



# The Beech Grove STAR



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December '12 - January '13

## Upcoming Events:

Sunday, Dec. 9  
Cookie Exchange  
3 pm

Sunday, Dec. 16  
Christmas Cantata  
7 pm

Tuesday, Dec. 18  
YAH! Christmas  
Singalong  
10:30 am

Monday, Dec. 24  
Candlelight Service  
7 pm

Tuesday, Dec. 25  
*Merry Christmas!*

Tuesday, Jan. 1  
*Happy New Year!*

Monday, Jan. 14  
Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Holiday

## Peek Inside for More News:

- **2012 State of the Church Report**
- **Missions/ Outreach Year in Review**
- **Volunteer Opportunities**

## Pastor's Note...

Have you ever watched a little child mark off the days and the months? Turning the pages of the calendar, a child asks, "Where's my birthday?" You help find the special day and circle it. "Where's Easter? The Fourth of July and Thanksgiving? And where is Christmas?"

From holiday to holy day, children stop around the year, measuring off time by their special days of celebration. And we would be wise to do the same. For truly the Christian year is a circle.

Near the top of the circle is Thanksgiving, both a conclusion and a prelude. We look back upon

days rich with God's blessing, and we look forward to Christmas when our search for Jesus' presence in our lives is renewed.

Through the keeping of our holidays and holy seasons, we cherish and pass on the rich traditions of the grand hopes of all humanity. We engage in treasured traditions, the prayers and dreams of the ages that provide heartfelt inspiration.

People of all the world are rich in their religious celebrations and each holy season embodies a prayer. And no prayer is more universally voiced and humbly

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## Help for Hurricane Sandy Victims



Two days after Hurricane Sandy ransacked the Crisfield MD area, my daughter called her mother and me describing all the flooding and devastation.

She had only begun to work there a month

earlier, having already put down roots and meeting the people affected by the dangerous Superstorm. She witnessed many people's homes and cars flooded with some 2 – 5 feet of the Chesapeake Bay storm surge. Families were displaced and there was an immediate need for food and warm coats.

The local hospital

was serving as a make shift shelter for the employees and their families; others were at a local high school or out-of-town motels and hotels.

One thing we can say for our daughter is that she has always had a heart for missions, and it was one of the reasons she took the

*(continues on page 3)*



Happy Birthday!

**DECEMBER**

- 2 Cindy Eberwine
- 7 Carol Jones
- 5 Jack Meyers
- 8 Jim Mackey
- 10 Lisa Price
- 11 Chrissy Callahan
- 14 Nicole Leidel
- 14 Morgan Magrisi
- 15 Mary Hassell
- 21 Jean Devers
- 23 Lorraine Mims
- 23 Jim MacCord
- 25 Jesus Christ
- 28 Bonnie Bagwell
- 28 Richard Stevenson
- 29 Butch Reynolds
- 29 Sarah Smith
- 29 Stephanie McCook

**JANUARY**

- 1 Keira Zirkle
- 1 Carolyn Smith
- 9 Matthew Eberwine
- 9 Steve Shultz
- 11 Jessica Price
- 12 Jason Smith
- 18 Bryant Goodloe
- 25 Philip Sandoval
- 26 Hannah Bartholomew
- 26 Rue Bagwell
- 26 Janice Morris
- 29 Cameron Willis
- 30 Carole Clarke
- 31 Joe Johann

**Making a list, Checking it Twice**

Arthur's General Store in Driver has a table set up for "Dear Santa" letters from children (or those of any age). \$1 is donated to the "Make a Wish" Foundation for every letter written. Macy's also participates in this same charity. Stop by Arthur's soon if you want to send Santa a note and support this charitable organization.



