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THANK YOU LORD FOR:

THE CULDEE CONNECTION

December 2024/January 2025

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There's an expression that, "the darkest hour is just before dawn." I don't know if this is scientifically true, but I think of this saying often when I'm in a situation of literal or figurative darkness. Lately, our days have been short as we're approaching the winter solstice on December 21st. I always look forward to this "turning" of the light, as the days afterward become progressively longer until we reach the Spring.

The season of Advent comes upon us during a time of darkness. The celebration of Christmas on December 25th dates to the 4th century reign of the Roman Emperor Constantine, in correlation with the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere. Biblical scholars disagree about the actual season of Jesus' birth. But it seems appropriate to celebrate the coming of the Light of the World – the birth of Jesus – at the time of year that is the darkest for those of us above the Equator!

The greatest darkness in the world is the absence of love. The writer of 1st John tells us that, "*Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.*" (4:8) Most of us have known an absence of love at some point in our lives. This is how we experience evil, loneliness, self-hatred and despair. In the darkest days of nature, and in the darkest days of our lives, the Light of the World is waiting to break into our darkness. We simply ask, and we wait. Like those who longed for the Messiah so long ago, may our hearts long for Jesus this Advent season.

Connie Weaver, Pastor

NOTES FROM THE STATED SESSION of NOVEMBER 10, 2024

June Stewart, Clerk

The meeting was held at 6:00 p.m. with a quorum of Elders in attendance.

- Active Membership Roll is 159.
- The minutes of the Stated Session meeting of October 13 were approved as amended; the minutes of the Called Session meeting of October 20 were approved as presented; the minutes of the Congregational meeting of November 3 were approved as presented.
- A Congregational meeting was scheduled for December 15 to present the 2025 Budget and to dismiss the Elder Nominating Committee.
- The October 2024 Financial Report was approved as presented.
- The Employee Evaluation Form Packet presented by the Personnel Committee was approved.
- At the Community Thanksgiving Service, canned food will be collected for the Food Bank and the offering will go to the Sandhills Coalition.
- New Elder Training will be on December 7; Session will examine the new elders at the Stated Session meeting on December 9.

Angel Tree Gifts

Thank you so much to all who donated gifts for the foster children and gift cards for the house parents. Will Huff from Children's Hope Alliance will come on November 26th to pick up the gifts and gift cards!!



Thanksgiving Breakfast and PW Thank Offering

Appreciation to the Presbyterian Men for serving breakfast on Thanksgiving morning! The Presbyterian Women Thank Offering program will highlight the ministries chosen to receive funding from the 2023 money collected last year. The offering taken this year will hopefully help even more ministries to receive funding next year when the 2025 committee reviews applications in March.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MINISTRY

As we wind down another year, plans are being made for the upcoming Christmas party. The party will be on December 8th at 6:00 pm. Under the direction of Gail Meeks, our children are busily preparing for their Christmas program. We hope the church family will come and invite their extended family and friends to join us. It promises to be a night filled with the Christmas spirit, good fellowship, light refreshments and even a visit from Santa Claus!

We would also like to extend to you and your family our wishes for a Merry Christmas. May 2025 bring each of you good health and happiness.

Marshall Sweat and Patti Burke



HURRICANE HELENE RELIEF CULDEE REPORT

Culdee has been involved in the Hurricane Relief effort from the beginning. We have endeavored to carefully place the designated funds across Western North Carolina to reach differing areas of need.

Once the session approved the use of funds, we began immediately by donating \$2000 to Operation Helo. This was a group of one hundred volunteer helicopter pilots that flew as many as four hundred relief missions a day over North Carolina under the direction of Matt McSwain. We provided fuel for rescue as well as supply, delivery, and recovery.

Our attention then turned to providing meals for victims, rescue workers, EMS, Fire Departments, Police departments and The River Rafting Girls. We donated \$2000 to a diner connected with a Southern Pines resident preparing up to 1800 meals a day for food and supplies.

