

THE CHALLENGE

Bethlehem United Methodist Church

Volume 9

Issue 8

December 2021

From the Pastor's Desk

"The Greatest Gift: Needed"

It is that time, if you have not already started, for making that list and checking it twice to see if you have all those special people in your life covered for Christmas. There is a great joy in giving and seeing the joy upon the faces of those who receive the well thought out and well picked out gifts that so much love was put into. The gifts may not always be gifts that those dearest to us exactly want, but, hopefully, something they truly need and can use - a gift that is a Blessing.

We see in God's Word from *John 3:16*, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son..."; one the world may not have exactly wanted, or that it was not the ideal gift they had pictured, but by God's great love, one that was more than needed, for it is one of light that breaks the darkness. It is one that heals the things that cannot be healed. It is one that brings peace when there is nothing but chaos. It is one that brings joy in sadness. It is one that brings compassion when there is suffering. It is one that offers hope in the midst of despair. It is one that offers a love without end, the greatest gift (*1 Corinthians 13:13*) ever imagined or given. A love and grace by God's mercy that offers life and freedom from sin and death. It is a gift that offers an assured promise that we can build our lives upon for the here and now and for the life to come.

1 John 4:8 says, "...God is Love..." and so, therefore, on that first Christmas the greatest gift was given to us; God gave a piece of Himself, an immeasurable piece/peace (*Ephesians 3:17-19*). When God gave us this gift, He put His heart into it so that all the world may know Jesus Christ as Lord and the beautiful experience of God's love and who God is.

So, in our gift giving this year, may God and His love be seen and experienced because we all need what God has given to the world.

May the preparation and anticipation of this season of Advent be holy and blessed, and may your Christmas be filled with God's love for the world that includes our neighbor, you, and me.

With God's Love, *Pastor Joseph, III*



Our Mission at Bethlehem UMC
Is to share the love and spirit of Christ, be a welcoming fellowship for all, nurture followers of Jesus and send them, as servants, into the world in need of God's grace.

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/214541575234325/?ref=share>

Visit our Website at

bethlehemumc.org



United
Methodist
Women

Arlene Stokes UMW 2021 Clapps Angel Tree

Arlene Stokes UMW is again
supporting Clapps Nursing

Center in assuring every resident receives at least one gift for Christmas. Pandemic restrictions still apply. If you would like to participate in this ministry, you may make a monetary donation in the form of a personal check to: Clapps Nursing Center, Inc. Atten: Kelly Amick, 5229 Appomattox Road, Pleasant Garden, NC 27313 Please write **Angel Tree** on the memo line.

If you prefer to give a gift, here is a list of items from which you may choose and drop off at Clapps:

2022 Calendars (Horses, Tractors, Animals)
Bird Feeders
Bird Seed
Body Wash
Brushes/Combs/Hair Picks
Decks of Cards
Devotional Books
Gospel CDs
Lg. Print Word Search Bks.
Ornaments
Paint for Crafts
Shampoo/Conditioner
Wooden Craft Pieces to Paint
Wrapped Snacks/V8 Juice/Cookies, etc.

*****GIFT BAGS ARE ALSO NEEDED TO PUT THESE ITEMS IN*****

Thank you for supporting this Ministry!



THE CHRISTMAS CARD POST OFFICE IS NOW OPEN

in the conference room! Please help our elves by alphabetizing (by last name) cards left for sorting and filing. Be sure to stop by routinely to pick up cards left for you and your family. **NOTE: Cut-off for dropping off cards is Sunday, Dec. 19th.**



Pleasant Garden Christmas Parade Sunday, December 5th @ 3PM



**Children & Family Ministries will participate.
Line up is at 1PM.**

*(We will decorate our float during line up time.)
Call Gail Williams or Layne Downing with questions.*



BUMC's Live Nativity Sunday, December 19th @ 6:30PM



Be sure to put this very special event on your family's calendar!



A Reminder From the Missions Team...

The first Sunday of the Month is Peanut Butter & Oatmeal Sunday. Bring donations of peanut butter & oatmeal for Urban Ministries. Your donations may be left in the narthex or conference room. Thank you for supporting this outreach!



CHRISTMAS HONOR CARDS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE. Cost \$5. Contact a Mission Team member to purchase. Benefits Greensboro Urban Ministry.



FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE... SAFE

SANCTUARY REMINDER... BUMC adheres to *Safe Sanctuary* policies set forth by the United Methodist Church requiring background checks for all volunteers who work with children and vulnerable adults. These are required to be done every three years. Since BUMC has resumed offering children's programs/events and Sunday School, it is time for some who are involved in these events to have background checks updated. Or, if you are new to any of these areas, you will be required to have an initial background check done. Please watch your mail for a permission form for this purpose.

JANUARY 2022 Newsletter Deadline - Please email your newsletter items to the church office at bethumcclimax@gmail.com by Monday, **December 20th**.

THE CHURCH OFFICE will be **closed on Monday, December 27th**, as Robin will be taking a vacation day.

Thank you **ALL** for everything you do to make my work in the church office a **TRUE Blessing** every day. Merry Christmas! Robin



FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

AUDIT

The financial records of Bethlehem UMC are required to be audited annually. This is not always easy because certain expertise is required to verify the records and procedures of the treasurer and count team.

Whitney Routh Reilly has again used her knowledge and expertise to audit the church's 2020 financial records. This is a fine example of good stewardship in which we use our tithes, time, and talents to further the kingdom of God. We are grateful to Whitney for the time and talent she has donated to her church. She has given us a clean audit for the year 2020.

Thank you, Whitney, for a job well done and greatly appreciated. *Frank Willis*, Stewardship & Finance Chair



A REMINDER FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR - Committee Chairs for

2022: The 2022 Budget Request Forms that will be provided are due to Frank Willis by **Sunday, December 19th** via email (jawillis1@aol.com) or mail to 8833 NC Hwy 22 N, Climax, NC 27233-8225.



HELEN GRADY ENDOWMENT FUND - Approximately \$2,000.00 available for disbursement. Any group, committee, or individual that would like to apply for this money may do so by submitting a **Request for Funds Application**. This form is available from the church office and must be returned to the church office before 4 PM Monday, Dec. 13 (Forms are also available on table outside of church office and in the narthex.) Funds will be released in early 2022.



IN OUR Thoughts and Prayers

Please keep these friends in your prayers:

Ongoing

Vicky Alexander
Martha Boren
Suzie Branch
Edna Coble
Jane Dunham
Cory Fields
Kelsey Garrett
R.W. Hinshaw
Ruby Hockett
Todd Holloman
Betty Hull
Bill Jones
Mary May
Mike McClintock
Jamie O'Daniel
Wes Taylor
Amber & Brandon Thompson
Our Homebound

Immediate

Daryl Bowman (Elaine Bowman's son)
Kathy Welborn Harrison (Myra Massaroni's sister)
Jimmie Jones
Sara Kauzlick
Wayne & Ruby Kirkman
Nancy Kivett
Dickie Parks
Jimmy Pugh
Barbara Riddle
Lorrie Roth
Sandy Russell
Preston Ryan
Ann Shoemaker (friend of Londa Parks)
Judy Shreve (friend of Phyllis Dahl)
Francis Snow
Julie Strickler (friend of Phyllis Dahl)
Joyce Tate
Julia Willis



Honorariums & Memorials

Since the last newsletter publication, the following gifts have been made in honor/memory as listed. BUMC gratefully acknowledges each gift received.

HONORARIUMS

In Honor of **Buddy & Judy Fields**
By Jeanette Fields & Frances Fields

In Honor of **Ruby Hockett**
By Larry & Lynne Causey
By Jerry & Karon Monnett

In Honor of **Stacy & Lucille McClintock**
By Angie Routh
By Wes & Lisa Taylor

In Honor of **Jerry & Karon Monnett**
By Ruby Hockett

In Honor of **Ruth Rowland**
By Margaret Royal
By Jane Williams

MEMORIALS

In Memory of **Dalton [Bowman] & Boys**
By Louise Bowman

In Memory of **Mike Fields**
By Beverly Fields

In Memory of **Harmon & Mildred Moser**
By Sheila Moser

In Memory of **Mildred Moser**
By Arlene Stokes Circle
By Gene & Vickie Flinchum
By Angie Routh

In Memory of **Clem Royal**
By Jerry & Karon Monnett
By Margaret Royal

Gifts received after the newsletter deadline will be listed in the next issue.



Happy Birthday!

