

the Epistle

First Presbyterian Church, Wadesboro, North Carolina 28170

December 2011

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Lone Star

Based on John 1:6-8; 19-28

Lone Star planted his front paws firmly on the rock at the top of the hill, threw back his head, opened his mouth, and howled loud and long. The humans who lived in the little cottages nestling at the foot of the hill shivered, and locked the doors and windows more securely. They mistakenly thought the cry of the wolf spelled danger to them.

But the wolf pack snuggled down contentedly together, secure in the knowledge that Lone Star was looking out for them. There was only one response to Lone Star. A faint echo of a wolf howl returned to him from a far distant peak, and Lone Star relaxed a little. They were alone in the hills, so the pack was safe for the moment.

Lone Star was proud of his position and of his name, for it described him exactly. Many of the younger cubs regarded him as a hero and would often play and scamper around him, daring each other to approach. Lone Star had a difficult job, for it was his particular task to be alert for signs of danger to the pack. But he was good at his job and had often saved the pack from enemies. But it was a lonely job, for he was always on the lookout while the rest of the pack slept, and sometimes Lone Star wished he hadn't been chosen for this particular role. Even during the day Lone Star kept his eyes and ears tuned for any sign of danger.

One day, while the young cubs were frolicking on the banks of a stream and learning to defend themselves by play fights, Lone Star felt his muzzle twitch. Instantly he was alert, all play abandoned, and his eyes and ears and nose quivering as he stood perfectly still. The young cubs sensed his watchfulness and huddled closer to him. Then Lone Star was off with a bound, calling all the pack to safety as he raced into the woods with the cubs

close at his heels. "There's one!" shouted a human voice. And a moment later a single shot was heard.

Lone Star bundled all the cubs into the den, hidden deep in the undergrowth. Then he crawled out to see whether any of the other wolves had been injured. Fortunately, the shot had missed, and all the wolves were safe. But they had to spend some time in the den, until the hunters had given up and gone home.

While they were in the den, some of the elders approached Lone Star. "Lone Star, you've proved your worth over and over again. All the youngsters admire and love you, you've kept our pack together, and you've kept us safe. We want you to be our leader. What do you say?"

But Lone Star shook his grey head. "I'm not your leader," he replied. "I'm here to make sure everything is ready for the new leader when he arrives. I've been chosen to protect the pack, to teach the young cubs the right ways, and to keep a proper lookout. But I'm not your leader. Another wolf is coming; I sense he's very near. When he appears, you'll all recognize him; he'll be like a silver cloud."

The next night, when they were out on the hills again and their way lit by moonlight, Lone Star took up his customary position with his paws on the boulder, threw back his head and howled. This time his cry was answered. Lone Star scanned the skyline. On the hill opposite he spotted the outline of a single wolf, who also had his head thrown back to howl. Lone Star felt a strange excitement rising within him. He howled again, and again was answered by the stranger, this time a little nearer. Lone Star continued to howl, directing the stranger closer and closer towards the pack.

Eventually the new wolf emerged in the clearing, and as he stood silently in the moonlight his coat shone like burnished silver. Lone Star had never seen any

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wolf so beautiful. He knew instinctively that this was the new leader of the pack. Quietly, Lone Star moved submissively, offering the stranger the leadership position. As he did so, Lone Star felt a strange joy and happiness inside himself. The dark eyes of the stranger seemed to burn into him with an intensity of love, and Lone Star knew his job was over.

“Silver Cloud!” Lone Star breathed. And he knew he would follow this wolf to the ends of the earth.

By The Village Shepherd

SESSION

The next stated meeting of Session will be Sunday, December 11, after Worship. Minutes are posted on the bulletin board.

MEMBER CARE NOTES

MEMBER CARE EVENTS

Reception

First Presbyterian and Sacred Heart Catholic Church hosted a reception in our Fellowship Hall after the Thanksgiving service on Tuesday, November 22, 2011, to welcome two new ministers to our Inter-Church Group: the Rev. Dr. Leslie Stacks and Father Jean Pierre Swamunu Lhoposo.

Christmas Fellowship

We look forward to an evening of finger-foods after a Christmas performance on Sunday, December 11th, at 6:00 PM.

November 20th Candlelight Service at Cedar Hill

Member Care represented First Presbyterian at a truly meaningful candlelight service on Sunday, November 20, 2011, at Cedar Hill A.M.E. Zion Church on Springer Road in Ansonville, NC. Cedar Hill A.M.E. Zion was one of many churches vandalized in Stanly and Anson County in November. More than 20 ministers from the area led the service that celebrated the love and compassion shown by over 200 people of different races and religions who attended the service. “The commonality among this group is our love of Christ,” said Cedar Hill A.M.E. Zion Rev. Renee Bethea. A minister of a church vandalized in Cottonville prayed for the perpetrators of the hate crime. “It is a shame that it takes an event like this one to bring the community together,” one minister

commented, “but we hope that this will be the tie that binds us together in the days to come.” Many workers spent the week refurbishing Cedar Hill A.M.E. Zion, which now looks brand-new, with the exception of the boarded-up windows that once held beautiful stained glass. Members were proud to announce that worship service was held on-site six days after the destruction of their church.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Honor your friend or loved one with a contribution to First Presbyterian Women of the Church.

