I stopped making New Year’s resolutions a long time ago. When you get as old as I am, and have broken as many resolutions as I have in my life-time, you just get a bit skeptical about making resolutions. Having said that, I want to hasten to add that I still believe in new beginnings.

Each day when we get up, each hour of each day, we have a chance to do things a bit differently than we did the day or the hour before. Sometimes it is just a matter of a slight attitude adjustment; sometimes it is a matter of having a bit more information or experience than we had a little while before; sometimes something happens to change our perspective on a particular problem or issue. Whatever it is, we can make different choices or decisions and the outcome can be vastly different for us. Thus, there is an opportunity for a new beginning.

Seeing and grasping opportunities for new beginnings are quite different in my mind than making resolutions that we may or may not keep. Opportunities present themselves often and our choices regarding them often have both short-term and long-term consequences. Resolutions imply change which is global and long-lasting. Opportunities offer the possibility that we may miss some and grasp others, but they will keep coming.

Resolutions simply are difficult for us to keep. And the guilt for not keeping them erodes our self-esteem and contributes to our cynicism. Those kinds of results are not good for our spirits.

I would just like to encourage you to be aware and sensitive to the opportunities that come your way to see another’s point of view, to grasp that there is more than one road you can take to get to your desired destination and to make helpful changes in your life. As a Christian, I also happen to believe that God is always present with us (“Emmanuel”), thus making the range of choices we have every day to situations we face easier to make if we seek His guidance. I hope you and yours have had a great Christmas season and that you have a new year filled with opportunities which offer all kinds of possibilities for positive learning and change in your life.

See you in Church each Sunday.

Bill Ellison

New families joined Grand Friends at our December meeting. Twenty-eight (28) were present at this meeting which included all youth Grand Friends with their parents and our older adults. One of our biggest groups ever.

A big WELCOME to our new youth Grand Friends and their parents joining the program. They were Claire Key, daughter of Carol and Kevin Key, and Logan Hayes, son of Michelle and Mark Hayes. We are delighted to have these beautiful families join Grand Friends.

Building relationships between youth Grand Friends and older adults is more important now than ever before. Helen Lingle, older adult, received a beautiful note from her youth Grand Friend, Ellie Jones, last year. This note read as follows: “I love you so much. I am so thankful that God put you in my life.” Grand Friends has been a real blessing to many youth as well as older adults and we are all grateful.

Lynn Jones, craft leader, taught the group how to make a candy cane candle. This was a great Christmas gift for the families and for the older adults. Eileen Porter, another leader, was present to prepare the youth with their lines in the Christmas story for our devotional. Thank you Eileen and all the youth for this great presentation. Betsy Holder, our fitness leader, taught the group a fun dance accompanied by lovely Christmas music. Thank you to all families for bringing special food for our beautiful refreshment table. All these goodies made this time so enjoyable.

It was a real joy to see how our youth have become stronger leaders this past year. We look forward to their leadership in helping our younger members with special projects in 2014.

Out next meeting will be Sunday, February 23.

Sallie Ward
“Dreaming” of the Holidays

In an article in the Philadelphia Inquirer, Melissa Dribben, has written about dreams. In particular she wrote about the circumstantial trigger for a dream at this time of year. Because this is a time when our families gather or we remember family members who are no longer with us, those thoughts in our minds can easily find their way to our dreams. Dreams serve to connect us to our roots and help us to imagine where our future lies.

Kelly Bulkeley, former president of the International Association for the Study of Dreams, has said that as more and more information is gathered about dreams there is a common thread of recurring themes in dreams. Most are negative. Children tend to dream about being chased by monsters or animals, and adults are haunted by failed exams, and fear of forgetting to get dressed.

With the use of computers, scientists have been able to sift through data looking for patterns, key words and images in dreams. Dream research has remained a small domain, however, because its advancement does not seem to have direct clinical applications, with the exception of PTSD treatment, states Deidre Barrett, associate professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School and author of The Committee of Sleep, an article about how artists, scientists and athletes use dreams to solve problems. She states that people dream solutions to architectural designs or chemistry, writers dream plots for novels, and musicians can hear scores. “If we are in a rut and not seeing a solution, dreams can show us a way outside of the box.”

Dream interpretation exists in nearly every culture. Bulkeley states that the one truth that remains constant is that the only expert about your dreams is you. “People can give you helpful advice, but it’s always up to the dreamer to say this is what I think it means.”

Debbie Taylor, RN

Carolers Spread Christmas Joy

On Wednesday, December 18th, fifteen carolers from West Market spread Christmas joy around Greensboro, visiting and calling members of our church to wish them a Merry Christmas. This was the seventh year that Lynne and I organized the caroling party made up of choir members and church members who wanted to sing. The carolers who joined us were Helen Alsbaugh, Ken Acker, Betty Betts, Nonnye Durham, Augusta Johnston who also played her harmonica, Gail Lung, Sandra Mitchell, Leah Overman, Mike Risotti, Bill Sims, Emerson Spivey, Bill Westphal, and Lee Willard.

The carolers gathered in the Early Childhood Center Parking Lot where the church vans were waiting for them. Lynne Gilbert and Emerson Spivey drove the vans. To reach more members the two vans took separate routes; each van was assigned seven homes, joining together at the last stop. Each van had a Google Map and directions for travel. Each van also had a list of six or seven members to contact for a singing phone call of several carols and wishing them a Merry Christmas. The carolers asked about favorite carols and sang them.

Caroling brought Christmas Joy to forty of our members plus some visitors at one home by us seeing them or singing to them over the phones. From those that we saw we received special smiles and from everyone, words of appreciation. We all received a special blessing from sharing Christmas Carols and enjoying good fellowship. Maybe next year you will want to join us. With more carolers and someone willing to drive their own van with some carolers, we might be able to reach more of our members.

Mary Belle Gilbert

Bill Ownbey shared a photograph of some of our carolers taken by his daughter, Debbie Wagoner.