



**THE MESSENGER**  
**FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
**601 NORTH PINK STREET**  
**CHERRYVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA 28021**  
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**December 2, 2020**

**Vol. XXXI No. 12**

Rev. Zack Christy  
Pastor

Teresa Gardo  
Administrative Assistant

Bess Thornburg  
Director of Christian Education

Nancy Catena  
Pianist / Organist (Interim)

Linda Barger  
Chancel Choir Director

Andrew Harmon  
Handbell Director

Mildred Young  
FUMC Weekday Preschool Dir.

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December Reflection

*Isaiah 40:3 "A voice cries out in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."*

Thanksgiving looked a lot different for us this year at the Christy household, as I am sure it did for many of you. Typically on Thanksgiving we keep the roads hot, we drive to Lexington for Thanksgiving with my family, then we drive to Canton for Thanksgiving with Crystal's family. At the end of the day we are full beyond measure and completely exhausted. While we may complain about all the travel, the truth is Crystal and I love it, we love getting to see so many family members, getting to catch up with relatives and just spending time with our families.

But we didn't do any of that this year. This year we stayed home, the kids didn't get out of their pajamas, Crystal and I cooked all day, we ate turkey, mashed potatoes, rolls, deviled eggs, even shared some with the dogs, but it wasn't the same. The food was wonderful, but truth be told Thanksgiving isn't all that much about food. It's good and it is important don't get me wrong, but even with wonderful food this year it was obvious something was missing.

As I have thought on it this past week, I have come to realize that what I missed most about Thanksgiving is the feeling of coming home. To go and sit at the same tables, to eat with the same people, to have the same arguments over football and politics, to be in a space that is welcoming and kind you can't replicate that. I am here to tell you today we all need the feeling of homecoming a place where we know in our heart-of-hearts we belong. I'm sad to say this year many of us were robbed of that homecoming.

What I appreciate about this Isaiah passage, a passage that Mark uses to describe the work of John the Baptist, is that it brings the good news to us that we have a home, that we can return, and that by the grace of God we are returning. Advent is a season in which each of us is given the invitation to return to God, to our true home.

Chapter 40 of Isaiah tells of what God will do, where God is going, God dragging Israel along with him, down the straight road home, it tells of God who is more than willing to do what is needed to be done to bring his people home. When there doesn't appear to be a way God makes one. When we feel that we are too far gone to be found, when we feel that we are too lost to ever make our way back home God makes a way.

Even in the wilderness, now it is important for us to note that wilderness for the people of Israel was a place of wild beasts, temptation, sin, and bewildered wandering with no star for a guide. Lest we forget, it took Israel forty years of wandering in the wilderness finally to find their way home. Wilderness is a metaphor for lostness, exile, and homelessness. It was from the wilderness that John the Baptist appeared quoting this exact passage in Isaiah, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Note the good news that this is *God's Highway*. God brings homeless people back home!

Advent is fundamentally about how God makes a way into each and every one of our lives through his son Jesus Christ. Not in the ways that we expect, certainly not in the ways that we would have picked, but God moves towards us in the most unassuming, awesome, and wonderful ways. God does this to bring us back home, a home made not with human hands, but a home eternal in the heavens. And God offers each and every one of us a homecoming that even prodigals like us can't help but be touched by.

I pray that as you move through this Advent season in this unprecedented and very uncertain year, that you might be certain God is calling you home through his grace, through his love, and through his voice. May your heart be warmed by the subtle call of homecoming and may you never forget you indeed have a home prepared for you by God.

Grace and Peace,

Zack Christy



The Backpack Ministry is in need of the items listed below of nonperishable items to put in bookbags during the month of December.

We would not be able to do this ministry without the many volunteers who assist with the program. Your generous donations help this mission to be successful and are very much appreciated by those who receive the book bags.

- Dec. 6 - canned fruit or apple sauce
- Dec. 13 - Tomato soup
- Dec. 20 - Chicken noodle soup
- Dec. 27 - Cans of Ravioli

Thank you,  
The Backpack Ministry Committee



Please continue to join us for Adult Sunday School lessons taught and provided by Betsy Baity on facebook or our church website each Sunday morning and post at

7:00am. Her inspiring lessons have been a blessing to all and we appreciate her dedication to bring these lessons to our church family each week.

#### **PRAYER LIST (Members)**

Bob Austell, Judy Bingham, Mike Burgess, Janet Carter, Vera Eaker, Jim Eaton, Ruth Gaston, Sherie Harrelson, Ken Mayhew, Aura Ann McGinnis, Larry McGinnis, Karleen Price, Rev. Harry Queen, Betty Jane Robinson, Chris Sneed, Gary Thornburg, Robert Turner, Earlene Williams, and all our homebound and nursing home members.

#### **PRAYER LIST (Family & Friends)**

Don Alexander, Brenda Beam, Martha Beam, Hazel Brandon, Thomas Dellinger, Jacob Dickerson, Lisa Eaker, Doris Finger, Miles Gantt, Bernice Harris, Terry Laughlin, John Miller, Kevin McQuaid, Steve Moss, Sandra Taylor Mossman, Margaret Sigmon, Peggy Smyly, Olivia Sutton, Stephanie Willis and our loved ones in the military.

#### **LOVED ONES IN THE MILITARY:**

#Ethan Beck, Aron Dickerson, Jessica Lovell, Cody Spiker.

#Church Member



### UMK's:

All UMK's ages 3-5<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to be a part of the fun activities, bible lessons, singing and evening vespers each Wednesday night 6:00 p.m. to 7:30.

We are so excited to have UMK's back inside the church and in full swing! In order to stay safe we ask that you wear your mask to our meetings. Supper will be served each night at 6:00 p.m. and we are continuing to study **TOY STORY** "Toy Bible Stories" for the next 6 weeks. We will be studying God's word and lessons through our toys and playtime. Miss Bess will continue to have our Bible lessons at 5:00 pm each Wednesday on our church Facebook page and website. Please remember to join in for a lesson each week.



We will have our UMK Christmas Party December 16<sup>th</sup> at our regular time 6:00 p.m.. Join us for supper, Christmas fun and games, Carol singing, and lesson time. We will also practice for our singing program on

December 20<sup>th</sup>.



The UMK's will sing at our 10:30 a.m. Worship service on **December 20<sup>th</sup>**. You will just need to wear a Christmas sweater, dress or outfit. I hope everyone can be there to share our Christmas songs with our Congregation. *NOTE: We will Practice 12/2, 12/9 and 12/16. Be There or Be Square!!*



**UMYF:** United Methodist Youth Fellowship (all 6<sup>th</sup> thru 12<sup>th</sup> grade) is currently meeting together each Sunday night from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the church downstairs in our new

Youth room. We already have a project to do in fixing up our new Youth space. Please wear or at least bring your mask. We have been having a snack supper, planning activities and projects, playing games and studying God's word and His will for our group. Our lessons are from "COMBOS" a lesson in "a combination to the game of life" for youth age participants. December's lessons will be "ANGELS ALL AROUND US," "ANGELS ON EARTH" and "THESE BOOTS WERE MADE FOR WALKING!" Please plan to join us as we make plans for the future of our group. We are planning our **Youth Christmas Party on December 20<sup>th</sup> at 3:00pm**. We will meet at the church and depart in the church van. We are blessed to see God's work and presence in our lives!



Our UMYF members with the help of some UMK'S will be serving as acolyte and crucifer as well as presenting readings and lighting the Advent Wreath each Sunday during the Advent season. Thanks to our young people for sharing their talents and wisdom with our congregation as we learn about the Advent Wreath.



As a reminder, Cherryville Elementary and Beam Intermediate schools both collect Box Tops. There is a box at the church office where you can drop these off. If you have questions regarding this program, please see Kelly Brown.



**A BIG THANK YOU!!!!**  
**THANKS to all of those who helped fill a Samaritan's**

**Purse Shoe Box!** Thanks to everyone who supported the Shoe Box project sponsored by the UMK's and UMYF groups from our church. We returned 51 "stuffed" shoe boxes to the Samaritan's Purse Shoe Box Ministry collection location. Way to go FUMC church family!!!

**STEWARDSHIP REPORT, NOV. 29, 2020**

Total Giving To Date . . . . . \$292,409.54  
 Total Expenses to Date . . . . . \$301,421.76  
 Over. . . . . \$9,012.22  
 With PPP loan Under . . . . . \$21,776.31



**Stewardship update:** We are off to a great start with our 2021 pledge campaign and a special thank you to everyone who has turned in their pledge card. **We have received 42 cards totaling \$158,328.00.** If you have not turned in your pledge card and wish to do so, please turn it in to the church office by December 31.



**KINGDOM KIDS KORNER**

Wow! What a different year this has been - at school and in our world! However, even with all the changes, many things remain the same at Kingdom Kids. The children are growing in so many ways; they are forming friendships (some which may be life-long); they are learning; they are happy; and they are loved.

Due to the continuing threat of Covid and the current restrictions our December celebrations will be different. We plan to have our annual Christmas program on **Thursday, December 17 at 7:00 p.m.** in the church sanctuary, but only the four year class will participate this year. There will be a maximum of six people allowed for each of the four year students in order to observe social distancing. **MASKS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR ENTRY!** There will not be a reception following the program as we normally have.

We plan to video our two and three year classes singing some songs and will share those on our Facebook page. We will have classroom celebrations for all classes, with some surprises planned.

We hope that everyone had a very Blessed and Happy Thanksgiving!

Ms. Millie



*We gratefully acknowledge gifts presented to the church in loving memory of:*

**AVA ANTHONY**

Gary & Phyllis Thornburg  
Danny & Teci Webb

**E. L. BEAM**

Johnny, Kelly & Nickolas Brown (Backpack Ministry)

**HANK BRADLEY**

Chad & Michelle Bingham  
Jack & Judy Bingham (Backpack Ministry)  
Johnny, Kelly & Nickolas Brown (Backpack Ministry)  
Allen & Susan Fraley (Backpack Ministry)  
Ron & Janice Hovis  
Bill & Quita Moss

**MICHAEL V. CATENA**

Nancy & Michael Catena (Endowment Fund)

**BRENDA HARBINSON**

Jack & Judy Bingham (Backpack Ministry)

**HUGH HUDSON**

Steve & Lynn Bowen  
Allen & Susan Fraley (Backpack Ministry)  
Gary & Phyllis Thornburg

**JACK HUSS**

Jack & Judy Bingham (Backpack Ministry)  
Clarice Harrelson  
Gary & Phyllis Thornburg  
Danny & Teci Webb

**ED MAFFETT**

T. L. & Miney Saine

**HAROLD MAUNEY, SR.**

Harold & Kim Mauney

**BETTY NEILL**

Johnny, Kelly & Nickolas Brown (Backpack Ministry)  
Gary & Phyllis Thornburg

**SUE NOLEN**

Cindy Burgin  
Dianne Dixon  
Rita Huffman

**GERALD QUINN**

Deanna Daggerhart  
Bill & Quita Moss  
Betty Jane Robinson

**LECY QUINN**

Gary & Phyllis Thornburg

**MAG STROUPE**

Gail & Ephriam Beam, Jr. (Backpack Ministry)  
Steve & Lynn Bowen  
Johnny, Kelly & Nickolas Brown (Backpack Ministry)  
Nancy Catena  
Allen & Susan Fraley (Backpack Ministry)  
Clarice Harrelson  
Ron & Janice Hovis  
Gail Jenkins & Jeff Jenkins  
Bill & Quita Moss  
Ronnie & Jill Puett  
Rob & Chelsi Thomas  
Gary & Phyllis Thornburg  
Danny & Teci Webb



	If you would like to <b>purchase a poinsettia</b> in honor or in memory of a loved one, please see a member of the UMW in the narthex after the service. This Sunday, Dec. 6, will be last day to purchase a poinsettia and the cost is \$10.00.
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Mr. Larry McGinnis  
907 Vista Drive  
Cherryville, NC 28021

**Sunday, December 6**

Sunday School (on Facebook)  
10:30am - Worship in Sanctuary  
6:00pm - Youth

**Wednesday, December 9**

6:00pm - UMK's

**Thursday, December 10**

7:00am - Prayer Breakfast at Homefolk's

**Sunday, December 13**

Sunday School (on Facebook)  
10:30am - Worship in Sanctuary  
6:00pm - Youth

**Wednesday, December 16**

6:00pm - UMK's Christmas Party

**Thursday, December 17**

7:00am - Prayer Breakfast at Homefolk's  
7:00pm - Preschool Christmas Program

**Sunday, December 20**

Sunday School (on Facebook)  
10:30am - Worship in Sanctuary  
3:00pm - Youth Christmas Party

**Wednesday, December 23**

Church Office Closed  
No UMK's

**Thursday, December 24**

Church Office Closed  
6:00pm - Christmas Eve Service

**Friday, December 25**

***MERRY CHRISTMAS***

Church Office Closed

**Sunday, December 27**

Sunday School (on Facebook)  
10:30am - Worship in Sanctuary  
No Youth

**Friday, January 1**

Church Office Closed



**FROM THE CHURCH STAFF:** We would like to take this opportunity to wish each of you a most blessed Christmas and the happiest of New Year's as this will be the last Messenger published in 2020.



We will have our annual **Christmas Eve Service of Lights** on Thursday, December 24, at 6:00pm.