

First United Methodist Church Cherryville, North Carolina

THE MESSENGER
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
601 NORTH PINK STREET
CHERRYVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA 28021
Phone (704) 435-6732 Fax (704) 435-4468
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NOVEMBER 26, 2024

Vol. XXXV No. 12

Rev. Zack Christy
Pastor

Teresa Gardo
Administrative Assistant

Bess Thornburg
Director of Christian Education

Nancy Catena
Organist

Linda Barger
Chancel Choir Director

Andrew Harmon
Handbell Director

Cam Alfaro
Audio Visual Tech.

Mildred Young
FUMC Weekday Preschool Dir.

Matthew 3:2 "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven has come near."

In Canton I used to attend a weekly lectionary study. One day during this study a man named Kevin who was the Associate at First Baptist said, "My dad is a manly man. He hunts, skins deer, and works the land. Until recently I had only seen him cry twice, once at my grandfather's funeral and once at my mom's funeral. However, recently I have noticed a change in him. He cries every time he watches a Hallmark Christmas Movie."

Have you ever seen the Hallmark Christmas movies? I have to tell you the DVR at the Christy house is chock full of them right now. The good news is, if you have seen one, you have seen them all. I think they use the same plot in each movie. It goes something like this. There is a guy who swears he will never be in a relationship, but then he comes into contact with a girl and he changes a little for her. Then he creates a problem. He runs away leaving her stranded near Christmas. Then something changes in his heart. He goes and finds her, either at the Airport terminal or the local coffee shop, I don't remember which. He tells her how bad he has been and he completely changes. They live happily ever after. If you have seen one, then you know that is the plot.

Now Kevin brought up something that I found fascinating. In these movies, the climatic scene is always built around a great moment of repentance. It is not just Hallmark that does this though. I think that is true in a lot of our Christmas stories. In the Grinch, when the Grinch hears all the who's singing his heart, it grows three sizes and he brings back Christmas to the town. He repents and reorients his life. He changes. In the Christmas Carol, Ebenezer Scrooge has an encounter with the ghosts and ends up changing his life.

Repentance, it seems to me, is something that we associate culturally with the Christmas season. However, in the church, repentance is not something that we typically think of when we think of Christmas. Oh we think of the Nativity, we think of the wise men, we think of a baby born to a virgin mother and a scared father, but repentance? That seems more like a Lent theme, doesn't it? Repentance doesn't really seem to fit within our Christmas narrative.

I wonder why that is. Why isn't repentance one of the first things we think of when we think of Advent? Why does Hallmark do a better job embodying repentance than the church does during this Christmas season? Well, I think John will help us understand that a little bit. You see, repentance isn't simply a high churchy word. Repentance is a way of life; and, if we are to walk the disciples' path, it is crucial for us to embody repentance day in and day out.

In our Scripture this month we traveled out to the wilderness to hear a sermon from that desert prophet John the Baptist. The message that we hear coming from John is decidedly different from the other

messages of his day and time. John shouts out in the wilderness, “Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” The first word that we hear from John sounds an awful lot like the first word that we hear from the bullhorn of street preachers, “Repent!”

Of course when John says “Repent,” he isn’t using repentance as we so often do. When we use the word repentance, we are typically referring to a vague feeling of sorrow that we have when we get caught doing something wrong. Repentance tends to be more associated with feelings than it does with action.

When John says, “Repent,” he is calling the people to action. He is calling people to change their lives by turning all the way around from their old ways. He is calling the people to embrace a new life. He is not calling the people who come out to hear him in the wilderness to sacrifice an animal; he is calling them to lives of personal sacrifice. For John the act of baptism seals this transition. Once you have decided that you will indeed repent, you confess your sin. John grabs you and dunks you in the Jordan, and when you are raised up, you are a new creation.

John tells these Pharisees and Sadducees, “Do not presume to say to yourselves we have Abraham as an ancestor, for I tell you, God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones.” It is easy to remove ourselves from this story and think that John is only talking to the Pharisees and Sadducees here, but that is not the case. John, out in the wilderness, is calling you and calling me to repentance. The Pharisees and Sadducees described themselves as a kind of works righteousness. They felt that they could be made holy by the things that they do. John calls them to repent of their sanctimonious self-righteousness in order that they may be humble servants of God. Somehow though I don’t think John is only speaking to the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Oh it is easy to think that we are nothing like the Pharisees and Sadducees, but chances are we are more like them than we would ever want to admit. There are all kinds of things that we put our hope in or we put our trust in before we place them in God. We may not be running out and shouting, “I have Abraham as a Father; I can do whatever I want.” We are more likely to say, “I read my bible every day. I pray every day. I go to church. I help people when I can. Surely I am good. Surely I am saved.” Each and every one of those things is good. They are vitally important to our formation as Christians, but they do not save us.

