

**FINANCIAL REPORT – As of January 19, 2015**

<b>Offerings &amp; Needs (Budget for 2015)</b>	
Needed For Mission, Ministry, & Administration .....	\$599,996.00
Received for Mission, Ministry, & Administration toward Yearly Goal .....	\$43,382.45
Weekly Consistent Need to reach the Yearly Goal.....	\$11,359.45
Amount given on 01-18-2015 .....	\$13,602.76

<b>Building Fund</b>	
Balance in Building fund .....	\$4,731,900.09
Amount given on 01-18-2015 .....	\$750.00

1. The amount needed by the last Sunday in 2015 should be an aggregate total of our financial needs including Conference Apportionments as well as all other needs.
2. The Amount Received should be the aggregate total of funds received for budgetary purposes.
3. The Consistent Weekly Need to reach the Yearly Goal will change each week depending upon the amount of weeks left as offset by the gifts received.

**CHURCH STAFF**

<b>James Adair</b>	<b>Custodian</b>
<b>Sylvia Beard</b>	<b>Pianist</b>
<b>Sandra Casper</b>	<b>Financial Secretary</b>
<b>Suzanne Clegg</b>	<b>Director of Youth Ministry</b>
<b>Rev. Dr. Sondra R. Jones</b>	<b>Senior Pastor</b>
<b>Cindy LaTouf</b>	<b>Office Manager</b>
<b>Leandre Majerus</b>	<b>Director of Preschool Ministry</b>
<b>Hank Morgan</b>	<b>Organist</b>
<b>Mark Ridings</b>	<b>Director of Music and the Arts</b>
<b>Susan Rosenthal</b>	<b>Director of Children &amp; Family Ministry</b>
<b>Bradley Trammell</b>	<b>Accompanist for Children and Youth</b>

**2015 Average Attendance**

Worship	291
Sunday School	123

**February Missions**

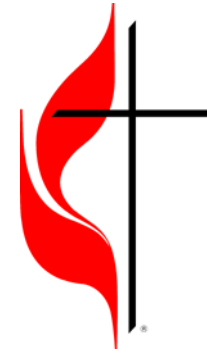
**Souper Bowl Offering-- Feb. 1.** Youth all over the nation will take an offering and will generate millions of dollars to feed the poor and homeless. Please drop a dollar in the soup pot as you leave church that morning so someone who is hungry will have a meal.

**Blood Drive --Feb. 8 from 9:00-1:00:** BFUMC and LifeSouth will team up to help save lives. LifeSouth will have their mobile unit in the church parking lot.

**Homeless Meal for Women & Children:** Tuesday, Feb. 17 at Grace UMC. Please contact Sandra Casper if you can help cook or serve or can contribute money or food. You can email Sandra at [sucasper@charter.net](mailto:sucasper@charter.net) or call her at 770-271-8008.

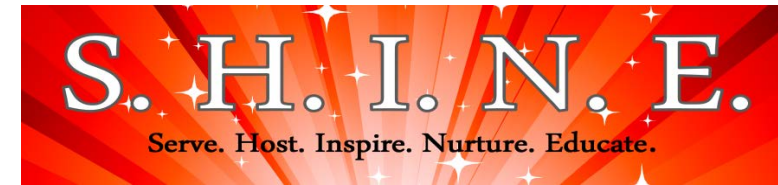
On Feb. 22, we will be taking an **Offering for the Housing & Homeless Council** which gives grants to ministries all over the North Georgia Conference to help people in need. It may just seem like a check in the offering plate, but the money you give to the United Methodist Homeless Offering becomes food, rent, emergency shelter, transitional housing, safety from domestic violence, home ownership and jobs.

**Allergy & Asthma:** With respect and concern for persons, who suffer from allergies and asthma, please refrain from wearing perfume or cologne on Sunday morning. For those who have allergic reactions to fragrances, this can cause extreme respiratory stress. Thank you for your consideration for the health and wellbeing of others.



