

NEWS AT *first*

**Monthly Newsletter of
First United Methodist Church
*December 2022***



God
with
us.

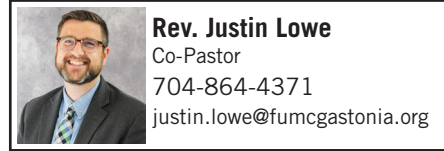
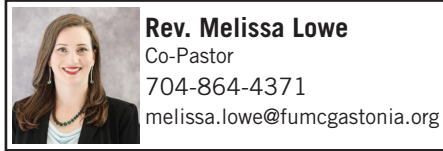
MERRY CHRISTMAS

Table of Contents



- 3 From our Senior Co-Pastors
- 4 Worship Arts Ministry
- 6 Children's Ministry
- 8 Youth Ministry
- 10 Adult Discipleship Ministry
- 12 Advent and Christmas at First UMC
- 14 Mission and Outreach
- 15 United Women of Faith
- 16 Community Health Ministry
- 17 Partnership News
- 18 Take Note
- 19 Staff Parish Relations Committee News
- 20 Business Office Updates
- 22 Charge Conference Recap

From our Co-Pastors



Advent Journey

**Luke 1:46-47 –“And Mary said: My soul glorifies the Lord
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...”**

We LOVE Christmas! Vibrant red and forest green colors surrounding everything, banister railings covered in greenery and twinkling lights, carols playing everywhere we go. This time of year, seems like it is sprinkled with celebration. While Christmas decorations and holiday festivities already surround us, we have not yet actually arrived at Christmas.

November 27, 2022, marks the beginning of Advent, the ‘New Year’s Day’ of the Christian calendar. We begin the Christian year with Advent, as a way through which we begin with the end in mind. Advent is different than Christmas, for Advent is a celebration and looking toward the second coming of the King! The very meaning of the word “Advent” is “the coming or arrival.” Advent is to be a pilgrimage journey preparing our hearts and lives for the second coming of Christ, a time of expectation.

Slow down during this time of Advent and reflect intentionally about preparing your heart to receive the coming of Christ. Are you rushing around during this season in a flurry of activity, or are you waiting prayerfully, listening to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in your life, anticipating the arrival of the King of kings? To help each of us pay attention to these promptings, we encourage you to pick up your family’s gift of our Advent Devotional, *“This Will Be A Sign For You,”* written by Henri Nouwen from Gunter Hall beginning November, 27th. Let us together begin our Advent journey, making worship a priority as we mark our path with the lighting of the Advent Wreath Candles. And lastly, we hope you will join us for a very special time of worship on Christmas Eve where we will hear the story of Christ’s birth, sing carols, and share the light of Christ. These are the moments that help us make our pilgrimage journey to the manger.

Happy Advent Friends and Merry Early Christmas!

Justin & Melissa

Worship Arts Ministry



Jim O'Dell
Director of Music Ministries
704-864-4371 ext. 233
jaodell@fumcgastonia.org



Susan Lisle
Music Associate
704-864-4371 ext. 237
susan@fumcgastonia.org



Timothy Scruggs
Organist
704-864-4371
timothy@fumcgastonia.org

CHRISTMAS CANTATA —The Incarnation—

Celebrate the Christmas Season
December 11th

Christmas Cantata

11:00AM | Worship | Sanctuary
3:00PM | Sanctuary

Reader's Theatre

"Bob's Your Elf"

By Norm Foster

December 12-13, 2022

7:00 PM

FUMC Theatre
162 East Main Ave.

Bob needs an attitude adjustment; he just can't cooperate with the other elves. So Santa sends him to an unlikely place to learn some lessons---to some church members trying to put on a Christmas pageant---can Bob help them; do they help Bob? The efforts of all are hilarious!



Poinsettia Orders

Deadline Tuesday, December 6

Ways to Order | Cost \$12

- Online at fumcgastonia.org/poinsettias
- Return bulletin insert to church office
- At reception desk



First United Methodist Church
Gastonia, North Carolina

ChurchWide Christmas Caroling Wednesday, December 14



Dinner in FLC at 5pm

Caroling to follow in groups around our community.

Please sign up for dinner, fumcgastonia.org/wef



LIVE Nativity

DECEMBER 18-19

6:30-8:00PM

FIRST UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH FRONT LAWN

Children's Ministry



Kristi McClellan

Director of Children's Ministries
& Weekday Preschool
kristi@fumcgastonia.org

Children's Choirs Christmas CONCERT December 7

5:30PM Dinner in FLC | 6:30PM Concert in Sanctuary



Sign up to help with
Advent Candle Lighting



<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0A4AA-DAE28A13-help>



Pre-Christmas Pancake Party

December 11
4-6 pm

Pancakes, games & crafts!

Contact kristi@fumcgastonia.org
for more information.



 **First United Methodist Church**
Gastonia, North Carolina

ChurchWide Christmas Caroling

Wednesday, December 14

Dinner in FLC at 5pm
Caroling to follow in groups around our community.
Please sign up for dinner, fumcgastonia.org/wef





**CAN YOU SPARE
A PAIR?**

FUMC Kids want to spread Christmas cheer
by sharing a pair of new Christmas socks.
Drop donations off to Mrs. Kristi.

Trunk or Treat Pictures

**Thank you to everyone who hosted a trunk, donated candy,
and attended our Oct. 30th Trunk or Treat.**



Youth Ministry



Stephanie Jenkins

Director of Youth Ministries
980-292-3182
sjenkins@fumcgastonia.org



Sun Dec 4 8:30AM Confirmation Class Meets for Field Trip
3-5:30PM Christmas In the City Outreach
6-7:30PM -Mid-Hi Christmas Party
Wed Dec 7 5:30PM Dinner, 6:30PM Children's Concert
Sun Dec 11 Camp Sunshine Christmas Party
6:30-8:00PM Sr-Hi Christmas Party
Wed Dec 14 Dinner & Christmas Caroling
Sun Dec 18 UMYF @ USNWC - Ice Skating 6-7:30PM
Sat Dec 24 Christmas Eve! 3 Services
Sun Dec 25 Christmas Day 10:30AM Worship *NO UMYF
Wk of Dec 26 College Student Christmas Dinner

2023 January 2023

Sun Jan 1 New Years Day 10:30AM Worship *NO UMYF
Fri Jan 6 6PM Gather to Depart for Sr-Hi Retreat
Sun Jan 8 6-7:30PM -UMYF Mid-Hi Only
Wed Jan 11 5:30PM Dinner, 6:30PM Small Group
Sun Jan 15 1:30PM Depart for Gaston College Hoops Game
Wed Jan 18 5:30PM Dinner, 6:30PM Small Group
Fri Jan 20 8:00PM Mid-Hi Lock-in @ Greene House
Sun Jan 22 6-7:30PM -UMYF@ Greene House
Wed Jan 25 5:30PM Dinner, 6:30PM Small Group
Sun Jan 29 6-7:30PM -UMYF@ Greene House

SAVE THE DATES!

SAVE THE DATES!

SAVE THE DATES!

March 5 Youth Sunday - All 3 Worship Services
March 17-19 Confirmation Retreat
March 23-26 Sr-Hi Boys Chrysalis Flight
April 30 Family Day
May 7 Confirmation Sunday (11:00 Worship)
May 21 Graduate Sunday
July 9-15 Asheville Mission Trip
July 10-17 Honduras Mission Trip

FUMCG Senior Hi Progressive Christmas Dinner Party
Sunday Dec. 11 6:30-8pm



Bring a \$10 gift for gift exchange
& CAM Combo donations



Confirmation Class Field Trip

Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral
600 East Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28203

Sunday December 4th

8:30am Meet @ FUMC Gastonia
9:30 Worship Service
11:00 Question & Answer Session
11:30 Bus back to FUMC Gastonia
Noon Lunch with your mentor



Sunday December 4th

"Christmas in the City" event downtown.
Parade begins at 5PM at the corner of Main St & Oakland (that's where FUMC Gastonia is!), so we have a great opportunity to show the love of Jesus to each person we encounter!

We're looking for jolly folks to hand out free water and candy canes to our community. Volunteers needed from 3-4PM, 4-5PM & 5-6PM. Please contact Stephanie Jenkins if you are interested in volunteering.



UMYF Mid-Hi Christmas Party
Dec 4th
6-7:30pm @ The Greene House

Bring a \$10 gift for gift exchange
& CAM Combo donations



UMYF Sunday Dec 18 6-7:30pm

ICE SKATING @
and **HOT CHOCOLATE**

U.S. NATIONAL WHITEWATER CENTER



Cost: \$25 Activity
(equipment included)

Parking \$6
(you can also tell front gate you are dropping off)

Bring extra \$ for snacks

Sr-Hi Winter Retreat

Jan 6-8, 2023
Valle Crucis, NC

Rescheduled from Fall 2022

Register
Online



QR Code: Youth Website

Scroll down to
Retreats & More Section

Open to new
participants

JOIN US!

SUNDAY JAN 15 1:30PM



GASTON
COLLEGE VS



BRUNSWICK
COMMUNITY
COLLEGE

Mens
Basketball

Cost: FREE!!!
2:00PM @ Ashbrook High School
1:30PM Meet @ FUMC
for transportation



FRIDAY NIGHT
JAN 20 8:00PM

GAMES
FOOD
FUN!

YOUTH LOCK-IN



Thank you!

Thank you to all who donated items,
helped and shopped at the youth
yard sale.

\$1,400 & counting
was raised towards
2023 mission trips.

thank
you

Any items that were
not sold at the yard
sale went to the
Kidney Foundation.

ALL youth and adults
are welcome to join us
on our summer
mission trips to
Asheville &
Honduras. Check out
the youth page (QR
code above), then
scroll down to the
outreach section for
more information!

Adults, Come Join Us!



- * Provide a meal for a Sunday Night
- * Lead a Sunday School Class
- * Lead a Wednesday Night Small Group
- * Assist with Sunday Nights in Games and/or Devotions

VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED

SIGN UP
TODAY!

Contact Director of Student
Ministries, Stephanie Jenkins

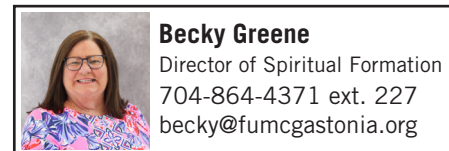
UMYF Sunday Night Dinners

Please help by donating \$ for a meal.
A typical meal for 30 youth is approximately \$150.
All donations go through the church
finance office & are placed on statements.

fumcgastonia.org/givepay/tithedonate

Select Fund: Youth Ministry, Sub Fund: Youth Meals

Adult Discipleship Ministry



I recently read a synopsis of the phrase “Three Word Theology” by Diana Butler Bass. She is an award-winning author and holds a Ph.D. in religious studies from Duke University. The Embrace women’s group, led by Cathy Waufler is studying her book Freeing Jesus this semester. I also shared some of the three word theology with the Prayer Pause small group.

We chose to look at phrases like:

“Don’t be afraid” “Be the light” “Walk in light”,
“Here am I” “Do unto others” “Love your neighbors”.

It’s basically taking a scripture and paring it down to three significant words. By doing a little research of the scriptures, these concise words can offer great wisdom. I encourage you to pick one of these phrases or create one of your own choosing. As we enter the Advent season, think how you can live out your three word theology daily. Here are some examples:

Come, Let Us (Isaiah 1:18)

Walk In Light (John 12:35)

Of The Lord (Matthew 7:8)

We are still (Psalm 46:10)

We are silent (Proverbs 17:28)

And we wait (Psalm 27:14)

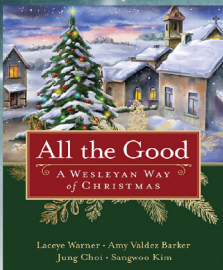
May your Advent season be bright with hope and light.
Becky

Prayer Pause Small Group



Joy Sunday School Class





**Advent
Sunday School Series**
Nov 27 | Dec 4 | Dec 11 | Dec 18
10:00AM | Family Life Center
Led by Revs Justin & Melissa Lowe

AN ADVENT JOURNEY GUIDED BY THE PRACTICES IN
JOHN WESLEY’S MEANS OF GRACE.



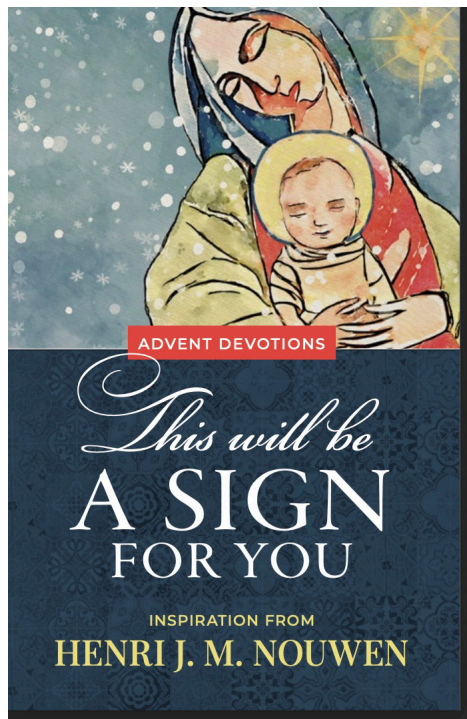
**Advent
Breakfast**
Tuesday Breakfast
at Eggs Up Grill
Tuesdays 7:00AM
Nov 29 | Dec 6
Dec 13 | Dec 20
Join us for breakfast and
devotions.

Advent Devotionals

Celebrate Advent with a daily prayer journey toward the joy of Christmas.

Henri Nouwen's *This will be A Sign For You* will be available for pickup beginning Sunday, November 27th in Gunter Hall.

The devotional booklets written by church members will be published during the 2023 Lenten season.



Friends on the Go Trip to Valle Crucis



Friends on the Go Trip to the Elmore's

Friends On The Go - Tuesday Dec 6th



"The Real Christmas Story"

Narrow Way productions in Fort Mill, SC

Cost: \$44.95 Adult | \$42.95 Seniors 55+

Includes: Dinner & show 2 ½ to 3 hours

Departure: 5:00PM

Register with Stephanie S.



Celebrating Title IX

We had a two great Wednesday Nights celebrating the 50th Year Anniversary of Title IX. Catherine Greene (center photo) spoke about the importance of Title IX in sports and Rev. Jan Brittain (far right photo) shared about the role of women in ministry and her journey and experience. We give God thanks for these two leaders in our midst who happen to be women!



Advent and Christmas at First

November 27 First Sunday of Advent | Sermon Series *The Coming King*

Adult Sunday School Advent Series "All the Good" with the Pastors
Advent Devotionals Available for pick up in Gunter Hall

November 29 Advent Tuesday Breakfast | 7:00 am | Eggs Up Grill Gastonia

November 30 Advent Vespers | 5:00 pm | Chapel
Wednesday Night Dinner | 5:30 pm | FLC 1 & 2
Operation In As Much | 6:30 pm | FLC Gym
(Pack 20,000 Meals for Ukraine)

December 2 UMM Hot Dog Lunch | Noon-1 pm | FLC 1 & 2
Community Kitchen Meal Prep and Delivery

December 4 Second Sunday of Advent | Sermon Series *The Coming King*

Adult Sunday School Advent Series "All the Good" with the Pastors
Gastonia Christmas Parade (help hand out water & candy canes)
Mid-High Youth Christmas Party | 6:00 pm | Greene House

December 6 Advent Tuesday Breakfast | 7:00 am | Eggs Up Grill Gastonia
Poinsettia Orders Due to Church Office
Friends on the Go "The Real Christmas Story" | 5:00 pm

December 7 Advent Vespers | 5:00 pm | Chapel
Wednesday Night Dinner | 5:30 pm | FLC 1 & 2
Children's Choirs Christmas Concert | 6:30 pm | Sanctuary

December 9 Community Kitchen Meal Prep and Delivery

December 11 Third Sunday of Advent | Sermon Series *The Coming King*

Adult Sunday School Advent Series "All the Good" with the Pastors
Chancel Choir Cantata *The Incarnation* | 11 am and 3:00 pm | Sanctuary
Pre-Christmas Pancake Party | 4-6:00 pm, Children's Ministry Area
Senior-High Youth Christmas Party | 6:30 pm

December 12 Reader's Theatre Bob's Your Elf | 7:00 pm | Theatre

December 13 Reader's Theatre Bob's Your Elf | 7:00 pm | Theatre
Advent Tuesday Breakfast | 7:00 am | Eggs Up Grill Gastonia

December 14 Wednesday Night Dinner | 5:00 pm | FLC 1 & 2
Church Wide Christmas Caroling | 5:45 pm | Various Destinations

December 16 Angel Tree Gifts for Pleasant Ridge Elementary School Deadline
Community Kitchen Meal Prep and Delivery

December 18 Fourth Sunday of Advent | Sermon Series *The Coming King*

Adult Sunday School Advent Series "All the Good" with the Pastors
Youth Ministry Outing - Ice Skating | 6:00 pm | USNWC

December 18 Live Nativity | 6:30 pm | Front Lawn

December 19 Live Nativity | 6:30 pm | Front Lawn
 December 20 Advent Tuesday Breakfast | 7:00 am | Eggs Up Grill Gastonia
 December 21 The Longest Night: A Service of Hope | 6:00 pm | Theatre
 December 23 Community Kitchen Meal Prep and Delivery
December 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion
 2:30 pm Theatre | 5:30 pm Sanctuary | 10:30 pm Sanctuary
December 25 Christmas Day | Sunday Worship | 10:30 am Sanctuary
No Sunday School

December 26 Church Offices Closed
 December 27 Church Offices Closed
 December 28 Church Office Open (8:00 am - 5:00 pm)
 December 31 Deadline for year-end giving

January 1 New Year's Day, Sunday Worship | 10:30 am, Sanctuary
No Sunday School

January 2 Church Office Closed
 January 3 Church Office Open (8:00 am - 5:00 pm)



Missions and Outreach

**First United Methodist Church**
Gastonia, North Carolina

**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**
OF AMERICA

Donate \$25 Visa Gift cards for teenagers at the West Gastonia Boys & Girls Club Teen Center.

- Donate during Sunday offering (*write in memo*)
- Donate \$25 online at fumcgastonia.org/givepay
 - Bring card to the front desk
 - Or place in business office drop-box.



**Fridays 11am
Greene House kitchen**

Community Kitchen is a group of people who meet once a week to plan, cook and share a hot meal with our unsheltered neighbors. After making the meals, we deliver them to the Bus Stop. For more information contact Thekellyray@gmail.com



Angel Tree

BLESS THOSE IN NEED

Pleasant Ridge Elementary School

Ways to get a tag with a Child's name:

- The tree will be located in the main lobby, pick one up between worship services or during office hours starting Nov. 30th.
- You can call the church office and have them pick one out for you.

**Deadline to bring gifts:
Friday, December 16**

*Return gifts to FUMC main lobby by the deadline. Please make sure all bags and gifts are labeled with the correct number from the tag.

Sunday December 4th

"Christmas in the City" event downtown.
Parade begins at 5PM at the corner of Main St & Oakland (that's where FUMC Gastonia is!), so we have a great opportunity to show the love of Jesus to each person we encounter!

We're looking for jolly folks to hand out free water and candy canes to our community. Volunteers needed from 3-4PM, 4-5PM & 5-6PM. Please contact Stephanie Jenkins if you are interested in volunteering.





**Hot Dog Lunch
Friday, Dec 2
Noon-1pm
Cost \$5**



Operation INASMUCH

Wednesday Nov 30 | 6:30PM | FLC GYM

5:30PM | Dinner



- Help prepare 20,000 meals to be delivered to people of Ukraine.
- Each meal is provided at a cost of 27 cents.
- Multiple assembly lines
- All ages



Camp Sunshine Christmas Party

December 11 | 12:30 pm - 2:30 pm | Family Life Center 1 & 2 & Gym

Donate paper plates, candy, Little Debbie Snacks, blankets, and/or cash by dropping them off in Gunter Hall by December 6th.
Help serve at the party by connecting with
Ginger 704.737.6113 or Merry 704.718.0705.

United Women in Faith

Thank you to all who purchased casseroles, baked goods, and more from United Women In Faith to support local missions in Gaston County.



United
Women
in Faith

UWF Christmas Dinner Meeting

Monday Dec. 5 | 6:30PM

FLC 1 & 2 | Childcare provided

Come join us for a holiday Mingle with the Ministers, officer installation, Special Recognition Pin presentation and Hands on Mission (Feminine products for Crisis Assistance Ministry and York Chester Middle School). Call church office for reservations.

Reservations Required | Deadline Fri Dec 2





Lisa Marisiddaiah
 Community Health Ministry
nurse@fumcgastonia.org



The Co-Pastors of First United Methodist Church
and The FUMC Community Health Ministry

Invite you to join us for
The Longest Night:
A Service of Hope

Wednesday, December 21, 2022

6:00 pm

First United Methodist Church Theatre
162 East Main Ave. Gastonia, NC

This event will also be available for viewing via
Livestream at www.fumcgastonia.org/worship/view-services
*Childcare available with advanced RSVP to 704-864-4371

For those who are grieving the loss of loved ones, who have difficult family relationships, who are feeling isolated, or who are experiencing anxiety due to general challenges over the past year.



Nurture Committee in partnership with
FUMC Community Health Ministry present:

**FRIEND
A SENIOR**

This program is intended to be a friendship/buddy program. We want to build relationships and not just give gifts at the holidays. These older adults live in assisted living/skilled nursing facilities and have been identified as not having a strong local support network. Some of them do not have family or friends to visit them or provide necessities or gifts.

If interested in getting paired with a senior, please email
Stephanie Elliott at stephaniebelliott@gmail.com



**Volunteers
Needed**

for various
FUMC Community Health
Ministry events.

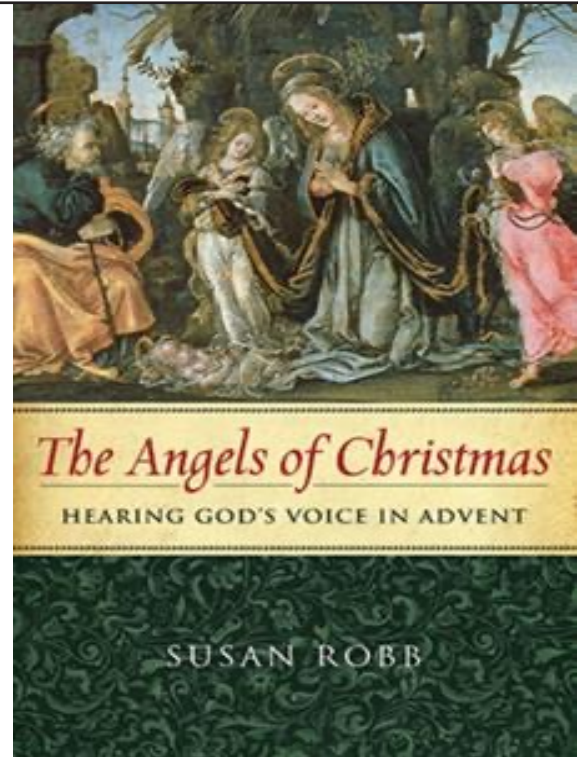
Please contact Lisa if you would like to be added to the list. Nurse@fumcgastonia.org



Advent Bible Studies

First in Bessemer City
Wednesday's @ 5:00 – 6:00 PM
Call for Meeting Site (704) 477-7715
Nov, 30th, Dec, 7, 14 & 21

Bethesda
Thursday's @ 7:00 – 8:00 PM
At Bethesda UMC Fellowship Hall
Dec, 1, 8, 15, & 22



Christmas Eve Services

First in Bessemer City
December 24th 5:00 PM

Bethesda UMC
December 24th @ 7:00 PM

Christmas Day Services

First United Methodist Bessemer City @ 9:45 AM

Bethesda United Methodist @ 11:00

Take Note

Minister on Call Schedule

*To reach a Pastor on nights or weekends, please call the church office **704-864-4371**, it will direct you to the ext. 229 and you will be forwarded to the minister on call.*

Joy to

- Jes and Amanda Still on the birth of their daughter Jane Elise Still on November 3

Sunday Morning Views & Attendance

Date:	162 E. Online	162 E. In-person	9am	11am Online	11am In-Person
Oct 30	51	44	50	288	186
Nov 6	340	49	51	370	171
Nov 13	79	51	43	304	198
Nov 20	65	45	43	207	184



KEEP US UPDATED ON
PHONE NUMBERS & EMAIL ADDRESSES

Please email Stephanie Sholtzes to update any of your contact information in our systems.

stephanie.s@fumcgastonia.org

Sympathy to

- Jo Ann Buckles and family on the death of her sister, Marilyn Ismail
- Lee Jenkins and family on the death of his father, Lon Jenkins
- Pat Moncrief and family on the death of her husband, Jack Moncrief
- The family of Nan White upon her death

Staff Parish Relations Committee News

Hospitality Assistant

(Full-Time Position) to provide hospitality assistance at the Information Desk in Gunter Hall.

Executive Assistant to the Senior Co-Pastors

(Full-Time Position) to provide administrative support to Pastor's Melissa and Justin and serving as our Membership Secretary.

Preschool Teachers

(Part-Time Positions) to provide safe, nurturing child-centered environments for growth and development Monday-Friday mornings.

Preschool Substitute Teachers

(Part-Time Positions) to provide safe, nurturing child-centered environments for growth and development on a substitute bases Monday-Friday mornings.

Children's Ministry Childcare Assistants

(Part-Time) to provide safe, nurturing child-centered care for spiritual growth and development on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, and Sunday mornings.

Help us spread the word that we are hiring for these positions! If you know of someone that would be a great fit for one of these positions, please encourage them to apply. For more information, learn more about these positions on our church website under the jobs section. fumcgastonia.org/jobs

Thank You Dana Crunkleton!!

Dana has served as one of our interim front desk hospitality assistants and her last day officially was November 21st. Dana has been a tremendous gift in the ministry of welcome and hospitality. Join us in saying thank you to Dana!

WE'RE HIRING!

Employee Hiring Practice Update

Throughout 2022, our committee has worked to update our employee handbook (last updated in 2017). One change that we made related to eligible employment is that members and/or attendees of First UMC may be hired for full-time, part-time, or interim positions. Preferential treatment will not be given to members and/or attendees.



Business Office Updates



Dave Davis
Business Administrator
704-864-4371 ext. 225
ddavis@fumcgastonia.org



Laura Kendrick
Accountant
704-864-4371 ext. 224
lkendrick@fumcgastonia.org

2022 Financial Snapshot

January - October 2022

Budget Year To Date

1,345,679

Budgeted Expenses Year To Date

1,303,248

Budgeted Giving & Other Income Year To Date

1,316,600

Surplus
\$4,400

Third Quarter Giving Statements

Thank you for your generosity and partnering with us to make a difference in our community and world. 2022 Third Quarter Giving Statements were mailed in November. If you have any questions related to your statement, please connect with Laura Kendrick.

*Merry
Christmas*

CHURCH OFFICES CLOSED
MONDAY DEC 26 & TUESDAY DEC 27
OPEN 8AM-5PM WEDNESDAY DEC 28

HAPPY NEW YEAR

CHURCH OFFICES CLOSED MONDAY JANUARY 2ND
OPEN 8AM-5PM TUESDAY JANUARY 3.



ALL IN

2023 Commitment Update

2023 Ministry, Mission, and Operating Budget

170 Commitments - \$1,071,173.00

2023 Weaving Building Debt

75 Commitments - \$113,220.00

Thank you for your ALL IN Stewardship Commitments.

Please note that if your method of giving is online through the church website (GIVE/PAY), please review your recurring payment setup. Be sure to choose Budget 2023 for your commitment or Weaving 2023 for your Weaving commitment. All recurring payments will need to be updated by the Contributor before the January contributions are made. If you need assistance navigating the Give/Pay website, please contact the Business Office.

If your giving method is with an ACH direct bank draft, the Business Office will automatically update your draft amount based on your commitment card, unless you instruct us differently.

Christmas Eve Offering



This year's Christmas Eve offering will go to support the efforts of Crisis Assistance Ministry here in Gastonia. Thank you for your gifts!

You can give online: fumcgastonia.org/give-pay and choose "Christmas Eve Offering." You can mail in to our PO Box address or leave at the church office.

LOOKING BACK, Looking Forward

Thank you for supporting the missions, outreach, education, and worship of First UMC with your financial generosity!

For IRS 2022 tax deduction purposes, contributions must be received by the following deadlines:

In Person: Friday, December 30, 2022

Mail: Postmarked no later than Saturday, December 31, 2022

Online: Saturday, December 31, 2022 by 11:59 PM ET

fumcgastonia.org/givepay/tithedonate

Charge Conference Recap

First UMC hosted and participated in the Gaston County Missional Network Charge Conference on Sunday, November 6th. James and Jane Smith provide a hymn sing to get us all started. District Superintendent, Rev. David Christy, preached and led us in Holy Communion, and presided over the Charge Conference. First UMC with unanimous joy approved Dr. Leigh Smith as a continuing candidate for ministry, approved clergy salaries, and our church leadership team to date. Below is Rev. Melissa and Justin's pastoral report presented at Charge Conference. There is much to celebrate happening in the life of First UMC!

Pastor's Annual Charge Conference Report

First UMC is deeply committed to the mission of making disciples for the transformation of the world. We are a downtown church worshipping and serving God in the heart of our community. First UMC remains a steadfast continuing UMC Church. In July of this year, new pastoral leadership was received. As new pastors, we participated in an onboarding experience with the lay leadership and staff, lead by Rev. Kim Ingram, which has provided clarity around bright spots and growth opportunities for our church.

One of these bright spots with First UMC has been the warm welcome of the church, at the "Mingle with the Ministers" gatherings. We have had 25 "Mingle with the Ministers" so far since we arrived in July, and have several more planned through the remainder of 2022. At these events, we are able to engage folks deeper and learn their stories. We have asked two questions at each mingle: "What do you love about First UMC?", and "What dreams is God stirring in your heart for First UMC?", followed by a time of question and answer. At each gathering, the people of First UMC have expressed the deep love and community that they have found and formed at this congregation.

An opportunity that was identified from our onboarding experience was that during the pandemic, the church was not able to hug or offer a handshake, look a departing pastor or worship staff member in the eye in-person and give thanks for their ministry due to the pandemic of COVID-19. Due to this, the Staff Parish Relations Committee will be hosting two 'Giving Thanks' receptions for Rev. David Christy, Rev. Dr. Jim Westmoreland, Rev. Saxon Scarborough and Dr. Aaron Prillaman to do just that.

We are humbled and grateful to be part of this vibrant, called, community of followers of Jesus who are passionate about their relationship with Christ and reaching out to share God's love generously.

Revs. Melissa and Justin Lowe

Advent Vespers Worship & Communion



Looking ahead to January

Winter Season Starts Jan 11, 2023

WEDNESDAY EVENING FELLOWSHIP

5:30 Meal / 6:30 Small Groups

Children, Youth & Adult



Christmas at FUMC

December 24 Candlelight & Communion Worship

2:30PM | Contemporary Worship | Theatre

5:30PM | Traditional Family Worship | Sanctuary

10:30PM | Traditional Worship | Sanctuary

December 25 10:30AM Combined Worship | Sanctuary

For any additions to the newsletter, please contact Alyssa Overcash by the 15th of each month.



Alyssa Overcash

Director of Communications
alyssa@fumcgastonia.org

Connect with us...

Website: www.fumcgastonia.org

Phone: 704.864.4371

Email: contact@fumcgastonia.org



First United
Methodist
Church of
Gastonia, NC



FUMCGastonia



Sign up to receive
Newsletters online



Give Online!

First United Methodist Church
PO Box 218
Gastonia, NC 28053

Published Monthly
at 190 East Franklin
Blvd. Gastonia, NC
(USPS 198-720)
Periodicals postage
paid at Gastonia, NC.
POSTMASTER: Send
address changes to:
News At First
First United
Methodist Church
PO Box 218
Gastonia, NC 28053