

December 2011 Issue



at  
**First**  
gla<sup>nce</sup>

**First Assembly**  
1501 Hwy 24/27 West  
P.O. Box 516  
Albemarle, NC 28002

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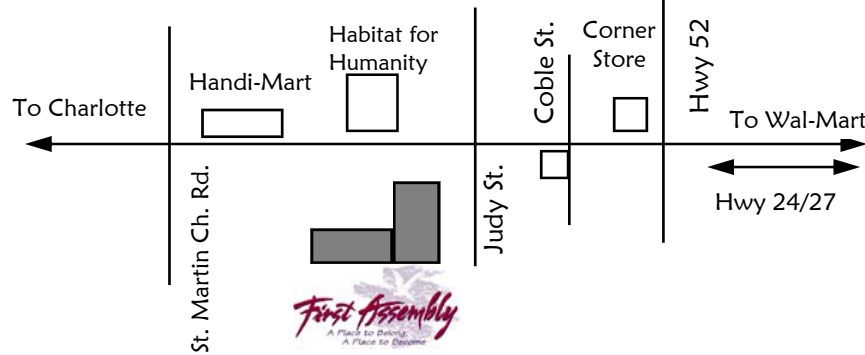
**Pastoral Staff**

**Rev. Bob Gruver ~ Senior Pastor**  
**Rev. George Mullen ~ Senior Associate Pastor**  
**Rev. Matt Miller ~ Youth Pastor**  
**Rev. Randy Thompson ~ Children's Pastor**  
**Rev. Matt Gilliam ~ Music/Media Pastor**

**Church Office**

**Hours:**  
Monday ~ Thursday  
9 AM – 5 PM  
Friday 9 AM - 1 PM  
**Phone:**  
(704) 983-3719  
**Fax:**  
(704) 982-7276

[www.albemarlefirst.org](http://www.albemarlefirst.org)



**December 2011**



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Sunday</b> 9am: Adult, Youth & Children Sunday School 10am: Adult Worship Children's Church	<b>Sunday</b> 6pm: Worship Service 6:30pm Christmas Drama Practice - YRoom	<b>Monday</b> 5:30pm - 7pm: Kid's Band Practice 7pm: Visitation Men's Prayer	<b>Wednesday</b> 7pm: Fusion Children's Ministries	<b>1</b> 10am: WM's 1 Hour With Him In Sanctuary 6:30pm-7:30pm: Praise Team Practice 7:30 - 8:30pm Christmas Choir Practice	<b>2</b> 7pm: Couples For Christ Jr. Ch. Church	<b>3</b> Children's Choir Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal 9am - 2:30pm (sanctuary) Greeter Christmas Party @ Fresh House (Locust) -6pm
<b>4</b> Communion 6PM: Children's Christmas Program	<b>5</b> Olan Mill's Portraits 2pm - 9:30pm 7pm: Connect365 Bible Study @ Sheila Holland's and Mindy Blankenship's	<b>6</b> 1pm: Ladies Intercessory Prayer @ Bea Cox's Home 7pm: Rooms 100-102 Victorious Overcomers	<b>7</b> 7pm: Small Group	<b>8</b> 10am: WM's 1 Hour With Him In Sanctuary 6:30pm-7:30pm: Praise Team Practice 7:30 - 8:30pm Christmas Choir Practice	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b> FUSION Christmas Party 6:30pm: CFC Christmas Party @ Nalin & Sue Mehta's Home
<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> 7pm: Stephen Ministry Training - Rm 100 Last Class 7pm: Stephen Ministry CE - Rm 101	<b>13</b> 1pm: Ladies Intercessory Prayer @ Bea Cox's Home 7pm: Rooms 100-102 Victorious Overcomers 6pm: Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal @ F/A	<b>14</b> 7pm: New Directions 6pm:Setup & Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal @ Ag-Center	<b>15</b> 10am: WM's 1 Hr. With Him Senior Saints Lunch @ Ryan's - 12pm 7pm: Christmas Program @ Ag-Center	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> Set Tear Down @ Ag-Center
<b>18</b> Nursing Home Ministry @ Forrest Oakes 6pm: Christmas Social	<b>19</b> 7pm: Stephen Ministry Training - Rm 100	<b>20</b> 1pm: Ladies Prayer @ Bea Cox's Home 7pm: WM's Connect365 Christmas Party Char's Home	<b>21</b> 7pm: Small Group	<b>22</b> 10am: WM's 1 Hr. With Him	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Christmas Eve Service - 6pm
<b>25</b> Christmas Day 8am - 9am: Praise Choir Practice Nursing Home Ministry @ Bethany Woods No PM Service	<b>26</b> Office Closed 7pm: Stephen Ministry Training - Rm 100 7pm: Stephen Ministry CE - Rm 101	<b>27</b> 1pm: Ladies Prayer @ Bea Cox's Office Closed 7pm: Rooms 100-102 Victorious Overcomers	<b>28</b> 7pm: New Directions	<b>29</b> 6:30pm-7:30pm: Praise Team 7:30pm - 9pm Praise Band	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>

