



FIRST NEWS

January 2008

FAREWELL UPDATE

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Since my announcement to you in November of my resignation as your pastor, I have been on a roller coaster of feelings and emotions. I know also that this has been difficult for many of you as you supportively allow my family the period of time we need to leave effective February 1. I thank you with all my heart for bearing with us during this challenging time of transition and change.

I have been through "leave-taking" times before, moving from one church to another, sad at departing but also excited by the prospects of another church challenge. But this time there is no transition to another church; this time the transition is to retirement from full-time ministry. As at no other time in my life, I think I know what Abraham felt like when he "...set out, not knowing" (Hebrews 11:8).

For me retirement does not mean quitting — it means scaling back ministry, at most to possible supply preaching or short interims. But more importantly for me retirement means finding new ways to do something vital with my life outside the "fish bowl" of the local church. Retiring will mean volunteering, recreating more (not just golf), doing more hand in hand with Bonita, trying my hand at writing, reading more books, trying to find ways to be my best self in whatever ways that can be demonstrated in love and caring toward others.

The fourteen years my family has lived in Lexington have been very rewarding to us. Laura and Will are both proud graduates of Lexington Senior High School where the diversity of the student body contributed much to their present achievement.

Much of their character has been molded by Lexington Senior High School and First Reformed United Church of Christ. Bonita has given her best to Lexington Senior High School. No teacher works harder than Bonita to make a positive impact on the lives of students. For all of us in the Hooper family friendships have been made in this community that will never be severed. We have been blessed. We know that our lives hold a meaningful future even though letting go of First Reformed and Lexington is painful.

Many have asked about our plans now that Bonita and I both will be retired. Presently Winston-Salem beckons for a couple of reasons: Bonita's mother and sister live there and they need us, and also because since my days as a student at Wake Forest I have thought it would be a wonderful place for retirement. Of course we will not be moving anywhere until we sell our house and find one in Winston-Salem. That may take a while. So pray for us as we go through this time of transition. You may still bump into us around town for a while.

My last Sunday as your pastor will be on January 27, 2008. The service will be a service of farewell according to the Book of Worship of the United Church of Christ. Later that afternoon there will be a reception in the fellowship hall. I hope you will come so that I can tell you how much I love you and express to you my gratitude. Elsewhere in this newsletter, I asked Paula to print a poem entitled "Bits and Pieces" which expresses much of how I see things now. Please read it!

In Christ, Mike Hooper

Consistory Highlights

December 2007

From Reverend Hooper's Report:

- Dedicated the lift to the choir loft given by the Jackie Sink family
- Attended special meetings of the Family Relations Committee for Habitat for Humanity
- Attended reception for former Mayor Richard Thomas and former Police Chief Leroy Pearson
- Thanked Amy McNeill for planning the Advent Workshop
- Thanked Paul, Lee Ann, the Choir, and the Orchestra for a superb cantata performance
- Thanked everyone for their contributions to the benevolences
- Invited men to come to the next Brotherhood meeting
- Will be taking some vacation the week after Christmas
- Important upcoming dates:
 - December 17 Staff Christmas party at the Hoopers
 - December 23 Baptism of Kalyssa Hutchens
 - December 24 Christmas Eve Service—11:00 p.m.
 - January 6 Communion and Ordination of Elders and Deacons



Lisa Nelson thanked Women's Life for the meal they provided at the Advent Workshop. Between thirty and forty people attended. She reminded everyone of the covered dish supper and Children's Christmas program on December 16.

James Gray thanked Tom Danze for the new handrails to the Chancel in the Sanctuary. He also thanked all the members of the Property Committee for their help this year.

The Board of Worship and Sacrament, chaired by Joyce Price and Peggy Bates, thanked the Decorating and Hanging of the Greens Committees for their hard work during this Christmas Season. Also, the other committees under that Board were recognized for their service this year.

Carolyn Spivey spoke to the consistory about ideas the Willing Workers Sunday School Class had to help our church grow. She talked about the "Great Commission" of our church to put words into action. Some ideas presented were visitation, welcoming people who attend Sunday school, and a homecoming event in the fall with a special speaker and music. The Evangelism and Congregational Life committees will meet with the Willing Workers class to study the suggestions and to make further plans.