# The Connection

*To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World*



*To shine the light of Jesus so that children, youth, and adults grow in the knowledge and love of God through missions, evangelism, worship, nurture, and Christian education.*

The Weeks of February 1, 2015 – February 28, 2015

Vol. 27 / No. 2



**Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup>  
12:00 PM**

Anyone may enter a pot of Chili for our panel of experts to taste and judge in a number of categories including: **Best Tasting, Best Texture, Best Aroma, Best Looking, Hottest,** and more! Simply sign up on the bulletin board to enter. You will bring your chili in a crock-pot Sunday morning and check it in with the volunteer in the Fellowship Hall. At 12:00p everyone is invited to come and enjoy all the chili, cornbread, and dessert you can eat! Our judges will present certificates to the winners at 1:00pm.

Plan to eat Buford's best chili for only \$6.00 (adults) and \$2.50 (children under 12) Children under 3 and chili cooks eat free! **No family pays over \$20.00!** The youth will use the funds raised for Camp Glisson Spiritual Life Retreat! Youth can help by volunteering to bring drinks, desserts, etc. See the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall to sign up.



**Call to Prayer and Self Denial meal and program**

*(Sponsored by the United Methodist Women)*

**February 18 | 6:00 pm**

**Ash Wednesday Service**

*(Nursery provided for children 0-2 yrs. old)*

**February 18 | 7:00 pm**

**Ash Wednesday**, a day of **fasting**, is the first day of **Lent** in **Western Christianity**. It occurs 46 days (40 weekdays plus 6 Sundays) before **Easter** and can fall as early as 4 February or as late as 10 March. Ash Wednesday is **observed** by many **Western Christians**, including Catholics, Lutherans, Methodists, Anglicans, and Presbyterians.

According to the **canonical gospels** of **Matthew**, **Mark** and **Luke**, **Jesus Christ** spent 40 days fasting in the desert, where he **endured temptation** by **Satan**. Lent originated as a mirroring of this, fasting 40 days as preparation for Easter. Every Sunday was seen as a commemoration of the Sunday of Christ's resurrection and so as a feast day on which fasting was inappropriate. Accordingly, Christians fasted from Monday to Saturday (6 days) during 6 weeks and from Wednesday to Saturday (4 days) in the preceding week, thus making up the number of 40 days.

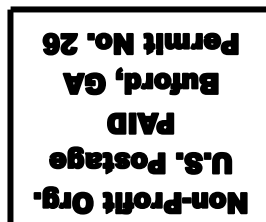
Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of blessing ashes made from **palm branches** blessed on the previous year **Palm Sunday**, and placing them on the heads of participants to the accompaniment of the words "Repent, and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return".

**Biblical significance of ashes:** Ashes were used in ancient times to express grief. The gesture was also used to express sorrow for sins and faults. In **Job 42:3-6**, Job says to God: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." The prophet Jeremiah calls for repentance by saying: "O daughter of my people, gird on sackcloth, roll in the ashes" (**Jer 6:26**). The prophet Daniel recounted pleading to God: "I turned to the Lord God, pleading in earnest prayer, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes" (**Daniel 9:3**). Just prior to the New Testament period, the rebels fighting for Jewish independence, the **Maccabees**, prepared for battle using ashes: "That day they fasted and wore sackcloth; they sprinkled ashes on their heads and tore their clothes" (**1 Maccabees 3:47**; see also **4:39**).

Examples of the practice among Jews are found in several other **books of the Bible**, including **Numbers 19:9, 19:17, Jonah 3:6, Book of Esther 4:1,** and **Hebrews 9:13**. Jesus himself is quoted as speaking of the practice in **Matthew 11:21** and **Luke 10:13**: "If the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago (sitting) in sackcloth and ashes." *\*Wikipedia*

**Return Service Requested**

**Buford First United Methodist Church**  
 285 East Main Street, P.O. Box 329  
 Buford, Georgia 30515-0329  
 770-945-7438 ~ [www.bufordfirstumc.org](http://www.bufordfirstumc.org)  
 Preschool 770-945-4161



# A Word From The Pastor

## Walk with Jesus to Jerusalem



Ashes. Water. Repentance. Fishermen. Women. Priests. Soldiers. Prayers. Healings. Danger. Storms. Waves. Calm. Chaos. Laughter. Terror. Palms. Children. Parades. Swords. Silver. Friends. Rooster. Firelight. Moon. Stars. Enemies. Bread. Wine. Blood. Vinegar. Thorns. Robe. Breath. Forgiveness. Whispers. Shouts. Death. Tears. Grave. Stone. Darkness. Silence.

Can you imagine that this story of Jesus were to end here, only with the final silence? No, we cannot imagine it, but perhaps we should think about it. What would life be without what Jesus went through and why? We should think about that more than we are so often inclined. No, the story does not end in silence because it is the wrong ending. It would be utter hopelessness and suffering with no redemption, no meaning and no purpose. To end the story here would be completely and totally against all that God planned. What God does do in Christ is fully love the world. God so loves us and plans for our salvation. Knowing this makes the season of Lent so powerfully real for us, but we do need to think about the journey with Jesus.

So before we can celebrate the joy of Easter, before we can truly go through the changes that Easter brings to our lives, I invite us to engage these images and experiences of Lent. I invite us to walk the Lenten path with Jesus. See Him. Feel Him. Think of Him. Reflect on Him. Pray to Him. Worship Him. Sacrifice for Him. Serve Him. Give to Him. Love Him. Trust Him. Hope in Him. Surrender our lives to Him. Let Him move and speak to us through His life journey. This is a gift of faith.

Yes, the Lenten path comes to us as a gift of faith. Lent comes to us pilgrims in the faith as we come searching for answers that are about life and death. Lent comes to us and it comes to help us come to terms with our humanity and our need of Jesus. Silence is not the last word. Love is the last word.

Walk with Jesus to Jerusalem this Lenten Season and find your true self in the heart of His love.

Love and Prayers,  
Pastor Sondra



\*A donation has been given in memory of Ella Mae Merritt by: Jim and Meredith Holt, Tommy and Gina Hughes, Phillip and Sylvia Beard, Bobby and Estelle Dobbs.

\*A donation has been given in memory of Heather Beard Blalock by: Phillip and Sylvia Beard.

\*A donation has been given in memory of Gerald and Sara McQuaig by: Donnie and Linda McQuaig.

\*A donation has been given in honor of Linda McQuaig by: Terry Ellis.

\*A donation has been given in honor of Mike and Sandra Casper, Celina Countess, Rick and Marsha Huckaby, Kenny and Cindy Karr, and Linda and Donnie McQuaig by: Dwight and Sandra Burgess.

### Effie Wood Circle

Will meet in the Beacon SS Classroom on Tues., Feb. 3, at 7 PM. Women's Cardiac Health will be the program given by a Registered Nurse from Duluth Gwinnett Medical Center Speaker's Bureau. All church women are invited to come & bring a friend.



## Young At Heart



Belated Valentine date - February 20th "A Night in Paris" presented by the Voices of North Georgia. Join us as we take a musical trip to the romantic locale of Paris. Music will be presented in a cabaret-style with a variety of popular songs from the first half of the 20th century. It will be an evening of hors d'oeuvres, vocal entertainment, and dancing in the Grand Ballroom of the Gainesville Civic Center.

**Time:** 6:15 P.M. to whenever everyone gets tired.

**Cost** \$15.00 for the ticket + \$2.00 for gas = \$17.00

**Reserve** by February 10th by contacting Debbie Atchenson at 770-965-3729 or

djatcheson@gmail.com. Payment by check to YAH - give to Pam Kocher or Debbie Atchenson.

**Reminder:** Trip balance for Cherry Blossom trip to Macon is due by February 26th.

**BFUMC is a Kroger Community Rewards participating organization!** We will receive a percentage of what our members spend at Kroger each quarter. These funds will be used for our mission project- Sack Kids Hunger.

Our church members can help by registering online with Kroger as a BFUMC member. The church will receive rewards as our members shop and use their Kroger Plus cards! You must enroll every August to stay in the program! Be sure and do this soon, so the

church will receive the funds! Register at [krogercommunityrewards.com](http://krogercommunityrewards.com).

## Music Ministry

### Music as a Lenten Discipline

In the season of Lent, it is traditional to give up something that we enjoy. Many folks seek to fast from certain foods, especially desserts, or reduce their TV viewing. This giving up, or fasting, is done as a discipline to get our attention, to remind us of Christ's sacrificial love and to prepare us to follow Jesus more faithfully. But Lent is not just about giving things up. It's also about adding good things to our lives or to others' lives, like offering forgiveness, speaking words of encouragement and spending more time in prayer. Singing in a choir offers another option for this season. Join a choir for Lent as preparation for the celebration of Easter! Speak to any choir member about rehearsal, or contact Mark Ridings in the church office. [music@bufordfirstumc.org](mailto:music@bufordfirstumc.org)

### Drug and Alcohol Awareness Program

Presented by the  
Crime Prevention Unit of the  
Gwinnett County Police Department  
Wednesday February 25, 7:00-8:00 p.m.  
Fellowship Hall

Youth 6<sup>th</sup> grade – 12<sup>th</sup> grade are encouraged to attend this along with their parent(s). Please sign up on the Youth Bulletin Board if you can join us.

We will have a program for 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade in room 203. Children in Kindergarten and younger will be in the nursery. (Please be sure and sign these children up as well!)

Suzanne

**Happy we love our Volunteers Month!** We are so blessed to have such wonderful volunteers in our Children's Ministry and we will be showing our love and appreciation this month in some special ways!

We have some exciting events to add to calendars as well. During the month of May during the Children's Church time, all rising 3<sup>rd</sup> graders will be participating in worship training where they will learn all about the different parts of the worship service as well as serving as an acolyte! We are so excited to have these children join the worship service on June 7<sup>th</sup> which is promotion Sunday. Children will move up to the next Sunday School and Children's Church accordingly. Please be on the lookout for an Acolyte training in the near future as well.

We will be having our first Children's Committee Meeting on February 1<sup>st</sup> 2015. We will be looking at our 2015 programming along with the parent surveys to see what areas we can improve in. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and opinions! We are excited about this new year and ways we can think outside the box to make our program even better  
Blessings, Susan

## Youth Ministry

## Children & Family Ministry

### Super Bowl Sunday



On Sunday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, the nation will be enthralled with the Super Bowl. Most of us will spend a couple of hours in front of the T.V. in a nice home with lots of Good food to enjoy.

We want to remember those in our communities that don't have a home or the food they need to feed their family.

Youth all over the U.S. will be taking up an offering for the hungry on **Super Bowl Sunday**. Our youth will be at the doors of the sanctuary as you leave worship on this day to give you an opportunity to give. We ask that everyone donate \$1.00 to the offering. The funds raised will go to the Women's Community Kitchen in Atlanta. Our church helps feed women and children at this site four times a year. Plan to help us feed the hungry!



### Ladies Book Club

Book selection for February is the second half of *Good God, Lousy World and Me* by Holly Burkhalter. It is the story of a journey of a human rights activist from unbelief to faith and is available at Amazon.com and probably most book stores. Suzanne Best will lead our discussions and we will meet on February 10 at 7 PM at Suzanne's home. Please bring \$5 for a snack supper. It is definitely not too late to join us, even if you didn't come in January. Looking towards March – our selection will be *Sum It Up* by Pat Summit. It is her story of becoming the youngest and extremely successful basketball coach of the Tennessee Lady Vols. Christi Lenz will lead us. Get your book now and start reading with us!

### Lent Devotions

Youth Lent Devotionals will be available on Sunday, February 15. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18. Pick up a Devotional Guide written by youth and adults of BFUMC. Make Lent a more meaningful experience!!

### Imagine! NO Malaria!!

During Lent we will have a Mission Focus on the *Imagine No Malaria* Campaign of the North Georgia Conference. Look for Facts about this disease and how we can eliminate it from our world in the Sunday Bulletin, Newsletters, and in the Lenten Devotional Book. Plan to give generously to the special offerings we'll take on Sundays, March 29 and April 5.