at

# First glance

December, 2011

**"Christmas...it's here!!!"**

Can you imagine it? It's getting' ready time. The stores are packed with people buying gifts. Those boxes packed away months ago are brought out and all of that Christmas stuff is pulled down from the attic. Everyone around is decorating their homes with lights and trimmings. Some lawns are filled with the showcases of Christmas splendor. What do you do to prepare for Christmas?

If it's like around our place, there is a mass cleaning effort...When the cleaning is complete; the house gets arranged for the decorating. Everyday things are put away. The whole house is given a new look just in preparation. Then the decorations are brought down and everything takes on the look of Christmas. The tree is set up with lights strung from top to bottom and ornaments are scattered on the branches. Other trimmings make their appearance around the house, garland is placed on the staircase rails and homemade decorations created by our kids and theirs are hung in different places. When all of this is done the work of preparation is nearly finished.

The final preparation centers on the gifts. Lists are created so we don't forget a thing while we are out shopping. It usually takes many trips to various stores and shopping centers. It wouldn't be Christmas without four or five trips to two or three malls. The shopping is done so that we can give and receive gifts on Christmas day. All of this is a great illustration of how God wants us to prepare for Christmas.

When we truly prepare for Christmas, there is a **personal cleansing** (*Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God. Matthew 5:8*). When we truly prepare for Christmas, there is a **new arrangement of our priorities** (*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well. Matthew 6:33*). When we truly prepare for Christmas, **there is a decorating of the heart** (*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh*). When we truly prepare for Christmas, there is a **receiving and giving of gifts** (*Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. John 1:12*).

**One of the greatest joys of Christmas is found in giving.** It is indeed better to give than to receive. I don't always enjoy the shopping or the wrapping of gifts but I love to give the gifts. The same may be true for you. You love to watch others tear through the wrapping. You love to watch their faces light up. You love to hear the words "It's just what I wanted!"

**It might surprise you but this applies to Christ as well. There is great joy when you give a gift to Christ. What does Christ want from you? Give Him your greatest and most valuable gift - yourself.**

**First Assembly...  
a place to belong  
a place to become**

**Have a Merry, Merry Christmas,  
Pastor Bob**

## FUSION FACTS

Merry Christmas! This Christmas season look back on the year and thank God for all His marvelous blessings. Big or small, God has done many things this year worth thanking Him over and over for! Erica and I are extremely blessed and have much to be thankful for in our "little man" Liam. We thank Jesus for the miracle of life and the opportunity to be parents!

In November FUSION experienced a great move of God! With Youth Convention (which was spectacular!!!) and our teaching series, we had a blast experiencing God in worship and diving into His Word. God is definitely moving in a way that is absolutely amazing. I love watching it.

