



the View from the Pew

Vol. 19, Issue 1
January, 2010

For the people of Waleska United Methodist Church
A family of faith that worships God, grows in faith, and serves humanity

Christmas: A Big Let Down?

Each year Laura and I try to make Christmas a very happy and special time for our children. We hit the stores and shop for those items we have been hearing our kids talk about in the months leading up to Christmas. We try to distribute the Christmas presents as evenly as possible to each of our children and we have all our little rituals to make memories with them. There is a lot that goes into preparing to celebrate Christmas and everything builds up for at least a month. Finally, the day arrives and the kids get excited as they open their gifts and participate in all the celebration. This year was no different as we worked so hard to make Christmas special at our house. We stayed up on Christmas Eve preparing the house for the happiness that filled the air on Christmas morning. The kids had a fun time on Christmas morning and we were happy that things went so well.

Then, the next two days were filled with visiting extended family for a Christmas celebration at each of their houses. We traveled to grandparents and great grandparents houses. We visited with aunts and uncles and cousins. By the time we got home a couple days later the kids were worn out and we were wondering why we put everyone through so much to celebrate Christmas together. In some ways the celebration of Christmas can be a let down by the time you are finished. Why do we put so much into trying to create an experience for our families when it results in overload for the kids and a feeling of disappointment for those that worked so hard to put it all together? Why do we often enter into a new year worn out from celebrating Christmas and stressed out over the debt we accumulated while trying to make it perfect? Maybe that's not the way things are supposed to go.

This year I was reminded that Christmas is a simple celebration even

though we try to make it so complex. We should be looking toward God to make this time of year special instead of trying to create an experience of our own. The simple gift of Jesus Christ should be the main focus of our celebration rather than looking for that perfect gift that will not make our loved ones truly happy in the long run. I was reminded of the simplicity of Christmas as I watched my children meltdown on day two of travel and opening up more gifts than they

needed or even wanted. I was reminded of the simplicity of Christmas when our daughter said, "We just want to stay home and play with our toys." Sometimes the best things are the simple

things

Maybe you are overloaded from celebrating Christmas and you are limping into a new year feeling like something is missing. The message is simple and we can always return to it. God has given us the gift of salvation through his Son, Jesus Christ. We don't have to do it on our own. God is with us. As you head into another year, don't forget this simple message. You can be lifted up by Christ rather than experience a let down after Christmas.

Be Blessed,

Pastor Sam

The Pastor's Message

Focus on the Front Windshield

One dusky winter evening as I was driving home over the north Georgia mountains, the fog was like a wet blanket covering everything that was familiar. For awhile I was uneasy and anxious thinking about what might lie ahead and how I would make it over the steeper, narrower roads to come. I put my lights on bright and tried to see down the road but the lights were only swallowed by the dense unknown. Whenever I looked in the rearview mirror my vision was also limited. I had to make myself remember what someone had taught me and what had worked in the past when I was in a similar situation. Only then, when I slowed down, lowered the headlights and concentrated on the road just ahead and where I was on that road, was I able to continue with a feeling of safety. I had to concentrate on staying straight on the road and not swerving either direction for that could have been disastrous.

The highway of our lives is like that. Sometimes things crowd in on us and cover us like a fog. Our vision becomes limited, our senses dulled and confusion and anxiety set in. We forget how to cope. We forget that we have been successful in the past in overcoming obstacles. We stare into the rearview mirror of past mistakes and hardships but can find no help. We try to look ahead and become anxious about the steep hills and possible hazards that could be waiting for us. We become paralyzed by the regrets of our past and our dread of the future. We swerve off our intended path and get bogged down.

Only when we stop or slow down, look at where we are now on our journey, evaluate the situation and fully experience the moment can we go the next mile with a sense of confidence. Remembering what we have been taught by those we respect and applying what has successfully worked for us in the past, we can increase our chances for success in the future, one step at a time, one day at a time.

As it says in Proverbs 4:25-27: "Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left, keep your foot from evil."

As we go into another year may God help us to:

Focus on the front windshield, not the rearview mirror.

— Carolyn Burkholder

The following Report on Briarpatch Church was written 35 years ago (Dec. 1, 1974) by Scott Jacobs (son of Dan and Carolyn Burkholder) for a World History class at Cherokee High School. He interviewed many Waleska area residents in their 80's and 90's for his report, fearing that the important history of Briarpatch would be lost upon their deaths.

The Waleska UMC met there for some time in the nineteen eighties before relocating to the newly constructed Hagan Chapel.

The historic old building continues in use as it is currently rented by the Waleska UMC to the Dogwood Hills Community Church.

A REPORT ON BRIARPATCH CHURCH by Scott Jacobs

Briarpatch Methodist Evangelistic Church is one of the oldest landmarks in Waleska (the Paul Boston home is older,

having been built before the Civil War). The church is a has-been, a hold-over from the past. Only the senior citizens of Waleska can remember



its heyday. Yet, much of the history of Cherokee County and Waleska is locked within those old walls. Briarpatch Church is a great heritage for us today.

Briarpatch Church was founded in 1834 by Lewis Warlic Reinhardt, a member of the then numerous and influential Reinhardt family, who had moved to Waleska a few years previously. Lewis Reinhardt was buried in the Briarpatch graveyard in 1884, and his marker still stands today. Evidently, when the church was started, there were quite a few briars in the vicinity and thus, the church was tagged Briarpatch, and the name has stuck ever since.

There were no Baptist churches in the area when Briarpatch was started, and indeed, a Baptist church was not built in Waleska until the middle nineteen hundreds. As one senior citizen of

Waleska put it, "You had to go to preachin', everybody had to go to preachin', and everybody went!" So Briarpatch's congregation grew as the county grew and both Methodists and Baptists attended the services there.

Another feature of Briarpatch Church made its reputation spread—the camp-meetings. These were open-air services that often lasted for as long as ten days. People from miles around would load up provisions and head for the church when camp-meetings were held. Many people had set up permanent shelters at Briarpatch for the camp-meetings, but many others slept on the ground and cooked over campfires. Mrs. Elizabeth Bailey of Waleska tells about her memories of the camp-meetings.

"I remember hearing my father (D.P. Moss) talk about the camp-meetings of that time. One particular thing that he enjoyed telling was attending a service. I'm not sure of the location from his conversation. The tent was not a canvas tent as we think of it, but

more a brush arbor. So he told of having a little dog that followed him to a service one night, and it seems to have been an exceptionally moving service because some women began to shout, and of course the little dog began to bark, and he, being just a small boy, was amused by that, so he clapped his hands, you know, and the dog barked that much louder. I think his daddy gave him a spanking for that when he got him home."

The most famous of all the Waleska camp-meetings was held in 1884. It was estimated that over five hundred people attended that meeting. Mr. Chester Tarpley, long-time member of Briarpatch Church, reminisces, "Well, Mr. Fincher was telling me one day that they had a sort of a camp-meeting there and Mr. Fincher said there was a Pitman woman, she's buried out there. She got to shouting one day in the service, and she just dropped dead, and he said they never did bring her home, said they let

her stay in the church until they got ready to bury her out there."

Unfortunately, the popularity of the camp-meetings dropped and the last one was held in the late 1800's. All traces of these camps have disappeared.

A church building was erected sometime in the middle 1800's, but it burned in the early eighteen eighties (the exact dates of this first building were impossible to find and so these dates are approximations based on the information I found).

In the late 1880's or early 1890's, a new building was erected (the present building). Some of the timber for the church was cut by Mr. Jesse Fincher (Mr. Fincher died in November, 1974, and he is buried at Briarpatch). The church in the late eighteen hundreds was expanding rapidly. Membership climbed and in the eighteen eighties went past the hundred mark. In 1888, there were five Sunday Schools in the area surrounding Canton. The churches employed about 30 officers and teachers and there were 375 students. Total cost for literature was about \$8.00.

