

THE CIRCUIT RIDER



Black Creek Methodist Church
Editor: Nichole Batten

December
2023

Dear Black Creek Methodist Church Family,
Greetings in the Lord Jesus Christ!

Praise God! Once again, we approach that great celebration of the birth of our Savior. If you have paid attention to recent events, the world seems to be in constant turmoil. When we observe the world, it can be difficult to be at peace and to have hope for the future.

As we approach this Christmas season, let us consider the peace that our God bestows upon us. The scriptures tell us that Jesus himself endured turmoil. *"He came to his own,"* John says, *"But his own did not receive him"* (Jn 1:11). Imagine the turmoil Jesus must have felt being rejected by his own people! Nevertheless, we are told in scripture that God does not desire for us to be in turmoil, but to be at peace, and find the abundant life in Jesus. As the Psalmist writes: *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea."* (Ps 46:1)

Despite the constant upheaval of the world, the lies and treachery of the Devil, we can be confident that we can take refuge in our Lord God. Jesus Christ came to deliver us from the fear of death and the world, confident that we are saved through faith in his death and resurrection. Therefore, let us rejoice this Christmas for the peace we are given through the Gospel! As Jesus himself says, *"come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls"* (Mt 11:28-29).

Join us as we celebrate the coming of our Lord, and the peace he provides us through his death and resurrection. **Christmas Eve Services:** One service at 10:00 a.m., Praise and worship service outside the Historic Church at 4:30 p.m., and traditional services at 7:30 p.m., and 11:00 p.m.

For more information about Black Creek Methodist Church, please visit www.blackcreekmethodist.org. Here you will find our Church calendar with worship times and activities, and media tools to help you grow in God's word.

In his service,

Pastor Devin Sanderson



children

My name is Jessica Huntley, formally Jessica Starnes. Prior to me leading the Children's Ministries, my husband Jordan and I would worship mostly at 11am service but would sneak into 8:30 every now and then. We are extremely blessed to have a house full of noise and love with our big family (Reese 11, Grady 7, Tucker 5, Leeland 4, and Beckett 3) and our pup Boomer. I have been a member of our sweet church since I was a small child and in the nursery with Marie Livings. Something that warms my heart and I enjoy looking at old pictures in the Historic Church from when I was a child. My mom and dad would bring me and my older sister, Cheree, up to the church for Sunday school, VBS, Sunday and mid-week worship, and whatever else the church had going on but also to ride tricycles and play on the grounds. I have a true love for our church and the traditions we as a church have been able to pass on throughout the years. The one thing that stands out the most about the church is the people, my church family and feeling completely welcomed and loved. I have learned the most fulfilling feeling is to share the love of Christ, help grow friendships, and relationships closer to Him with his most precious gifts, His children. It's a huge privilege and honor to be able to work with our kiddos here at Black Creek Methodist Church, that I am grateful for.

We have been working hard to redesign Kids Fellowship back to Children's Church and focus on the teachings of the church, why we do what we do, and scriptures that go along with Pastor Brian's services. On Sundays, you will find the kiddos ages 4-12 years old, upstairs in the Family Life Center utilizing the Davis Chapel. We fill the Chapel with a power point presentation, playing worship songs and hymns that are geared to teach the kids through movement. The message is designed to teach the same verses Pastor Brian is going over in his sermon but taught for the kids to understand. I encourage any of the kiddos to read the Bible verses out loud for us and we talk about what they mean and how to apply them to their lives. We work on remembering verses weekly and when they come back the following week, they can recite the given verse and receive a sweet surprise. We have started taking up tithes and offering that will help us get the things that are needed to make the Davis Chapel more "Chapel" feeling. We also focus on saying and remembering The Lord's Prayer. Our Children's Church format is to look and run like the adult's service and we will continue learning traditions like the Apostles Creed, Gloria Patri, and the Doxology. Midway through the service we move over to the classroom and do an activity or craft that's geared toward the message that was given.

On Wednesday we also are going over the same message that was given on Sunday except we dive in deeper. We start with praise and worship, moving into the Bible verses and breaking them down verse by verse. We talk about what they mean and talk about how they can be applied to the life of a kiddo. After we review and dissect the message a little more, we move into an activity. We have done things like catapulting marshmallows, to a date that Christ may come, to making mites and coin bags, to remember the widow that gave it all. We do have a little more time on Wednesdays to do more activities that may take a little longer than Sunday allows.