A Search Committee for the purpose of selecting a new pastor for First Reformed UCC was named. Members include:

Corinne Gray, Birke McNeill, Mark Smith, Sauni Johnson, Walter Hoffman, Clifford, Lopp, Tony Peele, Vicky Gray, Dawn Shaak, Carolyn Spivey, Eulene Shepherd, J.W. Bates, and Joyce Price.

Consistory Officers for 2008 are:

President - Walter Hoffman; Vice President—Scott Frye; Secretary—Lisa Nelson; and Treasurer—Melody Evans.

Women's Life Fellowship

Co-Chairs: Raeann Biesecker and Mary Jo Jessup



Women's Life Fellowship had our annual Christmas party at the home of Melody Evans. Heart sisters were revealed, delicious food enjoyed and wonderful fellowship shared. We all truly appreciate Melody and Albert's hospitality.

Thank you to all who supported our December bake sale. We raised over \$500.00 to use in our mission work.

Our next meeting is Tuesday, January 8th at 7 p.m. in the parlor. Those who want to participate will draw for a new heart sister for the coming year. If you cannot attend the meeting and want to be part of the heart sister program, please contact Raeann or Paula to have your name put in the hat. Childcare will be provided and all women of the church are welcome to attend.

United Friendship Club

Co-Presidents: Eulene Shepherd and Camille Morgan

The Friendship Club met Wednesday, December 12th at noon in the fellowship hall with twenty-six members and friends present. We had lovely decorations of snowmen and angels on the tables for our annual Christmas party. After a delicious covered dish lunch, Cathy Waitman shared devotions with us.

For our program, Dr. Chris Burr showed pictures of celebrations of Christmas in Germany.

Our next meeting will be January 23rd. Join us for food, fun, and fellowship in the new year.

Men's Brotherhood

By: Clifford Lopp

The Men's Brotherhood met on December 10th at Yarborough's Restaurant for our Christmas party. We had a good crowd and a wonderful meal. Special thanks to Cheryl Walser for her great hospitality. We enjoyed fellowship and even sang a Christmas carol. Thank you to our President, Frank Leonard for leading us.

Our next meeting will be Thursday, January 17th in the fellowship hall at 6 p.m. The evening meal will be provided. All men of the church are welcome!

Bits and Pieces

Bits and pieces

Bits and pieces

People.

People important to you...cross your life.

Some touch it with love...then move on.

There are people who leave you and you breathe

*A sigh of relief and you wonder why you ever came ~
into contact with them.*

There are people who leave you and you breathe

*A sigh of remorse and you wonder why they had to
go away and leave such a gaping hole.*

Children leave parents.

Friends leave friends.

Acquaintances leave acquaintances and move on.

People change homes.

People grow apart.

*You think on the many who have moved into your
hazy memory.*

You look on those who are present ~

And wonder.

I believe in God's master plan in lives.

He moves people in and out of each other's lives,

And each leaves a mark upon the others.

You find you are made up of bits and pieces

*Of all who ever touched your life, and you are more
because of it, and you would be less
if they had not touched you.*

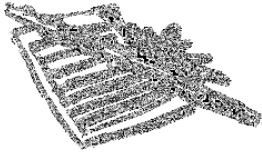
Pray to God that you can accept the bits and pieces.

In humility, and wonder, and never question ~

And never regret! Bits and pieces.

~Lois A. Cheney

Thank-you...



We extend a huge thank you to our Choir Director, Paul Freeman, Pianist, Lee Ann Peele, the choir, and orchestra for the WONDERFUL cantata presented on Sunday, December 9th.

Special thanks to Director of Christian Education, Amy McNeill and all the supporting parents for the GREAT children's Christmas program. We were truly blessed to be able to see the nativity from a different (younger) view.



Thanks to the offerings at the Wednesday night Thanksgiving Service (\$185.00) and Christmas Eve Candlelight Service (\$689.96) we were able to send a nice gift to Crisis Ministry over and above our budgeted benevolence.

THANK YOU! Because of your support we will end the year with bills and benevolences **PAID!!!** Our church has always been, and continues to be a giving church. I'm very proud that we are able to support our community through our benevolent gifts.



Dear Church Family,

The First Reformed UCC Staff wishes to thank all of you for your generosity during the holiday season. Your gifts of love and appreciation mean so much to all of us.

