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# MAPLE SPRINGS LIFE



Volume 2025 Issue 12

December 2025



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It happens every year. One day it's July and the weather is sweltering. A few minutes later it's Thanksgiving. Somewhere in between life in the church happened. Nominations and leadership, talk of stewardship, meetings and more meetings, Charge Conference, etc. And that's just the business stuff of church life. In the midst of the administrative part is the reason we exist as the church – to continue to be a beacon of light in our world, to feed body, mind, and soul, to celebrate and mourn, to serve others, to follow Jesus.

This time of year I sometimes find myself waxing nostalgic – I love the fall and especially Thanksgiving. So, I find myself recalling fond memories; the smell of fallen leaves, the aroma of food being prepared in the kitchen, the warmth of a fire. I also find myself sitting in awe at times, reflecting on the beauty of God's creation, reflecting on the past year, reflecting on the powerful things happening here at Maple Springs. It is humbling.

We have much to be thankful for here at Maple Springs. Being in connection with each other is one of the many blessings of my life. I am grateful for the opportunity to walk alongside each of you, through the celebrations and the difficult times of life. This is life together – we walk with each other through the ups and downs, the joyful and not so joyful times of life. We hear beautiful music in worship, we celebrate Holy Communion, we shed tears – sometimes of joy and sometimes of loss. I've officiated way too many funeral or memorial services this year, a dozen since May. But that is also life together.

Yet, we live gratefully, knowing that God is with us, that we are not alone. We live gratefully, even in the loss of loved ones, knowing that we serve a God who is with us in the midst of the storms of life.

Another of the powerful connections is not just within our church walls, but the connection to other churches. The outpouring of support from Mt. Tabor UMC for the food pantry has been overwhelming. They don't have a food pantry, we do. They do have the opportunity, and they have made the commitment, to be in connection with us to help support the food pantry. I am grateful for the connection. When we live gratefully, when we give without strings attached, we are always blessed beyond measure.

Finally, as we move toward Advent and the Sundays of hope, peace, joy, and love, my prayer is that we as a church move forward with the hope of Christ in our hearts, the peace of Christ guiding our life, the joy of Christ shared with those we meet, the love of Christ in all that we do. Living gratefully we can do just that.

Blessings,

Pastor Gary

## Update from Staff Parish Relations Committee

SPRC has been working on plans for the staff for 2026. Pastor Sylvia's retirement has created an opportunity for us to assess what Maple Springs needs for the future! We took the first step and decided that we need to add an Associate Pastor role that can partner with Pastor Gary and the staff to lead us. We will be using the normal process with the District to request an Associate to be appointed to our church to start July 1. We are working on the job description and will do interviews in February. Announcements of appointments will happen in late April. Please be in prayer for us as we do this important work.

If you have questions, please reach out to me or Pastor Gary.

Blessings for the holidays!

Ceil Hodgin

[ceilhodgin@me.com](mailto:ceilhodgin@me.com)



# December Worship Services

 December 7<sup>th</sup> 10:00 AM  
Craven Hall  
Matthew 3:12

December 14<sup>th</sup> 10:00 AM  
Sanctuary  
Children's Nativity

 December 17<sup>th</sup> 6:30 PM  
Sanctuary  
Blue Christmas

December 21<sup>st</sup> 10:00 AM  
Sanctuary  
Choir's Christmas Cantata



Christmas Eve: December 24<sup>th</sup>  
5 PM - Craven Hall - Contemporary Worship  
7PM - Sanctuary - Traditional Worship  
Candlelight and Communion at both!

 December 28<sup>th</sup> 10:00 AM  
Craven Hall  
Guest Preacher: Haley Givens

MAPLE SPRINGS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# CAROLS: A CHRISTMAS CANTATA

FOR CONGREGATION AND CHOIR

**DECEMBER 21 - 10AM IN THE SANCTUARY**

SING ALONG WITH BELOVED CHRISTMAS CAROLS :  
JOY TO THE WORLD  
O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL  
AWAY IN A MANGER  
SILENT NIGHT  
AND MORE....



