8 | 7:30 UM Men's Breakfast Mtg. | | 8:00 AA Alanon | 22 | 8:30 | Worship | |
| | 8:30 Worship | | | | 9:45 | Sunday School | |
| | 9:45 Sunday School | | | 11:00 | Worship, Fellowship | | |
| | 11:00 Worship, Fellowship | | | 4:00 | Church Council Mtg. | | |
| | 12:00 Youth Silent Auction | | | 8:00 | AA Closed Discussion Group | | |
| | 2:00 Scout Leader's Mtg. | 23 | 9:00 Parent's Morning Out | | 8:00 | AA Big Book | |
| | 4:00 Trustee's Mtg. | 24 | 9:00 Parent's Morning Out | | 6:00 | Cub Scouts | |
| | 5:00 Ministry Team Mtg. | | 6:00 Cub Scouts | | 7:30 | Boy Scouts | |
| | 8:00 AA Closed Discussion Group | 25 | 9:00 Parent's Morning Out | | 9:00 | Parent's Morning Out | |
| 9 | 9:00 Parent's Morning Out | | 10:00 Bible Study | | 6:00 | Wednesday Dinner | |
| | 10:00 Joy In Christ Circle Mtg. | | 6:30 | Children's Bible Activity | | 6:30 | Children's Bible Activity |
| | 8:00 AA Big Book | | 6:30 | Handbells | | 6:45 | Bible 101 |
| 10 | 9:00 Parent's Morning Out | | 7:00 | Adult Choir | | 7:00 | Adult Choir |
| | 6:00 Cub Scouts | 26 | 9:00 Parent's Morning Out | | 7:00 | Bible Study | |
| | 6:30 UMW Exec. Board Mtg. | | 6:00 | AA Alanon | | 8:00 | AA Alanon |
| | 7:00 Friend Circle Mtg. | 27 | 6:00 Scout Pack Mtg. | | 6:00 | Scout Pack Mtg. | |
| | 7:00 First Faith Circle Mtg. | 28 | 9:00 Brunswick Stew Cooking | | 6:00 | Youth Dinner Fundraiser | |
| | 7:30 Boy Scouts | 29 | 8:30 Worship | | 9:45 | Sunday School | |
| | 8:00 AA Big Book | | 9:45 | Sunday School | | 11:00 | Worship, Fellowship |
| 11 | 9:00 Parent's Morning Out | | 11:00 | Worship, Fellowship | | 8:00 | AA Closed Discussion Group |
| | 10:00 Bible Study | | 8:00 | AA Alanon | | 9:00 | Parent's Morning Out |
| | 1:00 Senior Yoga | 30 | 9:00 Parent's Morning Out | | 8:00 | AA Big Book | |
| | 6:00 Wed. Fellowship Dinner | | 8:00 | AA Big Book | | 9:00 | Parent's Morning Out |
| | 6:30 Children's Bible Activity | 31 | 9:00 Parent's Morning Out | | 6:00 | Cub Scouts | |
| | 6:30 Handbells | | 6:00 | Cub Scouts | | 7:30 | Boy Scouts |
| | 6:45 Bible 101 | | 7:30 | Boy Scouts | | | |
| | 7:00 Adult Choir | | | | | | |
| 12 | 9:00 Parent's Morning Out | | | | | | |
| | 7:00 Bible Study | | | | | | |
| | 8:00 AA Alanon | | | | | | |

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

From Your Staff

Chris

Diane

Dennis

Wendy

Rachael

Nancy

Jennifer

Suzi

