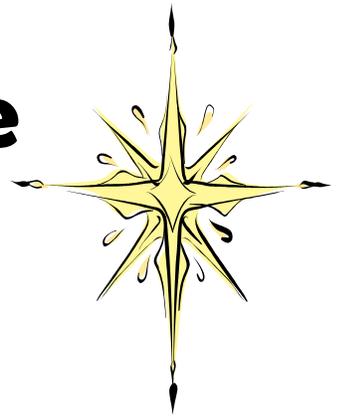




# The Beech Grove STAR



4251 Driver Lane, Suffolk, Virginia 23435  
(757) 538-8353 phone  
office @beechgroveumc.org

December '13 - January '14

### Upcoming Events:

Sunday, Dec. 8  
Cookie Exchange  
1:30 pm

Sunday, Dec. 22  
Christmas Cantata  
7 pm

Tuesday, Dec. 24  
Candlelight Service  
7 pm

Wednesday, Dec. 25  
*Merry Christmas!*

Wednesday, Jan. 1  
*Happy New Year!*

Sunday, Jan. 5  
UMM Holiday Brunch  
1:30 pm

Monday, Jan. 13  
Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Holiday

### Peek Inside for More News:

- **2013 State of the Church Report**
- **2014 EEF Dates**
- **Stocking Stuffers Needed**
- **Prayer Shawl Ministry**
- **Outreach Opportunities**

## Pastor's Note... Genesis 8:22

Fall follows summer's retreat and precedes winter's approach; winter then opens its arms to the bursting forth of spring, and spring vanishes into summer.

In my life, as in divine order, one season leads to another and each hold beauty in its own unique way. To me, it is the changing of the seasons of life which affirms every transition in my life and brings both wonderful and positive change.

In this same way the seasons of the Christian church year flow in ever changing patterns as well. Its continual cycle begins with the anticipation of the birth of the Messiah, followed by the

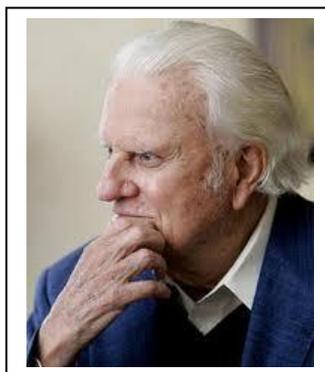
Christmas miracle, examination of Christ's life and death, the victory of the resurrection, and power of the Holy Spirit.

Closely following and reflecting on this calendar progression of the Christian faith is what gives my spiritual life a firmer foundation, regardless of the chaos around me.

I give thanks that the yearly revisiting of these great events in history continue to teach and discipline me for all the changes ahead during the natural progression of the ever approaching and unfolding of God's divine order.

*(continues on page 3)*

## Witnessing About... Understanding



I recently watched what is believed to be Billy Graham's last sermon. The sermon entitled "The Cross" from "My Hope America" was

first broadcast on November 7<sup>th</sup> on Graham's 95<sup>th</sup> birthday.

In the video, Graham stated that he has "wept" as he traveled from city to city when he saw how far away from God people have wandered. While the message of this sermon was generally the same – "He (Christ) loves you and He wants to forgive your sins" – he expressed a greater urgency: the

"great need of a spiritual awakening," the need for folks to "understand" the basis for the message.

How is it possible that we still don't understand this simple message? Never before in history have we had more access to "Christian resources": web sites, books, radio programs and movies - and on and on it goes.

*(continues on page 5)*



Happy Birthday!

**DECEMBER**

- 1 Lynn Felton
- 2 Cindy Eberwine
- 3 Flynn Pipkorn
- 7 Carol Jones
- 5 Jack Meyers
- 5 Janet Moore
- 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
- 3 Marissa Coggins
- 9 Matthew Eberwine
- 9 Steve Shultz
- 11 Jessica Price
- 12 Jason Smith
- 18 Bryant Goodloe
- 25 Philip Sandoval
- 25 Donna Sawyer
- 26 Hannah Bartholomew
- 26 Rue Bagwell
- 26 Janice Morris
- 29 Cameron Willis
- 30 Carol Clarke
- 31 Joe Johann

*\*\*please let us know if we've missed your special day*

and suddenly there was with  
 the angel a multitude of  
 the heavenly host  
 praising God and saying  
 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth,  
 peace, goodwill towards  
 men  
 Luke 2  
 13-14