If we only place our hope and our trust for salvation in our abilities and in our good works, we have missed the point. Salvation does not come to us because of anything that we do. Salvation comes to us in the form of a baby, lying in a manger, and as Martin Luther said, “The wood of the cross and the wood of the manger are the same.” In order for us to embrace the life that Jesus Christ calls us to, we must repent. We must know that we need a savior, but we must also structure our lives around repentance. Because the second that we stop repenting, the second that we stop trying to grow into the grace that God freely gives us, we start moving backwards.

In this season of Advent, in this season of busyness, let us take a few moments. Let us repent, repent of our sins, repent of our transgressions, and repent of our busyness. Let us be stopped in our tracks by the grace of God, and may we linger in the wilderness just for a few moments, and may we listen to that wild, locust eating, camel hair dressing preacher, John the Baptist. He knows something we need to hear. He knows God’s grace and God’s peace flow from a manger. May we be humbled by that grace, and may we walk out into the world as a people ready and willing to repent. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Grace and Peace,

Zack Christy



CHILDREN'S CHURCH is held during our 10:30 worship service for all children **3yrs thru 3rd grade**. The children will leave from the sanctuary worship service following the children's sermon and go to a classroom on the educational hall for lessons and crafts. Parents can pick-up their children at the end of worship. A packet will be available outside the sanctuary in the Narthex for children 4th-5th graders or older with pencils crayons and coloring pages and Children's Worship bulletin. Again... **volunteers are needed for Children's Church teachers and helpers.** Please let Bess know if you are willing to help with children's church.



THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR ACOLYTES AND CRUCIFERS

Thanks so much for serving your church as Acolyte and Crucifer. You are an important part of our worship service each week. Please see the below Acolyte/Crucifer schedule for the month of December. **If you cannot serve on your Sunday, PLEASE contact Bess @ 704-435-6732, cell: 704-836-6803 or 704-435-5185 or switch with one of the other people on the list.**

Dec. 1	Hunter Brafford	Landry Pruitt
Dec. 8	Zach Harmon	Seth Harmon
Dec. 15	Lydia Bradley	Sophia Williams
Dec. 22	Mikki Jane Emerson	Mallie Emerson
Dec. 29	Amber Grace Brittain	Caroline Carswell



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



DECEMBER NURSERY WORKERS

We are proud to offer an infant nursery, provided each Sunday morning, for our sweet babies during the 10:30 worship service. Our nursery is located at the end of the hall and to your right just below the church office. **A BIG THANK YOU** to all who have agreed to help in the Nursery. Below is the Nursery Workers list for December. You will receive a reminder card and text on your given Sunday. Please let Bess or Susan Beam know if you cannot be there on your Sunday.

Dec. 1	Kristen Freeman
Dec. 8	Emily Winter
Dec. 15	Dawn Whitworth
Dec. 22	Susan Beam
Dec. 29	Kelly Brown

Breakfast

On **Saturday, November 30**, we will have our Community Breakfast. Serving times will be from 7:30 - 10:30 a.m. Come join us for a time of fellowship and a delicious all you can eat breakfast buffet. Cost will be by donation. Our profits have gone toward assisting our local community by giving to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund, to the local "Handy Man's Ministry" for helping with minor repairs to homes, and to our youth for retreats and mission trips. **We hold this event the last Saturday of every month.**



We are in need of the items listed below of nonperishable items to put in book bags during the month of December. Your generous donations help this mission to be successful and are very much appreciated by those who receive the book

bags. We can always use these items, but sometimes the list may change based on the supply of goods we have on hand.

- Dec. 1 Canned chicken
- Dec. 8 Spaghetti sauce in can
- Dec. 15 Beef Stew
- Dec. 22 Fruit Cocktail
- Dec. 29 Chicken Noodle Soup

Thank you,
The Backpack Ministry Committee

UMKS CHRISTMAS PRESENTATION



Our UMKS will delight the congregation with a “CHRISTMAS LIGHT SHOW” on Sunday, December 15th during the 10:30am worship service. They have new songs to sing and audience participation and a fresh new modern way to tell the Christmas Story. Make your plans now to experience a show with Emcees, tangled lights, “live” Christmas trees, Angels, Shepherds, Wisemen, a Shining Star, Scripture readers, Mary and Joseph and of course the baby Jesus within our “Christmas Light Show!”

