

VISTA de la Montaña

December 2015 ECHOES Pastor's Pen

Dear Members and Friends of Vista Church,

Sunday so much reminded me of the Grace of God that works in our lives even before we know God. John Wesley called this prevenient grace. Sunday you blessed us and our little "Sweet Pea" Ivy more than words can express! Thank you from Deede, Amy, Austin, me and "Sweet Pea". We took this car load of blessing over to our Sweet Pea's home to open all her presents and she slept through the whole thing in her Grandmother Deede's arms. Grace upon grace was poured out on Sweet Pea, blessing upon blessing and she was totally unaware! So often we are totally unaware of the blessings poured out on us by the Grace of God and can only in retrospect see those blessing and lift up thanks.

Sweet Pea slept through the entire celebration and won't remember a thing of course, but the blessing still remains. We celebrate that same blessing in our lives when we baptize infants. We celebrate that the Grace of God comes to us and saves us and rescues us before we even ask. In the end as we reflect on this all we can say is "Thank You!" "Thank you God!!!"

Advent starts the last Sunday in November and this first Sunday is when we remember that long ago, before Jesus was even born into this world, the plan of God was in motion; a plan that will extend to the end of time and the beginning of a New Heaven and a New Earth. This season of Advent and Christmas is a special time in which people's hearts are more open to hearing and responding to the Grace of God that came to us in the innocence of a baby. Christmas is a time to invite people to join us in worship and mission.

In our bulletin we will have a section that can be used as a poster or used to give to someone to invite them to our services. Most people (about 80%) who join a church come to the church because of the invitation of a friend, relative, acquaintance or neighbor. You can be that invitation, the working of the Grace of God in another person's life. To you they are indeed "People of Peace."

We look forward to celebrating this season with you
Thanks again for all your gifts and blessings!

In Christ's love, Pastor Fred

VISTA'S ANNUAL BEDDING AND CLOTHING DRIVE

A chill is in the air, and that means it is time for Vista's annual warm bedding and clothing drive to benefit area residents in need.

Throughout December, a box in the Narthex will be available for your donated items of blankets and comforters, and jackets, sweaters, coats, gloves, socks, stocking caps and scarves (both child and adult sizes). Remember, our nights turn cold during the winter months and many homes are poorly insulated, leaving their residents uncomfortable and susceptible to illness.

We will collect your donations weekly and take them to the Clothing Bank at IMPACT of Southern Arizona where they will be distributed to those in need. This is a win/win for all - as a result of your donations, you will end up with more room in your closet, while knowing you are helping others ward off the chill!

Let's wrap others with loving concern! And, THANK YOU as always, for generously responding to this request!

Benith MacPherson, Missions Outreach Liaison for IMPACT

IMPACT of Southern Arizona is sponsoring an Adopt-a-Child event this holiday season. All potential recipients have been personally interviewed by Brenda Garcia, program coordinator, or Claire Saavedra, Bi-lingual liaison. IMPACT has written guidelines for those who choose to adopt a family. You will receive a paper giving the number of children in the family and their clothing sizes and special wish for a toy. \$50 - \$75 per child is the spending range per child. Gifts are to be wrapped, labeled and returned to IMPACT by Dec. 11.

If you would like to participate in this service, you can call Brenda at IMPACT (825-0009) to receive information about the family for whom you will be purchasing presents as well as more detailed guidelines.

This is just one more way in which Vista members can reach out and personally touch the lives of those in need in our larger community.

Benith MacPherson, Mission Outreach Liaison

Gifts to Vista's Financial Vision

THE DOG ATE MY BOX OF ENVELOPES

I FORGOT MY OFFERING

I USED MY LAST CHECK

VISTA TO THE RESCUE

ACH (Automated Clearing House) - the paperless contribution

You can choose to electronically transfer the amount to be deducted from your checking or savings account on either the 15th or 30th of each month. Call the church office and leave a message for the financial secretary who will give you the authorization form to complete.

Stocks or Mutual Fund Shares

We are now in partnership with the Desert Southwest United Methodist Foundation which allows you to electronically transfer stock or mutual fund assets. The first step is to contact Lucille Sterling, Executive Director, for instructions. You may call (602) 798-8202 (Direct), (480) 495-4438 (cell), or (602) 265-1524 (FAX). The proceeds of the sale of shares will be sent to Vista. There is NO charge to you or us. We are excited to work with Lucille. This will solve past problems of delayed communication to Vista from stock transfers and calls to you from the financial secretary requesting additional information.

