



The News & Record asked a few area ministers for things we should leave behind entering 2010. Here's my list. I welcome your comments.

1. **Men talking about abortion.** Just for a year, could we men simply be quiet and listen to women discuss (both publicly and privately) this crucial issue that concerns them intimately?
2. **Endless news stories about the sex lives of public people.** Believe me; I know that talking about other people's foibles tickles our *schadenfreude*. Yet, despite the puritanical preaching that takes place, we have far too much prurient interest in what other naked people do. Could we have a fermata on that for a year?
3. **Gay people staying in the closet.** I'm trying not to be arrogant about this issue as a straight guy, since being straight costs me nothing, and coming out does cost people friends, family, jobs and even their very lives. But lots of us who are vocally supporting gay rights and for their rightful place in our congregations could use some help. If everyone who is gay, lesbian, or bi could stand up and say so to family, friends and co-workers, freedom might make some long strides.
4. **Smoking and dipping.** It's time to quit, and I mean weed, tobacco, and that clove-smelling quap. It's mega-expensive; it's killing you, and the rest of have to subsidize your health care, wheezy.
5. **Underpaying the military while we are telling them how much we love them.** This is deeply repugnant and dishonorable: all the rhetoric about how much we adore our military service men and women, and then not paying them a living wage. It's past time to double their salary. Less yellow ribbons; more greenbacks, please.
6. **Watching sporting events instead of playing them.** Greensboro is an active town, with lots of people playing sports and not just watching them. But we could do much better. How about for the next year everyone try something new: jump rope, racquetball, lacrosse, tree climbing? Notice that my list did not include competitive eating.
7. **Paying to see expensive, stupid Hollywood movies.** I don't know whom to see about getting my two hours and eight bucks back from seeing "Transformers 2." But these movies are a national shame, and seeing Megan Fox in slow-mo did not make up for it. In 2010, let's agree not to see the horrid ones.
8. **Trying to convert the Jews and Mormons.** When a Christian friend visited the Silver Temple in Cambodia, she commented to the monk that she was surprised that she felt close to God there. The monk said, "Same God, different pagoda." The Jews and LDS in our city do a lot of good, and make this city a better, more just place. Even if one doesn't agree with their faith, could we not allow them the dignity of walking their own path?
9. **Planning roads without bike lanes.** The new section of Friendly is beautiful with one glaring error: no bike lane. There are five colleges and a law school on this stretch of street, from Guilford College to A&T, but no bike lane. How many more bikers have to die before we figure out biking is healthy, gas-saving, economical, and a blast? We should plan now for their presence on most new and expanded roads.
10. **Tolerating children going hungry.** That wily Presbo pastor Frank Dew said at the fall Greensboro Urban Ministry fund-raiser, "Let's keep working for that day when we can say, "Remember when there were hungry people in Greensboro? Remember when there were homeless in our city?" This is the dream, the hope, the realistic and possible goal. And it begins with all of us in this great city no longer tolerating even one child hungry in our midst.

Michael

During Advent, College Park's Pathfinders Sunday School class explored spiritual lessons from several popular children's Christmas stories. One of the stories we looked at was *The Polar Express* by Chris Van Allsburg (published in 1985; a movie based on the book came out in 2004). If you're not familiar with the story, it's about a boy who longs to believe in Santa Claus but finds it difficult to do so. This all changes, however, on Christmas Eve, when a mysterious train visits the boy in the middle of the night, taking him and a group of other lucky children to the North Pole for a visit with Santa. The train's conductor, along with the other passengers, help turn the boy's crisis of faith into a journey of self-discovery.

While some see this story as a Christian allegory or parable, others label it as one more thoroughly secular tale that subverts the true meaning of Christmas. My personal take is that the book and movie offer some good fodder for thinking about the Christian life. The Pathfinders class enjoyed a lively discussion comparing this story to our journey of faith.

One conclusion I drew from *The Polar Express* (particularly the movie version) is the value of traveling with others. The boy is encouraged to believe because the children around him believe. In this respect I think *The Polar Express* illustrates the importance of community. It is the shared journey that transforms people. I know this because living my life among you has changed—and continues to change—me!

As we enter a new year, I offer some suggestions to help strengthen our sense of community.

- **Seek community for yourself.** College Park has more to offer you than a place to worship on Sunday mornings (as important as that is). Why don't you try one of our Sunday morning Sunday School classes? Volunteer to cook a meal for or serve at Greensboro Urban Ministry (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday night of each month). Have dinner with us on Wednesday nights. Stop by our next Uncorked social event in February. Volunteer to serve on one of our committees or ministry teams. Join one of our choirs. Sign up to help with our Backpack Club.
- **Offer community to others.** Even though College Park is a relatively small congregation, it's never easy to be the "newbie" in a group of more than 200. We have a number of new members who are looking for their niche here. Help them along by sitting in a different part of the sanctuary on Sunday mornings and talk to someone you haven't met before. (I'm a major introvert so this is really hard for me to do, but if I can try it so can you.) Pray for the folks listed in the Concerns section of each Sunday's bulletin. Write a note of encouragement to someone who needs it. Invite someone to have lunch with you and your family/friends after Sunday morning worship.