Prayer Breakfast



Our Thursday morning Prayer Breakfast will resume on December 5th, 7:00am, at

Homefolk’s café. Due to the Holiday schedule **we will not meet on Thursday, December 26th or January 2nd**. Our prayer breakfast is such a blessing to all who attend. It’s a great start to our school day, work day or any day! We are meeting at Homefolk’s Café at 7:00am on Thursday mornings to feed our tummies, our souls and our hearts with friendships, devotions and prayer time before school. Every one of all ages and all denominations are invited to join the prayer breakfast group! Our church van will be there to provide a ride to school for anyone who needs it. **BUT Buckle Up and hold on to your stuff! There may be a BUMP in the road!!!**

Stewardship is...



Stewardship update: Our 2025 pledge campaign is underway and a special thank you to everyone who has turned in their pledge card.

We have received 35 cards totaling \$142,416.00. The finance committee invites all church members to turn in a pledge card. You may bring it by the church office or you may place it in the offering plate on Sunday morning.



in case of
**INCLEMENT
WEATHER**

In case of inclement weather / dangerous road conditions, First UMC will alert

you of any changes to our regular worship schedule by our One Call Now system. If you have changed phone numbers or disconnected your landline, please contact the church office.

UNITED METHODIST KIDS / UMKs



Our Wednesday night United Methods Kids, better known as UMKs is in full swing. All 3 yr. olds through 5th graders are welcome to join in and be a part of our UMK program. UMKs meet each Wednesday night at 6:00pm. Supper is served each night from 6:00 to 6:30pm and then we will move into the sanctuary for our singing and assembly time. For the month of December, we are working hard on our Christmas presentation a "Christmas Light Show" in the Sanctuary. Everyone who has a part in the play is encouraged to **PLEASE** be at UMKs to practice. We have a lot of work to do!!!! Then on December 18th we will celebrate the birth of Jesus with a Christmas birthday party and have our Christmas coloring contest and greet a possible visitor from the North Pole!!!! Parents can pick-up your children at 7:30pm at the side entrance.

- Dec. 4 "Christmas Light Show" play practice
- Dec. 11 "Christmas Light Show" play practice
- Dec. 18 Happy Birthday Jesus Christmas Party!!!!
- Dec. 25 No Meeting Merry Christmas
- Jan. 1 No Meeting Happy New Year!!!

We love our Wednesday nights of fun and learning together about God's love! As always leaders, helpers, kitchen volunteers and supper providers are needed. Let Bess know if you are willing to help!

UMK DECEMBER SUPPERS:

- Dec. 4 Spaghetti bread and dessert
Robin & Roy Norwood family
and Steven & Lacey Spangler family
- Dec. 11 Soup and Sandwiches and dessert
Bobbi, Chris and Caleb Ballard
- Dec. 18 Pizza, chips, dessert
CHRISTMAS PARTY NIGHT!
- Dec. 25 NO MEETING
MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!**
- Jan. 1 NO MEETING
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!**



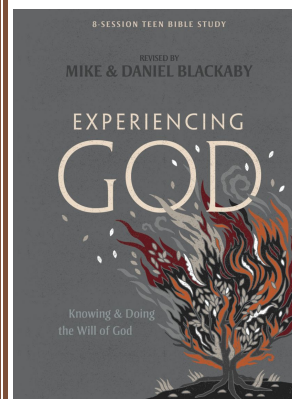
KINGDOM KIDS KORNER

November seemed to arrive quickly, but has been much calmer than October was. The children have settled into our routines and seem to be thriving. Our teachers are working hard to keep them engaged and learning.

We are already working toward getting ready for the Christmas program which will be held on Tuesday, December 17th at 7:00 p.m. in our church sanctuary. This program is always a blessing!

We continue to covet your prayers for our preschool program. Thank you and Happy Thanksgiving!

Ms. Millie



Youth Bible Study: The youth have started a Wednesday night Bible Study. The youth will eat with the UMKs at 6:00 and then help clean up after dinner. The book we are using is Experiencing God: Teen Version. If you want to buy a book for your youth, they are available at Lifeway.com or Amazon. We look forward to seeing you at our next study.