Contributions

In Honor of the Chancel Choir by
Alice Grimes



MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS



The Magic of Christmas will be performed by The Charlotte Symphony on December 1, 2011, 7:30 PM at the Belk Theatre in Charlotte. Tickets are \$25.00 per person. Anyone interested in attending this special Christmas performance, talk with Jeanne Price, Anne Trexler, or the church office for details and possible carpooling. The church receives a portion of the ticket price.

WORSHIP NOTES/ CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SACRAMENT OF LORD’S SUPPER



Do this in
Remembrance of Me.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper will be observed during morning worship on Sunday, December 4th.

BIBLE STUDY

Wired Word on Tuesdays @ 6:00 PM

Wednesdays @ 5:00 PM

COLLEGE CARE PACKAGES

Plans are for the College Care Packages to be prepared and mailed to all of our college students in early December. We hope the packages will encourage and help relieve some stress during exam time!

CHRISTMAS **BLESSINGS/OPPORTUNITIES**

As we enter into this season of Advent, the church once again offers so many opportunities for ways to fill our hearts and the hearts of others. Thanks go to those who, in a few hours time, transformed our church and fellowship hall with the beautiful decorations, Chrismon and Christmas trees, wreaths, and other special touches. The beautiful poinsettias fill our sanctuary in honor and memory of those whom we want to especially remember during this time. Also, thanks to the families who are sharing the lights of hope, peace, joy, and love by being readers for our Advent Wreath lighting each week. There are many ways that we can reach out to others during this special season. Begin by asking a friend or neighbor to worship, the cantata, the Christmas program, caroling, Sunday School, or to help with our Mission projects such as the Food Pantry distribution in December.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM **December 11, 6:00 PM**

First Presbyterian will celebrate the wonder of the Christmas Story through the play, "Guess Who's Coming to Bethlehem" on Sunday, December 11, at 6:00 PM. Our children will portray a variety of animals as well as the manger scene. Others will add to this special event through song and special readings. Following this program, we will have time for refreshments and a special visit for the children. Ask your friends and neighbors to join us for the retelling of this timeless story of the night of the birth of Jesus. Please bring a finger food so that we can enjoy a short time of fellowship together.

CHRISTMAS CAROLING **December 18, 5:00 PM**

Consider spending some time brightening the lives of others who can't share in worship during this special Christmas season. One of the memories we all share of Christmas is caroling. This is a fun time for all – but most of all, it is a way to let our members and friends know that we have not forgotten them, even though some may be unable to attend church regularly due to health problems. Please meet at the home of Luke and Anne Hyatt (108 Briar Creek Place, Wadesboro – behind Highland Drive) on Sunday, December 18, at

4:45 PM. If you don't feel you have a good singing voice, don't let that stop you! It's your heart that we need. To end a perfect night, everyone is invited back to the home of Anne and Luke Hyatt following caroling for Luke's delicious chili, hot chocolate, coffee, and finger foods.

CHRISTMAS EVE **CANDLELIGHT SERVICE** **December 24, 2011 – 5:00 PM**

We will have a candlelit Festival of Lessons and Carols that traces highlights of our faith history as recorded in the Bible. Carols will be interspersed with the readings and will include not only choir pieces, but also carol singing by the congregation.

CHRISTMAS MORNING **December 25, 2011**

Join us at 11:00 on Christmas morning for a Festival of Carols. In our worship, we will let our voices echo the jubilation and excitement of this Christmas miracle — which grants us identity as children of God. We will not have Church School this day, and dress will be casual, as we gather together to rejoice, give thanks, and sing!

JOY GIFT OFFERING **Good News of Great Joy** **December 24, 2011**

The Joy Gift Offering will be collected on Christmas Eve at the Christmas Eve Service. This offering has been a Presbyterian tradition since the 1930s. Because Advent and Christmas shine a light not only on our world's greatest hope but also on our world's greatest need, PC(USA) provides this opportunity for congregations to support causes specifically designed to bring *Good News of Great Joy* to the poor in circumstance or spirit. Alongside the message of promise and fulfillment in Luke's Gospel, we also hear the clear call to God's people to respond in faith as Christ calls us: "*From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded*" (Luke 12:48). The Christmas Joy Offering is split evenly between the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions and scholarship funds for Presbyterian-related racial ethnic schools and colleges. Help us support these faithful servants and students in their hour of great need and hour of great promise and give generously.

♪ NOTES FROM JANICE ♪

On December 11, our Handbell Choir will perform for the glory of God two very unusual selections. "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" by Julie Turner begins with a haunting simple sound of melody and singing bell tones in the background and continues to embellish the tune ending with the same beautiful tones produced by the singing bells. "An Appalachian Christmas" by Tammy Waldrop uses many varied techniques to imitate mountain instruments.