**Coming Soon... EEF!**

While the blessed holiday season is approaching, the complementary Easter season won't be far behind. Beech Grove eagerly anticipates it each year with the grand opening of the Easter Egg Factory! Now legendary in status, it spans 7 weeks and is an integral part of our church identity. Mark your calendars now with some important dates:

- mid-February '13 Box and label making
- February 23, 2013 Factory set-up
- February 25, 2013 Production begins
- March 16, 2013 Last day to place orders
- March 22, 2013 Factory closing/clean-up
- March 31, 2013 Easter Sunday



**Looking Ahead:** Are you ready for a new year? We're considering changing the format of the newsletter to reflect a magazine concept, so please share any story ideas for the next issue with Robin Magrisi (robinmagrisi@charter.net or #538.0234) by **Friday, Jan. 18th.**

hope  
peace  
cookies

**Beech Grove Cookie Exchange**  
*Sunday, Dec. 9th at 3 pm*

Simply bake and bring 4 dozen of your favorite cookies to trade with the other church bakers and cookie aficionados. We'll sample and exchange in the spirit of fun and fellowship and toast the season with hot chocolate! Please RSVP to Kristi Willis (kristiw@cox.net or #270-2222).

## Help usher in the New Year with a smile

Now is the time to sign up for Sunday morning ushers! If you're interested in serving as an usher at any 8:30 or 11 am service during 2013, please contact Brenda Bell at #394-1426. No previous experience is required, and training is offered.



## Volunteers Needed

Florence Bowser Elementary School is in need of volunteers to work with a number of children on academics and also to role model and establish positive relationships. Training and scheduling are provided. If you can offer your time and attention, you can make a difference in the life of a child. Call #923-4164 for more information.



United  
Methodist  
Women

The UMW will have no business meeting in December. We will, however, take Christmas items to the Genieve Shelter and participate in the UMW District event on December 15th at the Wesley Community Center.

With the support of the Beech Grove congregation, we were able to be generous in our mission giving. We pledge our support to missions around the

world through the Virginia Conference, and we support local charities as well.

Next year we follow our usual meeting time, the 4th Tuesday of each month except July, August, and December. We meet in the fellowship hall at 11 a.m. We encourage all ladies who are available to join us. Call Jean Devers with any questions at #638-0755.

## **Hurricane Relief** *(continued from cover)*

job in this small, underserved community where she believed she could make a difference as a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner. But, this conversation was not about her work, instead it was a plea for us to find some way to help respond to the immediate needs of a town in shock, mourning the loss of homes, cars and much more.

I asked our daughter to get a name of a local United Methodist Pastor so relief could go through church channels. As is the way with God, it turns out one of the contractors working with her to set up her clinic just happened to be on the Staff Parish Committee of a local UMC. Therefore, a connectional plan was put in place to receive food and coats to be distributed in this small, devastated community.

Our Elizabeth River District had an opportunity to respond on short order - a time period of less than a week. And **RESPOND YOU DID!** Thanks to your generosity, our district sent approximately 12 DOZEN winter coats and over 100 boxes of non-perishable foods; PLUS over \$2000 in gift cards to purchase cold foods and cleaning supplies.

There will be continual opportunities to support victims of Hurricane Sandy, not only in Crisfield, but in all areas that were in the path of this Superstorm. United Methodist Disaster Early Response Teams already have been deployed, and there will be a large number of United Methodist Volunteers in Missions Teams needed for weeks and months to come.

Thank you so much for your generous spirit in this particular relief effort. And also, special thanks to the churches that served as DROP-OFF points from around the district: Lynnhaven, Great Bridge, McKendree and Beech Grove.

~ Keith Moore



**Keep your head up...  
God gives his hardest battles  
to his strongest soldiers.**

**Pastor's Note** (continued from cover)

prayed than the song of the angels on Christmas, the prayer for peace on Earth and goodwill to all people.

May the advent season lead each one of us to some new beginning in life as we celebrate the birth of the Christ-child. Let the twelve days of Christmas be a treasured celebration of the true meaning of the greatest gift ever given in the birth of the Christ-child.