Thank you, Mike, Paula, Amy, Paul, and Lee Ann

THANK YOU to Alisa Johnson, Betty and J.W. Bates, Pattie Everhart, John Gray, Nancy Robbins, Ramona Yarbrough, Banks Shepherd, John Potts, Janette Neal, Lynn and Jordan McCarn, Ann and Walter Hoffman, Sandra Hutchens, Kalyssa Hutchens, Eulene Shepherd, Steve Smith, Kivi and Ava Miller, and Girl Scout Troop #984 (Corinne & Alice Gray) for representing First Reformed UCC by ringing bells at Lanier Hardware to assist the Salvation Army.



Dear First Reformed UCC,

Thank you so much for allowing us to use your fellowship hall for our rehearsals again this year. May all of you have a blessed Christmas. *The Community Candlelight Choir*

THANK YOU NOTES WERE RECEIVED FROM THE FOLLOWING FOR BENEVOLENT GIFTS:

Pastor's Pantry	The Salvation Army	Lancaster Seminary	Nazareth Children's Home
Blowing Rock	Family Services	Crisis Ministry	Hospice of Davidson County
Elon University	Catawba College	Habitat for Humanity	Davidson Medical Ministries

Angel Tree Donations

Thank-you to the many people who placed Angels on the breezeway Christmas Tree in honor or memory of someone special. Your generous donations raised \$1,896.00 for the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.

In Honor of - - -

Ralph Bailey
Betty Bates
J.W. and Betty Bates
Peggy Bates
Bob and Doris Biesecker
Brad and Raeann Biesecker
Holt Biesecker
Raeann Biesecker
Charlie Britt
Emily Britt
The Choir
Church Staff
Church Staff
Church Staff
Church Staff
Justin Davis
Taylor Davis
Wanda Daye
Albert & Melody Evans
Albert & Melody Evans
First and Second Grade Sunday School Class
Paul and Debra Freeman
Paul and Debra Freeman
Paul and Debra Freeman
Carolyn Grimes
Virginia and Bunny Hill
Bonita Hooper
Reverend Mike Hooper
Reverend Mike Hooper
Mike and Bonita Hooper
Mike and Bonita Hooper
Mike and Bonita Hooper
Margaret Hodges
Mary Jo Jessup
Frances Leonard
Mary Louise Leonard
Betty and Larry Link
Callie Link
James Link
Larry Link
Clifford and Paula Lopp
Clifford and Paula Lopp
The Clifford Lopp Family

By

Mary Crouse
Your Heart Sister
Calvin, Susan, Devin & Jonathan Odom
Mary Crouse
Lisa Nelson
Lisa Nelson
Lisa Nelson
Paula Lopp
Betty and Larry Link
Betty and Larry Link
Doris Frye
Doris Frye
Mary Jo and Lee Jessup
Banks and Eulene Shepherd
Raeann, Brad & Holt Biesecker
Betty and Larry Link
Betty and Larry Link
Paula Lopp
Clifford and Paula Lopp
Tony and Lee Ann Peele
Nancy Robbins
Lisa Nelson
Tony and Lee Ann Peele
Clifford and Paula Lopp
Willing Workers Sunday School Class
Cathy Waitman
Mike Hooper
John and Vicky Gray
Keith and Alisa Johnson
Clifford and Paula Lopp
Lynn, Lauren and Seth Klopp
Banks and Eulene Shepherd
Merle and Jerry Hodges
Paula Lopp
Elizabeth Sink
Merle and Jerry Hodges
Mary Crouse
Betty and Larry Link
Betty and Larry Link
Betty Link
Lisa Nelson
Tony and Lee Ann Peele
Dawn and Bob Shaak

Angel Tree Donations, *continued*

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Claire Melville
Lisa Nelson
Tony and Lee Ann Peele
Tony and Lee Ann Peele
Cory Reed
Ryan Reed
Nancy Robbins
Lauren Thompson
Cathy Waitman
Cathy Waitman
Mark, Missina and Kaylee Waitman
Steve Waitman
Women's Life Fellowship
Yoga Class

