

Youth Newsletter

December 2004

Children, Youth Participate in Youth Sunday

Each year, on the first Sunday in November, Bethlehem's youth take over the responsibility of teaching Sunday School and bringing you the Morning Worship service.

This year, on Sunday, November 7, Youth Sunday began with the junior and senior high school youth helping teach the children's and adult Sunday School classes.

Following Sunday School, the youth took over the responsibility of the Morning Worship service.

Junior ushers greeted worshippers as they arrived, tallied the number of people in the congregation, handed out visitor's cards, and took up the morning offering.

The Praise Team began the service by leading the congregation in singing a number of both spirited and worshipful songs.

The Children's Choir helped lead a praise song, and also performed a song during the service.

Nathan Neblett played piano throughout the morning service, not only playing for the Praise Team, but also playing the congregational hymns, the Offertory, the Doxology, and more. Luke Willette performed the Anthem.

Ashley Barber was the Lay Reader, leading the Congregational Call to Worship and delivering the Offertory Prayer. Kristin Ranno welcomed visitors and led the congregation in the Morning Prayer. Kristen Palmer taught the Children's Sermon and helped with Children's Church. Brittany West read the Morning Scripture.

This year, Amanda Crumpler, Steven Morean, and John Driver each delivered a Morning Message. Amanda talked about her experiences growing up

YOUTH GROUP SCHEDULES

SCOOTERS • VOYAGERS • PATHFINDERS

- December 5** Visitation at Nansemond Pointe, 12:00noon-4:00pm
Voyagers Christmas Party, 5:30pm-7:15pm
No Regular Meeting for Scooters and Pathfinders
- December 12** Children's Christmas Play, 6:00pm
- December 19** **No Regular Meeting**
Christmas Pageant
- December 26** **No Regular Meeting**
Christmas Holiday
- January 2** Regular Meeting, 5:30pm-7:15pm

ALPHAS • OMEGAS

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- December 19** **No Regular Meeting**
Christmas Pageant
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Christmas Holiday
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For more detailed information about your group's schedule, please contact your group's leaders.

at Bethlehem, and about what the church means to her. Steven talked about his first visit to Bethlehem, and how he came about joining the church. John delivered a sermon entitled "Salt of the Earth".

We have much to be thankful for here at Bethlehem. Most importantly, we have an incredible group of young people who appear ready, willing, and able to take on responsibility within the church.

Thanks to each young person who participated in Youth Sunday. Great job!

Pioneers Visit Whidbee Lane Farm

On Sunday, October 17, the Pioneer Clubs at Bethlehem traveled to Holland for an afternoon of fun at Whidbee Lane Tourist Farm on Southwestern Boulevard.

The children played in the turtle maze and the hay bale maze, then moved on to the petting zoo, where they could hold and pet various farm animals, such as rabbits, chickens, pigs, goats, and ponies.

The group then enjoyed a hay ride around the farm, where they learned about various aspects of farm life and were shown samples of the various crops that were grown at the farm this year.

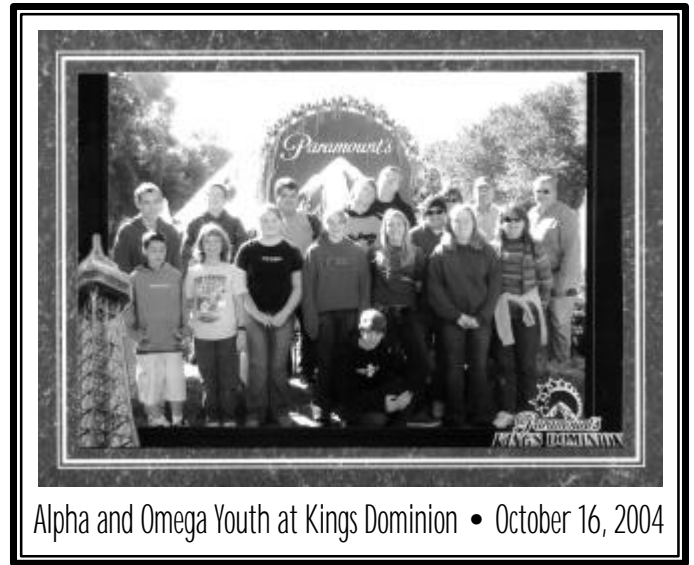
Then, the group tried to make their way through the Whidbee Lane Corn Maze, a series of paths cut through over six acres of tall corn stalks. After about ten minutes of searching for the exit, Laura Thornton was the first of the group to find her way out of the maze.

Before leaving, the youngest children spent a few minutes on the playground, while some of the older children returned to the petting zoo for a final visit with the animals.

Special thanks to all the Pioneer Clubs leaders and parents who helped drive the children to the farm and supervise them while there.



The Pioneer Clubs had a great time at Whidbee Lane Farm!



Alphas, Omegas Collect \$133.17 for UNICEF

After church on Sunday, October 31, the junior and senior high youth went into the community trick-or-treating. Instead of asking for candy, however, the youth asked for something even more meaningful—donations to UNICEF.

For the past six decades, UNICEF has provided assistance and protection to children and their families who are victims of war, disasters, and poverty.

UNICEF operates in 158 countries and territories around the world to meet the basic needs of women and children. UNICEF provides immunizations, vitamins, health care, water purification, school supplies, and so much more to the world's less fortunate children, all based on need, not politics.