Tis' the season for Christmas Parties, and if you are like me, you have your fair share of them. FUSION is no different. This month our FUSION Christmas Party is on the 10<sup>th</sup> check out the FUSION event calendar for more information! I look forward to seeing your student there!

Amidst all the parties, shopping, family get-togethers, shopping, baking, and shopping it can be real easy to forget the reason for the season, Jesus. So this CHRISTmas don't leave out Christ! Invite Him to the parties and get-togethers, and you can even dare to take Him shopping with you (you'll need Him to keep it together when you try to find parking spots at the mall!).

**Have a blessed Christmas,**

**God bless,  
Pastor Matt**

### Couples For Christ

#### Small Group

Friday, December 2nd  
Jr. Children's Church

#### Christmas Party

Saturday, December 10th @ 6:30pm  
Nalin & Sue Mehta's Home  
34876 Oakhill Drive, Albemarle

## Music Notes Firestorm Ministries

Thank all of you for approaching me about getting involved with Christmas! We are getting close to the production and we STILL have opportunities for you to come and get involved. If you are looking to be a part of the Community Christmas service, "God With Us", and have not contacted me, we can still use your help. Because this is designed to be a "church wide" outreach, we are hoping to use every member in some capacity (even small roles). Contact the church offices or email me at [Mgilliam@albemarlefirst.org](mailto:Mgilliam@albemarlefirst.org) for more information on how you can get involved!

The dates of the event (starting with prop setup) are December 14<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> at the Agri-Civic center here in Albemarle. We will be meeting that Wednesday, December 14th to setup and run a full dress rehearsal. The program dates are Thursday and Friday December 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm. Saturday December 17<sup>th</sup> will just be a day to clean up and get things back to the Church.

For those wanting to get involved with decorating, prop building, painting, or stage design, we are meeting Wednesdays from 6:30pm until 9pm in room 209. If you are not currently involved with a bible study group on this night, this would be a great opportunity to come use your talents! Also, the same group will be meeting Saturdays from 1pm until 5pm in room 209. Feel free to come and go as your schedule allows. Thank you in advance for all that you have done, all that you do, all you are going to do for our Church, our community, and most importantly The Kingdom!

**Blessings,  
Pastor Matt G.**

### Senior Saints

#### Lunch @ Ryan's Restaurant

Thursday, December 15th @ Noon

### Victorious Overcomers

Tuesdays, December 6th - 27th  
7pm - Rooms 100-102

Wow! Many thanks to all the kids who went without soda (or something else) during most of November. The money collected for our "Pop-Out" campaign went to help provide water wells in Africa. The kids gave up something to drink so that other kids could have something clean to drink!

We are so excited to present to you our Christmas play "Back to the Manger" on Sunday night, December 4th! The kids have done a great job putting it all together and I've enjoyed having a part in the play and being able to imitate my future self - an old guy! Hopefully I'll still be able to cut up in real life when I'm that age! A big THANK YOU goes out to Susan Helms for putting up with all my different lines and stuff I added to my character; it was different each week! We hope to see you on December 4th; you'll really enjoy it - I promise!

Save the date for Sunday night, December 11th because we'll be having our kids Christmas party and it's gonna be "Christmas in Hawaii!". Yes, you heard right! All the kids need to wear something Hawaiian, bring a big beach towel, sunscreen and we'll have a huge blast at our Hawaiian Christmas Luau!

**Merry CHRISTMAS  
to everyone at Albemarle First!**

**Pastor Randy**

### Connect365 Women's Ministry

#### Ladies' 1 Hour With Him

(Intercessory Prayer)  
Thursdays @ 10am - Sanctuary

#### Ladies' Bible Study

Monday, December 5th @ 7pm  
At The Homes Of: Sheila Holland  
433 Lindsey Lane, Oakboro &  
Mindy Blankenship  
32865 NC Hwy 740, Badin

#### Christmas Party

Tuesday, December 20th @ 7pm  
Char Gruver's  
438 Lindsey Lane, Oakboro, NC  
704-485-8072