Envelopes are still available if you prefer to give your gift in this manner.

Please call the church office and leave a message for the financial secretary to call you with any questions about your financial gift.

Thank you for your gifts to Vista's Financial Vision.

*Joyce Holman, Financial Secretary
Finance Team, Stewardship Team*

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Christmas Shopping at Vista

Yes, you can do some Christmas shopping on December 13 before and after the church service. The United Methodist Women will be having their traditional *“Sweet Shoppe”* sale plus this year a mini *“Artists and Craft Fair”*

The money raised during these two events will be for the UMW mission project.

“Artists and Craft Fair”

Homemade Items

Date: 12/13/15

Purchasing times will be from 11:05 to 12:30 PM.

Place: Inside the sanctuary along the walls

To rent a table at the “Artists and Craft Fair” on 12/13/15:

Contact: Delores Brindle 520 907 5706 or e-mail: deloresjb@yahoo.com

Table rent cost: \$10.00 for a 6 foot by 30 inches

Limited number of tables

Selected by who contacts Delores first

Last date for renting: Sunday, December 6, 2015

Homemade items only, no commercial items will be accepted

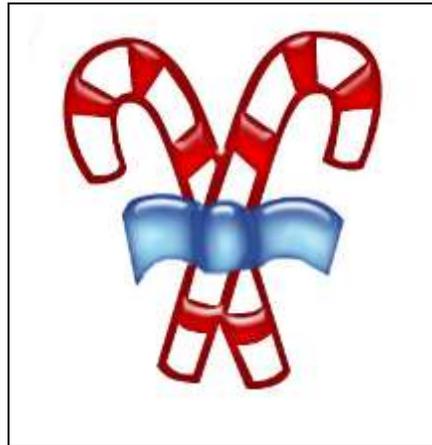
Vendors: Will only be church folks

Buyers: Will only be for those who attend church that Sunday

Time for selling: 11:05 to 12:30 PM.

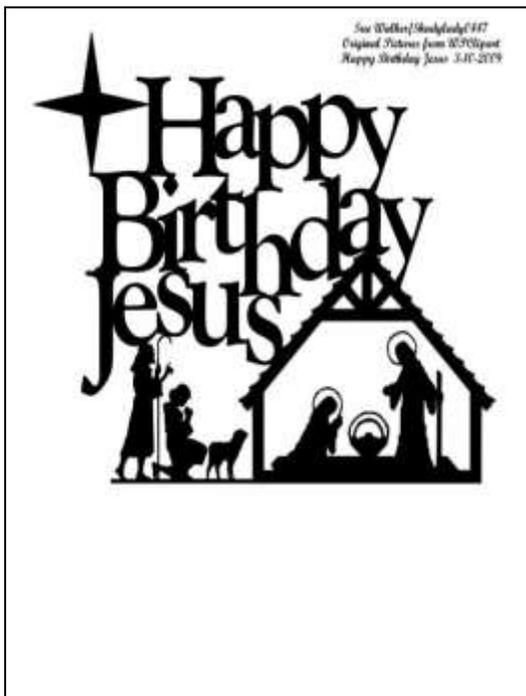
Give a homemade gift to your family and friends this year.
Please let us all support the United Methodist Women Mission project.

On Sunday, Dec.13th, after church service, Vista's UM Women will hold their annual pre-Christmas BAKE SALE and or Sweet Shoppe. You can purchase home baked cakes, cookies and scrumptious jams or preserves.



The Vista UM Women would like to say **THANK YOU** to all that supported us by attending the Western Chuck Wagon Dinner as all proceeds go to Mission projects either locally, statewide and even worldwide. Another huge **THANK YOU** to all the women that were involved with the preparations by shopping, decorating and cooking for the event, while cleaning up afterwards we had unexpected help by some Vista men = **THANK YOU!!!** 😊

Blessings to this great Vista family!