As conditions in the mountains turned cooler, there was an opportunity to assist in the connection of donated generators to twenty-five homes without electricity. We collaborated with an electric company to provide plugs, cables, and an electrician to safely connect homes to the generators providing them with heat. We donated \$1822.85 for this effort.

Culdee partnered with a church in Hendersonville. The residents without power needed to cook and prepare meals. We purchased thirty butane camp stoves which could operate indoors, extra fuel canisters and lighters. These were distributed throughout the community. We used \$2708.60 for this purchase.

As we continued to search for ways to help, we discovered Hospice & Palliative Care for the Blue Ridge needed dehumidifiers, damp rid buckets and carbon monoxide detectors for homes with hospice patients. These were distributed to those in need. \$1744.80 was used to purchase the items.

In talking with churches and residents in western NC, each told of Samaritan's Purse being present in their communities and working in different capacities. They distributed food, worked to reopen, and rebuild. \$10,000 was donated to assist in this effort.



Pinehurst Baptist Men were leaving for Western NC on a mission trip to assist in the rebuilding of homes, ramps, and community building repairs. A donation of \$5000 was made to purchase needed materials to rebuild.

Squared Away Response is currently involved in the building of 10 x 16 insulated tiny homes for delivery to Mitchell County. The homes are being built on the Carthage Fairgrounds, disassembled, packed on flatbed trucks, and driven to residents in need. Culdee donated \$12,100 for the building of homes.

The cost of one home is approximately \$5000. We have donated two homes!

Christmas is going to be a challenging time for families in the mountains. Culdee hopes to help young families and children at Christmas this year to feel loved by their neighbors. Swannanoa First Baptist Church is sponsoring Christmas shopping experiences, to be held from December 7th - December 12th. Impacted families can register to shop, receive gifts and donations for Christmas. Volunteers will be available to help wrap and assist the families. The church anticipates serving four hundred families. Culdee donated \$2500 to be used in this effort.

Camp Living Water is sponsoring "Mules on a Christmas Mission." This event will be held in Bryson City, NC and will offer families the opportunity to visit with Santa (arriving in a helicopter), watch mules arrive packed with toys, and celebrate Christmas. This area suffered a great deal of losses.



Families may apply and receive gifts when requested at the event. They will enjoy hot chocolate and a time of celebration. Culdee donated \$3000 to purchase items for this event.

The Culdee family is always charged to serve God and be a presence in the lives of those less fortunate. In our effort, we have tried to reach across Western North Carolina. We have extended your hand from Hendersonville to Mitchell County and as far west as Swain County. Each donation has been carefully selected and given when we could contact someone on the ground in these areas. This was an ominous task when we first started but as each week passed, we were presented with new opportunities to assist. For us to accomplish our goal in six weeks, it was truly a work of God!

This completes the donation of our funds, and we are hopeful that God will bless each family receiving our gifts. As we move forward, please continue to pray for our neighbors as they face more challenges ahead.

FUNDS RECEIVED:

Session appointed funds: \$35,000
Harvest Festival Proceeds: \$7159.28
Donations from congregation: \$756.00
Total: \$42,915.28

TOTAL DISTRIBUTION: \$42,876.25

Thank you for trusting and supporting us in this effort!