In Loving Memory of - - -

Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Bailey
Mary Allison Bailey
Ed Bates
Ethel and Murphy Bates, Sr
Ruby Bouchard
Raymond Conrad
Reverend Carl Daye
Dale B Everhart
Laura Mae Everhart
Lori Lopp Floyd
Lori Lopp Floyd
Lori Lopp Floyd
Bill Grimes
Archie Hodges
Gordon Knowles
Evelyn Lanning
Evelyn and John Lanning
Jessie Mae Leatherman
Bill Leatherman
Dr. Jake Leonard
Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln Link
Chris Madren
Bobby Nelson
Paul and Edna Odom
Dan Phillips II
Vernon Price, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Roby Swing
Cliff, Helen and Nancy Waitman
Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Williams
Leonard Younts and Karen Foster

Alice, James, Scott & Corinne Gray
Paula Lopp
Clifford and Paula Lopp
Lisa Nelson
Betty and Larry Link
Betty and Larry Link
Holt Biesecker
Myra Thompson
Lisa Nelson
Paula Lopp
Cathy Waitman
Cathy Waitman
Raeann Biesecker
Carolyn Spivey

By

Ralph Bailey
Ralph Bailey
Peggy Bates
Pattie B Everhart
Butch Bouchard
Cathy Waitman
Wanda Daye
Pattie B Everhart
April Craft
Dawn and Bob Shaak
The Clifford Lopp Family
Lee Ann and Tony Peele
Carolyn Spivey
Merle and Jerry Hodges
Nancy Robbins
Mary Crouse
Myra Thompson
Lisa Nelson
Lisa Nelson
Merle and Jerry Hodges
Larry and Betty Link
Nancy Robbins
Lisa Nelson
Calvin, Susan, Devin & Jonathan Odom
Adena Wall
Joyce and Valerie Price
Adena Wall
Cathy Waitman
Betty and Larry Link
Bruce and Betty Younts



Director of Christian Education

Amy McNeill



December has ended and all the craziness that comes with it. It is a wonderful month of celebrations, shopping, parties, family gatherings, children and Santa Claus...sometimes too much is crammed into it. Hopefully we all remembered it is a time to reflect and celebrate the most important birthday of the year.

When it is all over and Santa has come and gone, life mellows out and it's time to think of the new year. As we begin another year I hope each of you will put your church family in your new year resolution. Whether it be volunteering your time and talents, attending Sunday school regularly, or making your church attendance a little better than the year before, let's try to focus on what we need to do to grow closer to the Lord and our church family. I'm excited to begin a new year...an opportunity to try to improve as a person and my relationship with the Lord.

I want to thank everyone who participated and helped with the children's Christmas program. Thank you to all the parents for my Christmas gift and your support throughout the year.

I wish for everyone a Happy New Year and I look forward to spending 2008 with you!

Sunday School—December

Ramona B Yarbrough
Carolyn Spivey
C.H. Bates
John Walser
Clifford Lopp
Lisa Nelson

Jo Hudson
Adena Wall
J.W. Bates
Mike Hooper
Paula Lopp
Cathy Waitman

Wanda Daye
Elizabeth Sink
Earlie Hartley
Jeff Hutchens
Camille Morgan



Kid's Club

Corinne Gray



The Kid's Club met in November to make and decorate a growth chart so they could keep up with how much they're going to grow. They are located in the upstairs hallway of the education building. For those kids who missed this activity you will get another chance to make one!

In December we celebrated Christmas. To show how much we care for the shut-ins of the church, we created Christmas cards to be mailed to them. Afterwards we had a Christmas party.

Mark your calendars for January meetings: **Tuesday, January 8 at 7 p.m.** in the music room and **Sunday, January 27** immediately following the children's sermon in the music room. All children ages 4-8 are welcome to attend! If you have any questions, please contact Corinne Gray at 249-3971.

DECEMBER MEMORIALS

Reverend Keith Sink
Martha and Robert Adams

Mr. and Mrs. L.O. Walser, Sr.
L.O. Walser, Jr.