**Christmas for the City**



Christmas For the City is an event hosted by Love Out Loud whose vision is to create a meaningful Christmas experience for the whole community. This is a come and go event, filling the Benton Convention Center with holiday cheer!

Along with many other churches and non-profits, Maple Springs will be hosting an activity table in their Children's space.

We hope to see a lot of Maple Springs faces at Christmas for the City on Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup> between 1-6PM.



Stewardship is never the most exciting thing to talk about in the church. For years as a lay person and as a pastor I've always thought that there has to be a better way. A better way than just a one time push each fall to "rally the troops," or to figure how to financially underwrite the budget for the coming year. Still, we as a church have to raise the funds in order to operate, to be in mission, to live out our calling as followers of Christ. It takes money to make that happen. We need you and your gifts.

But this year, rather than the standard pledge card and commitment Sunday that many churches, us included, have used in the past, we are simply telling the story and asking for your commitment. We are asking for you to increase your commitment if you can. Giving is a spiritual discipline. It is a part of who we are.

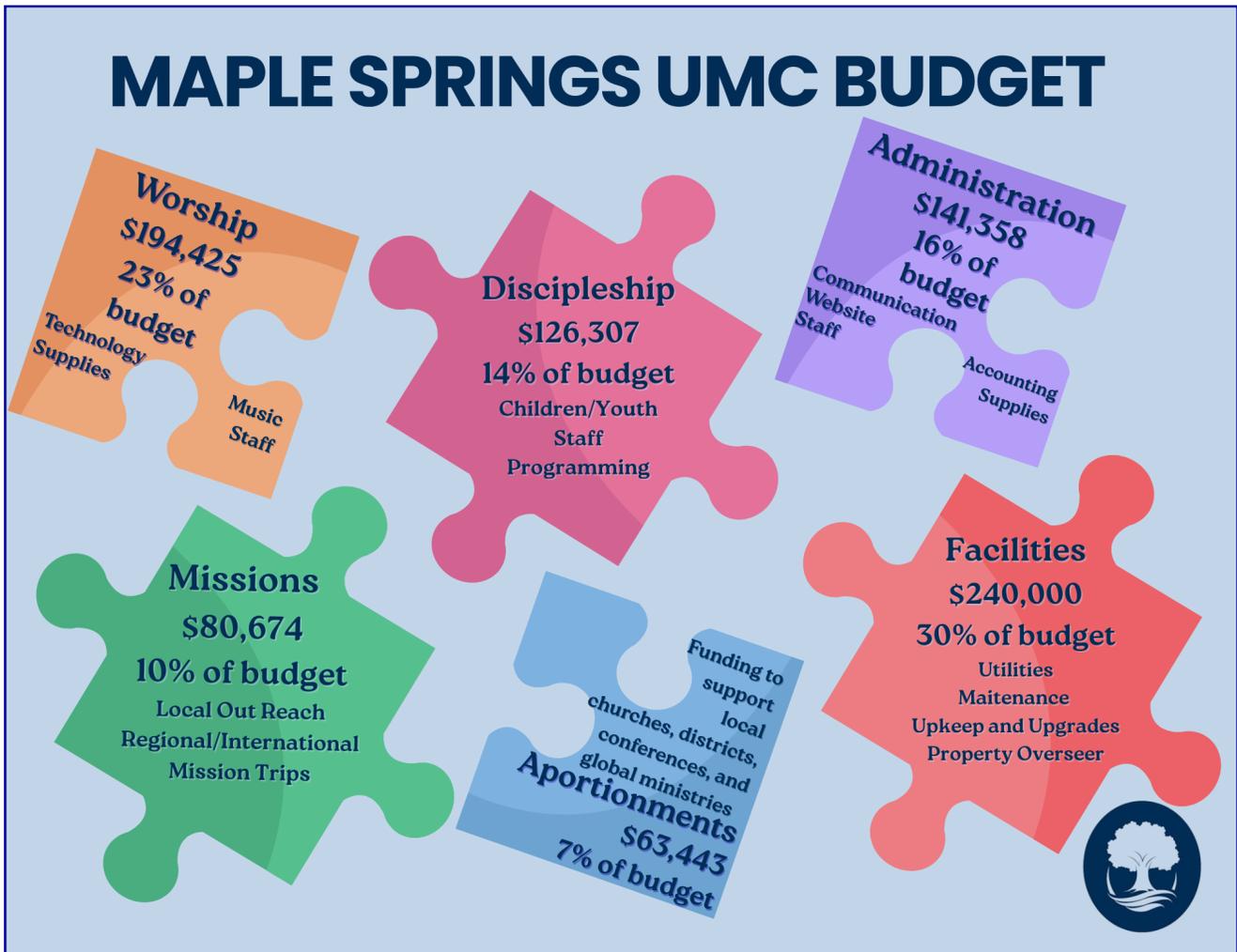
So, we tell the story of what it means to be part of a life-giving, spirit-filled church like Maple Springs. Rather than just a line item, spread sheet look to the budget by the numbers (which will also be available), we tell the story by the many ways in which we are in ministry in our community and beyond.