On Sunday December 18, the Chancel Choir will present "Tapestry of Light" A Celtic Christmas Celebration by Joseph Martin. Springing from the rich heritage of "Celtic" Christmas music comes a cantata overflowing with hope and light. From seasonal songs that lift the spirits to quiet carols of reflection and peace, this work is filled with the music of grace.

Through the sharing of this work, may the grace that inspired these time-honored tunes surround and inspire you. (Joseph M. Martin)

For December 11, our Cherub Choir is learning some special songs to be presented in a play entitled "Guess Who's Coming to Bethlehem" by Michael and Jill Gallina. The animals in the Bethlehem stable have been informed of the coming Messiah, but they aren't quite sure who it will be. The lamb naturally thinks it's a lamb; the dove thinks it's a dove who will come to bring peace, and the other animals have their own thoughts as to who this mysterious visitor will be. Come see this special production and find the answer!

MISSION

FOOD PANTRY: WACOM

December Food Pantry:

Set-Up – December 9th 4:00 PM

Distribution – December 10th 8:30-10:00 AM

The **Food Pantry** will distribute on Saturday, December 10th. As in the past, we plan to celebrate the season by providing snacks to our customers on that day. ***Please sign up to bring a snack to wish our customers a Merry Christmas.*** Sig-up sheet is in the Bell Room.



CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND GROCERIES

“Hens and Hams” - December 17, 2011

We have Christmas stockings from Anson Crisis Ministry on the table in the Bell Room for those who would like to help make a child’s Christmas a little brighter this year. We will be providing food for these families as well as Christmas stocking gifts. Distribution will be at 10:30 AM on Saturday, December 17th. Please pick up a **stocking** to provide gifts and also don’t forget to bring **canned goods** to be left in the Bell Room for our groceries for these families.

ANSON CRISIS MINISTRY NEEDS

December is the month that we are to provide Anson Crisis Ministry with canned string beans or canned peas. These items maybe left in the container provided at the entrance to the church.

We also need a volunteer to take the items to Anson Crisis Ministry at the end of each month. If you would be willing to volunteer, please call the Church Office.

BELK CHARITY DAY SALE RESULTS

The amount of money raised to date for the church’s General Fund from the sale of tickets for the Belk Charity Day sale was \$195. Thanks for your help and participation!

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

“Thank You” to all who supported Samaritan’s Purse Operation Christmas Child. We delivered 23 shoe boxes to the local collection site.

WACOM NEEDS YOUR HELP!

We need volunteers to help unload the trucks when food is picked up from Second Harvest in Charlotte. Please let anyone on the Mission Ministry, any member of Session, or the Church Office know if you would be willing to help!

OFFERINGS

\$2 Per Family Offering for the Mission Fund:

December 4th

10¢-A-Meal Offering: December 25th

10¢ a Meal, 30¢ a day, \$2.10 a week, \$9.00 a month

PROPERTY/FINANCE/ ADMINISTRATION

2012 PLEDGES

Every year, but particularly in today's economic climate, every person's pledge and giving matters. If you have not turned in your pledge cards for 2012, please do so. Thank you to those who have returned them – this greatly helps the finance team plan and prepare a responsible budget for the year ahead. There are still copies of the pledge forms at each entrance to the sanctuary if you have misplaced yours.

END OF YEAR DONATIONS

The IRS rule is that end-of-year donations from church members must be either at the church office or in the mail with a December postmark to be correctly considered a current year contribution.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Each week, we need \$3,264.00 to meet budget for the General Account. Below is a list of the amounts we have received in past weeks:

Oct. 30 \$8,875.81
Nov. 6 \$2,674.00
Nov. 13 \$2,261.50
Nov. 20 \$1,533.00

\$13,056.00 was needed for this period and we received \$15,344.31 – overage of \$2,288.31. Shortage since January 1, 2011 is \$48,429.22.

COMMUNITY NOTES

Anson Singers Concert
Sunday, December 4, 3:00 PM
at First United Methodist Church

First Baptist Church, 309 Lee Avenue
Christmas Cantata
Saturday, December 10 – 7:00 PM



Merry Christmas!

NURSERY VOLUNTEERS

December 4 Eddie & Ellen Huntley
December 11 Ross Huntley & Ginger Trexler
December 18 Pam Vernon & Bob Stowe
December 25 Luke & Anne Hyatt

ACOLYTE/GREETER SCHEDULE

December 4 Mary Catherine Boylin
December 11 Tripp Trexler
December 18 Katie Paige Huntley
December 25 Dylan Trexler

USHER SCHEDULE

December 4
Foyle Hightower
Pam Vernon
Hugh Wallace
Alex McLeod

December 18
Calvin Catoe
John Edwards
Luke Hyatt
Jeanne Price

December 11
Brenda Morgan
Danny Deese
Jim Strayhorn
Bryan Trexler

December 25
Jim Boylin
Glenn Trexler
Jerry Ridenhour
Ashe Ratliff

Note: Ushers need to be at church by 10:45 AM. If you cannot usher, it is your responsibility to get a replacement.

First Presbyterian Church

PO Box 351
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