UMYF CHRISTMAS NOVEMBER/DECEMBER CHRISTMAS ACTIVITES AND PARTY

Hi there my UMYF members and friends,



MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYBODY!! YES IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR!!!!

We have several things in store for our group this holiday season.

We will be shopping for new Christmas toys for the mountain counties and decorating the fellowship hall Christmas tree on November 24th. Please be at the church by 5:00pm so we will have plenty of time to get everything done. We will take the church van and go shopping and eat at the Subway at Walmart in Cherryville, so you will need money to eat on. We will wrap up our meeting time at 7:30pm as usual.

On December 1st the UMYF will host our First Sunday in Advent Coffee Bar. We will serve from 9 until 10:20am. Everyone needs to be here by 8:30am to set up and get things ready. Then right after church on Dec 1, we will leave from the church and go up to Crossnore to deliver our toys and gifts. We will grab lunch on the way and be home around 5:00 pm. You will need money for lunch.

Sunday, December 8th is fun night with our church family as we have been invited to join the Roman's 12 Class for a night of Christmas Caroling, light-sightseeing, food and fun with church members of all ages. We will meet at the church around 5:00 pm and be finished around 8:00 pm.

OUR UMYF CHRISTMAS PARTY IS DECEMBER 15TH HERE AT THE CHURCH FROM 6:00 TO 7:30 PM ***EVERYONE IS ASKED TO BRING A "GENDER NEUTRAL" GIFT RANGING IN THE PRICE OF A MINIMUM OF \$15 AND NO MORE THAN \$20 FOR A SECRET SANTA / DIRTY SANTA GIFT EXCHANGE.*** We will have food, games and Christmas fun!

NO UMYF ON DECEMBER 22nd, 29th OR JANUARY 5th. We will resume on January 12th to begin our new year and plan our trip to the Edge Conference.

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!!!!
AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!



LOVE TO ALL, BESS



If you would like to **purchase a poinsettia** in honor or in memory of a loved one, please see a member of the UMW in the narthex before or after the service. **December 8** will be last day to purchase a poinsettia and the cost is \$12.00.



IN HONOR

We gratefully acknowledge gifts presented to the church in honor of:

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

JOHN CROCKER

Johnny, Kelly & Nickolas Brown (Backpack Ministry)
Gail Jenkins, Jeff Jenkins, & Chelsi & Rob Thomas
Bill & Quita Moss

JANA CROWE

Bruce & Chris Barrett (Church Renovation)
Johnny, Kelly & Nickolas Brown (Backpack Ministry)
Gail Jenkins & Family (Backpack Ministry)

JOE GAINEY

Ronnie & Jill Puett

KIM HEAVNER

Johnny, Kelly & Nickolas Brown (Backpack Ministry)

JIM MCQUAIGE

John & Linda Dellinger

ADRIENNE OSBORNE

Linda K. Barger
Johnny, Kelly & Nickolas Brown (Backpack Ministry)
Janice Hovis
Gail Jenkins Family
Ronnie & Jill Puett
T. L. & Miney Saine
Phyllis Thornburg

EARLENE WILLIAMS

Pam Anthony & Alan Cannon (Playground Fund)
Libby Ballard
Ben & Robin Blackburn
Dianne Dixon



SANDRA CARPENTER

Eloise Mauney (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

ZACK CHRISTY

Danny & Teci Webb

CHRYSTAL GREENE

Mac & Jewel Brawley (Disaster Relief)

JEFF HAMRICK

Ernie & Betty Parker
Phyllis Thornburg
Danny & Teci Webb

SYLVIA NORTON

Eloise Mauney (Pastor's Discretionary Fund)

RONNIE PUETT

(Happy Birthday)

Jill Puett (Church Maintenance Fund)



PRAYER LIST (Members)

Bo & Betsy Baity, Kent Ballard, Michael Beam, Steve Bowen, Dennis Bradley, Mac & Jewel Brawley, Mike Burgess, Michael Catena, Deanna Daggerhart, Bob Faires, Ruth Gaston, John Hines, Reid Huss, Ken Mayhew, Ray McSwain, Roy Norwood, Dave Plake, Tim Pruitt, Rev. Harry Queen, Vernon & Betty Smith, Todd Sorenson, Jim Tate, Ron Walls, Wayne & Belinda Watts, and all our homebound and nursing home members.

PRAYER LIST (Family & Friends)

Mark Brafford, Hazel Brandon, Alan Cannon, Mary Crocker, Johnny Fraley, Jennifer Pruitt, Leslie Queen, Carolyn Summer, Shayne Turner, Rick Webb, Marshall Williams, Matt Williams, Greg Yount and our loved ones in the military.

LOVED ONES IN THE MILITARY:

#Ethan Beck, Edward Blackburn, Caleb Dickerson, *Hunter Haire, *Jessica Lovell, Paxton York.
Church Member, *Deployed

December Birthdays

- 1 Tommy Allen
- 2 Kacee Buff
- 3 Zaylee Morris
- 5 Steve Beam
- 5 Robert Smith
- 6 Reid Huss
- 6 Riley Shuford
- 9 Karley Powell
- 10 Fin Beam
- 10 Violet Wallace
- 11 Pierston Elliott
- 11 Tracy Lyles
- 11 Mary Beth Wyatt
- 12 John Warlick
- 15 Stacey Bradley
- 15 Jennifer Mauney Cushman
- 15 Quita Moss
- 17 Gary Freeman
- 18 Dean Starling
- 19 Kelly Brown
- 19 Bryan Flynn
- 20 Carolyn Abernathy
- 20 Scott Aldridge
- 21 Palmer Huffstetler
- 23 Angela Jones
- 24 Rob Elmore
- 25 Harold Mauney, Jr.
- 26 Sara Baity
- 26 Chad Bingham
- 26 Dwight Stroupe
- 27 Sophie Williams
- 28 Jimmy McGinnis
- 29 Emily Whitworth Parris
- 30 Carroll Sneed
- 30 Kyle Wilent
- 31 Angie Anthony



If your birthday is in December and not listed, please contact the church office.



Mr. Ken Mayhew
507 Spring St.
Cherryville, NC 28021

Sunday, December 1

9:00am - Youth Coffee Bar fundraiser
9:30am - Sunday School
10:30am - Worship
11:30am - Youth to Mountains
2:30pm - Carolina Care devotions
4:00pm - Christmas Cantata Rehearsal

Monday, December 2

6:00pm - Preschool BOD meeting

Wednesday, December 4

6:00pm - Men & Alto's Cantata rehearsal
6:00pm - UMK's
6:00pm - Youth Bible Study

Thursday, December 5

7:00am - Prayer Breakfast @ Homefolk's

Sunday, December 8

9:30am - Sunday School
10:30am - Worship
2:30pm - Carolina Care devotions
4:00pm - Christmas Cantata Rehearsal
5:00pm - Youth caroling with Romans 12 class

Wednesday, December 11

6:00pm - Men & Alto's Cantata rehearsal
6:00pm - UMK's
6:00pm - Youth Bible Study

Thursday, December 12

7:00am - Prayer Breakfast @ Homefolk's

Sunday, December 15

9:30am - Sunday School
10:30am - Worship
2:30pm - Carolina Care devotions
4:00pm - Christmas Cantata Rehearsal
6:00pm - Youth Christmas Party

Monday, December 16

7:00pm - Finance Committee meeting

Tuesday, December 17

7:00pm - Preschool Christmas Program

Wednesday, December 18

6:00pm - Men & Alto's Cantata rehearsal
6:00pm - UMK's Christmas Party

Thursday, December 19

7:00am - Prayer Breakfast @ Homefolk's

Sunday, December 22

9:00am - Youth Coffee Bar fundraiser
9:30am - Sunday School
10:30am - Worship
2:30pm - Carolina Care devotions

Tuesday, December 24

6:00pm - Christmas Eve Service

Tuesday - Friday, December 24 - 27

Church Office closed

Saturday, December 28

7:30am - 10:30am - Community wide breakfast buffet

Sunday, December 29

9:30am - Sunday School
10:30am - Worship
2:30pm - Carolina Care devotions

Wednesday, January 1

Church Office closed

Sunday, January 5

9:30am - Sunday School
10:30am - Worship

STEWARDSHIP REPORT: NOV. 24

Received to Date..... \$283,564.34
Needs to Date \$387,491.50

OTHER FUNDS RECEIVED YTD:

Church Building Renovations..... \$13,119.00
Endowment Fund \$3,275.00
Pastor's Discretionary Fund \$5,474.25
Playground Fund..... \$4,509.00
Youth Missions..... \$2,476.83

DECEMBER USHERS:

Gary Freeman, Danny Webb, Reid Huss,
Guy Eaker, Vee Thornburg