	<u>December</u>		<u>January</u>
12/5	Gene Flinchum	1/1	Stephanie Garrett
12/6	Lily Christie	1/3	Clark Hinshaw
12/9	Cory Fields		Lois Snow
	Luke Hinshaw	1/5	Dottie Tew
12/10	Holley Wicker	1/6	Phyllis Wicker
12/11	Erin Edwards	1/7	Sharon Welborn
	Dawn White		Kimberly Garrett
	Charles Wells	1/8	Ron Bazhaw
12/13	Wayne Alley		Sally Sipes
	Karon Monnett	1/10	Todd Garrett
12/15	Jerry Berry	1/12	Sara Kauzlick
	Jerry Monnett		Bryson Windsor

12/17	Nelle Haywood	1/14	Ronnie Grimes
	Jane Chamelin		Stacy McClintock
12/19	Grant Allen		Beth Coble Pulliam
12/21	David Fields	1/15	Eddie Sipes
12/23	Braylynn Adams	1/16	Jimmie Jones
12/26	Amber Cook		Krista Neelley
	Cindy Franklin	1/17	Garrett Nance
	Leah Fields	1/18	Melanie Robb
12/27	Joy Cranfill	1/21	Alice Jones
	Logan Royal		Lisa Taylor
12/28	Cindy Duncan	1/22	Pat Waugh
12/30	Andrew Coward	1/23	Lindsay Fields
12/31	David Allen		Linda Grimes
		1/24	Angie Routh
			Jane Snead
		1/25	Betty Hull
		1/29	Judy Norris
		1/31	Sharon Goad



UPCOMING Events



Thursday, January 13th (TENTATIVE) – Finance Committee Meets

- Monday, January 17th – Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED



COMING IN JANUARY 2022! Our annual blood drive is **TUES., JAN. 18** in the Fellowship Hall from **1-7PM**. In order to donate blood on Jan. 18 you must **NOT** have given blood for 6 weeks prior.



Happy New Year

A new year is about to unfold
With new opportunities to explore
Doors will open for new experiences,
New adventures with the Lord

Remember not the former things,
The things of this past year,
The Lord will do new things in us,
Much more than we are aware.

-Matthew 1:10



Chrismon Tree

Submitted by Judy Fields

Each year in December Bethlehem is decorated with wreaths on the doors, a nativity scene outside, candles in the windows, and the Chrismon Tree standing prominently at the front of the sanctuary. Members of the congregation usually agree that the tree is beautiful.

The first Chrismon tree was at the Ascension Lutheran Church in Danville, Virginia in 1957. The ornaments were made by a lady named Frances Kipps Spencer. She loved Christmas but thought that decorated trees had no place in a church.

As she tried to decorate the tree in a suitable way she referred back to The Book of Signs by Rudolph Koch. One section on early Christian symbols caught her eye. The symbols were ones that early Christians used to identify themselves, to designate meeting places, and to transmit their faith and beliefs. Ms. Spencer decided that by using these designs to decorate the tree, she would be using the real reason we celebrate Christmas. She chose the word Chrismon to name the ornaments. The word is a combination of Christ and monogram, (meaning symbol). All Chrismons are white and gold (for his majesty) with an occasional spot of color allowed for a specific purpose. They can be made with any material, but are now usually made of beads.

A Chrismon Tree was first used at Bethlehem when Kenneth Moore was pastor (1976-'80). His wife, Sarah Helen, had some experience with Chrismons at other churches. The Arlene Stokes Guild began meeting together to make ornaments for a tree at Bethlehem.

New ornaments are made by Doris Reynolds. She can tell you more about the time it takes to make these ornaments and the meaning of each one. Take a closer look at the tree this year. Doris and the others who started this tradition deserve a big thanks!



Pictured: (Above, right) the New 16-foot Chrismon Tree; (below) are close-up pictures of a few of the many beautiful hand-made Chrismons which adorn the tree.



STEWARDSHIP REPORT

Budget Results for October 2021

\$406,456.58 Total Budget Money Available October 1, 2021
26,742.60 Money Received in October
- 38,076.99 Money Spent in October
\$395,122.19 Total Budget Money Available October 31, 2021

For the month of October, 2021, the Church Budget spent \$11,334.39 more than it received. For the year, the Church Budget spent \$12,420.82 more than it received.