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO:

O'DONALD, Jay & Louise

12/01

KUHN, Jack & Barb

12/04

NEVINS, Dick & Ilene

12/08

HOTCHKISS, Curtis & Michelle

12/15

PETERSON, Art & Shirley

12/19

ANDERSON, Dave & Maureen

12/29

STODDARD, Bud & Pat

12/30

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

HOTCHKISS, Curtis 12/01

MILLER, Shirley 12/01

KOELLING, Jerry 12/05

WALDO, Marilyn 12/08

WATKINS, Stuart 12/09

BOLAR, Marlin 12/10

NEWMAN, Shirley 12/10

SNYDER, Donna 12/14

RAYNOR, Mary 12/16

ROBERTS, Kim 12/16

HARRINGTON, Joanne 12/17

MILLER, Paul 12/17

CURTIS, Carol 12/18

JOHNS PHD, Micki 12/18

MADDEN, Barb 12/18

CALAVAN, Phyllis 12/19

KARCHER, Cynthia 12/19

RUTKOWSKI, Marv 12/19

TERRY, Carl 12/20

BULL, Fred 12/21

DE WINDT, Charlotte 12/22

GILMOUR, Joanne 12/23

GRIFFIN, Linda 12/23

POHNERT, William 12/23

BLEESS, Von Ceil 12/24

AUGUST, Don 12/25

RUPE, Marvin 12/25

KUHN, Barb 12/27

LITTLE, Betty 12/30



Mission Outreach Ministry

Merry Christmas to all our Vista Church Family, from your Mission Outreach team. As we have the joy of celebrating another Birthday for our Friend, Lord & Savior Jesus Christ, our hearts are blessed by the example He left us and the call to serve others as an expression of our love for Him, not only in our community, our country but also around the world. One of the ways we express this love is by the way we live our lives and the care we give to "Feed My Sheep" thru Mission Service at Vista. So many of you dear partners in Mission, have given so much of your Time, Resources, Goods & Service and best of all, your Prayers to further the Mission Ministry at Vista. We thank you from the depth of our hearts and pray God's richest blessings on you for your amazing generosity and the love you have shown to those we serve.

I promised you, in last month's Echoes, a report on our annual Celebration of Learning Festival held for our sister church Fuente de Vida in Agua Prieta, Mexico. There were 34 of us from Vista and 2 more from Sun Lakes UMC on the trip. The day on 10-31-15, was cool and calm and we had a lovely ride on our comfortable touring bus to the border in Douglas. We had a new experience in crossing the Mexican Border. The Border officers required us to unload from the bus, all boxes, containers and luggage, and put them thru an X-Ray machine and then reload it all back into the under belly of the bus, before we were given permission to enter Mexico. Thank goodness we only had the craft and game boxes and 2 Certificate boxes with us. This was a new wrinkle in the crossing experience. Thanks to Pastor Gela, she and her helpers had come to Vista 2 weeks earlier on the 9th and picked up all our supplies, prizes, etc. and crossed the supplies to Mexico before our arrival, they even set up the Prize Room saving us a good deal of time. There were a happy group of folks in Agua Prieta awaiting our arrival and everything went very smoothly. The Festival started in the sanctuary, with the introduction of the Vista sponsors who were with us to their sponsored child. It is always so sweet to see how happy the students are to see and meet their sponsors. Pastor Fred gave a greeting from Vista to a packed church and then the students did a local folk dance performance, followed by a recital of a poem by one of the youth. The next part of the program was to award the framed Certificates of Achievement to 40 students who achieved a B+ average or better for their last school year 2014-2015. Each student received not only the Certificate, but a \$15.00 reward gift certificate to a local store. Their Mothers were invited to accompany their child to the front to receive a Mother's Gift Bag of items, donated by our folks at Vista, in appreciation for keeping their children in school and helping them achieve their Honor's grade. In many cases this is quite a sacrifice for the family to keep their children in school and not working to contribute to the family finances. We want to recognize this effort on the part of the Mothers, as many of the fathers are out of the country. Following each award their pictures are taken. This year the family and student pictures were taken by our guests from Sun Lakes, Rob and Deb Ralston. We will soon be showing

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**CELEBRATION
OF
LEARNING
2015**