Etta Mae Jackson
{C.H. Bates' Sister}
John and Vicky Gray
Paul Canady

Christopher Andrew Madren
{Melody Evans' Brother}
John and Vicky Gray

Gordon G. Knowles, Sr.
John and Vicky Gray

Roby Leonard
John and Vicky Gray

Abigail Leonard
John and Vicky Gray

Hank Garrity
Jay Young



DECEMBER HONORARIUMS

Reverend Mike and Bonita Hooper
Prentice Weldon

Altar Flowers

Coordinator: Betty Link



As we begin a new year please consider special occasions that you might want to place flowers on the altar for the morning worship service. Several individuals have secure dates that they continue to use on an annual basis, however, there are several open dates. If you would like to donate flowers on a particular

Sunday, or just to fill in on an open Sunday, please contact Betty at 853-2507.

JANUARY STEWARDS

Ushers: Chairperson: Peggy Bates
Captain: J.W. Bates
Denise Durham, Ramona Yarbrough, Peggy Bates

NOTE: If you would like to add your name to the 2008 usher schedule, please contact Peggy Bates at 249-0916



Current and past elders and deacons...you are the communion stewards of the church. Elders serve the center aisle and Deacons serve the outside aisles. If you are not currently assisting with this important stewardship role and would like to serve, please contact John Potts at 248-6325. Holy Communion will be served Sunday, January 6th, April 6th, July 6th and October 5th of 2008.

Plate Attendant: Don Leonard

Sound Tech: Jordan McCarn

Acolytes: Matthew and Kelsey Johnson

Adult Joint Sunday School: Responsible for lesson - - - New Way Class

Social: Host/Hostess: Cheryl and Bill Walser, Janette Neal, and John Potts

Greeters:	January 6	Eddie and Susan Miller
	January 13	Walter and Ann Hoffman
	January 20	Ruth Fritts and June Grubb
	January 27	Larry and Donna Berrier

Nursery:	January 6	Kivi and Edgar Miller
	January 13	Amy and Birke McNeill
	January 20	Nicole and Mark Smith
	January 27	Sauni and Thomas Johnson



John Barber, Ethel Bailey, Sadie Bailey, Mary Louise Leonard, Frances Leonard, Ike Green, Louise Rollins, and Rita Tussey

January 2008

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		Office Holiday	11 a.m. (P) MORNING GLORY CIRCLE 7 p.m. Choir Practice	11:30 a.m. (P) Reception Committee 5:30 p.m. (P) YOGA Class		
6 Joint Sunday School Sunday School Social 11 a.m. COMMUNION Ordain Elders/Deacons	7 7 p.m. (P) WOMEN'S LIFE FELLOWSHIP and KID'S CLUB	8 7 p.m. (P) WOMEN'S LIFE FELLOWSHIP and KID'S CLUB	9 7 p.m. Choir Practice	10 5:30 p.m. (P) YOGA Class	11 6:30 p.m. (Marborough's) NEW WAY CLASS Christmas Party	12
13 7 p.m. CONSISTORY MTG	14 Morning Glory Circle Serving Meal at Shelter 5:30 Scrap Booking	15	16 7 p.m. Choir Practice	17 5:30 p.m. (P) YOGA Class 6 p.m. (FH) MEN'S BROTHERHOOD	18	19
20	21 9 a.m. (P) TRUSTEE MEETING	22	23 Noon (FH) FRIENDSHIP CLUB 7 p.m. Choir Practice	24 5:30 p.m. (P) YOGA Class	25	26
27 3-5 p.m. (FH) RETIREMENT RECEPTION FOR REVEREND HOOPER	28	29	30 7 p.m. Choir Practice	31 5:30 p.m. (P) YOGA Class		



The first Sunday of the new year, Sunday, January 6, 2008, Elders and Deacons joining the Consistory in 2008 will be ordained/installed during the eleven o'clock worship service.

Elders: Nancy Robbins and Cheryl Walser

Deacons: April Craft, Ramona Yarbrough, and Eddie Yates

Trustee: Jerry Smith

Holy Communion will be served **Sunday, January 6, 2008**



First News

First Reformed United Church of Christ
104 East Center Street
Lexington, NC 27292
Phone: 336-248-2617
Fax: 336-248-6163
Email: church@frucc.org

www.frucc.org

Return Service Requested

CHURCH STAFF

Minister..... Reverend Mike Hooper
 Director of Christian Education Amy McNeill
 Administrative Asst Paula Lopp
 Choir Director Paul Freeman
 Organist Lee Ann Peele

SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
 Worship Service 11:00 a.m.

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Lexington, NC 27292
Permit #168