Briarpatch Church was known under a variety of names—Waleska Mission, Waleska Academy, Reinhardt's Chapel, or Waleska camp. The Quarterly Conferences for the church were very important in that they kept the church from backsliding into total confusion. Cherokee County was, at that time, growing very rapidly and the number of new members joining the church kept it in a state of chaos. The church records had been neglected and at one Quarterly Conference over fifty names of people long dead or moved away were struck off the membership list. The church calmed down somewhat in the early nineteen hundreds, though, and all was well. It was about 1910 that the spelling of Waleska became Waleska. The roads in this part of Cherokee County were not in the best condition (in fact it was the 1930's before highway 140 was first graveled), and evidently the Waleska Highway, which at that time ran in front of the church instead of behind it, became very muddy and presented a problem at times.

The preacher at Briarpatch (Reinhardt Chapel) was expected to be the president of Reinhardt College (or was it the other way around).

(continued on page 3)

(Briarpatch—continued from page 2)

A couple of the most famous preacher-presidents were: Rev. P.P. Eakes (1890-91) and Rev. C. Evans Pattillo (1891-94). In 1917, the preacher's salary was \$250. It was in the early nineteen hundreds that Reinhardt College built their own building in which the church services could be held. The Methodist's meeting place, therefore, moved to that building and Briarpatch Church was used only in the summer and for funeral services. This state of affairs continued for many years and Briarpatch Church was slowly going to ruin. It was in the 1940's, though, when the doom of Briarpatch Church seems to descend. Mr. C. Tarpley tells about it. "We used it (Briarpatch) sorta like only in the summertime. There's a few summers that they didn't use it. We got to going out there in the summertime—through the summertime services. Now Dr. Burgess (the president of Reinhardt College), he and Lee Mackey, they didn't like to go out there very much. So one night we were going to vote to decide whether or not to continue. We had day and night services, too, when Green (Reynolds Green—one-time pastor of the Waleska Methodist Church) was here. So they brought a bunch out from the college, you know, so they could out-vote us. And then for about two summers we didn't go back." It seems, though, that Dr. Burgess changed his mind or he got out-voted and the congregation started meeting at Briarpatch again for the summer services.

Other dangers threatened the old church, though. For example, the possibility of the Waleska Methodists building a permanent church building. Ironically, it was Dr. Burgess who saved Briarpatch from this danger. It seems that R.M. Moore traded some land to Rev. Reynolds Green (the land where the Waleska Baptist Church now stands) to build a church on. Dr. Burgess disagreed with Rev. Green and he told Dr. Moore to let the Baptists have it. Later, before he left, Rev. Green said, "Sometime we'll have a Methodist Church here, but it may be after I'm gone."

Fortunately, Briarpatch Church has withstood all these dangers, and the college and private citizens keep it in good repair for summer use.

Today, Briarpatch Church is a little, white, one-room building standing on highway 140 right outside the Waleska city limits. The old Waleska Highway is a tree-covered trail in the woods. The cemetery sits on the hill overlooking the church, and many of its gravestones are illegible. Inside the church the rough plank pews sit facing a small pulpit; an old pot-bellied heating stove stands in the corner. What is it about the church that makes it something different from an old, time-worn building? History. As one senior citizen put it, "I guess you could tell and notice the difference in the preaching, and the service, even the singing. Seemed like, course it might have been just my way of thinking, but seemed like people enjoyed it better, you know, and felt a little different out there in the Old Church, cause its been a church so long."

The future looks bleak for Briarpatch. When the Waleska Methodist Church builds its own church, what will happen to Briarpatch? The future of the old church is in the hands of the Methodist congregation.

Without Briarpatch Church, a colorful chapter in the history of Cherokee County would have been lost. This little one-room building, as the first Methodist Church in Cherokee County, brought the Methodists together and combined their efforts to develop and encourage the growth of Methodism in Cherokee County.



Post-It Note Party

Saturday, January 16th
10am—noon
In the Fellowship Hall



Great Waleska Garage Sale

Saturday, April 17th
9am—1pm
Waleska UMC parking lot

Join Rick Whiteside in a new Adult Sunday School study—*When All Else Fails Read the Instructions* by James Moore. The class meets in the Brides Room in the rear of the sanctuary at 9:15am. All are welcome.

A new Ladies Bible Study *Jesus the One and Only* by Beth Moore will be offered weekly beginning Monday, Jan. 25th from 7-9pm and Tuesday, Jan. 26th from 1-3pm. This is a 10 week study that will finish mid April. For more information please see or email DeDe Reilly.