At our Annual Charge Conference, which was held on November 18, we passed the budget for 2026. Our budget has increased by 6.7% for a total of \$852,207. This includes church staff, pastors, all programming and outreach, conference apportionments to the larger church body, and building maintenance/operation. For a church our size this is actually a modest budget, but being good stewards of our resources we feel it is important to be frugal, but not cheap, to be responsible with God's gifts, while not burying our talents.

We are grateful for those who came before us who had the wisdom to plan for generations to come through endowed giving. We are grateful for each and every one of you who continue to give. This giving is not just to keep the doors open or to make sure we make budget for the year; it is kingdom giving. We need you and your gifts.

When all of the pieces of the puzzle fit together we can build a beautiful representation of what kingdom living looks like right here at Maple Springs. Take a look at the puzzle pieces. →

See the dollar amounts and the percentages that make up our annual budget. For example, rather than saying that it costs a certain dollar amount for the staff or administration or any particular ministry or program, we have (as closely as possible) approximated what amount of time is spent in each ministry area, and what cost is associated with that.



In other words, we come to worship, we hear beautiful music, we are in fellowship with each other – the lines of responsibility for each staff person that makes this happen overlap into multiple areas. Or we look at the buildings, our beautiful campus, and realize that the impact we make in the community is more than just maintaining a building for the sake of maintaining a building. Doors are opened, people are fed, souls are nourished. How do we put a black and white dollar figure on the impact this makes? Again, lines of responsibility, not just each staff person, but of the multiple ministries overlap. It may be a little confusing when we look



at the missions budget for example. We give far and above what the line item on the black and white budget states, because all proceeds from pumpkin sales goes to mission. There are other areas where special giving is directed to mission; UMCOR for example. And we support many ministries like the Food Pantry and Old Town School all through the year. The dollar figure on the puzzle piece is representative of what was done this year. It could vary in the coming year.

But the story that is told is that missions is a priority at Maple Springs. Worship and discipleship are priorities at Maple Springs. Children, youth, and adults are a priority. It is beautiful to see all generations represented. Yes, the building, which allows many of these things to happen, has to be a priority as well.

Together, in connection with each other, let's put the pieces of the puzzle together so that we can move into 2026 with the full confidence that we are following Christ and that we are part of building the kingdom of God right here at Maple Springs.

So, this is the ask. Please be prayerful about giving to the church. If you are new to the church perhaps this is a new concept. But we ask for your support; we can't do this work without you. We need you. If you are a long time or even a newer member we ask for your continued support; we can't do this work without you. Be a part of something bigger than yourself.

Blessings,

Pastor Gary

## Legacy Giving

Maple Springs is currently developing a legacy giving program, whereby members may make gifts to the church through your will or estate plan. These gifts can take many forms, and provide a way for you to continue supporting the church into perpetuity. Information will be available soon to help you with your legacy giving plans.



Our solar panel installation on the sanctuary is complete and operational. What a gift. What a blessing. We are seeing, even with fewer hours of sunlight as we approach winter, immediate results. Perhaps in your mind you've wondered about return on investment or how long it will take before we realize any financial benefit.

If this was strictly a business decision, then that is a reasonable question. But this is greater than that. The solar panels were paid for completely by generous gifts from church members who have a passion for the cause. No money was spent from our church budget. These financial gifts were made to support solar specifically, above and beyond budget or tithes. Without this solar project it is safe to say that the gifts would not have been given or would have been redirected to another cause outside of the church.



With that said, the first day that the solar panels became operational we began reaping the benefits of being powered by the sun. This is an immediate payback, for which we are grateful. That means more of your financial gifts can be used for ministry, not to pay energy costs! It is estimated that approximately 40% of our electrical energy cost for the half of the church campus that it powers (sanctuary, offices, choir and food pantry area), will be offset because of going solar.

Additionally, it is crucial to understand that our stewardship goes beyond just financial. It is our responsibility to be good stewards of creation, of God's great gift. Our stewardship is both/and, not either/or. Both financial responsibility and care for creation.



As a church we would like to say thank you to those who supported this project, both financially, and by positively embracing the idea of going solar. Specifically a big thank you goes out to Margaret Miller who did exhaustive research and moved the project forward – moving from a vision and dream to reality; Kim Richmond who with her Western North Carolina Conference Creation Care position kept us on track with our environmental justice cause; and Jennifer Kerrigan, who with her legal expertise – specifically related to solar projects – made sure that legally and contractually every “I” was dotted and “T” crossed. This is a team that is second to none. Thank you and may God continue to bless Maple Springs as we dream dreams, see visions, and live into the people we are called to be.



# FOOD PANTRY

OUR FOCUS IN DECEMBER WILL BE **BREAD!**  
LOAVES, BUNS, TORTILLAS, PITA, ENGLISH  
MUFFINS, ETC.

THANK YOU FOR FEEDING OUR NEIGHBORS!



MAPLE SPRINGS  
FOOD PANTRY  
VOLUNTEER POSITIONS AVAILABLE



SCAN THE QR CODE



[foodpantry@maplesprings.org](mailto:foodpantry@maplesprings.org) for more information



MAPLE SPRINGS  
FOOD  
PANTRY





Thanks so much to the generosity of following groups who held food drives to supplement our Food Pantry!

- Maple Springs Preschool
- Meadowlark Elementary School
- Mount Tabor United Methodist Church
- Silas Ridge Neighborhood
- Vienna Elementary School
- Woodberry Forest Neighborhood



It was such a privilege to have nearly 400 in attendance at FJPM's 10th Annual Fundraising Breakfast on October 29, 2025. The highlight of the morning was hearing from Kevin and David as they shared their stories as graduates of the Transition to Work (TTW) program. Both men returned to the community within the last two years. They shared that they are both gainfully employed and serving in managerial and supervisory roles at their jobs. They are reconnected with and supporting their families. Both Kevin and David recently purchased their own homes.



Kevin said, "I am grateful to God for bringing this program into my life. I wouldn't be where I am today without Him." David highlighted the positive aspects of the program, saying, "It helped me focus on the positive and stay away from the people, places, and things that landed me in prison to start with." We are so proud of these men and the strides they have made in their lives since leaving prison. They received a well-deserved standing ovation at the end of the breakfast.



Attendees also enjoyed music provided by Johnathan Wright, another TTW graduate, who returned to the community about a month ago. Additionally, Madison Kilgore, representing Governor Josh Stein, brought a letter from the Governor to share with the audience.



## Prison Ministry December Collection Item

Maple Springs Life

During the month of December, we will continue to collect athletic crew socks for the Forsyth Jail & Prison Ministries. Please place your donations in the collection bins in Craven Lobby or the side narthex of the Sanctuary. Billy Cunningham will deliver the donations to the prison residents. Thank you for your support!



## Habitat for Humanity

The affordable housing crisis in Winston-Salem is another area of greatest need where we can partner by building with Habitat for Humanity and their build program. In the fall of 2024, Yadkin Valley District churches were invited to build with Habitat for Humanity. Many churches generously gave money toward this effort. Along with some District funds, the Yadkin Valley District churches are contributing \$50,000, which makes us 50/50 partners on a house build.

Now it's time to get to work!

**Click here to sign up:**

<https://habitatforsyth.volunteerhub.com>.

Individuals or groups can sign up. We will be put to work on different houses. Up to 10 people are assigned to one work site at a time. Would your church like to partner with another United Methodist church on a particular day? Kay Harmon, member at Lewisville UMC, has kindly agreed to help answer questions and organize our effort. Here is Kay's email: [detd1655@gmail.com](mailto:detd1655@gmail.com).



During the winter months, there are many of our neighbors for whom there is “no room in the inn.” Not only did Jesus experience this during his lifetime, but Jesus also invites us to respond by caring for our brothers and sisters in need: “For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home” (Matthew 25:35).

For this purpose, Maple Springs is partnering with various churches in the community, the city of Winston-Salem, and the Yadkin Valley District to provide meals, hospitality, and shelter for

our unhoused neighbors. Winter Shelter runs from November 15 and runs through March 1. There are many ways for us to connect with this ministry. As part of offering a welcoming, safe, and hospitable shelter for those experiencing homelessness during the winter season, churches are partnering by providing hospitality and a dinner for the guests in the evening who will then spend the night in a warm and safe bed provided just for them. You can bring the meal to the host site at 6:30pm and you are invited to stay and eat with the guests. If you are unable to make a meal but would still like to volunteer with your time and gifts, there are opportunities to provide hospitality by greeting guests as they check in.



Below are the links to three host shelter sites in the community where you can plug in with your time, talents, and treasure. Thank you so much for your consideration of this request. Let's serve our community as Jesus would so when our neighbors greet us, they say, "This is Maple Springs and they love me!" You can click any of the site links below to sign up to help with Winter Shelter. If you have any questions, please reach out to Erin at [erin@maplesprings.org](mailto:erin@maplesprings.org).

[The Dwelling Shelter](#)



[New Story Shelter](#)



[Our Lady of Salem Shelter](#)



## Old Town School Winter Coat Drive

Our winter coat drive for the students at Old Town School has begun! Please bring your donations of new warm coats to the church and place them in the collection boxes in Craven Lobby and the side narthex of the Sanctuary. The drive will run through Wednesday, December 10. Gray and Kay Tuttle will deliver the coats to Old Town before the winter holiday break.



# Coats for Kids!



This journey of gardening with more of an eye to the impacts on pollinators, other wildlife, and native plants rather than humans first has been a journey of discovery, learning about things I never even really thought about or questioned before. Never once did I wonder where the bees, butterflies, and moths went to in the colder months, except for being somewhat aware of the great Monarch butterfly migration to Mexico.

Now that we are attracting these creatures into our garden and know that many overwinter right where they are, it's important to provide a way for them to survive the colder months. We have learned that we can do that by adding a leaf layer in the garden where insects, amphibians, reptiles, and even some mammals will snuggle down to survive the winter cold. Also, we've learned many birds will continue to eat from the seedheads of perennial plants throughout the winter so they should not be trimmed off until the spring. And we've learned that some insects bore into hollow stems of plants that are left over the winter if they are not trimmed down to the ground during the fall cleanup.

As we work to apply these lessons we've learned, the garden will look messier over the winter months than most of us are used to seeing, with leaves providing a layer of insulation for insects and others, and dead and dying plants left standing or partially trimmed as a place of shelter and/or food.



And, if you stop to think about it, with life sheltering among the leaves, it will be important to NOT walk across or otherwise disturb those areas during the colder months. We wouldn't want to harm those who are harboring underneath.

Thanks for joining us in living into this new aesthetic!

And thank you, God, for this opportunity for us to grow in relationship with You, with your creation, and with each other!

Sincerely,

Kim Richmond, UMC EarthKeeper



## It's Quiet in the Garden!

As fall has arrived, it is quiet in the garden - but we want to celebrate all the work that has been done! We want to thank the 40 individuals (and several important pieces of equipment) for their 900+ hours of service to bring our Pollinator and Prayer garden to life! We planted some new plants this fall, shared some lance leaf coreopsis seedlings and gave out some seeds! The garden may look a bit messy as we



leave materials for our insect friends to use this winter. We are learning some great things about sustainable ways to garden! If you want to learn more about how to cut your plants to support pollinators - read this article from the NC State: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/garden-cleanup-for-pollinators-trim-perennial-stems-in-their-first-winter>

Our committee is happy to have anyone join us! We will have a few meetings over the winter to learn and fellowship and make plans for the spring!

