



Pleasant Green *United Methodist Church*

PleasantGreenUMC.org

Roots & Branches

December 2015



It Came Upon A Midnight Clear

By Dr. Jesse Brunson

I love this season of Advent and Christmas. I love the smells, the Christmas decorations, the baking of cakes, and all the bells and whistles of the season. I even love the rush of Christmas traffic and people hurrying to buy that Christmas gift for a family member or a friend.

However, more than all of these wonderful and exciting activities of Christmas, I love the church at worship during this season. I love the Advent and Christmas hymns. Hymns such as *O Holy Night*, *Joy to the World*, *Away in a Manger*, *What Child is This*; and one of my most favorite Christmas hymns, wait for it; *It Came Upon A Midnight Clear*.

This hymn describes the angels' announcement of Christ's birth to the shepherds, recorded in Luke chapter two; which describes the angels' appearance to the shepherds while they kept watch over their flock by night. I love this hymn and text because it suggests to us the tremendous responsibility that the shepherds and the image of shepherding would occupy in this new dispensation of God's Kingdom.

The image of the Lord as our Shepherd is an image that looms large in all of scripture, throughout the Old Testament, the Psalms, and the New Testament. The story of Abrahams' family tending their flock and David's writing in Psalm 23 are all placed so beautifully in scripture; informing us that God's desire is for us is to live a life of peace and prosperity. We need a shepherding spirit in politics, in business, in education and in religion. We need that shepherding spirit throughout the world to bring about the ways of peace and not war and destruction.

Because of all of the unrest in our world, we need to be reminded that *It Came Upon A Midnight Clear*. On the night of His birth there were no clouds in the sky, no storms on the horizon, and no rain in the forecast. It was a clear, bright and glorious night when Christ was born. It was a clear and glorious night; when the angels sang to the shepherds and to the world,

*Glory to God in the Highest and on earth;
Peace to men on whom his favor rest.*

Have a Blessed Christmas!

Pastor Jesse

Christmas Gift Baskets ~ PGUMC Mission Fundraiser ~ \$25

Order thru December 13

Baskets include a mug, chocolate bar and your choice of coffee, tea or hot cocoa. A special chocolate lovers basket of 4 chocolate bars is also available. You may fill out an order form to select the items in your basket. The baskets have a tag to let the recipients know you have given a donation to Pleasant Green Missions in their honor. All proceeds will go to our mission fund – local and global.

Mission Basket Order Forms are available in the Narthex



The coffee, chocolate, tea & cocoa are purchased from Equal Exchange, in partnership with United Methodist Committee on Relief. Coming Soon: New Shipment of Chocolate!



From Project Bountiful Home Team...

Andrea Harris and Gail Pruett attended the 2nd Retreat of Project Bountiful on November 13th & 14th. The first day was information and inspiration filled. We heard the histories and stories of many of the churches participating in year two of the project (14 in all). Our presentation came on Saturday. For each church, we identified the bounties in that church and its values.

In some ways, Pleasant Green overlaps many other churches; in some ways we are unique. All of us are striving to live as closely to Jesus and His teachings as possible. Our mural will be posted for everyone to see very soon. Look for it!

Our focus for the history mural from Pleasant Green:

Many of the activities started in the distant past are still on-going today. Think stew, children's time during worship, United Methodist Women activities, caroling.

We are intentionally intergenerational in many of our activities (Clyde Walker Sunday School class, Common Thread, chicken and dumplings)

We value our children and youth, giving much attention and programming to them (Sunday School classes, Kids Worship, Children's Choir, Elevate, going to Pilgrimage and mission work).

We value service and mission work (Robeson County, Murdoch, El Salvador, Food for All)

PG is seen as a warm and welcoming church, striving to be family oriented.

During the process of creating the mural, we learned that in the 1960's and 1980's, there were many news articles about PG. This helped us have a stronger community presence. This knowledge may be helpful as we move forward.

We also heard more about the direction and focus for Project Bountiful (PB). Some of the important points:

Goal: moving from membership to discipleship focus in our approaches.

Foundational work for each church:

Identify our own values, vision and mission.

Context: our community, demographics, history, stories, values.

We are on a journey through a process. PB is not a one-time event.