Romeo's and Juliet's

The Juliet's will meet on January 14th at 11am at the church.



The Romeo's will meet on January 20th at 11am at the church.

Call Martha Ayer or Bruce Ayer at 770-479-6303 for details,

Missions Update

Our contributions for the Thanksgiving and Christmas meals provided by MUST were great, but were down from last year—probably due to the economy. MUST still needs our contributions of canned food items and our traditional gifts of peanut butter and jelly. Please put your contributions in the basket in the Fellowship Hall and we will deliver them to MUST.

Waleska UMC supports Meals on Wheels with a monthly contribution as part of our mission budget and outreach. Also three of our members deliver meals on Monday mornings. They are Alan Allen, Dick Dowis and Jerry Sauls. Pray for their safety and tell them how much you appreciate their efforts.

—Joe Love, Missions Chairman
(Editor's note: We need at least one more person, male or female, to deliver the meals. This would only require a few hours of your time on one Monday each month.)



"Announcing that the much enjoyed Wednesday Family Night will resume on February 10th."



January Ushers

- 3rd Bobby & Diane Jordan
- 10th John & Carole Christian
- 17th Don & Marci Hottinger
- 24th Wendell & Kay Abernathy
- 31st Joe & Harriet Love



January Birthdays

- 1st Audrey Knoll, Travis Countryman, Tracey Countryman
- 3rd Janis Lytle
- 8th Dick Summers
- 9th Jim Poole
- 14th Miranda Grogan
- 19th Aaron Hamby
- 21st Bradley Fowler, Cole Fowler, Tony Shedron
- 23rd Ray Bolick
- 26th Drake Dunham
- 28th Ashlyn Hamby, Aiden Hamby
- 31st Barney Bell



January Anniversaries

- 31st Al & Sandy Smith

Book Notes

Have you read a good book lately? Please write a review and share with us.

The Tongues of the Dead by Brad Kelln

Father Ronald McCallum, who was placed at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University twenty years ago to watch over the Voynich manuscript, sees a young boy named Matthew reading the manuscript through the display case glass. The boy tells Father McCallum that it is the language of the forsaken, who are half men and half angels and God's secret. Father McCallum finds out the boy is autistic and has never spoken. The Vatican sends Father Valori to determine whether the boy can read the manuscript. But the manuscript is stolen. The Vatican, as well as others, moves to stop the secrets of the manuscript from being revealed.

Father Valori finds that the Voynich manuscript is the bible of the Nephilim, descendents of angels and human women, who are mentioned in Genesis and Numbers. The angels were banished by God from heaven and the descendents destroyed by the flood of Noah's time. But not all of the descendents (Nephilim) were destroyed. Matthew is the last.

The **Voynich manuscript** is a real document. It is a mysterious, untranslatable illustrated book thought to have been written in the 15th or 16th century. The author, script, and language of the manuscript are unknown. Many of the plants illustrated are not known. The Voynich manuscript has been the object of intense study by cryptographers, including some top World War II code breakers, who have all failed to translate any of the text. Currently the Voynich manuscript is stored in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University.

Confirmation 2010—Not Just for Kids Anymore

Information Gathering Sunday, January 31st at 9:30am

Confirmation is a learning season when persons make a study of what it means to be a Christian. To be a Christian is not a title, but a journey toward becoming more "Christ like". But what does that really look like?

Confirmation 2010 is an intentional plan to begin a life dedicated to Christ and a life of study to follow God's calling in every way.

This journey will be open to students in the 4th grade as well as for adults. The adult component will be new this year.

Confirmation 2010 will be jam packed with hands-on challenges relating to *Your Bible, Choices, Ways We Worship, Prayer Paths, Simple Acts of Service, Baptism & Communion, Creeds, and Missing the Mark*, as well as special events and opportunities to live full out for Christ.

If you are interested in participating or need more information, please contact Pastor Sam or DeDe.

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Church hours: Mon.-Thurs., 9 a.m.-noon
Sunday School, 9:30 each Sunday
Worship, 10:30 each Sunday
Nursery provided

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