Want more information on any of these? Have an idea you want to share? Send me an email (cindydillon6@gmail.com).

Cindy Lou Who

## Youth Summer Mission Trip, West Virginia

This summer, July 24- 31, our youth will be going to Colcord, WV to help families in the community who need but cannot afford home repairs (restoring roofs, rebuilding porches, repairing walls and ceilings, replacing flooring, or painting). We will worship with the community on Sunday morning, and the congregation will cook for us on Tuesday night. As important as every nail we drive is the relationship that we build with the community and the home owner. This will be a wonderful Appalachian experience for the youth. Cost of the trip is \$300 per youth. A \$100 deposit is due by March 1.



As part of the closing ceremony at the youth Passport camp, the campers are given an opportunity to share one thing they have learned over the week. Please understand this is no simple matter. Accepting this invitation to share also means agreeing to speak before a packed auditorium of approximately 500 campers, chaperones and passport staff. There are several obstacles to overcome between the seat and the microphone, like not tripping over your neighbor's book bag as you make your way to the aisle, and making sure that if you do trip there is enough room to play it off with that seemingly purposeful jog. You tirelessly repeat to yourself what you plan to say so that you aren't caught speechless before the crowd of campers.

Needless to say, this closing invitation is the kind that keeps most teenagers glued to their seats. But despite the looming possibility of tripping up the aisle or completely losing train of thought, one College Park camper braved the pressure of the moment and made his way to the microphone. Standing casually with each hand propped between his shoulders and his book bag straps, he approached the mic. and said, "this week I learned that God has unlimited text messaging." After receiving a brief chuckle from his audience, he made his way back up the aisle and returned to his seat.

This is not the first time that one of Nathan Usey's comments has kept me thinking. Nathan has a knack for thinking up creative one-liners like this one. To be honest, the idea that seems to be communicated in this statement is not altogether new. It is the same simple truth that we have all been taught since our pre-school days: God loves us and is always listening. However, the more I consider Nathan's statement, the more convinced I become that it is less about God, and more about us. Nathan's comment highlights *our* ever present need to be in communion and in communication with God.

That creation is a well-designed social web is clear. We, along with lions, dolphins, fish, geese, wolves, ants, and the remaining members of the animal kingdom are social creatures. We run in communities, prides, pods, schools, gaggles, packs, and colonies, and it is within these social settings that we thrive. We have an innate need to be in communion and community with one another that directly reflects the God who created us. The communal life of God, Jesus, and Spirit is both the model for the community of creation, and for the community of God with creation. We are created not only to be in communion with one another, but also to be in communion with God.

We glimpse this communion between creation and God in the book of Job. After losing his family, his possessions and enduring much physical suffering, Job turns to God cursing his own birth, justifying his faithfulness to God and questioning God's character for allowing such events to happen. For more than thirty chapters of the book, Job's interrogation of God and God's response to Job continues. When the dialogue ends, it is not Job who God rebukes, but Job's friends, who have come to comfort him, but who are insistent of Job's guilt and discourage his petitions to God. To the reader's surprise, God commends Job for his questions, his faithfulness, his openness and his honesty. This communion between God and creation is also evident in the praise hymns and laments of Psalms, in the devoted prayer life of Jesus, and in several of our other biblical stories.

For some, or perhaps many of us, the question is not if or why, but how. How can we live faithfully in communion with God? The youth will spend the next six weeks exploring this question in a discussion series that focuses on Spiritual disciplines. This series will expose youth to spiritual practices with which they are not familiar, and will guide them in finding a way of being in communion with God, of being open to the Spirit of God that is comfortable for them. Jesus communed with God in many ways: in solitude away from the disciples, teaching with the disciples, in meditation, by writing in the dirt, fasting in the wilderness, serving and healing, even in lament on the cross. We learn from Jesus, and from the story of Job, that living faithfully in communion with God means responding openly and honestly to God in our own prayer language.

We all respond to and hear God through different means. Finding our own prayer language is something that takes both time and practice, but I encourage you, as we enter into this new year, to take the time to explore your language. Fredrick Beuchner says, "according to Jesus, the most important thing about prayer is that you keep at it." The hope for all of us is that we find our own prayer language, and our own way of understanding our communion with God. In Paul Young's book *The Shack*, God is imagined as one with free postal service, in the movie "Bruce Almighty," God's email account has limitless inbox space, for Nate Usey, God has unlimited text messaging. How do you understand your communion with God?