We will develop our own Ministerial Action Plan (MAP) to guide us.

To accomplish change (from AA model): Relate, Repeat, Reframe our information and activities.

Partner with community groups and individuals to build relationships.

Reach out to the community to meet needs; provide service.

Explain our service to others in terms of "why" instead of what and how. For example, Wilber & Orville Wright often told others they were driven by the vision that the world would be a better place with air flight (their "why"). They were remembered, when competitors were not.

It is not important that everyone be on board with plans and changes. Instead, focus on innovators, early adopters, early majority (Diffusion of Innovation Theory).

"People don't care about what you know until they know you care." (Joel Ornstein). Caring can be a foundation for meeting community needs.

The Spiritual Web brings clarity to why individuals and the church as a whole approach their spirituality as they do. This web includes Head, Heart, Pilgrim, Mystic, Servant, Crusader approaches to spirituality...Look for more information in the future.

Next steps:

Discuss our values.

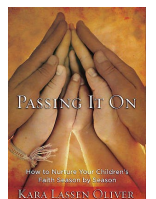
As a church, develop our vision. If we take a magic carpet ride over our church community in 5 years, what will we see? Collate the many visual pictures from church members > Condense the ideas to 1 to 2 pages > Collapse to one memorable line.

Once our vision is developed, re-visit our mission statement.

This is an exciting time, with excellent guidance from the Project Bountiful leadership and resources. Andrea and Gail hope you get the PB bug as we have!

Passing It on: How to Nurture Your Children's Faith Season by Season

Parents have the most direct impact on their children's spiritual formation. But often they lack confidence in their biblical knowledge, theological understanding, and grasp of Christian tradition. With gentle humor and faithful insight, Kara Oliver encourages parents by providing practical ideas for passing on their faith to their children, including special times of the year: Advent, Lent, summer, and back-to-school. ***Copies of this book are available in the church office at the cost of \$7.***





From the Prayer Team...

Abundant Hope in Times of Stress

Isaiah 40:31 (NIV) Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Matthew 2:10 (KJV) When the wise men saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

Matthew 2:11 (NIV) The Magi saw the child with his mother Mary; and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts.

As we anticipate Christ's birth through Advent, we also anticipate all of the hope He brings to us. He is the light of the world; pure in love and compassion. He loves us so much and wants the best for us. He has created each one to be like Him. He has promised He will be with us forever; He will never leave us. All we need to do is knock and He will answer. The prayers of two or more together in Jesus' name are so powerful! He hears all and knows all. Christ is wisdom, grace and glory personified. He carries us in times of stress; understanding when we are hurting and need His healing.


As we look around and see people missing from worship, meetings and our social events at Pleasant Green, be Christ's hands and feet. Share Jesus with those who are home bound. Express the hope that He brings. Take time for you to participate in all of the wonderful events at PG that connect us with Christ as Hope: decorating for Advent, participating in the Lessons & Carols worship service, caroling with the shut-ins, listening to the Choir's Cantata and the Children's Nativity. Or, just pray, with the hope of Jesus in mind.

Dear Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, thank you for such a wonderful and mysterious gift; the birth of your awesome Son. He is the source of all of our hope. He lifts us up when we are at our lowest; supports us when we are confused and despairing. He takes our worries as his own. He comforts us in times of pain. He heals us when we are sick. He mourns our losses as we mourn; giving promise of better days to come. He is our light and way as we stumble and wonder, "what's next?" He sorts out chaos when we are overwhelmed. Even when we don't have the words to pray, He knows. He knows our needs, our fears, our hopes and dreams. Thank you for His presence in our lives. We can only give a small portion of our appreciation through our relationship with you and him; and, through our gifts and service. We are grateful that you are so gracious and generous. It is in your Son's name that we pray. Amen.

December Prayer Ministry Meeting

The December meeting will take place on Wednesday, December 16th at 6:30 pm. We pray actively for our church activities, church and extended family members; and, local, national and global issues. We will also talk about how the beginnings of visitation to those who are home-bound went. Come join us! In the meantime, check out the Prayer Ministry bulletin board above the prayer letters table in the hallway, leading to the Fellowship Hall. Sign the prayer letters under the bulletin board. Signing a letter means you commit to pray for that person at least once during the week. Did you know that even though you don't know the person, he or she is so grateful that you care!

Remember to fill out the yellow prayer cards found in the pews to request prayer for those in need.

The Mebane Community Choir 
will perform the Christmas portions of Handel's Messiah on Sunday, December 6 at 3 pm
Mebane Presbyterian Church
402 South Fifth St.
Mebane

Our Pleasant Green Church family



celebrated Gloria & Jim Perry's 50th Wedding Anniversary!

Pleasant Green's Kids Connect will meet during the Sunday school time on Dec. 6th from 10—10:45 am to make crafts for the Mission Market. This is a great way for the children to donate their time to the Mission team! 
Our goal is to provide fun service-learning opportunities for children.

pleasant green youth group



December Youth Calendar

Friends, Fellowship, Games and Lessons / Sunday School 10 am

Contact Ali DeLeo for more information:
202-744-6440 or alideleo@gmail.com

- **Dec 5 (Sat)** 9am Chrismon Tree Decorating & rehearsal for Chrismon Service
- **Dec 6 (Sun)** Youth present Chrismons at the 11:00 Worship Service
5:00 pm Elevate—"A Christmas Carol" movie
- **Dec 8 (Tues)** Food For All (Youth Ministry is Leading) ~ need parent help also
- **Dec 13 (Sun)** Caroling 4–6 pm / Christmas & Cookie Making Party at Ali's House ~ 6 - 8pm
- **Dec 24 (Thurs)** Christmas Eve Service ~ Youth will help set-up the luminarias – arrive at 4:00pm, snacks provided



Pilgrimage 2015

On November 13th, ten youth and four adults set out from Pleasant Green to join over five thousand youth across the state for the North Carolina UMC Conference's Annual "Pilgrimage". Over the course of the week-end, the youth joined in fellowship and worship around the theme of what it means to "SHINE" (based on Matthew 6:16). The speakers included Bob Goff (author of "Love Does"), the Rev. Tiffany Knowlin, and many youth throughout the conference. Crown Coliseum was full of energy for this life changing weekend filled with amazing artists, an awesome house band, and inspiring stories that revealed the transforming love of Jesus Christ for the world.



From PG November 2006 Newsletter... **A community of gift we call Church**

Imagine receiving an unexpected gift from an acquaintance. What is your first thought? "Oh, she shouldn't have!" And then, "Darn it! Now I have to give *her* something!" It is aggravating to feel indebted to someone else, isn't it? "Until I give something to her, she can hold this over my head..."

Now imagine Jesus hanging on the cross, his mother and one of his disciples are standing there. John tells us that "When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home." (John 19:26-27)

As God spoke creation into being, with these few words from the cross Jesus enacts a new community, he begins a new politics, a politics of gift. "Here is your son... here is your mother." This is the new politics we call Church, where mothers who have lost sons and young men who have lost friends find one another.

What could John the disciple and Mary the mother of God give to Jesus in return for his sacrifice? Nothing. And so it is with us. We can give nothing to God that is not already God's. Unlike the acquaintance who expects a gift in return, God needs nothing from us; he does not *need* our help. God will be God regardless of what we do or do not do. Yet God has invited us to participate in this community of gift. The latest opportunity for such participation here at Pleasant Green comes in the form of hurricane relief. Many of you have already given to UMCOR and to other similar efforts; thanks be to God for your gift. The relief work continues, however. Donna and I will be leading a mission team to Gulfport, Mississippi, over Thanksgiving weekend. The youth group will be making a similar trip next summer. You are invited to participate. Please join us for one of these trips. Consider an offering of money or supplies to assist these relief efforts.

We, like John and Mary, stand at the foot of the cross alongside those who have lost so much because of these recent hurricanes. From the cross Christ beckons us to participate in God's new community. On the cross Jesus gives us the greatest gift of all, and in giving John and Mary one to the other, he teaches us how to give. The truth about a gift is that it is freely given, without cost to the one who receives it. So we do not give out of obligation, but rather out of thanksgiving. For through Christ, God has already enacted a new politics, a community of gift we call Church. In giving, we reflect this new creation and boldly proclaim that Christ has come, and will come again.

The peace of Christ be with you. *Brad McMullen* (Brad and Jonathan were both Duke Divinity Interns at PGUMC)
(many thanks to my friend Jonathan Tran for his help with this article)

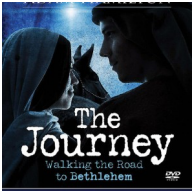


**Thanks to the youth for a great Halloween Carnival!
\$ 510 was raised + food for OCIM!**



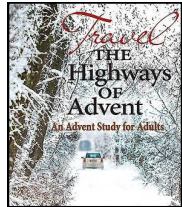
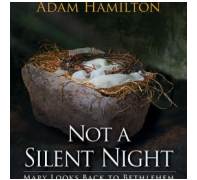
Thanks to Mike Martin + THE DOG HOUSE for supplying the Halloween Carnival hot dogs!

Join an Advent Sunday School Study!



Seekers: Journey with Adam Hamilton as he travels from Nazareth to Bethlehem in this fascinating look at the birth of Jesus Christ. This five-session DVD was filmed in the Holy Land and is a companion resource to *The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem* church program. Each exciting session contains 10-15 minute video vignettes of Adam Hamilton retracing the actual path of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem. Also includes a bonus segment on the Holy Land today.

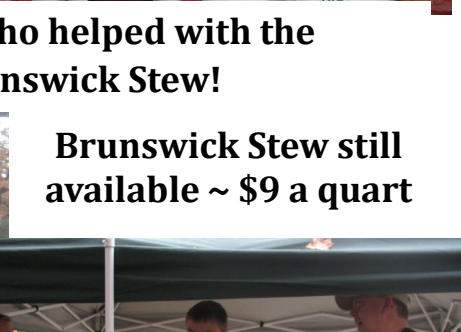
Hearts & Hands: Imagine Jesus from Mary's point-of-view—proud of her son, in awe of his gifts and mission, guided by love for him as a person and so much more. Adam Hamilton begins at the end, with Mary at the crucifixion and resurrection; travels back in time as she witnesses his life and ministry; and ends at the beginning, with the Christ child born in a stable, Mary's beautiful baby. This year, experience Advent and Christmas with Mary.



Pastor Jesse's Class & Wednesday Morning Bible Study: The book, written by Stan Purdum, is based on the particular pathways to Jesus during Advent. The focus emerges from the chapter content and encourages the readers to engage in spiritual practice or do something specific that will help them grow in faith. This Bible study series is designed for transformation and for applying the study of the Bible to everyday, practical life experience. It is intended to nurture and encourage faith development and spiritual growth.



The Women's Class: Finding God in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* Study by Ali DeLeo & Rev. Alisa Lasater Wailoo. Each week focuses on a section/character of the movie, with 6 scriptures to read and ponder. Ali has the sermon podcasts if people are interested.



Thanks to all who helped with the
UMM Brunswick Stew!

Brunswick Stew still
available ~ \$9 a quart



THANK YOU to Linda, Lyle & Hayden Miller (& picker, Kathryn Dempsey) for supplying our church family with fresh vegetables this fall!

Advent at Pleasant Green

Adventicipation!

Saturday, December 5

Advent Decorating
begins

at 9:00am

Come and bring family & friends and your favorite breakfast snack!

Order Poinsettias
to be placed in the Sanctuary during the Christmas Season. Deadline to order and pay is December 6. Sign up sheets for Poinsettias given in honor or memory of loved ones, are in the Narthex. The cost is \$7.00.



Make checks with Poinsettia on the memo line to PGUMW and place in the offering plate.

Lessons and Carols

A special Advent Worship Service



Sunday, December 6 at 8:30 am

Join us for refreshments in the Fellowship Hall at 9:30am.

A Chrismon service by the youth will be included in the 11am service.

Christmas Caroling to our shut-ins

Sunday, December 13 at 4 pm

Join us as we spread the joy of the season!



United Methodist Women's Christmas Dinner

December 14— 6:30 p.m.

ALL women of the church are invited!
Please bring a dessert.



Candle Burning for Missions

Give a donation to burn a candle in memory or honor.



Sign up on the UMW bulletin board by December 6.

Pleasant Green Mission Market

Saturday, December 12 - Fellowship Hall 9:00 am

Come early for best selection!

Please sign up to bring your favorite homemade cookies or baked goods. We will have a wonderful variety of cookies, cakes, pies, breads, and candies as well as handcrafted items—jewelry, ornaments, knitting, Salvadoran items, stocking stuffers and other gifts.

Bags, boxes & bows will be available.

It is a fun time—so tell your friends!
Come take care of your holiday baking needs!

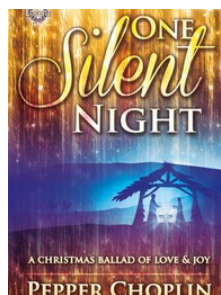


Children's Play Practice For K & Up

Dec. 6 & 13 ~ 9:15am in the Choir Room

Saturday, Dec. 19 ~ 10 am

Nativity animals (thru age 4) come at 5:30pm before the Christmas play to try on costumes.



Chancel Choir Cantata
11:00 am ~ Sunday, December 20

One Silent Night

By Pepper Choplin

One Silent Night long ago, a birth story began that forever changed the world. Lying in a crude manger was a new-born babe, who would become the Source of our Christian faith and our abiding hope.

Weaving familiar carols and songs throughout original music, this timeless tale emerges in a deeply moving presentation that will lift one's faith and deepen one's understanding of the profound significance of that *One Silent Night*.

~ ~ ~ No 8:30 am Service ~ ~ ~

Christmas Concert & Children's Nativity

December 20 at 6 pm

All are welcome to participate in the Concert!

Children—all ages are invited to take part in the Children's Christmas Play. Sign up in the Narthex.



Stay after the Christmas Play to drink hot chocolate and roast marshmallows around a bonfire!



Christmas Eve Communion
Candlelight Service - 5:30pm



Please bring gifts of food for OCIM on the Sunday before Christmas, Christmas Eve, Sunday after Christmas and Epiphany Sunday.





Pleasant Green United Methodist Church
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 Durham, NC 27705
 (919) 383-5764



Non-Profit Org.
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 Durham, NC 27705
 Permit No. 5

Website: PleasantGreenUMC.org

Pastor - Rev. Dr. Jesse Brunson (919) 383-2339

Director of Spiritual Formation and Youth Ministry-
Alison DeLeo: alideleo@gmail.com

Address Service Requested

 Please recycle this newsletter. 



*Your Help is needed for the
MISSION MARKET on December 12!
 All proceeds will go to our mission fund
 both local and global.*

*All invited to help make Chocolate Covered
 Cherries at 6pm on **Thursday, December 10.**

*Please donate your favorite homemade baked
 goods, canned goods, local produce, crafts, etc.!

To be a part of this, please contact:
Wendy at wendy_anderson@dpsnc.net
or Kathryn at missionkat@gmail.com

Blood Drive

December 6

9 am — 1 pm

*Sign up in the Narthex or
 on line to give life!*



Reduce Waste in the First Place



~ Wrap presents in useful items such as
 a towel or scarf.

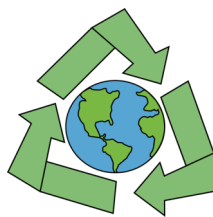
~“Do not rent, trade or sell my name or address”

Say these words every time you order from a catalog or
 purchase a gift subscription over the phone to prevent
 your name and address from being spread to mail order
 lists. Write the words next to you name and address
 every time you fill a warranty, membership or subscrip-
 tion form.

~ Choose only the catalogs you use and stop the rest by
 registering your preferences at www.catalogchoice.org.

~ Reuse packing materials or take them to a local
 mailing store.

~Purchase wrapping paper made from recycled paper.



*If wrapping paper (not metallic) is
 not reusable, it can be recycled at
 the curb with other paper.*

The Pleasant Green UMW Cookbook is still available!

Special sections: Old favorites from the first PG Cookbook published in 1980 and
 the Christmas Cookie Sale recipes! The cookbook includes 433 recipes and pages of church,
 as well as, UMW history with pictures. (\$16 each)



Purchase cookbooks for Christmas presents and support UMW missions!