



The Varnell Voice
newsletter for Varnell UMC, Inc.

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Intentional Faith Development

Warning: Intentional Faith Development can be hazardous to your life. Symptoms of growing faith include (but are not limited to) unexplained joy in the midst of suffering, going places you never wanted to go, loving people you don't know, giving generously and enjoying it, saying things you never thought would come out of your mouth, a sense of peace that passes all understanding, and forgiving people instead of wanting to scratch their eyes out. If symptoms persist, stop going to church, quit reading your Bible, skip times of prayer - and they will soon diminish.

This year Varnell United Methodist Church is focusing on "Intentional Faith Development." This is the third practice listed in the book Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations. During the coming year, I challenge you to join me in taking an intentional step toward developing your faith.

Want some of the "side effects" listed above? Seek to implement several of the specific steps below.

- Read the Bible. No preacher, teacher, or book can grow your faith faster than reading God's Word. Participate in a Bible Study. Want to grow your faith fast? Lead a Bible Study.
- Pray. Increase the amount of your daily prayer time and God will bless your socks right off.
- Fellowship. Keep company with people who have a stronger faith than you and your faith will grow stronger.
- Do Something. When you serve somewhere or do something for Christ, your faith will develop and other people will be blessed.

I'm not saying you have to do all of these. I do know from my own life and faith that intentionally increasing one will lead to surprising blessings in your life, and some of the symptoms above will rear their unexpected heads in your life.

Don't say I didn't warn you!

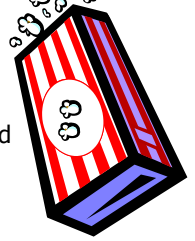
Ready. Aim. Invite!

By December of 2011, Varnell United Methodist Church set a goal to bring fifty (50) new people into this family of faith. What a great target to aim at! Those fifty people might include another life-long friend - Someone who is not currently at Varnell UMC will come and discover how great you are. But most will only come if they are invited. Start today. Pray about the person God is calling you to invite. A personal invitation is, always has been and always will be the single most effective way to bring people to Christ through the local church. But wait, there is more.

A second goal is for fifteen of those fifty new members to join the Church on a "profession of faith." That means VUMC has a goal to birth fifteen new Christians this year. Again, this will only happen if they come. Why not invite someone to church today and change their life for good?



Look What's Popping Up in Children's Ministries!



Hello guys!! This is Ashley, Varnell's new interim Children's Minister. For those of you who don't know me, let me tell you a little bit about myself. I was born and raised in California! After graduating high school in 1994, I moved to Georgia to attend college. In all honesty, it was definitely a culture SHOCK!!! But like always, God had a plan with me moving here! While attending Piedmont College, I met my husband Larry, who is a native Varnellian. To make a long story short, we married in 2000 and have 2 kids, Luke and Annie.

With a degree in Childhood Education, I began my career as a 2nd grade teacher. For the past few years, I have been blessed with the ability to be a stay at home mom! However, several months ago, the Lord came knocking on my door asking me to step up as Children's Minister! I was real quick to say NO! However, after much prayer, I realized that even though I am a little scared of this new journey, I know God will equip me with all that I need. I am looking forward to getting to know the children here at VUMC, but also reaching out to other children in the community who don't have a church to call home. I am taking each day at a time and learning new things every day. Please be assured that my whole heart is in this!! I believe children are the future, and together as a church we can ensure a brighter future by planting solid seeds of faith, and at the same time make learning about Jesus fun and exciting!!

Here are things I am currently working on:

Beginning Feb. 13th – All ages of Praise Kraze students will begin their worship in the gym. For the first 10 - 15 minutes kids will be involved in **whole** group song and worship. AFTER that they will split into 2 groups for the remainder of the service!
PICK ALL SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN UP IN THE GYM AFTER WORSHIP BEGINNING FEB. 13th!!

Beginning March 2nd – Wednesday nights will be full of high voltage Bible experience stations! Kids will rotate to different stations, such as art, drama, cooking and science. All these stations will tie into the same monthly biblical concept. **WE STILL NEED VOLUNTEERS!! YOU WILL ONLY BE COMMITTED TO 1 WEDNESDAY A MONTH!**

3 & 4 year old activities will be brought back on Wednesday nights beginning March 2nd. **STILL NEED VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH 3 & 4 YR OLDS!! WILL ONLY BE ONCE A MONTH I PROMISE!**

I will continue to keep you informed on *what's popping* in Children's Ministries! Please be patient with me during this time of transition. Some things might work and others might flop. If you see a problem and have a solution, come to me and we will fix it. We want VUMC to be a place where kids want to be. If you have suggestions, please feel free to email me at ashley@varnellumc.org. I am a big kid at heart and can't wait to sing, dance, and play with your child as we learn about GOD!!

Plan A ≠ Plan B

"What Do You Do When God Doesn't Show Up The Way You Thought He Would?"