Lin

## Baby Showers in January

We are honored and proud to have two babies on the way to the College Park nursery. Mark your calendars for January 10th for the Carnish family and for January 31st for the Whitehead family as we share gifts, food and congratulations. David & Teresa Whitehead are registered at Babies R Us and Target. David & Debbie Carnish are also registered at Babies R Us and Target. We will gather in the parlor on those dates immediately following the 11:00 service and all are welcome. Any questions, please call Anna Marie Rogers (339-9059).

## Betty Withers Birthday Celebration

### YOU'RE INVITED!

Who would ever guess that on January 19 Betty Withers will turn 80?!?!?! Hard to believe, but it's true. Join Betty, members of her family and friends as we celebrate her special birthday on Sunday, January 17, from 2 to 4 pm with a reception in the Fellowship Hall. Betty says that your friendship is a treasured gift, and asks for no other. Cards, however, are most welcome. Please RSVP to Deanna Miller by Wednesday, January 13. Email: [deannahmiller@hotmail.com](mailto:deannahmiller@hotmail.com)... cell: 336-202-1174...home: 336-574-2377 (Don't tell Betty but we'll have some "special" entertainment. Well, after all, this IS College Park!)

## Thank you

Dear College Park Family,  
Thank you doesn't begin to tell you how much you mean to us and how much your care has touched us as Janice heals from her broken leg. Your calls, cards, visits, e-mails, wonderful food, and prayers have sustained us.

We love you more than we have words to say.

Janice and Robert Kirkman

Dear College Park,  
Thank you so much for all the Christmas cards and gifts that you gave to me for Christmas. Your kindness and generosity is so much appreciated.

Helen Morehead

Dear College Park,  
We would like to thank all those who helped to provide us with meals, prayers, and support during the first weeks of bringing home our baby, Sam. We look forward to seeing everyone soon.

Brandi, Yates & Sam Austin

Hey! What's for dinner?  
CPC Wednesday Night Fellowship

### **January 6:**

Shepherds Pie, Salad  
Pumpkin Spice Cake

### **January 13:**

Slow Cooker Roast  
Mashed Potatoes, Peas  
Mississippi Mud Cake

### **January 20:**

Spaghetti  
Salad/Rolls  
Fruit Cobbler

### **January 27:**

Five Spice Pork Chops  
Corn Pudding, Broccoli  
Cream Cheese Sheet Cake



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Alliance of Baptists - American Baptist Churches - Cooperative Baptist Fellowship  
December Peanut Butter Donations = 52 Pounds  
Total Peanut Butter Donations for Year = 669 pounds  
Total Other Food Donations for Year = 503 Pounds  
Grand Total for Year = 1172 Pounds

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Our Communion bread is graciously donated  
by Great Harvest in Friendly Center.



## 15th Annual Male Bake-Off February 7th

Immediately following worship on Sunday, February 7, everyone is invited to a simple lunch of soup and sandwiches in the Fellowship Hall. Afterwards, we'll sample all the male bake-off entries.

### Rules for entry are:

- Any male 5 years old or older can enter (non-members are welcome).
- The entries should be ready for judging by 12 noon on Sunday, February 7.
- Men entering the contest may receive no help from any woman. Boys may receive some help from brothers, fathers, or other male figures.
- All entries should be a dessert of some variety. No jalapeno sawdust cakes, Matt.
- Men may use a boxed cake mix, but should not cheat. (Cheating would be buying an already-made cake.)
- Awards will be given for Best in Show, Judges award, Most Creative, Best Looking (dessert, not the baker), Best Tasting, Best Chocolate, Best Non-Chocolate, Super Bowl Award, Muy Macho, Best First-Time Entry, Best Veteran, Weirdness Cup, Fruit Frenzy, Best Pie, Poison Control Alert, and People's Choice (1st, 2nd and 3rd place).
- There are three overall divisions: Boys (ages 5-11), Young Men (12-18), Men's (19 & older).
- Each entry costs \$5 to pay for the snappy awards.
- As always, three impartial judges will judge all desserts. Bribes are appreciated.

**New award this year: Best Cookie**

### Every Member a Minister

Lin Bunce, Associate Minister  
Phyllis Calvert, Treasurer  
Cindy Dillon, Minister of Small Groups  
Susan Finley, Handbell Director  
Rydell Harrison, Minister of Music & Worship  
Matt Lojko, Deacon Chair  
Georgia Murray, Office & Media Manager  
Helen Morehead, Sexton  
Ralph & Tammy Stocks, Missionaries  
Michael S. Usey, Pastor  
Betty Withers, Still Feisty at 80

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Progressive - Diverse - Ecumenical

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