Marshall Sweat and Patti Burke

Finance Ministry

- The projects the Session has approved this year have either been completed or are in final stages of completion. Gathering bids for projects garnered significant savings for Culdee as did the donation of time and talent by the Culdee Community.
- The Budget Committee met with the different ministries to seek their input on ministry needs for 2025. After these meetings, Finance compiled and presented a budget draft to the Session which they approved for 2025. The final budget will be presented to the congregation in December.
- The Finance Ministry oversees the Harvest Festival's auction and yard sale which was a great success again this year. Appreciation is extended to all who made or gathered donations for these activities. Many wonderful volunteers made the events successful. Special appreciation to Stuart and Debby Fields, Johnny and Martha Owen and Waylon Collins for sharing their expertise.
- See how your donations and support of Western North Carolina are going:
 - \$2,000.00 – Helicopter fuel for rescue, supply delivery and recovery
 - \$2,000.00 – To a diner that is providing meals for victims, and workers such as EMS, Police, Fire Department and River Rafting Girls.
 - \$1,822.85 – For plugs, cables, and electrician to connect 25 homes with generators that will provide heat.
 - \$2,708.60 – To purchase 30 butane camp stoves, fuel canisters and lighters for indoor cooking that are being distributed by a church to the community.
 - \$1,744.80 – To purchase dehumidifiers, damp rid buckets and Carbon Monoxide Detectors for hospice and Palliative Care of Blue Ridge.
 - \$10,000.00 – To Samaritan's Purse.
 - \$5,000.00 – To Baptist Men on Mission in NC.
 - \$12,100.00 – Squared Away Response – small house for family.
 - \$2,500.00 – Swannanoa First Baptist Church Christmas Event for families.
 - \$3000.00 – "Mules on a Christmas Mission", Bryson City Christmas event for families.
- Culdee's finances are strong. Investments remain conservative to allow growth with minimal impact for fluctuations. Currently there is 11.77 months in reserve.

90TH BIRTHDAY

Harold Clayton celebrated his 90th Birthday on November 20th. Congratulations Harold! His daughter, Amber, shared the following autobiography and pictures of her father.

HAROLD EUGENE CLAYTON

Harold was born on November 20, 1934, in Jackson Springs, NC. He is the youngest of 11 children. His family lived in Jackson Springs until Harold was 13 and then moved to Pinehurst. Harold attended West End School up to 8th grade and then went on to graduate from Pinehurst High School in 1953. After high school, Harold worked in plumbing and electrical shops in Pinehurst before joining the Air Force in 1956. He was stationed at Shaw Air Force Base in South Carolina until he was discharged in 1960. After returning to Moore County, Harold began working for the phone company in Southern Pines (which would later become Sprint). He retired from Sprint in December 1996 after 35 years of service.



Harold met his future wife, Sarah Cox, in 1964 after being introduced to her by Otis and Leona Patterson. They were married at Culdee on November 28, 1965. They soon built a house in Pinehurst and welcomed a daughter, Amber, and a son, Matthew. Sarah began her 30-year teaching career at Union Pines High School in 1965 and retired from Sandhills Farmlife in 1995. Harold, Sarah, Amber, and Matt enjoyed many wonderful trips to Gatlinburg, Myrtle Beach, and New England before Sarah's passing in 2010.

Harold is an avid saltwater fisherman and loves to fish for flounder and trout along our coast and piers. He has turned Amber into an angler as well and they love to spend spring and fall Saturdays on the hunt for 'the big one'. In 2019, they began working on a bucket list to fish off of every coastal pier in North Carolina – there are 17 piers, and they have 3 left to go.

Harold is also a die-hard St. Louis Cardinals baseball fan. He had a cousin, Enos "Country" Slaughter, who played for the Cardinals in the 1940s. Enos scored the winning run in Game 7 of the 1946 World Series against the Boston Red Sox. A statue of him sliding into home plate sits in front of Busch Stadium in St. Louis and Harold hopes to attend a game there next year and see the statue in person.

When Harold isn't fishing or watching baseball, you can find him outside in his yard tending to the many trees, flowers, and azaleas he has planted over the years. And no bird will ever go hungry as long as he is yardmaster. If it snows in Pinehurst, one of his first concerns will be scraping a path around the bird feeder so his feathered friends can eat.



But his most favorite thing to do is being PaPa Harold to grandson Griffin (15) and granddaughter Sydney (12). Matt and his wife Lori are wonderful parents and Griffin and Sydney are Harold's treasure. He enjoys attending their school sports games in Mooresville and watching them grow into the awesome young people that God has called them to be. And wouldn't you know...they love fishing too.