Blessings for a holy holiday season,  
*Pastor Keith Moore*



**The Cupboards Are Bare...**



Well, not quite, but we need to do some shelf restocking. Please take advantage of those holiday grocery sales and consider adding a few items to your

basket to share with those in need (*no glass jars, please*). Some suggestions include instant oatmeal, pop tarts, canned soups, spaghetti sauce, pasta, rice, tuna and canned meats.

**YAH! Christmas Singalong**

The YAH (Young At Heart) group meets the third Tuesday each month for fun, fellowship and friendship as part of Beech Grove's senior ministry.

Join them Tuesday, Dec. 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am in the Fellowship Hall for a holiday get-together complete with lunch and Christmas carols.

They continually find ways to support those served by the Genieve Shelter, a home for families in crisis. Please continue to collect and donate personal care items such as soap, shampoo, hair brushes, combs and more.

Thank you!



**Beech Grove UMC  
Mission Statement**

Our Beech Grove family seeks our Lord's will and shares Christ's love with all.



**Treasurer's Report**

	Sept.- Oct. '12	Year-to-date
<b>Income</b>		
Plate offering	\$ 34,592.27	\$165,331.49
Building fund	1,105.00	1,706.00
Easter Egg Project	475.00	108,113.45
Other	<u>\$ 880.09</u>	<u>\$ 24,634.13</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 37,052.36</b>	<b>\$299,785.07</b>
<b>Disbursement</b>		
Operating/program expenses	\$ 11,676.44	\$ 56,343.13
UMC district/conference fees	\$ 22,228.96	52,587.55
Pastor/staff compensation	\$ 19,005.46	91,000.63
Other	<u>\$ 53,774.14</u>	<u>\$ 95,617.07</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 106,685.00</b>	<b>\$295,548.38</b>



## Scouting at Beech Grove

**Girl Scout Troop 5292:** We are so proud of our girls who recently earned their Silver Awards --the second highest honor that can be bestowed onto a Girl Scout-- by helping Horses Helping Hands in Smithfield and sprucing up landscaping at John Yeates MS. These girls made significant contributions to their organizations by dedicating more than 50 hours each to their projects.

Fall Cupcake Wars and CANstruction competitions were a huge hit and may become annual events. Coming in December, groups of our girls will be participating in the Albert Horton Wreath Laying, the Botanical Gardens Polar Express, and earning their babysitting badge by completing the Red Cross Course and babysitting some children in Portsmouth. Preparations are already underway for making and racing cars in our Second Pine Wood Derby Contest.

On behalf of our troop, we would like to extend huge wishes for all congregants of Beech Grove a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!

**Sea Scout Ship 16:** In the past quarter, we've cooked our famous Boston Butts, did some classes on knot tying and navigation, cleaned up our shed, helped officiate the Cub Scout Raingutter Regatta and attended the Davy Jones Rendezvous in Winston-Salem, NC. We even managed to get some sailing in!

This year has been great for sailing! Some of our crew participated in the Sunfish and Dinghy Distance Race on the Elizabeth River in September, and we got to do some daysailing aboard a 46' ketch that we'll be sailing frequently next year. We've been doing some repair work to our well-used dinghys so they'll be ready for next season.

We promoted Kathleen Blasiole to Ordinary and will holding boards again to bring a few of the crew to Apprentice. We're winding down on what has been a very busy year!



## An Army of Elves Needed to Fill 150 Stockings

Of course we know the real reason for the celebration this season, but the Outreach/Missions Team also knows that children don't understand when Santa "forgets" to stop at their home.

Please help them **fill 150 stockings** for area needy children who may not receive anything else this Christmas. Empty stockings are available in the sanctuary and should be returned by Wednesday, Dec. 12th.

Be sure to label your stocking for a boy or girl and indicate an appropriate age range (infant, toddler, 5-8 years, 9-12 years or teen). Please note, NO chocolate, peanuts, glass containers or other dangerous items are permitted.