We all have one or two plans that go awry in our life. So where do you go to when your Plan A's don't happen? Where is GOD in your Plan B's?

The Thursday Morning Ladies Bible Study will begin exploring a book entitled *Plan B* by Pete Wilson, February 24 from 10:30-11:30 a.m. in Room #201.



A nursery will be provided. Expect some laughter, tears, and special moments of sharing as we realize GOD IS actively working in our lives even in our Plan B's. For more information or where to find a discussion guide, you can contact Beth Gwin at 706.694.8447 or email her at bgwin82@gmail.com.

No Studying, No Testing, No Worries, Just Come

All men, especially manly men - Bring your Bible if you have one - and if you don't, we will get you one to keep!

Come join the Men's Bible Study group; it is extremely user-friendly. There will be no required reading during the week, no study guide other than your Bible and no test.

You will meet in Room #201 on Sunday evenings at 5:30 p.m.

So, bring your Bible – that's it. We'll pick a passage to discuss each week and figure out how much we know or don't know about God's Word.

There are basically no guidelines. We are just going to read and discuss the Bible. Have some more questions? Call Matt Thames 706.264.4546.



Youth Activities: Gonna Be RAD!

Hello everybody, it's me again with some more fun, exciting, and life changing events going on here with the Youth. We have already done a couple of events that have been amazing for me and for the youth as well, and we are looking forward to the upcoming ones.

The first event on the agenda is "**UPRISING**". This is our "in-house" (lock-in) youth retreat that is taking place February 19th through February 20th. The retreat will start at 10 a.m. Saturday with activities all day long, and will end on Sunday at 6 p.m. The retreat will only cost the students **\$5.00 each**, so this is a *pretty stinking awesome deal* for your youth. You just can't beat a \$5.00 deal. So, tell someone, "Come on Somebody." (Fill in the blank here.) This is going to be a blast, so I hope you come join the **UPRISING**.

The second event is The Revolution worship service on February 19th in Room #123. YES, this is the same day as **UPRISING**, but it's all **COOL BEANS AND HOT CHILI**. The Revolution will start at 7 p.m. and will end at 9, with the **UPRISING** Lock-In to follow.

We are having an awesome guest speaker come all the way from far away Cleveland, TN - Eddie Jones. Eddie is the Youth Pastor at North Cleveland Church of God, and was my mentor while I worked there. I know he will bring a powerful message to our crew at Varnell. *Everybody is totally welcome to come to the service and share in this awesome night.*

I hope to see everyone come out to these two awesome events and take and grow from them. If you have any questions, please call me (Kurt Baron, Youth Pastor) 706-537-3582 or email me kurt@varnellumc.org.



REVOLUTION!

Fifty (50) youth and adults arrived Friday, January 28 for the Youth led Worship time "Revolution."

Any Given Day, Varnell UMC's Youth Band, rocked the house for Jesus at the beginning of Worship. Tyler Grant was so filled with the spirit that he fell off the stage onto his rear end. (He was okay, but the stage suffered some damage.)

Kurt gave a message on "Fruits of the Spirit" and then the youth played some cool games, such as *Bird on A Wire*. (Ask a youth about this awesome game.) Food & fun commenced after this and a time to hang out with everyone. Come to the next one scheduled February 19. The **GNARLY** begins at 7 p.m.

Gal Pal Time

After Revolution was over Friday, January 28, thirty-two (32) Middle School & High School gals kicked the guys out for a special Lock-In designed just for them.

The girls, along with Beth Gwin and Melissa Thompson, who coordinated the event, had a fun time making brownies for Providence Ministries, studying what God's Word says regarding "Making Time for GOD", playing flashlight tag, basketball and other games.

Needless to say, there were a lot of sleepy girls (Beth & Melissa too!) the next day, but many friendships were made and special times had by all who attended.



OFFERING Christ While BECOMING WHOLE-HEARTED Christ Followers



Welcome Ashley Reed

On January 1, 2011, Ashley Reed joined the staff at Varnell as the Interim Children's Minister. Ashley has a degree in Childhood Education from Piedmont College. Ashley and her family are members here at Varnell UMC and you probably have heard Ashley sing solos as well as with (the *Varnell Team Praise*) during Worship.

She is very excited and enthusiastic about working with the children at Varnell UMC and growing the Children's program throughout the community.

Ashley is married to Larry and has two children - Luke who is eight years old, and Annie, who is three.

Everyone is very happy to have Ashley on staff here at Varnell UMC. Please take a moment to say "Welcome!" Lift Ashley and her family up in your prayers during this transition.



Ashley Reed joined the Varnell UMC staff as the New Children's Minister in January. Ashley's family includes from left to right: Larry, Annie, Luke and Ashley. When you see Ashley, welcome her aboard!



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- Keyla Manning** Toddler Childcare Provider - Interim
- Janice Richards** Musician (8:40 & 10:45)
- Ashley Reed** Children's Minister - Interim
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