these pictures to you in a Sunday Service. Following the ceremony we were invited to the new Jim & Doris Long Community Center, and served a tasty lunch. Arts and crafts followed lunch, with a craft project using the used cards from Vista to make pretty wall hangings. Not only do the kids make the craft projects, but the Mom's too. Upon completion of each art project the kids received a ticket to go into the prize room to pick out an item of their choice. The prize room was in the old sanctuary trailer building and held multiple tables loaded with your gift items. Believe me when I tell you that this Festival is like Christmas for them. What is always so pleasing is how well behaved the children are and the great big smiles on their faces. We sure do appreciate all the love and generosity Vista gives to these children thru the abundance of items you donate nor only for the students but for the Mothers too. After Crafts we start the Games, held in the dirt streets surrounding the church facilities. Ring toss, tug a war, egg in a spoon races, 3 legged races, gunny sack races, kick the soccer ball into the net competition, bean bag toss competitions etc. are played. The winner of each game gets a ticket to visit the prize room. The kids run from one game to the next and a number of the Mom's compete also. A great deal of fun is had by all, and the prizes in the prize room are soon used up. What a happy day, but all good things must come to an end, and by 3:00 PM we were on the bus and headed out to the US border and on to Vista by 6:30 PM. On the way home we have an opportunity to share with each other the joy and surprises of the trip. One of our youth said "what a surprise it was to experience how friendly they all were and they did not even know me". Others expressed "how surprising it was to see how happy they all appeared even living under such poor conditions" other surprise was "how loving they were". These trips are an eye opener for many of our fellow travelers and they are surprised to "see how much joy a small gift can bring". Oh if only we could take everyone at Vista with us, to experience the blessing of knowing our fellow Christians at our Sister Church. Without your help it would not be possible to hold the Celebration of Learning Festival, so once again, thank you so much for all your help and we do hope you will join us in 2016.

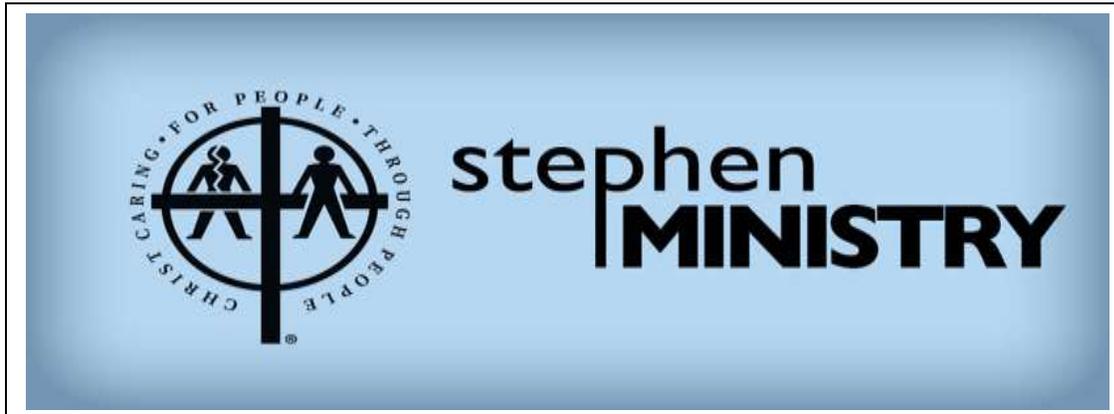
Our next Mission Outreach Meeting will be on Wed. the 2nd of Dec. at 1:00 PM in Ed's building. As always everyone is welcome to come and join us. I especially want to thank all the great folks who joined us on the trip to Agua Prieta and those who helped us get ready for the trip. You were all such good company and your help with your assigned jobs made the day such a success. The Bible says that "even as we have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me" May it be so!!

Wishing you all a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

Yours in Mission service:

Dee Berman..... Chairman

520-825-7115-----deerick1968@gmail.com



**SAVE LEAP YEAR DAY –
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2016**

The third collaborative workshop to help all of us make informed choices about how to best care for ourselves and our loved ones day-by-day and year-by-year will be at Vista from 1:00-4:00 on Monday, February 29, 2016. Please put this on your calendar now!!!

Karen MacDonald, M.Div., Health Ministry Manager for Interfaith Community Services (ICS), one of the two speakers that day states: “Healthy living includes drawing on all of our resources: spiritual, physical, mental, and social connections. In this presentation, we’ll consider how these aspects enable us to live as fully as possible with ongoing health conditions, and through all the length of our life. We’ll also learn about resources that can support our wholistic healthy living.”

THANK YOU VISTA FAMILY

To all of our Vista friends and family, the Bellah family thanks you for all of the prayers, words of encouragement, cards, flowers, and visits to our mom, Mildred. She is still battling and sleeping most of the time. She can no longer stand, sit or walk and is confined to a special wheelchair. Keep her in your prayers.

Bill and Mary Bellah

TUCSON HOSPITALITY INN

As of November 15, the *Pantry Food Drive* was well underway. You have been very generous and I will give a full report in next month's Echoes.

On November 6, a special event took place at the Inn. Lou Tompkins presented 6 plaques to honor individuals and organizations who have contributed to the support of THI. The plaques went to Long's Realty; Welcome Wagon Foothills Alumnae Club; Roadrunners Club; our church Vista de la Montana UMC; Patricia, a lady who has volunteered for seven years, donates food to the Inn every month, takes Lou shopping, and fixes luncheons for special occasions; and to our own Dee Berman for her continuing support of the Inn in many ways. The presentation was followed by a luncheon prepared by Patricia. The plaques are hung in the dining room of the Inn.

As of early November, the Inn was full. *Staying there was Dawn from Lake Havasu. She has throat cancer; Marisa and her mother Sharon from Ohio. Marisa was there for treatment of an auto-immune disease; Larry and Margo from Prescott. Larry has brain cancer; and Nadia from Egypt. Nadia was due to have more rhino surgery on November 17. Please keep these patients and their families in your thoughts and prayers.*

I will remind you that since THI is a 501 (c) (3) Qualifying Charitable Non-Profit, couples and singles have taken advantage of this in the past to donate to THI and received Arizona dollar for dollar tax credit on their Arizona Tax return. The maximum credit for couples is \$400; for singles it is \$200. If you want credit for 2015, you have to get your donation to the Inn by December 31. If you do not claim Arizona as your permanent residence, you can still deduct your donation of any amount as a charitable donation. Please make your check out to Tucson Hospitality Inn and mail it to Lou Tompkins, Tucson Hospitality Inn, 2539 E. Edison Street, Tucson, AZ 85716. You will receive a letter gratefully acknowledging your gift.

The Inn will be decorated for Christmas by volunteer and nurse Stephanie Ly and her friends. Hopefully it will bring cheer and hope to those who have to be at the Inn during December. There will be a 7 foot tree, a nativity scene, stockings hung on the mantle and various decorations placed in the living and dining room. My thanks to Stephanie and her crew!

My hope for you is a joyous and blessed Christmas with friends and family. I thank you for all your generous support this year that helps to continue this mission. Lou wishes you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and continues to say that Vista has made a great difference with all the ways that members have helped! He thanks you!

Kay Gragg, THI Team Leader



CATALINAS COMMUNITY CHORUS
in cooperation with Vista Fine Arts
presents
“A Christmas Concert...Merry and Bright”
Sunday, December 6, at 3:00 in the afternoon

You are invited to catch the spirit of the holiday season with the Catalinas Community Chorus and guests, the Tucson Girls Chorus. We hope you and your families and friends will join us on Sunday, December 6 at 3:00 P.M. at Vista for this holiday kick-off.

Catalinas Community Chorus is now in its 10th season – 2016 is their 10th Anniversary Year! The singers are members of our community. The mission is to bring the beauty and inspiration of outstanding choral music to the community. Under the leadership of artistic director, our own Bill Bellah, this group’s reputation has grown into being Northwest Tucson’s Pops Chorus, singing a variety of musical styles, including Broadway, spiritual, gospel, folk, jazz, pop, country, western, and light classical.

Come and enjoy an afternoon of Christmas classics in a unique blend of timeless beauty, presented by two of Tucson's wonderful musical ensembles. Tickets (\$10) are available by calling 520-303-6474, on Sunday mornings at Vista, or at the door on concert day. More information at www.vistaumc.org.

Sonoran Bells
in cooperation with Vista Fine Arts
presents
Ring In the Season
Sunday, December 13 at 3:00 in the afternoon

Sonoran Bells, Tucson's premier community handbell ensemble, will close their 2015 season on December 13th with a concert at 3:00 p.m. at Vista. Under the direction of Shannon Casey, the program will feature traditional carols and contemporary arrangements of holiday songs.

Sonoran Bells, established in 1999, is a community handbell ensemble based in Tucson and comprised of experienced handbell ringers chosen by audition. The group quickly established itself for the ensemble’s musical excellence. In addition, they are proud of their educational focus, which consists of hosting festivals and workshops throughout the year, thus providing a resource for other local handbell and chime ensembles. A variety of classes are offered to directors and ringers who are interested in building their ringing skills.

Please come and bring your friends and family on December 13 at 3:00 p.m. to enjoy this outstanding program. Handbells are beautiful to see and their music is guaranteed to get you in the spirit of Christmas. The concert is free and all are welcome. An offering will be taken. For more details about the ensemble, visit www.sonoranbells.org.