Please fill and return as many as are practical for you to help us meet our bold new goal of 150. Thanks so much for helping us play Santa again this year with the Salvation Army! If you need some suggestions on items to help stuff a stocking, consider any of the following:



### School supplies:

Pencils  
Pens  
Crayons  
Markers  
Solar calculator  
Small writing pads  
Sudoku/word search  
Stickers/stamps

### Toys:

Dolls, cars  
Stuffed animals  
Jump rope  
Card games  
Small books  
Yo-yo, jacks  
Coloring books  
Electronic games

### Personal care:

Toothbrush  
Small toothpaste  
Comb/brush  
Lip balm/gloss  
Hand/body lotion  
Bubble bath/beads  
Pocket mirror

### Miscellaneous:

Hats and gloves  
Socks  
Sunglasses  
Hair accessories  
Jewelry/watch  
Hard candy/Pez  
Candy canes

## Help Fill Our Christmas Baskets!



In a complement to the successful Thanksgiving Baskets, the Outreach/Missions Team is filling baskets again for area needy families this Christmas.

Choose a card with a specific grocery item or give a monetary donation to purchase fresh turkeys. All checks should be made out to Beech Grove UMC and noted for "Christmas Baskets."

Our combined efforts fed seven families at Thanksgiving, and we'll hope to repeat that success. All donations of groceries or funds must be returned to the church by **Saturday, Dec. 8th**. Thank you for your

## Outreach & Missions Team Up for a Successful 2012

Outreach and Missions committees combined efforts this year and have accomplished much as a team. We started with the annual "Souper Bowl" Sunday at the Wesley Community Center in Portsmouth by delivering soup and a donation to the Stop World Hunger Program. Later in the year, we returned for a tour and talk from Director John Hatcher and also supported the center with a \$250 art scholarship at Camp Rainbow in the summer.

New opportunities to support our youth including engaging the Confirmation Class in a pair of activities during their course, including making a Wesley Center donation. We also funded \$4,500 in college book scholarships for Beech Grove students and managed the collection and delivery of school supplies to our neighborhood Driver Elementary and Florence Bower Elementary Schools. Each school also received a \$300 check.

Once again, we sponsored a Missionary through Global Ministries (\$2,500) and oversaw the donation of 130 Health Kits to UMCOR. We've also started a new fund for future Missionary trips. We participated in the St. Andrews Potato Drop at Magnolia UMC in April and hosted a "Soda Jerk" Ice Cream Social for the Congregation in July.

By teaming up for Driver Days, we earned nearly \$600 selling dry goods including plants and other donated merchandise. We're currently working toward our goal of filling 150 stockings for the Salvation Army and feeding needy families with Christmas baskets.

Throughout the year, we continued to participate in Salvation Army Luncheon programs and assisted with bills for families in need. Thank you for continuing to support all of our efforts to aide those in need in our community and around the world. *~Janice Morris*



*The Annual Driver Days celebration and sale netted close to \$600 for our team.*

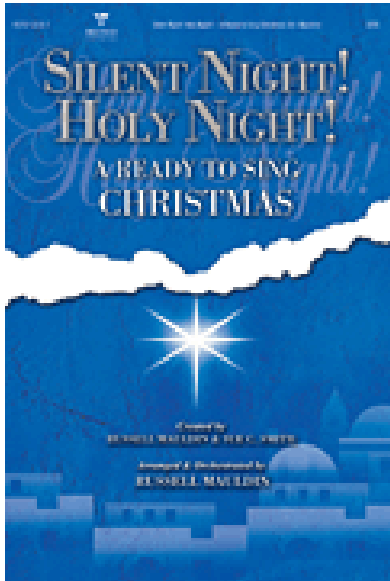


*We enjoyed getting to know members of the Confirmation Class and partnering in support of their faith journey.*



*Hazel Winborne steps into the pulpit to deliver the sermon on Father's Day.*





## Choir Presents Annual Christmas Cantata Sundays, Dec. 16th and Dec. 23rd

The adult choir of Beech Grove presents the Christmas music of "Silent Night! Holy Night!" (written by Russell Mauldin and Sue C. Smith) for their annual Christmas cantata on Sunday, December 16th at 7 pm.