**Coming Soon... EEF!**

While the blessed holiday season is fast 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:

- March 1, 2014 Box making/labeling
- March 15, 2014 Factory set-up
- March 17, 2014 Production begins
- April 5, 2013 Last day to place orders
- April 12, 2013 Factory closing/clean-up
- April 20, 2014 Easter Sunday



Tis' the Season



Christmas Cookies

**Beech Grove Cookie Exchange**

**Sunday, Dec. 8th at Noon**

Simply bake and bring 4 dozen of your favorite cookies to trade with the other church bakers and cookie aficionados following the 11 am service. 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).

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

So, let's allow God to speak to us all through the order, beauty and changing of the seasons as we, once again, journey to the manger.

May God be praised for seasons past, present, and future; and may there be found, season upon season, true belief in God's power to bring order out of chaos, beauty out of ugliness, hope out of despair, and cleansing out of sin.

Finally, may our eyes and hearts be open to anticipate ongoing growth and good will to all as we celebrate the greatest gift ever given; God becoming flesh and granting us the hope of salvation.

Thoughts worth pondering,  
*Pastor Keith Moore*



**Help Feed the Hungry**



The holiday season can be especially hard for some folks to meet all their family's needs. Please take advantage of your grocery store's sales and consider adding a few items to your

cart to help keep our Food Pantry fully-stocked into 2014 (*no glass jars, please*). Some suggestions include instant oatmeal, cereal, pop tarts, canned soups and vegetables, spaghetti sauce, pasta, rice, chili and canned meats.



**UMM Annual Holiday Brunch**  
**Sunday, Jan. 5th**

Join the United Methodist Men on Sunday, Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm to celebrate the season together. They'll enjoy a spectacular holiday brunch at the Taste of Smithfield. For more information and to confirm your attendance, please contact Jon Morris.

**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. '13	Year-to-date
<b>Income</b>		
Plate offering	\$ 33,600.09	\$154,711.52
Building fund	70.00	719.00
Special Offerings/Missions	1,944.00	4,717.95
Easter Egg Factory	8.00	111,045.20
Other	<u>\$164,099.28</u>	<u>\$170,494.00</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$199,721.37</b>	<b>\$441,687.67</b>
<b>Disbursement</b>		
Operating/program expenses	\$ 10,566.22	\$ 51,325.26
UMC district/conference fees	\$ 15,306.42	56,376.33
Pastor/staff compensation	\$ 18,212.69	92,041.18
Other	<u>\$168,437.47</u>	<u>\$226,048.07</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$212,522.80</b>	<b>\$425,790.84</b>



## Scouting at Beech Grove

**Girl Scout Troop 5292:** We are collecting new or gently used children's books for all ages as part of a service project to assist the H.E.R. (Help & Emergency Response) Shelter. Donations are appreciated and are being collected in a basket at the top of the stairs.



**Boy Scout Troop 16:** The 2014 calendar is set, but we have several projects to wrap up this year. We are hosting the Order of the Arrow District Holiday Banquet on Dec. 7<sup>th</sup> and look forward to seeing many friendly faces from other lodges. We'll also head back to Merchant's Mill Pond in mid-December for a weekend camp and canoe outing at one of our favorite retreats. Finally, we'll convene on Dec. 16<sup>th</sup> for the Holiday Court of Honor and Christmas Gathering to recognize the boys for all their hard work while enjoying food, fellowship and the fun annual gift exchange.

**Sea Scout Ship 16:** We've enjoyed a busy fall season with many activities on and off the water. Members of our crew served as judges at the Cub Scouts' Raingutter Regatta, cooked up a Caribbean dinner for Beech Grove's Wednesday prayer group, marched in the Driver Days parade, ran an event at the District Camporee and continued to work on various advancement items.

Ahead of decommissioning the boats for the winter, we took the Contest 31 out in early November for a sail to Norfolk which afforded a spectacular view of the Norwegian Tall Ship while she was in port for a visit!

Notably, Skipper Jim Mac Cord passes the Captain's wheel to Dan Trevino at an official change of command in January following nearly 15 years at the helm. He'll stay aboard Ship 16 as a mate and retain his role as Commodore on the Council level.



## Stuff Their Stockings with Care

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 Sunday, Dec. 8th.

Be sure to label your stocking for a boy or girl and indicate an appropriate age range (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

## **Witnessing About.. Understanding** *(continued from cover)*

Yet we, as a culture, are increasingly becoming less Christian, to the extent that Newsweek ran an article in 2009 entitled “The End of Christian America”. Even our president, in his book “The Audacity of Hope” (published before he was elected president), stated that “whatever we once were we are no longer just a Christian nation; we are also a Jewish nation, a Muslim nation, a Buddhist nation, a Hindu nation and a nation of non-believers.” So why is our culture becoming increasingly skeptical to Christian beliefs and walking away from the church? The reason is that many of us don’t “understand” the foundation upon which our faith is built. We have questions and doubts that we don’t really know the answers to.

From our childhood, many of us were told, “Believe in Jesus!” But today, with all of our country’s economic, political, relational, sin and social problems, people more and more are asking “why” type questions. However, we in the church have managed to raise up generations of people who don’t know how to answer those questions; people who are unable to defend their faith. For instance, how many of us have told our kids bible “stories”? Kids today – and many adults for that matter - equate “stories” with “fiction”. We read about Noah and the Ark and the Great Flood and show them this tiny, cartoonish little boat with animals and people hanging off, etc. When they ask “How can that be?” what do we say? Probably, something along the lines of, “Well I don’t know the answer, but it really doesn’t matter anyway, just along as you believe in Jesus!”

So while we struggle to biblically answer those questions, the secularists/atheists are capturing their hearts and minds of those in our society by “teaching” them why the bible, from their prospective, is not true and can’t be trusted. The result is that roughly 1% of our population (i.e. 3.6 million self-described atheists) is having a major impact on our culture. Who would have thought back in the 40’s, 50’s or 60’s that today we would have legalized abortion and gay marriage, taken God and prayer and the Bible out of public schools, and removed all religious symbols from public places? But, that is exactly what has happened. Somehow, we as a church, have become ignorant to scriptural authority and moved our “house” from the rock to the sand (read Matthew 7:24-27).

So exactly what is there to understand; what do we need to know? We all know that God loves us. We all know that He sent His only Son, Jesus the Christ, to die for us and our sins. But do we really KNOW why? We have all asked the questions at some point: Did God really create the world in six literal days? Was there really a global flood? Do dinosaurs and millions of years fit into the Bible? Why is there pain and suffering? Why did Jesus have to die? I believe the answer to all of this begins with the first line in Genesis, “In the beginning ...”. If we don’t understand the “beginning” then we don’t have the necessary foundation on which our true faith is built.

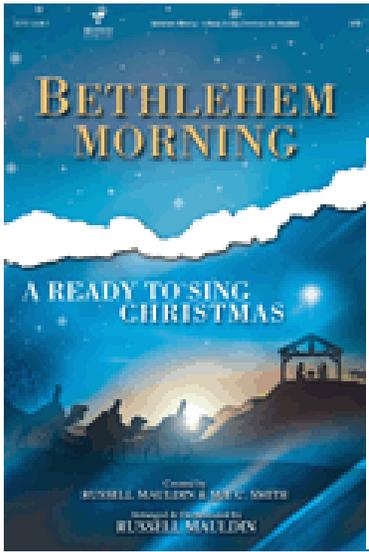
Before any building can be confidently built, it must first have a strong foundation. “In the beginning” is the strong foundation on which the rest of the Bible – and our hope – stands. Psalm 11:3 says, “if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” When we have questions, for whatever reason, we look to the world for the answers: science and the “experts”. However, we shouldn’t try to make what the world says fit into the bible, it should be the other way around. Priest and theologian, Martin Luther once said, “... but if you cannot understand how this could have been ... then grant the Holy Spirit the honor of being more learned than you are. For you are to deal with scripture in such a way that you bear in mind that God Himself says what is written.” He was speaking specifically of the days of creation, however, the premise can be carried throughout the Bible!

We should seek to understand all that we can about God’s Word. Romans 1:17 says, “the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith”. What that means is, God gives you truth, you believe that truth and God gives you more truth. The Bible says that Jesus is the Light of the World (John 1). So it stands to reason the more we obey the Light, the more Light we get! A well-known pastor once said, “The reason some of us don’t understand the Bible any more than we do is because we have not been living up to the Light God has already given us! If you want to understand the part of the Bible you don’t understand, begin to obey the part you do understand and you’ll understand what you didn’t understand. Understand?”

When we don’t seek biblical knowledge for ourselves, when we interject “man’s word” and try to make the bible say things that it doesn’t, we compromise the very foundation of our faith. It is our duty to understand the scripture enough that we may “be ready to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15). When we are faithful in doing that, God promises to give us more understanding. Let’s start strengthening our foundation today! Let us begin to obey the parts of the Bible that we do understand – always giving deference to the Holy Spirit – so that we may start to receive and understand more about our Wonderful God and our salvation through His Son, Jesus! Peace.

(You can view Billy Graham’s video sermon “The Cross” at <http://myhopewithbillygraham.org/programs/the-cross/>)

~David Willis



## Choir Presents Annual Christmas Cantata Sunday, Dec. 22nd at 7 pm

The adult choir of Beech Grove presents the Christmas music of "Bethlehem Morning" (written by the award-winning team of Russell Mauldin and Sue C. Smith) for their annual Christmas cantata on Sunday, December 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7 pm.

As the backdrop for the original Christmas chronicle, "Bethlehem Morning" recounts the miraculous story of Christmas through traditional carols and holiday favorites, but also reminds us that the story of God's love didn't stop there.

Light refreshments will follow in the Fellowship Hall.



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 8th. All poinsettias will be displayed in the sanctuary and may be taken home following the Christmas Eve service.



## Help Us Fill Christmas Dinner Baskets!

In a complement to the successful Thanksgiving Baskets, the Outreach/Missions Team is filling baskets again for area needy families this Christmas. To participate, choose a card with a specific grocery item or give a monetary donation noted for "Christmas Baskets" (please make checks to Beech Grove UMC) with the intent of purchasing fresh turkeys.

All donations of groceries or funds must be returned to the church by **Sunday, Dec. 8th**. Thank you for your support as we continue to feed neighboring families at Christmas!



### 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."**

# 2013 State of the Church Report

*Beech Grove UMC, Suffolk, VA*

Greetings Brothers and Sisters in Christ! In last year's report, we encouraged everyone to not lose sight of our guide – keeping Christ at the center of everything we do. We have done that and more! As we put a bow on the latest church year, we are confident that God is at work here at Beech Grove UMC.

2013 was our first of a three year commitment to the 5 Talent goals, intended to unify our efforts toward 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. We made significant strides towards realizing some goals and came up short in others. However, a renewed dedication to these goals by the entire laity in 2014 will continue to open doors for God's will to be done through us in Driver and beyond.

**5% annual increase in average worship attendance** – Our beginning 52-week rolling average worship attendance was 84.6, setting our goal at 88.8. We are proud to report that our average worship attendance through September was 87.7 and our church saw a net increase of nine members! We were saddened by our loss of Linwood Stalls, rejoiced at the baptism of Ethan, and anticipate the birth of another baby this November. In an effort to reach out directly to the surrounding neighborhoods, we hosted two Parents' Night Out events this year. Two young adult couples who recently joined reaffirmed that our sense of family is our greatest strength. Hide this under a bushel, "No!" we have to intentionally let it shine out into the community.

**Professions of faith represent 10% of average worship attendance** – This is one of two goals that present us with the most room for improvement. We only had one profession of faith this year, representing 1.1% of our average worship attendance. As we look toward 2014, may we be reminded of Christ's direction in Matthew 28:19, "...go and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" and then set about to fully answer that call.

**Small group participation represents 50% of average worship attendance** – This year saw the completion of a Disciple III class and the kick-off of a Disciple IV class in September. A women's fellowship/study began this October. And we would be remiss to not highlight the 200% growth in youth group (UMYF) participation, expanding from 5 to 15 since last year's confirmation class!

**50% of worship attendance serves by actively participating in relational ministries with the poor** – Our Outreach Committee, led by Janice Morris, has done a fabulous job of offering us new opportunities that go beyond charitable support from a distance and instead put us smack-dab in the middle of active service to those around us. Serving meals at the Suffolk Salvation Army remains a staple of our church-wide ministry program. We provided over 40 flood buckets to UMCOR and a large quantity of school supplies were donated to students at Driver and Florence Bowser elementary schools. Bo Mahon and Paul Smith again served intellectually disabled adults as Camp Rainbow counselors at both week-long summer retreats. Two Financial Peace courses were offered, providing a Christian based financial education to four couples, two who attended from outside of Beech Grove. Additionally, the newly developed Prayer Shawl ministry has produced immediate results by providing a gift of love, care, and comfort to those who need it most. This year also saw Shari and Keira Zirkle serve together for the second time on a mission to Lithuania, and Chuck and Marty Rintamaki participated in their second mission trip, this time to Uruguay. And just recently, our congregation was introduced to the Stop Hunger Now ministry for which we have already raised \$1,500 towards our goal of

*(continues on page 8)*

## State of the Church Report *(continued from page 7)*

hosting a food packing event before the spring. It would be close to impossible to mention all of the service rendered in this one report. However, this snapshot clearly indicates that we are making huge strides at becoming a church that is more actively involved in direct relational ministries with the poor and there is more that we can all do.

### **10% of annual giving supports ministry with the poor; 5% annual increase in giving –**

Through September, our annual plate offerings were almost \$28,000 short of our +5% goal. However, we continue to be 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. Everyone should take pride that we again met 100% of our annual apportionments and \$18,000, representing more than 12% of our annual giving, was donated in support of ministries with the poor. The total approaches 18% when donations from the UMM and UMW are included. There is no denying that we are blessed!

However, the drop in plate offerings should be further reason for us to commit to diversifying our income stream through 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.

As a small church, we continue to 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. This year's highly successful Vacation Bible School (VBS), led by Lorraine Mims and averaging close to 30 children per evening, was indicative of how much good we can do when everyone contributes. We are in the second year of our plan to resize our committees, and we are very excited about the new faces who will be serving on committees for the first time starting in 2014, bringing new and diverse ideas to our leadership.

The Trustees were extremely active this year. Significant improvements to our landscaping has made our grounds cleaner and more simple to maintain, but no less attractive. Capital improvements included a new sanctuary sound system, reinforcement of the sanctuary windows, and the removal of a failing tree. The icing on the cake was the addition of an external handicapped access ramp making our sanctuary more accommodating and welcoming to those with disabilities. Our plan to renovate the existing building was tabled due to a cost estimate that exceeded our means, however Site Planning deliberation continues toward seeking God's long-term will for the back land as well as making manageable improvement projects to our existing facility.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, we feel called to close out this report much like last year. God is clearly at work in Beech Grove, and we have so much to celebrate! Yet, regardless of our progress, Jesus still commands us to "go and make disciples." Together as Christ's church and with God leading the way, let's continue to step out in faith with a renewed commitment to reflecting Christ to those around us.

*Keith*

Keith Moore  
Pastor

*Jason*

Jason Bartholomew  
Lay Leader

## 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.



## UMW Highlights

The United Methodist Women are pleased to report a \$579 profit from their 2013 projects with thanks to the Beech Grove congregation. Funds were used to support UMW's global mission projects and other local outreach efforts including Genieve Shelter, Wesley Community Center, Camp Rainbow, Stop Hunger Now and more. Keep reading in 2014!

## Knitting Group Delivers on Comfort and Fellowship

Since the inception of The Prayer Shawl Ministry in April, the members have lovingly donated their time and talents by creating hand-knitted and crocheted shawls for those in need.

The ministry message of caring is simple, universal and enduring. Time and again, the creation and presentation of a prayer shawl (like all acts of generosity) enriches the giver as well as the recipient.

Our prayer shawl ministry meets every Tuesday from 1 to 3 pm, and welcomes new participation of both experienced crafters and those who wish to learn. Donations of knitting supplies from those who no longer knit/crochet also are appreciated. For more information, please contact Rose Brown at #538-2369.



## Outreach Committee Leads the Way for Beech Grove Service Opportunities

You may be most familiar with the Outreach Committee's quarterly call for dessert donations, but their programs stretch beyond the Salvation Army to touch the lives of many. Most recently, they rallied together to host a Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser with proceeds benefiting the Stop Hunger Now project. The Beech Grove congregation was very generous and helped exceed their fundraising goal!

The holiday season brings projects including Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner baskets and filled stockings for those less fortunate. Watch for news of a Souper Bowl project and the ever-popular lunch service at the Salvation Army in early 2014 plus other opportunities to be the hands and feet of God.

