



bearcreekumc.org

December 15th
2016

worship... walk... work...

Christmas Services

December 24 and 25, 2016.

Christmas Eve Services*

December 24, 2016

Family Service in Sanctuary @ 5pm

Contemporary Service in Fellowship Hall @ 7pm

Pre-worship Christmas Concert in Sanctuary @ 8:30pm

Traditional Service in Sanctuary @ 9pm

** child care is available*

Christmas Day Services

December 25, 2016

Combined Traditional & Contemporary Service in Sanctuary @ 10am

Cristo Reina (Spanish) Service in Fellowship Hall @ 6pm



worship

Christmas Giving

Double December needed for a strong finish.

We talk about finances a lot around Christmas for three reasons:

1. You can't avoid talking about money with so much of it flowing on Black Friday and Cyber Monday and Spend-Way-Too-Much every other day.



work

2. It's the end of the year and we, as a church, need a Double December-twice as much giving in December over any other month-in order to pay our bills and finish the year on firm financial footing.
3. The story of Christmas is about holding nothing back; the theme of Christmas is giving; the essence of Christmas is sacrifice.

Here is a Christmas text from John (3:16): *For God so loved the world that he **gave** his only Son.*

Here is a Christmas text from Paul (Philippians 2:5-7): *Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but **emptied himself**, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.*

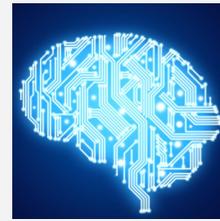
Corrie Ten Boom said, "The measure of a life, after all, is not its duration, but its **donation.**"

Please consider how you can have a greater measure of life and a joyous Christmas through that extra gift for your church before the end of the year.

Alternative Thoughts

by Dr. Jonathan Bynum.

Among the feast days of the saints, the birthday of Saint Lucy (or Santa Lucia) is celebrated on December 13. Because her feast used to coincided with the Winter Solstice-the shortest day of the year (before calendar reforms)-it became a festival of light, particularly in Scandinavian countries, with their long dark winters. There, a young girl dressed in a white dress and a red sash (as a symbol of martyrdom) carries palms and wears a crowning wreath of candles on her head. In both Norway and Sweden, girls dressed as Lucy carry rolls and cookies in procession as songs are sung.



work

Lucy lived in Syracuse in the late third to early fourth centuries and died during the persecution by Diocletian. Hers is the story of a young Christian woman who vowed to live her life in service of Christ. Lucy had consecrated her virginity to God, and she hoped to give all her worldly goods to the service of the poor. Her mother, Eutychia, was not keen on the idea and arranged a marriage for Lucy with a pagan. Lucy's only hope was to convince her mother that Christ was the better partner for life.

Having suffered a hemorrhage for several years, Eutychia was persuaded to make a pilgrimage to Catania where she was cured. You see, after several prayers at the tomb of Saint Agatha, Lucy saw the saint in a dream and was promised her mother's illness would be cured through faith. That healing allowed Lucy to convince her mother to give the dowry money to the poor and allow her to commit her life to God. While Lucy and her mother were grateful to God, the scorned bridegroom was angered and took his case to the governor, Paschasius. As punishment, the governor first tried to force her into the shame of prostitution, but the guards who came to take her away were unable to move her, even after hitching her to a team of oxen. Then they piled wood around her to burn her, but the wood would not catch fire. As a last resort, they drew their swords and Lucy met her death-through martyrdom receiving her crown of glory.

Stories grew about Lucy. In one, Lucy warned Paschasius he would be punished. When the governor heard this he ordered the guards to gouge out her eyes. In another version, it was Lucy who removed her eyes in an attempt to discourage her suitor who greatly

admired them. In either account, when her body was being prepared for burial, they discovered her eyes had been restored. Today she is the patron saint of the blind.

You might think this a strange story to share close to Christmas, during Advent. But in a world that too often seems consumed with darkness and, worse, accepting the shadows as normative, we need to look to those individuals who boldly reflect the light of Christ. We need to be those individuals who boldly reflect the light of Christ, for "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5). Lucy was wholly committed to Christ, refusing to compromise faith for security. She wanted to give all she had to those who needed it most. Isn't that precisely what Jesus did? Isn't that what Jesus wants to do through each one of us?

Jim Elliot famously said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose." So Lucy lives on forever. And even now you can join her in the feast.

Christmas Poinsettias

Last chance to order poinsettias.

If you haven't already ordered your poinsettias, please call (281.463.2330) or [email](#) the church office no later than Sunday, December 18. They are \$10 each and may be taken home after the 9pm service on Christmas Eve.



work

Christmas Lunch

Don't spend Christmas Day alone.

If you do not have plans to join family members for Christmas, you are invited to stay after the 10am worship service on Christmas Day for a Christmas meal at Bear Creek UMC. Instead of eating alone, cooking when you do not have the energy, or finding a restaurant when most will be closed, come to the Family Life Center to join with others in our church family and share a meal in the gym. **RSVP to the church office so we know how much food to prepare.**



work

There was no room in the inn, but we will have a plate for you in the gym. Merry Christmas! ~ BCUMC Prayer Ministry

Thank You!

Sharing God's love in our community.

A huge "Thank You" to Betsy Ayers for her countless hours organizing and coordinating **The Day of Thanks and Giving AND Angel Tree**. These two community outreach events mean so much to the recipients of Thanksgiving meals and to the children that would likely not receive any Christmas gifts if not for the Angel Tree ministry. Hundreds of people are positively impacted by these programs that you, our awesome congregation, so generously support year after year. Thank you BCUMC for your witness to those less fortunate in our community. God bless you!

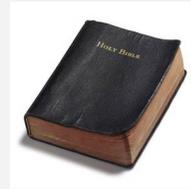


work

Ladies' Daytime Bible Study

Wednesdays from 10:00 to 11:30am.

Would you like to grow another step in your journey as a child of God? Rob Fuquay explores what Jesus meant when he said, "I am the Bread of Life"; the Light of the World: the seven I-Ams in The Gospel of John. Come study these with us and learn about **The God We Can Know** beginning January 11, 2017 continuing through February 22, 2017. We will meet in FLC 102 from 10:00 to 11:30am. Facilitator will be Virginia Garner. Study books will be available after December 25th in the office for \$10. Please purchase one before class starts and read Chapter 1 before coming to class.



walk

EHS Materials

Please return DVDs and unused material.

For you leaders or hosts of our Emotionally Healthy Spirituality study, please return the DVDs and any unused materials to the church office so we can help others in their journey.



work

Emmaus Prayer Clock

Sign up to pray for pilgrims.

The Walk to Emmaus Men's Walk #95 is February 16, 2017 through February 19, 2017. Click [here](#) to sign up to pray for the pilgrims and the team. Thank you!



walk

Youth News

Christmas Party & Gift Exchange. Note time: 4-7pm

Saturday we will be helping with a local deconstruction project; contact Lea if you would like to come and help. Join us this Sunday, from 4 to 7pm, for *Youth @5* - we are having our Christmas Party and Gift Exchange (\$5 max). Come for games, dinner, and fellowship! Read your Youth Newsletter for more Youth information. Contact [Lea Bynum](#) with questions.



walk

AWANA on Wednesdays

Resumes January 11, 2017 @ 6:30pm in the FLC gym.



worship

Awana will not meet for the next three weeks during Christmas break. We will resume on Wednesday, January 11, 2017.
Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Bear Creek United Methodist is devoted to nurturing your children with scriptural teaching, fun activities, and opportunities to cultivate great friendships that last forever.

Here are a few things to remember:

- On Wednesday, January 11, please drop off (6:30) and pick up (8:00) your child in the Tree House on the second floor of the Family Life Center.
- Fill out a new Kidzone Registration ([English](#) or [Spanish](#)) form for 2016-17.
- Pay the \$20.00 registration fee per family for 2016-17.

Please contact me if you have questions concerning any ministry to children here at Bear Creek United Methodist Church. Click [here](#) for the schedule.

Thanks,
John R. Henley
281.463.2330

Online and Text Giving

Electronic giving. From your smartphone.

We now offer online and text giving on our website. Both options are facilitated through Shelby Systems, Inc., our church administration software, which is highly secure. You will find links and instructions on the [giving](#) page of our website.

Thank you for your faithful contributions that allow us to continue the various ministries of Bear Creek United Methodist Church!



worship

Energizers

December 16. Clay's. 11:00am.

Energizers, a group of active adults age 50-plus, enjoy gatherings that include day-long excursions. On December 16 we will meet at Clay's (17717 Clay Road) @ 11:00am; everyone is responsible for their lunch. If you would like to participate in the gift exchange, please bring a \$10.00 gift marked "female", "male" or "either". Come and join the fellowship.



walk

Fellowship Friday, an Energizers outreach ministry, provides a loving, welcoming and fun environment for family members with mild to moderate memory loss who do not require skilled care. This program, a partnership between Interfaith CarePartners and BCUMC, is designed to give caregivers some much needed time away. ***Our next meeting is January 13, 2017 from 10am to 1:30pm.*** The theme for January is *New Beginnings* and the entertainment is Grandma's Boy Friends.

Western Prayer Wall

FLC 101. Leave a Prayer Request.

Been to the Holy Land? If it's too far or you've already been, visit our BCUMC Western Prayer Wall any time during church office hours or on Sunday. Please leave your prayer request in the crevices of the wall. Thank you - the Prayer Ministry Team.



walk

A Time to Pray Together

Prayer Room - Ministry Village. Wednesdays @ 9:15am.

Come to pray with us for the congregational needs of BCUMC and for what God puts on our hearts. We are trusting in His Promise, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." ~ Matthew 18:20



walk

Blessings, **James Sharp, Communications Director**
281.463.2330 X109

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