Vista's Christmas Calendar

- Nov. 29** **1st Sunday of Advent - *Hope***
10:00 am Worship Service
- Dec. 6** **2nd Sunday of Advent - *Peace***
10:00 am Worship Service with Christmas Musical by the Chancel and Handbell choirs.
 "The Promise of Light"
3:00 pm Catalinas Community Chorus with the Tucson Girls Chorus presented by Vista Fine Arts.
- Dec. 13** **3rd Sunday of Advent - *Joy***
10:00 am Worship Service followed by UMW Sweet Shoppe and Arts & Crafts Fair.
3:00 pm The Sonoran Bells presented by Vista Fine Arts.
- Dec. 20** **4th Sunday of Advent - *Love***
10:00 am Worship Service
- Dec. 24** **Christmas Eve Services – *The Bread of Life***
3:00 pm Carols & Communion – A service for those who like to sing but don't like to drive after dark
6:00 pm* Family Service – for children and the young at heart.
8:00 pm Carols, Communion and Candle Light. –
 A grand celebration of
 the birth of the Christ Child

Stephen Ministers serve as a “leaning post”

By Dawn Baumgartner Vaughan

All we’re really doing is being vessels for Christ, to be a listening ear and to walk with people during difficult times.”

It takes more than a set of ears to be a good listener to another member of your church. The Stephen Ministry is a nation-wide program in which congregation members go through intensive training to be there for others in their times of need. On a Tuesday night earlier this month at White Rock Baptist Church, eight Stephen Ministers and Stephen Leaders gathered in a classroom. They started the meeting with a devotion led by Eloise Jordan, who talked about the building blocks for good relationships: love, encouragement, respect, managing emotions and prayer.

In Stephen Ministry congregations, lay caregivers—called Stephen Ministers—provide one-on-one confidential Christian care to the bereaved, hospitalized, terminally ill, divorced, unemployed, relocated, empty-nesters and others facing a crisis or life challenge. Stephen Ministers and care receivers are paired by gender—women with women, men with men. “We can’t stress enough how Christ-centered, God-centered this ministry is. God is always there,” said Stephen Leader Barbara Carney.

Stephen Ministries, which is based in St. Louis, was started in 1975 by the Rev. Kenneth C. Haugk, Ph.D., a pastor and clinical psychologist. Brian Scott, who is a Stephen Minister, said that men are not bred to share their feelings. “But when it all comes down, men hurt as much as anyone else, maybe even more,” he said. “It takes a little while to build trust, but once you peel back the layers, you see men have the same fears as everyone else.” If people don’t know what’s going on with you, they can’t pray for you. Maybe my charge as a Stephen Minister is to spread that message to other brothers,” Scott said. When Brian sees his care receiver now, he gives him a big hug. They’ve become good friends. Barbara Green was part of a similar program at her church in California, so she was eager to join the ministry at White Rock. “It’s such a rewarding experience to see the results of you being there for them, and that what they say is not being repeated,” Green said. Before she meets with a care receiver, she prays first, asking the Holy Spirit to lead her. “I think of it as being a leaning post. It makes you feel closer to God,” she said. Green said many Stephen Ministers are wounded healers, too. “If you have gone through something when no one was there for you, like I

have, you see yourself [in the care receiver]. I know God can handle anything,” she said.

White Rock consulted Union Baptist when it first considered becoming a Stephen Ministry congregation. In 2003, Carney brought the idea to her pastor at White Rock, the Rev. Reginald Van Stephens. “She could tell that, as a pastor, I was extended,” Van Stephens said. “It was also clear that this is not a counseling ministry, but a listening ministry. They don’t give advice. They’re simply there to be listeners.

”Stephen Leader Shirley Davis said one reason Stephen Ministry is active is because they realize the pastor can’t get to everyone in the congregation, so people in the church are trained and help the pastor. That means 50 hours of training for Stephen Ministers and a week-long training session for Stephen Leaders. Leader Joel McCauley Sr. said it has been an extremely rewarding experience for him. “You get an opportunity to really share intimate thoughts and feelings you don’t get to normally, because of the trust factor. You don’t build that overnight,” McCauley said. “All we’re really doing is being vessels for Christ, to be a listening ear and to walk with people during difficult times.

”Leader Teri Canada became involved after her mom passed away. “At that point, nothing that big had happened to me. You can go to some dark places, and [Stephen Ministry] is having someone lead you out,” she said. Canada said the training helped her, too. McCauley said that when a loved one dies, there is a rush of support and visitors, but two weeks after the funeral, the grieving person is alone. But the person’s Stephen Minister will still be there.

Durham, North Carolina

February 17, 2011

The Herald Sun—Durham, North Carolina. Reprinted with permission.

February 17, 2011