Major Maintenance & Repair Fund – this designated money will be used to pay for major maintenance or repair projects to the Church building, parsonage or parking lot. The Board of Trustees must recommend all expenditures from this fund to the Church Council, and the Church Council must approve all expenditures from this fund. This is a perpetual fund and a minimum balance of \$2,500.00 shall be maintained at all times.

\$33,184.61 Total MM&RF Money Available October 31, 2021

Other Designated Gifts – occurs when the Church receives money for a designated purpose and the Church shall only spend this money for the purpose that it was given.

Camp Tekoa	\$ 781.88	Arbor Fund	\$ 924.39
Food Pantry	\$ 1,460.12	Handbells	\$ 160.52
Discretionary Fund	\$ 4,637.50	Scholarship-Religion Ed	\$ 1,983.22
Records & History	\$ 581.56	Missions-Undesignated	\$ 20,661.33
UMYF	\$19,700.63	Christmas Shoeboxes	\$ 302.85
Family Ministries	\$ 687.40	Cemetery Fund-Maint.	\$ 23,879.39
Helen Grady Endow.	\$ 800.00	Choir Fund	\$ 1,004.46
		Insurance Claim	\$ 21,870.00

Total Other Designated Gift Money Available October 31, 2021 \$99,435.25

\$101,800.00 **Perpetual Care Cemetery Fund**

In order to plan and provide the necessary funds for the care and upkeep of our cemetery, a Perpetual Care Cemetery Fund was created. This fund was a non-expendable trust fund in which the principal (donations) cannot be spent but the interest earned on the principal can be spent for the care and upkeep of the cemetery. The Perpetual Care Cemetery Fund was capped as of January 17, 2016 by the Church Council and is no longer taking donations.

\$62,988.44 **Helen Grady Endowment Fund**

The money was donated to our church from the estate of Helen Grady in 2007 to be used for improvements to the church, community, or the development of an individual. The money is at the United Methodist Foundation of WNC, Inc. and the amount that can be spent annually is 5% of the last three (3) years average end-of-year balance.

Frank Willis, Stewardship Ministry Chair

DECEMBER 2021

7.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 (Estimate) New Ph. System in place	2 10AM Children's Chapel (in Sanctuary) ~10AM Christmas Bags (Assembled in Library/Begin to deliver.) 4PM Children's Chapel (After Schoolers/Sanctuary)	3	4 11-5PM FH & Kit. in use (Fam. Event)
5 2 nd Sunday of Advent 3PM PG Christmas Parade (Line up at 1PM)	6	7 10AM StoryTime (FH)	8	9 6PM Adult Fellowship Christmas Party (Kimbers')	10	11 11-2PM FH & Kit in use (UMW Christmas Party) 3-8PM FH & Kit in use (Fam Event)
12 3 rd Sunday of Advent Estimate of Giving Cards Requested/Deadline	13 Helen Grady Apps Due	14 10AM StoryTime (FH)	15	16 10AM Children's Chapel (in Sanctuary) 4PM Children's Chapel (After Schoolers/Sanctuary)	17	18 Charles Wesley's 8-day 3-9PM FH & Kit in use (Young-at-Heart/Christmas Party)
19 4 th Sunday of Advent Poinsettias in Sanctuary Christmas Cd P.O. Cut Off Budget Requests Due 6:30PM Live Nativity 	20 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE	21 Winter Begins 10AM StoryTime (FH)	22	23	24 Christmas Eve Poinsettias in Sanctuary  6PM Christmas Eve/ Candlelight/Communion Service	25 Christmas Day 11-3PM FH & Kit in use (Fam Event)
26 1 st Sun. after Christmas Day	27 CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED (Robin/vacay day)	28 10AM StoryTime (FH)	29	30 10AM Children's Chapel (in Sanctuary) 4PM Children's Chapel (After Schoolers/Sanctuary)	31 New Year's Eve 	1 New Year's Day 

Greeters:

12/5 Byron & Phyllis Dahl
12/12 Susan Coward
12/19 Wayne & Phyllis Alley
12/24 Susan Coward
12/26 OPEN

Flowers:

12/5 OPEN
12/12 Culbertsons (Altar)
12/19 Poinsettias
12/24 Poinsettias
12/26 OPEN

Bethlehem United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 56/6103 Appomattox Road
Climax, NC 27233

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED