

The Methodist Messenger
December 2021
Whiteville United Methodist Church

Sunday School - 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service - 10:00 a.m.
Wednesday Holy Communion Service/Bible Study - 6:00 p.m.

FROM
THE
PASTOR



It's beginning to look (and sound) a lot like Christmas! Advent and Christmas festivities are in full swing. People are heading to the shops and stores looking for that perfect gift for those they love. Neighbors are donning their homes with lights and colorful Christmas characters. The sights and sounds remind us that the Christmas (Advent) season is upon us.

Christmas preparations fill our time with decorating, purchasing, wrapping, traveling, and celebrating. Christmas parties, special events, and gatherings help us experience the joy and good cheer of the season, but also make a full schedule even fuller. Sometimes we might wonder if we will have the time to get everything done before December 25th. We may even start looking past Christmas, yearning for Christmas to be over so we can finally rest and relax.

Those of us who follow Jesus want to make sure that all the Christmas celebrations and preparations don't crowd out the true reason for the season; Jesus. In our pursuit to celebrate Christmas, Jesus sometimes gets left out.

With all the hustle and bustle, we have to be intentional to keep Jesus at the center of our celebration. If we don't pay attention, Jesus can slip out of focus and we might not even notice.

There were many who looked past Jesus the faithful morning of his birth. People were busy going about their day and living their lives. They weren't concerned about Christmas trees or making Eggnog, but they had other tasks keeping them busy.

Only a few discovered what God was doing in that feeding trough in Bethlehem. The shepherds heard the Good News of Jesus' birth from angels and went to see God's gift of love, then went back praising God and sharing the Good News of great joy with all. The Magi were far away following a star when Jesus was born. They were actively seeking the true King, but would arrive about two years after Jesus' birth.

Those who encountered Jesus would never be the same. The world would never be the same. God loved the world so much that he gave...he gave his one and only son. While celebrating the miracle of Jesus' birth may we not miss the reality of his life.

May you keep Jesus at the center of your celebration and may he bring you Peace, Hope, Joy, and Love. MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Pastor Terry



WORSHIP COMMITTEE

As the weather becomes crisp and another year in the life of our church comes to an end, I am most grateful for how so many of you continue to serve our church so faithfully. Whether it's teaching Sunday School, participating in our music ministry, preparing the altar or arranging flowers, overseeing the soundboard or serving as an acolyte or greeter or any one of the countless other (usually unseen) tasks that keep our church moving in a positive direction, thank you!

The Worship Committee met November 9th and discussed plans for the Christmas Season. The true spirit of Christmas will be shared through music from The Jane Wyche Schulken Handbell Choir, the Chancel Choir, the WUMC Preschool children, as well as from from Nan Leggett and Gus Cothorn. Sunday, November 28th, is the first of the four Sundays of Advent and also a time when we will celebrate our church's annual Hanging of the Greens Service during our regular 10:00 am worship service. Other occasions to worship include the following:

1. Advent Sermon Series begins Sunday, November 28
2. Advent Bible Study – Wednesday nights beginning December 1 at 6:00 pm
3. Christmas Eve Service – December 24, 5:30 pm

At this special time of the year, I wish you and your loved ones Christmas greetings and best wishes for the new year. While we recall times of uncertainty again in 2021, we continue with faith, love, joy, and hope in 2022.

Betty Gray, Chair



WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

The Wednesday morning Bible study will meet December 1st and 8th then will resume January 5th. The group has prepared gift bags for everyone receiving a food pantry bag for a special joy for Christmas. We continue to study the fascinating book of Daniel. We wish all a blessed and happy Christmas celebration of Jesus' birthday!

OUTREACH

The following is from Selma Adevu. Our church gives \$1,000 each year toward her fees. Individuals have also supported Selma. We have \$1,000 in the 2022 budget. Anyone wishing to see the Progress report can ask Carolyn Hankins to forward it.

Greetings from Ghana,

I trust you're both doing good and staying safe.

Your support for me has been amazing and now my dream of becoming a Medical Doctor has almost come to full fruition. We cannot thank you enough for your prayers, kindness and your financial support.

Our most gracious God has seen me through three years of medical school and with your support I am through to the final year. I am determined to make you and the family proud.

I have attached the report of this year's academic work and I'm glad to say God has favored me all through my academic work and God willing, I should graduate next year about this time.

Thank you again and again.

Mrs. Joanie Calhoun had sent me email indicating that you have been inquiring about my academic fees for the final year. Thank you so much for your thoughtfulness and love. It is \$6,500 and I pray God touches the hearts of my other supporters who will receive this report to contribute to meeting my fees in full.

The final year commences next Monday and I will be glad to receive your support to send me to the finish line.

God richly bless and keep you.

-Selma

Birthdays



DECEMBER

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 5 th | Kevin Bullard |
| 6 th | Betty Hamilton |
| 10 th | Zoey Hunt |
| 12 th | Morgan Simmons |
| 13 th | Darryl Diefes |
| 16 th | Anna Georgis Phelps
Mary Hutchins |
| 18 th | Anne Williamson |
| 21 st | Camden Collins |
| 22 nd | Mac McGougan |
| 23 rd | Lonnie Bullard, Jr. |
| 25 th | Sandy Duncan
Lonnie Bullard |
| 27 th | Nancy Bullard |
| 29 th | Jenny Barnhill |
| 31 st | Paul Gore |

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Our in-person worship service attendance has averaged 47 as of the end of October. YouTube average views are 35. Combining the two we average 82, which was our average in-person attendance back in 2019 before the pandemic.

As of October 31, we were \$34,850 behind our budget and this year's offerings are \$7,127 less than this time last year. Fortunately offerings and spending trends indicate that we will have sufficient funds to meet all our actual expenses, except for conference apportionments. We have only paid one month so far. Apportionment payments are accepted into early January. I only recall one year that we did not pay apportionments in full. Please prayerfully consider increasing your donations to support our conference and its connectional and worldwide missions.

Offerings and attendance have been trending down for several years. This was apparent before the pandemic began. We have reduced our budget by about 3% in each of the last few years, but these cuts have not matched the decline in our offerings. To match expenses to income we would need to cut the budget by 14%. Our staff salaries, maintenance, operating expenses, and conference apportionments combined are 94.3% of our budget. Reducing any of these by 14% would have a severe impact on our church operations and ministries.

As we looked at our downward trends we identified four main causes: 1) Alternative styles of worship sought by younger generations. 2) Member relocations. 3) Health, aging, and fixed income of our congregation. 4) Declining population in area: City (-11.6%) and County (-12.9%). We must address these realities as we plan and budget our ministries going forward.

The finance committee is attempting to cut the budget 3 to 5% a year until we balance the budget with our offerings. Given our current situation, the finance committee recommended a 2022 budget of \$288,883. This represents a 3.68% reduction. It was approved as presented by the church council. The total is more than anticipated income, but we move forward in faith. We regret that there are no salary increases in the 2022 budget. The good news is that, except for the events cancelled due to Covid restriction, we have been able to carry out our missions and continue to serve our members and the community. Re-read the newsletters for this year and praise God for what we have been able to do.

The pledge campaign resulted in 23 pledges totaling \$146,160. The total is 51% of our current budget, a slightly higher percentage than recent years. Last year we received 72 pledges of \$135,828. The number of pledges decreased by two thirds, but the dollar amount increased.

The Covid pandemic has come at a time when our church's finances and demographics are declining and is a test of our commitment and resilience as a congregation. As stated in a

publication of WUMC history, "May God continue to bless this great church. So live today that the future will be indebted to you".

Tom Leggett, Finance Chairperson

GIVE OUR GIFT OF LOVE TO GOD

We celebrate the greatest gift of all at Christmas. "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son..." (John 3:16 NIV). He only asks that we believe in him. As Christians, we are assured of God's great, unfathomable love for us. True love, however, should flow both ways. What gift do we offer God? We have only ourselves to give, but that's what He desires the most. He wants us to surrender to Him in a deep, loving relationship.

God shows us love in the same way He tells us to love one another in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. He is patient and kind, slow to anger, forgiving of wrongs, takes no delight in evil, gives us truth, always protects us, and never fails us.

Now, consider how we reciprocate. Are we patient, or in a hurry, when we come to Him with a prayer request? Are we self-seeking in our desire for His favor? Are we boastful in seeking His grace? Are we easily angered when He doesn't answer prayer by letting us have our way? Do we proclaim the truth of His Word? Do we protect His name from blasphemy? Do we always trust in Him, keep our hope in Him, and persevere on the race He sets before us? Do we fail Him?

He always forgives us when we confess our failings. Let's be intentional this Christmas to take time out from the secular busyness of festivities to begin a deeper relationship with Him. Let's surrender to Him and give Him our love with all our "heart, soul, and mind" (Matthew 22:37 NIV).

– Judy, a sister in Christ



PRESCHOOL NEWS

December 5th our Preschool children will come and bless the congregation through the gift of song.

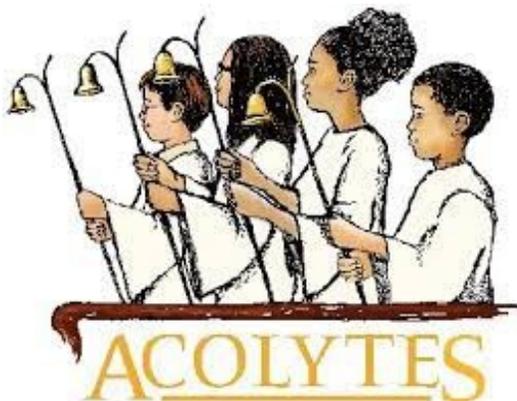
This past month our 2 year old classes donated non-perishable food items to our church food pantry while learning about “groceries” and “giving” during their letter “G” week. It was truly such a sweet and special time. Pastor Hunt and Mrs. Beth Bullard both came out to meet the children, accept their donations and pray over the food.



Serving in December

Acolytes

Dec. 5th - Peyton Hunt
Dec. 12th - Emily Sauls
Dec. 19th - Andrew Sauls
Dec. 26th - Peyton Hunt



NURTURE COMMITTEE

We were involved in decorating and serving for the Reception following the Community Thanksgiving Service held on November 21st at our church.

We will be putting up and decorating the NEW Chrismon tree in the Sanctuary for the first Sunday of Advent. We would like to thank our generous donor for giving it to the church! We will also be undecorating it in early January.

I would like to thank those members of the Nurture Committee that are going on to other committees in January- Ann Williamson and Louise Barkley. You have been great! I would like to welcome Ann Simmons and Sandy Turner to our committee! Lastly, I would like to thank those faithful members that are still with me: Alma Deans, Cynthia Page, Ann Sauls, Shirley Kennedy, Linda Overcash, and Kayla Ward. You all are the best!

Debbie Conway, Chair

METHODIST WOMEN

The Whiteville United Methodist Women met on Saturday October 30th. We packed gift bags for the Shut-ins of our church with useful and whimsical items in them. We divided them up to be delivered to the people with a personal visit. A slate of officers for 2022 was presented and approved by those present at the meeting. Our new officers are: Debbie Conway- President, Beverly Justice- Vice President, Carolyn Hankins- Treasurer, and Vickie Pait- Secretary.

Our December meeting will be a Christmas social on Monday, December 13th at 6:30 pm in the Church Parlor. We would like to invite all women of the church to come and fellowship with us and join in our very important mission work!

Debbie Conway- President



* Ms. Ann Worthington receiving her gift.

PARISH NURSING

St. Mark AME Zion Church is now a certified COVID-19 church site. Tests and vaccine needs will be available at the church Monday-Friday from 10a.m.-5p.m. The clinic will follow CDC guidelines. Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, including boosters, will be available free of charge on a walk in basis. Johnson and Johnson vaccine will also be available, but requires an appointment.

WUMC has partnered with St. Mark folks on several projects over the years. We wish them well with this important health project for our community.

Listed below are names and contact information of members of our church family who are presently unable to actively participate in person church gatherings and worship. However, they always enjoy knowing they remain in our hearts and prayers.

Thank you for helping us share words of love and good cheer with them with a card, note or phone call. Please call the church office if we have inadvertently left someone's name off the list.

With gratitude,
Patricia Ray
Parish Nurse

God, we thank you for all your blessings: for health and strength and daily food; for people who have entered our lives and blessed us with their presence; for all who have long been part of our lives; and for love and grace you have poured out on us so we can be a blessing to others.

Amen.

Written by Keith Beasley- Retired United Methodist Pastor

OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Outreach Committee is once again sponsoring families from Families First, Inc. to provide Christmas gifts for children. There are 20 names on the Angel Tree in the Narthex for you to pick from. All stars have age, sizes and likes on them but if you have any questions, you can reach out to Families First at 910-642-5996. All gifts should be unwrapped and delivered to the office at 121 W. Main St., Whiteville by December 15th



Best,
Vickie Pait

Jesus Is The Reason

**In Bethlehem, God gave to us
The source of Christmas joy;
A star is shown on a miracle:
The virgin birth of a boy.**

**He was born both God and man,
A Savior for us all,
The way to get to our heavenly home,
If we just heed His call.**

**So as we shop and spend and wrap
And enjoy the Christmas season,
Let's keep in mind the sacred truth:
Jesus is the reason.**

Joanna Fuchs
americaninterfaith.org

❄️ December 2021 ❄️

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship/ Second Sunday of Advent/ Preschool performance.	6 7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	7 7:00 p.m. Cub Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	8 9:30 a.m. Bible Study /Fellowship Hall 6:00 p.m. Holy Communion/ Advent Bible Study	9	10	11
12 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship/ Third Sunday of Advent	13 7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	14 7:00 p.m. Cub Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	15 9:30 a.m. Bible Study /Fellowship Hall 6:00 p.m. Holy Communion/ Advent Bible Study	16	17	18
19 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship/ Fourth Sunday of Advent	20 7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	21 7:00 p.m. Cub Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	22 9:30 a.m. Bible Study /Fellowship Hall 6:00 p.m. Holy Communion/ Advent Bible Study	23	24 5:30 p.m.- Christmas Eve Service	25 
26 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship	27 7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	28 7:00 p.m. Cub Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	29	30	31	

WHITEVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH CONTACT AND VISITATION LIST

Name	Address - Whiteville 28472 unless otherwise noted	Phone -Area code 910 H=home C=Cell / Notes
Sabra Allen	623 Blue Jean Road	H: 207-6432 C: 317-6191
Jan Avant	West Bladen Assisted Living - PO Box 669 714 Bladen St, Bladenboro NC 28320	Jan - C: 874-7345 Call facility for appointment 863-4500
Bill and Sue Ball	274 Hillcrest Lane	Sue 642-2947
John and Louise Barkley	707 Evergreen St	John 640-6301 Louise 840-1895
Sara Brooks	713 Bryce St	H: 642-4192, C: 641-7825
Jane “Jo” Bullard	303 Jefferson St	H: 642-6160 C: 640-9230
Louise Brinson	West Bladen Assisted Living - PO Box 669 714 Bladen St, Bladenboro NC 28320	Call facility for appointment 863-4500
Lewellyn David	Liberty Commons, 1402 Pinckney St	C: 840-7776
Layton and Libby Dowless	53 Sherwood Rd,	C: 770-2062
Betty Hamilton	PO Box 297; 136 Maple St Brunswick 28424	H: 642-2689 C: 840-1221
Emily Harris	Lumberton Health and Rehab 1555 Willis Ave, Lumberton 28358	Mail only
Margaret Hicks	104 E Frink St	C: 200-7580
Lindbergh Holden	3366 James B White Hwy North	H: 642-2463
Wendy Hood	30 Mahan Street	C: 840-1527
Clara Hunsucker	Liberty Commons, 1402 Pinckney St	C: 840-7776
Mary Hutchins	170 Peppertree Crossing Avenue, Brunswick, GA 31525	C: 840-9777

Judy Kachinka	West Bladen Assisted Living - PO Box 669 714 Bladen St, Bladenboro NC 28320	Contact through Jan Avant
Tammy McCullum, son Tristen	443 S Franklin Street	C: 704-564-7424
Sarah Meares	Elizaabethtown Healthcare PO Box 1449; 206 Mercer Mill Road Elizabethtown 28337	C: 207-1076 Very poor vision makes use of phone difficult
Jimmy and Nancy Oakley	113 E Calhoun St	H: 207-6867 Nancy C: 207-3927
Lucille Raynor	3507 James B White Hwy South	Mail only
Thetus Sessions	638 Warrior Trail	642-2693
Phil Stoll	538 Woodfield Rd	642-5265
Ann Suggs	1270 Beaverdam Rd, Chadbourn 28431	H: 653-3711
Marty Ward	PO Box 489; 251 Country Club Rd.	H: 642-3086
Ruth Walsh	411 Inman Lake Rd	H: 642:2537 C: 445-1942
Ann White	112 N Franklin St	H: 642-2537
Linda Whitehead	Liberty Commons, 1402 Pinckney St	
Ann Worthington	Carpenter Place Rehab and Living Center 600 Fieldwood Lane, Matthews NC 28105	C: 840-2980



Advent Sermon Series: God With Us

In the season of Advent, we prepare to welcome Jesus, the Messiah in *God With Us*. This year, as we await our Lord, we will put ourselves in the place of the first people who awaited and celebrated Jesus' birth. Through their stories, we will learn what it meant for God to be with them, and we will open our eyes to experience God with us, too.

November 28: God with Zechariah, the Skeptic

Scripture: Luke 1:5-16, 23-25, 76-80

There are moments when circumstances in life or deferred hopes and dreams may feel like a heavy burden with no relief in sight, from smaller expectations to deeper concerns, such as job security, financial responsibility and fragile relationships. While all of us face the mystery of what tomorrow may bring, the assurance we have is that when we pray, God is with us.

December 5: God with Joseph, the Dutiful

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

The Christmas story of Jesus' birth begins with a dilemma. Mary's pregnancy creates a real issue for Joseph. He is not the father; this situation not only creates personal pain; it also could cause a public scandal. Joseph chooses not to disgrace Mary, but instead he will divorce her, the best that could be hoped for in this situation. However, the Spirit of God moves Joseph from doing good out of a sense of obligation to the revelation of God's extraordinary plan. When God calls us to move beyond our duty, God is with us.

December 12: God with Mary, the Faithful

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

God calls us into unknown places that we wouldn't foresee for ourselves. And even in the midst of uncertainty, God is with us.

December 19: God with the Shepherds, the Dismissed

Scripture: Luke 2:8-20

Christmas shows us that God takes ordinary lives and does extraordinary things with them. The shepherds who were often dismissed play a prominent role in proclaiming the message of Emmanuel, God is with us.

Christmas Eve/Christmas Day: God with Us

Scripture: Luke 2:1-7

There is a big difference between God for us and God *with* us. The birth story is a perfect example of that. A bunch of shepherds and a couple poor kids gather at a barn in some backwater Roman province. Yes, God was with us there and any other "last place on earth" you might find yourself. God is with us here, too.

December 26: God with the World

Scripture: Luke 2:25-35

Help is here. Our temptation can be to think that we're alone in our wait for help, but the truth of Christmas is that help is already here. Simeon waited many years for the "consolation of Israel,"

**Whiteville United
Methodist Church**

902 Pinckney Street
Whiteville, NC 28472



Mrs. Morgan Simmons, Administrative Assistant
Monday-Thursday/8:30 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.
12 noon-12:30 p.m. Lunch

Mr. Chalmers Waddell, Custodian
Monday-Friday/7:30-12:30 a.m.

Ms. Tammie Anderson, Treasurer
Friday/4:00-6:00 p.m. (or later)

Office (910) 642-3376
email: wumc@whitevilleumc.org
website: www.whitevilleumc.org
Rev. Dr. Terry Hunt

Mission Statement of Whiteville United Methodist Church

As people of the body of Christ, we will gather for and be strengthened by Word and Sacraments, participate in loving fellowship, grow in discipleship, and serve our community and the world in Christ's name.