My overall goal for the Children's Church is to make sure we are teaching the love of Christ in a fun structured, kid focused way, so our kiddos want to come and bring friends to learn the teaching of Christ. If you happen to share these same wants for our kids, please reach out to me about volunteering with our Children's services. I am currently looking for volunteers for both Sunday 11am Children's Church and Wednesday's Service Children for Christ at 6-7:30pm. Thank you to my church family for trusting me to teach and love on the little people of our church. It is truly something that I look forward to every Sunday and Wednesday!

YOUTH NEWS



This year has been amazing for the Youth. Even with the changes in the church the Youth room has held strong and grown spiritually this year. We finally were able to split the Senior and Junior High School classes. We also started new study formats to tailor to the specific age groups. Paul Jacobs and Jordan Huntley took over the Senior High Sunday School class and we are so excited to have them on board. This year we had seven Youth graduate from confirmation class, they got to go camping at the beach for their retreat. We also added a "Circuit Rider Experience" for the Confirmed, taking them on a trail ride on horseback and simple meal around the fire. It was a great way to really find a connection to our Methodist history. We cannot wait to add it to next year's program. While we didn't have our bake sale this year, we hosted many meals and service projects. It was exciting to help coordinate the Easter sunrise service and breakfast. The teens learned quickly which councilors will burn pancakes, this year. We also hosted a churchwide sock Hop and Car Show. It was a tremendous hit and we cannot wait for **2024's second annual Churchwide Sweetheart Sock Hop and Car show, February 18th 3-5pm**. The Youth also got to go see the Casting Crowns in concert and had a blast! It was a beautiful worship experience for parents and teens. Our lock-in was a hit this August included a messy Olympics, a lesson in how to turn our Joy over to the cross for sure. We also helped with the fall festival and pumpkin patch. From manpower to food, this group has been on fire for serving the Lord and community. They wrapped up the year with a parade float for Christmas. We can't wait for what next year brings. This is all thanks to those who have helped the Youth program. **From donors, councilors, facilitating classes to just encouraging Youth to come to church; We want to thank you. None of this ministry would be possible without God and your help!**



Peace and Blessings,
The Youth Room!



Sunday School

Thank you to all our wonderful Sunday School teachers! All Sunday School classes start at 9:45 am.
As we go into the New Year, why not find a class to attend!

Sunday Morning at 9:45

<u>Class</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Material</u>	<u>Leaders</u>
Crusader	Study	Comprehensive Bible Study	Judy McNee
Tea Time	Choir Room	Feasting on the Word Curriculum	Angela and Mike Whiteside
Open Door	Portable	Bible Study	John Dickerson
Seekers	Mongiovi House	A Liturgical study-Feasting on the Word	Tracy Scoville

Children

9:45: <u>Children's Church</u> :	FLC	Studying Scripture & singing worship songs	Jessie Huntley
11:00: <u>Sunday School</u> :	FLC	Bible based lessons, crafts, and snacks	Diane Wilder, Nancy Long, & Misty DiGiovanni,

Youth - 9:45 am, Room 212 FLC Peggy Washington, Paul Jacobs, & Jordan Huntley

****Volunteers needed** to work with children on Sunday morning at 9:45 & 11:00 am and on Wednesday evening at 6 pm. Scheduling can be arranged to fit your availability. Contact Jessica Huntley or Ed Dickson for more information.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



From the Kitchen

As the year comes to and end we (the Kitchen Crew) would like to thank everyone who has supported the Wednesday dinners. This coming year will host a bunch of different dinner ideas and as always fellowship and fun. Our next big event will be Christmas Day dinner at noon. If you know of anyone without family or a place to have a good Christmas meal please let them know about this dinner, all are welcome. Those of you that have asked how you can help in the kitchen here are a few items always needed: clear knives, round table cloths, all colors (best at dollar stores), Tea bags large ones, coffee. We wish all our congregation a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy & Blessed New Year. Looking forward to 2024 with you all.

Love in Christ,

Trish & Mike Gibson

Sharon Frisbee

Melissa & Brian Steiner

Linda Morrison



The Food Bridge works with Feeding Northeast Florida to provide food for our clients. We receive food from thirteen (13) different stores which includes twenty three (23) pickups weekly. Our truck goes out Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday to make our weekly pickups. They leave at 6:30 am and we are finished around 10:30 am. The Food Distribution is from 7:30am-10:30am on Thursdays. This is a Drive thru only process. Clients are asked to remain in their vehicles. Clients must submit an application online and be approved before receiving food. During the month of October we packed and distributed 300 to 320 boxes weekly and during the month of November we packed and distributed over 300 boxes weekly except the week of Thanksgiving and that count dropped to 220. During November and October we added 60 new families to our distribution list. We deliver to 68 clients that are not able to come to us. We are open to volunteers, every weekday from 6:30 am to 10 am and Thursdays until noon. If you love to meet and help new people and share God's love, consider the following opportunities: drivers, loaders, sorters, "pushers", "hookers", "bookies" etc. Answer God's call and come and get involved in this ministry. If you have experience with Excel, there are volunteer opportunities working in the office. The Food Bridge opened 21 years ago with 4 volunteers. Our clients can receive food every two weeks. After a year if they are still in need they can renew their application. During the 21 years we have served over 4500 families. Needless to say we have grown over the years and continue to need more volunteers. Come by and visit on a Thursday morning and see how your church is a blessing to our community. The Food Bridge is self supporting. We depend on grants, sponsors and donations from individuals. Donations of food is also given to us from Wilkinson Jr High School, Lions Club, Church of Jesus Christ, Hendry Farm, Reinhold Foundation, Clay Electric Foundation, Post Office Food Drive, Clay County Fair Association, Farm Bureau and multiple individuals. We are so grateful for their support. We try not to be a burden on the church. We pay our electric bill, gas for the truck, buy and repair all of our refrigerators, freezers, and air conditioners for the Budington Building, along with purchase and maintenance of the truck. We are very appreciative of everyone who donates food and makes monetary donations. Thank you for your continuous prayers and support.



TRUSTEES REPORT

The Trustees meet once a month, if necessary, and each Trustee has a building or area for which to be responsible. If you see any areas that need repairing or replacing notify one of the following:

Emmy Hall, Susan Hendry
Colleen Marsteller
Mark Sommers
Jordan Huntley
John Lynch

Sanctuary
Budington Building
Historic Church
Family Life Center
Mongiovi House, Portable

Some of the decisions made and projects completed this year are: a company was hired to maintain AC's, and replace filters, the boards on the front entrance to the Portable were replaced and painted, (Thanks Pedro), Nichole and her husband Clint pressure washed the Office Entrance, Trustees helped with the Festival and Pumpkin Patch, and ten new round dining tables were purchased to replace damaged ones in the FLC.

A special thank you goes to Tommy Wilder who is always available to give advice or repair broken "stuff" that happens often during the year and to Bobby Fioreilo, who has stepped up and spent many hours tending the cemetery.

Trustee Chair, Sandra Wilson



SPR Committee

We will soon be looking back on 2023 and moving on to 2024.

We started the year as Middleburg United Methodist and are ending as Black Creek Methodist. It sure has been a banner year. We are also happy to be back to our normal schedules.

We are so blessed to have Pastor Brian as our Senior Pastor. We look forward to his leadership in the coming year.

We welcomed Jessie Huntley as our Children's Coordinator. She has a great curriculum set up for the Children's program.

Peggy has had a great year for the Youth program and looking forward to 2024.

Our worship attendance has increased quite well. We still have a bit to go before we reach numbers before the Pandemic.

There are many opportunities here at Black Creek Methodist for those able to volunteer. We thank those who have given their time so generously.

In Christ,

Judy McNee, Chairman

You know how as a child, if a big occasion were approaching, you felt anticipation and excitement and could hardly *wait* for it to happen? Then, as you grew older, your appreciation for the big events magnified and you still had difficulty in the *wait*. Or perhaps if there was another type event impending, such as surgery or a difficult exam – that *wait* couldn't be long enough. The *wait* can be interpreted in many different ways.

I'm not always the best *wait*-er. I tend to want to make things happen and move stuff along. Blessed with good health and energy, I usually am able to make a *wait* satisfying in that I can get several more projects finished (or started) while *waiting*. However, after an intensive month of Pumpkin Patch, my left Achilles tendon popped and slowed my speed down by at least half. Repair surgery finished off the speed to near zero. Thanksgiving, the annual Cane Grinding and Christmas were on the horizon for me to prep for. What in the world was this kink in my plans?? But, the living room couch became my domain and the *wait* sat in the shadows laughing at me. No weight on that ankle for 6 weeks. I was at the mercy of everyone and everything. I presently am 2 ½ weeks into the interminable 6. I'd like to say I've increased my devotion time, crocheted an afghan, addressed all our Christmas cards and caught up with distant cousins by phone.

Nope. Not at all. However, I have found myself to be reflective in the wee hours when I can't sleep. I've queried God on several nights about the *why* of this, and what lesson is it that I am supposed to be learning? So far, He hasn't sent an answer. So I am reminded about the *wait*.

There were several in the Bible who *waited*. Abraham had to *wait* for decades before his promised son Isaac was born, Joseph was sold into slavery, spending years in prison before attaining the lofty position in Pharaoh's court, the whole Moses adventure involved extensive *waiting*, and David was forced to endure years hiding from King Saul before being elevated to the position of king for which he had been anointed. There were 400 years of silence from God separating the Old from the New Testament where the Hebrew nation *waited* and *waited* for a promised Messiah, Anna and Simeon in the Temple who had *waited* their whole lives for the same reason and did get to meet baby Jesus for the first time, the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda who had waited 38 years to be healed, the woman with the issue of blood for 12 years who touched Jesus's garment. A lot of examples of *waiting*, proving the point that our timing is certainly not God's timing.

We celebrate Advent, which is a symbolic time of *waiting* for Jesus to be born; we will celebrate Easter and the Resurrection when Jesus fulfilled His mission, but then we return to the *waiting* for His return. We dread listening to today's news reporting man's injustices, we witness mankind's inability to meet the roles for which God created them, we fight various temptations every single day and our resolve may waver. The Second Coming: we long for it, we pray for it. But have you considered that we, too, have a mission to achieve? Christ will return when the timing is right in the heavens, but until then we are to spend our time telling the world, telling our neighbors, telling our families and perhaps our very selves about the precious promise of eternity and forgiveness. Jesus commissioned us; it's our duty, and the fields are ripe to be harvested. When you think of *that* enormous responsibility, you realize every second counts and suddenly the *wait* is not so long after all.

I want to focus this new year on the importance instead of the irritation of the *wait*. I am going to ask for His will to be illumined in my life so that I can work on my mission and not waste time be-moaning my petty inconveniences. I hope that we all can do something similar to advance His Kingdom and help our church become a true beacon in the community. Gayward says that if each of us commits to bringing one new person to the church, our membership will explode. Not a bad idea – new blood, new ideas, new helpers. God might really get to show off then with His Grand Plan. What will be your focus in the new year for our church? How are you going to ask God for ways to share His endorsement of us as Christians? God's got something in store for His children at Black Creek Methodist Church; we've just had too many examples lately of His benevolence to doubt it, and I hope we all commit to *something* to help spread His Word. I hope we continue to be surprised by the flood of blessings and grace. You'll See. Just *wait*!

Susan Hendry



Please Welcome Our New BCMC Members



Jennifer Joseph



Randy & Shelly Swartz

**and also Wanda Kile who is not pictured.



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LEADERSHIP TEAM

What a year this has been for our church! Our incredible Leadership Team has met multiple times this year and with God's blessings and lots of prayers from you, we have become the first United Methodist Church in the county to become disaffiliated from United to Global. You voted for the name "Black Creek Methodist Church" which happened to be the original name. We paid our debt to the UMC, got OUR deeds to OUR property recorded and have moved on.

The Team continues to meet and Suzanne Lyda has researched and compiled a new set of Policies and Procedures for our Church. As soon as we finish this document you are welcome to read it and make corrections.

Your Leadership Team: (If you don't know who these Leaders are, please ask someone in our church to introduce you.)

Suzanne Lyda
 Gayward Hendry
 Don Weeks
 Karen Kwaak
 Millie Wilkes
 Ed Dickson
 Judy McNee
 Heather Marsteller
 Mike Gibson
 Mike Whiteside
 Sandra Wilson
 Susan Hendry
 Jessie Huntley
 Peggy Washington

Policies and Procedures
 Property
 Ministry Council Chair
 Altar Guild
 Finance Chair
 Sunday School Supt.
 SPR
 Youth Representative
 Stewardship
 Lay Leader
 Trustee Chair
 Worship
 Children's Ministry
 Youth Ministry

We are currently working on our Vision and Mission Statement. Please give your ideas to anyone on the team.

God's Blessings to all of you.

Sandra Wilson



Black Creek
Methodist Church

A Global Methodist Church

Black Creek Methodist Church

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Office Closed

**December 22-January 1st.
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!**

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Black Creek Methodist Church
3925 Main Street
Middleburg, FL 32068

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PLACE
STAMP
HERE

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Go in Peace and Love