Thanks to all who donated, the youth were able to send a check in the amount of \$133.17 to UNICEF, enough to:

- immunize 66 children against both polio and measles for life,
- provide over 4,394 children with a year's supply of vitamin A capsules to help prevent blindness, or
- buy a year's supply of school supplies for 54 children.

Thanks to the church and the community for your support!

Bethlehem Hosts 2nd Annual Community Harvest Festival

On Sunday, October 31, Bethlehem hosted its 2nd annual Community Harvest Festival.

Over 100 children and adults from the church and the community attended. Some of the adults even came out in full costume to enjoy the festivities!

A number of games for all ages were set up in Graham Hall, including a cake walk, the Jacob's Ladder clothespin drop, a duck pond, a bean bag toss, bobbing for apples, and much more.

There was also an arts and crafts table, with projects for both younger and older children.

George and Travis Fowler brought their tractor and trailer out to church and took the children on a fun and exciting hay ride.

And there was plenty of food, including hot dogs, chips, drinks, candy, and more.

Special thanks to all the youth leaders and volunteers who made the Harvest Festival possible.



check out more Harvest Festival pictures at

<http://www.bccsuffolk.org>
and
<http://www.bccyouth.org>

Youth Make Visitation a Priority

The Youth Groups at Bethlehem have always thought it important to remember those of our membership who are in the nursing home or shut-in at home.

Over the past few months, the youth have made three visits, and the children in the Pioneer Clubs are scheduling another visit to the nursing home early in December.

On September 16, the Alphas visited Nansemond Pointe Nursing Home and delivered brightly-painted hand-made suncatchers to the residents.

On October 17, the Omega Youth visited the residents at Lake Prince Retirement Home.

And, on October 30, the Omegas made delicious stew and took a batch to each shut-in, taking time to sit down and visit with each and every one.

We LOVE
BECAUSE HE
FIRST LOVED US.
1 John 4:19

Congratulations
to the
Pathfinder Youth Group
for receiving a pin and certificate
in recognition of their participation in
2003 Military Mail Call!

This year, the Pathfinders participated in Military Mail Call once again, writing over 80 cards to military personnel stationed abroad.

Way to go, Pathfinders!

Youth Coordinator's Corner by David Salerno

First of all, I have to apologize for not publishing a Youth Newsletter last month.

October is typically a very busy month for the Youth Groups at Bethlehem, and this year, it seemed busier than ever.

The month of October found me extraordinarily busy planning over half a dozen activities for the youth, including the Kings Dominion Trip, the Whidbee Lane Tourist Farm Trip, Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF, our Second Annual Community Harvest Festival, Youth Sunday, and the Youth Concert.

And if it wasn't for the dozens of leaders and volunteers who rolled up their sleeves, pitched in, and helped out, these events wouldn't have even happened. So I owe all of you a great debt of thanks.

But all of this planning left precious little time for much else, including publishing the Youth Newsletter for November.

However, as busy as my October was planning these events, the youth were even busier actually participating in these events.

In fact, the youth at Bethlehem have been quite active over the past three months. And, to borrow a phrase from Martha Stewart, that's a good thing.

I firmly believe that our children and youth should be highly involved in church and in our local community. Through this involvement, they learn to put their faith into action, and to have a Christ-like attitude of service to others.

And it does my heart good to see our youth involved in just about every aspect of church life.

Simply stop for a second and take notice. At just about any event we have at Bethlehem, and not just youth events, you see our youth setting up tables, putting out chairs, cleaning up, and so much more. You see our youth looking for ways they can be of help, and gladly doing whatever is asked of them. This speaks volumes about the way they have been raised, and every Bethlehem parent should be incredibly proud.

Christian service is one of the cornerstones of the Youth Groups at Bethlehem.

I have always envisioned the youth fellowship program as a unique place that brings together all aspects of Christian living—Christian fellowship, Christian education, and Christian service.

One has to look no further than the adult fellowship organizations within the church—the Women's Fellowship and Ladies Circles, the Laymen's Fellowship, and the Fellowship Club—to find shining examples of this combination of fellowship, education, and service in action.

However, no other organization within the church brings all three of these aspects together for our youth on a weekly basis in quite the same way that the youth fellowship program does.

And, ultimately, I feel that I would be doing our youth a huge disservice, and severely limiting the effectiveness of our youth fellowship program, by focusing solely on Christian fellowship or Christian education, rather than coordinating a well-rounded youth program that incorporates all three aspects of Christian life.

Don't get me wrong. I think all three of these aspects are equally important. Christian fellowship is the "glue" that holds the group together, and helps youth form a network of supportive fellow believers that can be leaned upon in times of need. Christian education is vital to the spiritual growth of our youth, and provides youth with the tools they need to handle the challenges and difficulties that come their way on a daily basis.

But just as faith without works is dead (James 2:14-26), so is fellowship and education without service.

If our youth fellowship program were to focus only on Christian fellowship, or only on Christian education, then when would our youth clubs ever visit the grateful residents at the nursing home, take hot soup and a warm friendly smile to our shut-ins, go door-to-door in the community collecting donations for UNICEF, go without food for 30 hours to raise money for World Vision so that other needy children might eat, or participate in any of the numerous service projects that we support here at Bethlehem?

When would they ever have the opportunity as a group to put their faith into action?

It's not enough to simply talk about faith. We must all put our faith into action each and every day, and both encourage and empower our youth to do the same.

Until next time, God bless,