"Silent Night! Holy Night!" celebrates the miraculous story of Jesus' birth. Classic carols and hymns as well as stirring new songs by Laura Story, Chris Tomlin and others are intertwined in the program.

Light refreshments will follow in the Fellowship Hall. The choir also will sing the cantata on December 23rd at the 11:00 worship service.



The legend of the poinsettia says that a poor Mexican girl had no gift to give the baby Jesus at Christmas Eve service. As she walked to the chapel, she picked a handful of weeds from the roadside and made them into a small bouquet. When

she placed them by the nativity scene, the green leaves burst into bright red flowers, and everyone who saw it believed it to be a Christmas miracle!

The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are often thought to symbolize the Star of Bethlehem. The red leaves represent the blood of Christ and the white leaves represent his purity.

**Purchase your own Christmas flowers this year in support of the choir!** Proceeds underwrite the purchase of choir music. The potted plants are \$10 each and can be ordered in honor or memory of friends and loved ones. Please place your order by December 9th. All poinsettias will be displayed in the sanctuary and may be taken home following the Christmas Eve service.



**Beech Grove UMC's  
Plan for Ministry**

**We are called to be a compassionate,  
nurturing congregation who serves God  
through prayer, worship, fellowship,  
study and missions as we  
"Honor the past, serve the present and  
build the future."**



## An Evening at Blackstone • December 9th

Fill your holiday with the magnificent music of "The Hunts" and the Uplifting Dance of "His Handmaids," and fill your belly with a true Christmas feast! Tickets are available for the banquet and performance or in a package that includes lodging and breakfast. The celebration begins with an open house and concludes with caroling. Call Cyndi Schnell at #434-292-5308 to purchase your tickets or e-mail [cyndischnell@vumac.org](mailto:cyndischnell@vumac.org).

# 2012 State of the Church Report

*Beech Grove UMC, Suffolk, VA*

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ! We have much to be proud of in 2012. Beech Grove membership grew by twelve; eight by profession of faith. We confirmed six of our youth. Laity had positive experiences at the Society for St. Andrew Potato Drop and as Camp Rainbow counselors. A 3-5 year old Sunday School class was started. Over 20 laity completed Disciple I and II studies and a Disciple III study is ongoing. We met 100% of our annual apportionments. And we ventured out into the world of social media.

Yet, as we close out another church year and look toward 2013, we find ourselves in a precarious position. Society's attitude toward religion threatens our ability to fully answer God's call. The national religious landscape, which has been changing for the good part of three decades, is not favorable. Pew reported in October that one in five Americans say they have no religious affiliation. A Gallup poll this year revealed that a long-term decline in Americans' confidence in organized religion fell again for 2012. A Barna Group study indicates that we're losing youth; nearly three out of every five young Christians disconnect either permanently or for an extended period of time from church life after age 15. 84% of young adult Christians admit that they have no idea how the Bible applies to their field or professional interests. UMC membership and average worship attendance in the West is receding and, at best, ours is stagnant. The average age in the UMC has risen to 57 years.

In this environment, the worst thing we can do is to allow complacency to set in. The world around us is unarguably changing and, to remain relevant, it demands that we find ways to change with it while steadfastly clinging to the unchangeable.

Another thing that can get in our way would be to lose sight of our guide – not keeping Christ at the center of everything we do. We are all better off when we remember that it's all about Him; and in doing so love more, appreciate more, forgive more, build each other up more, and live more in harmony with each other – each with the attitude of Christ Jesus toward the other.