Harold joined Culdee in 1948. He always looks forward to the harvest festival, chicken and dumplings, homecoming, revival, and fellowshiping with his church family. He appreciates all the care Culdee has shown him over the years and continues to do.

If he had to impart life wisdom and blessings over you, he would pray that you would come to know the saving grace of Jesus Christ, to find your joy in Him and to be a blessing to others for His glory. He would want you to prioritize making sweet memories with family and friends. He would wish you fair winds and a following sea. And always....tight lines.

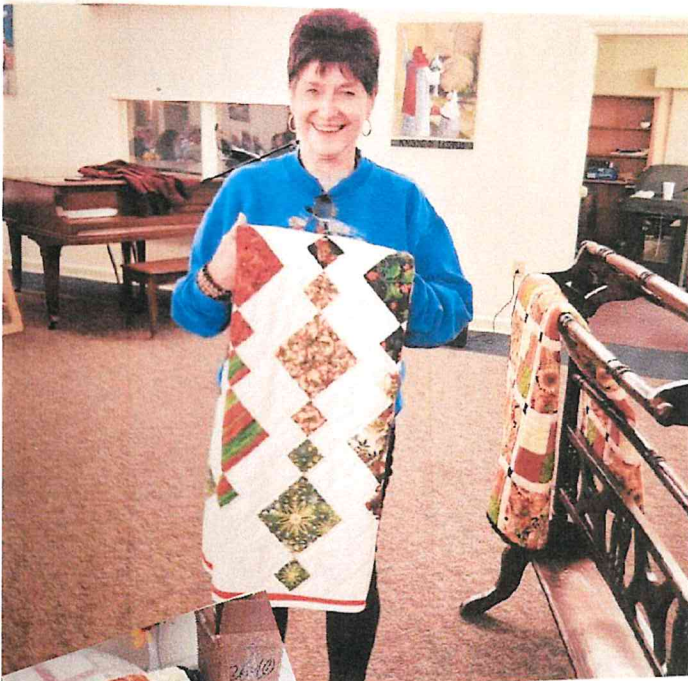
2024 Quilt Raffle Winners



**Larry
MacMahon**



Anna Rae Kemp



Claudia Cole



Will Cuff

Quilt won by Anna Lee who is away at college and not available for a picture.

Congratulations to all the winners!!

Many thanks to the quilters who put much thought and time into creating the quilts.

And thank you to everyone who participated.



Birthdays of the Month

DECEMBER 2024

Dee Anderson	01	Betty Lois Frye	14
Matt Halverstadt	03	Pam Brown	15
Tim Howle	03	Chris Bobo	16
Alistair McKenzie	04	Gwyn Cox	21
Russell Whitaker	07	Michael Salargo	22
Roston Barber	08	Abby Governale	22
Lily Cox	09	Denise Grandolfo	26
Nicholas Fortune	10	Everette Parsons	27
Patrick Fields	12	Kim Cole	28
Ed Taylor	12	Ann Savage	30



JANUARY 2025

James McKenzie	08
Tony Cox	09
Josh Halverstadt	12
Lisa Patterson	13
Dianne VanWinkle	14
Catherine Sears	14
Jason Cole	17
John Blue	18
Randy Cox	18
Tyler Prince	20
Doris Anderson	21
Phillip Marion	21
Caleb Marion	22
Domonic Campbell	25
Derek Stewart	26
Breese Lilly	26
Dot Monroe	27
Matthew Clayton	29

Happy New Year

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Wow! The holidays are here once again. We are busy, busy bees. I pray your hearts are full of happiness and thankfulness for all the many, many blessings our Lord has showered down on us this past year. May our hearts be truly filled with thanksgiving as the Psalm 9:1 says, "I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart: I will tell of all your wonderful deeds." Let us come with pure praise to our King and Lord through this glorious holiday season. We know through it all, God calls us to look up and see His mercy and grace. He calls upon His children to be His feet and hands in helping the ones in need.

With this said, the New Year's Mission Committee is asking our church family to provide and bag desserts with no icing to feed 800 people. Please bring them to the fellowship hall by December 31st so they can be counted. Also, we will be needing your help in getting this New Year's Day meal ready two days ahead.

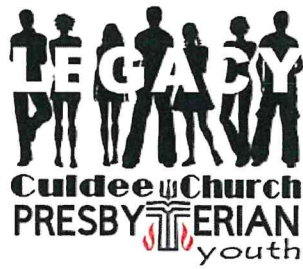
On December 30th we will start at 9:00 am washing, cutting and cooking collards. The pork loins will be rubbed down and wrapped.

On December 31st we will bag the bread, count desserts and put labels on the plates.

So you see there is a lot of work leading up to the New Year's Mission Meal. The sign-up sheets will be out in the sunroom by December 21st. Please be in prayer as to how you can serve your Lord and King on the first day of 2025!



Darrell & Karon McKenzie



Culdee Youth has been busy with school, athletics, jobs, and service projects! Our big project this year was the Pinecrest High School Emergency Clothes Closet. This closet is used multiple times daily and provides a change of clothes, school supplies, snacks, and other needed items that allow students to return to class quickly. We raised approximately \$12,000 thanks to all of you who supported this amazing project! Pinecrest basketball players and other student volunteers joined us in helping create this beautiful closet!



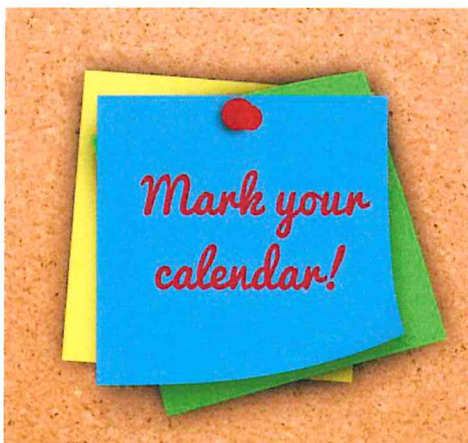
In addition to our closet, we continue to serve our church and military by putting out the flags on Memorial Day, July 4th, and Veterans Day. We hope you all enjoy them as much as we enjoy putting them out!

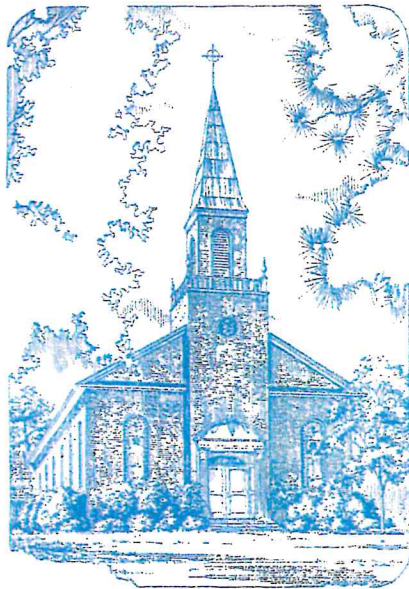
With love, light, and hope, Culdee Youth



FOR YOUR CALENDAR

November 24th – Community Thanksgiving Service – Culdee 5:00 pm
 November 28th – Thanksgiving Breakfast at 7:00 am by the Men
 December 4th – Circle One will meet at the church at 10:30 am
 December 5th – Circle Three will meet with Teresa Cole at her home
 December 8th – Children's Christmas Program at 6:00 pm
 December 15th – Cantata by Chancel Choir
 December 24th – Christmas Eve Service and communion
 January 1st – New Years Day Meal





Culdee Presbyterian Church

916 HIGHWAY 73, WEST END
NORTH CAROLINA

*Give thanks to the LORD, call on his
name; make known among the nations
what He has done. 1 Chronicles 16:8*

Culdee Presbyterian Mission

Culdee Presbyterian Church will build caring relationships with our local and global community while proclaiming the Word of God and building up our faith community.

Contact Us: Phone (910) 295-6685

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