“Can two people walk together without agreeing on the direction?” This question posed by the prophet Amos around 750 B.C. is just as appropriate for us today. It has taken people of many talents and perspectives for Beech Grove to be in ministry for the past 140 plus years, and it will take the same diversity to make a difference in the years to come. Yet, our church lacks a clear unifying direction, universally affirmed, to guide our everyday decisions and activities. I am hopeful that the goals adopted with the 5 Talent Academy will provide that missing compass.

I recently read an op-ed asserting that far-reaching spiritual reawakening can only happen through personal experience. As a church, we have plenty of room to grow as witnesses to God's grace. We all have our own personal story of faith, a reason that being a Christian matters. A greater willingness to share these stories can enrich our relationships and our understanding of each other and become a powerful example to those yet to experience Christ's love and acceptance. So, we should resolve to find the confidence to witness to those in our surrounding community and invite them to share in The Good News.

Jesus reminds us that the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. As a small church we experience the challenges that come from having a limited full-time staff. This reality demands that everyone pitches in and finds a way to volunteer the best of their prayers, presence, service, talents, and witness. For 2013, I am encouraged by recent efforts to reduce our committee sizes and to enlist a greater diversity of participation in the life and work of the church.

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## **State of the Church Report** *(continued from page 8)*

Despite these uncertain times, there are reasons to be confident in the future of Christ's church in Driver. Beech Grove has much strength upon which to build. First and foremost is our strength and our redeemer, Jesus Christ. We are assured in Romans 8:31 that "If God is for us, who can be against us?" With Him on our side and Scripture as our foundation, we are a church built on a rock.

We genuinely care and are concerned for one another. This is what attracted Melissa and me to Beech Grove and I believe that it will be equally attractive to others. We need to find a way to extend that same love and care more often to those outside of our walls.

We are a generous church, blessed with sufficient financial resources and a strong balance sheet giving us the freedom to take some chances as the hands and feet of Christ.

Our location in the center of a growing residential community is a strength that has gone largely untapped. There are over 4,200 households and 4 public schools inside of a 3 mile radius of our church, filled with residents who are largely upper middle class, middle-aged, and married with children.

Scripture tells us that "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." What is 2013 a time for? Looking ahead, God has blessed us with opportunities to make a greater difference in our community and in the life of the church, one of which is participation in the 5 Talent Academy. The program can't do anything by itself and efforts by a few will fall short; but if we embrace this initiative as an entire church, this three year program can focus our labors on stimulating growth in attendance, stewardship, spiritual maturity, professions of faith, and ministering with the poor which are all evident in today's vital and growing churches.

There are unlimited opportunities to expand our Children's and Youth programs to attract those young families around us, and I am optimistic about the enthusiasm and leadership that Darryl and Bob will bring to this effort and we should support them completely. Additionally, hundreds of local children enter through our doors each month as part of Scouting ministries and we should find ways to strengthen those relationships.

I think that most of us can agree that agricultural tax breaks do nothing for the kingdom, so we should commit to finding creative ways to use the back land right now.

Creating real relationships with those in need has the power to change the lives of the recipient and the giver. Similar to laity experiences with Camp Rainbow and the Society of Saint Andrew this year, we should offer more events that go beyond charitable support from a distance and instead encourage active participation in outreach.

And this year, we should commit to diversifying our income stream by establishing an Endowment Fund. Widely successful at universities, an endowment would offer congregants a way to make a lasting impact and ensure that Beech Grove can continue its mission and ministry beyond our lifetimes. It will also serve to mitigate risk by relaxing our reliance on regular giving and Easter Egg Factory profits.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, even as the world distances itself from religion, Jesus still commands us to "go and make disciples." The worst response would be for us to turn inward and simply hope that people walk through our door. The threats to our efforts are real and we must acknowledge our weaknesses; but together as Christ's church in 2013 and with God leading the way, let's step out in faith, and commit to real results which capitalize on our strengths and intentionally take advantage of clear opportunities to show Christ to those around us.

Together with you,  
*Jason*  
Lay Leader