Reach out for more information on how to get involved!

Ceil Hodgin ([ceilhodgin@me.com](mailto:ceilhodgin@me.com)), Kim Richmond ([kjricholder@gmail.com](mailto:kjricholder@gmail.com))

Robin Hager, Lydia Whitt, Trish Anthony, Carolyn Morgan, Marci Bruno,

Bet Wilson, Mark Bee, Cathy Plaster, Hank Sigmon, and Ryan Sprinkle

The UMC's Council of Bishops met in early November after which they released a statement that was reported in UM News as **"Bishops Prioritize Creation Care."** The entirety of the article is located at <https://www.umnews.org/en/news/bishops-prioritize-creation-care>.



Three key points contained within the article are:

- **The Council of Bishops adopted a response to the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement's open letter asking the bishops to prioritize creation care and environmental stewardship.**
- **The bishops affirmed their commitment to implementing the decisions made at the 2024 General Conference, including creating Green Teams in churches, districts and conferences.**
- **The council also encouraged church members to take action.**

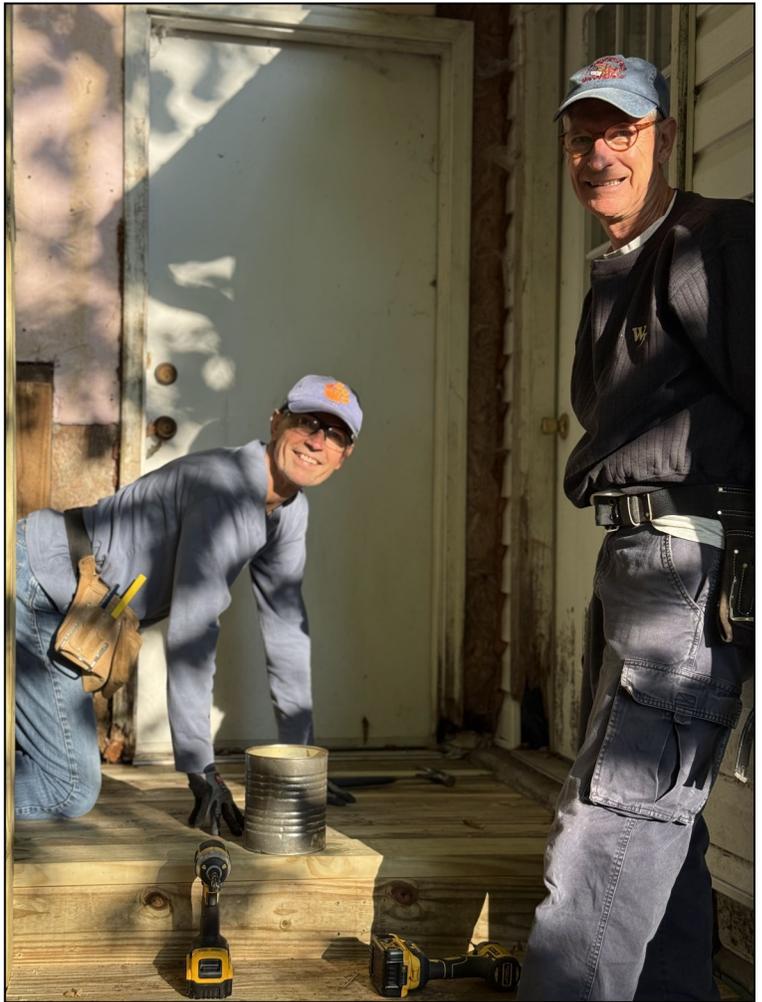
The link to the referenced letter from the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement (UMCJM) is contained in the article or can be read directly at <https://umcreationjustice.org/open-letter-to-the-council-of-bishops/>.

For those not already aware, "the Council of Bishops is made up of all active and retired bishops of The UMC. The Council meets twice a year. According to the *Book of Discipline*, 'The Church expects the Council of Bishops to speak to the Church and from the Church to the world and to give leadership in the quest for Christian unity and interreligious relationships.' [Paragraph 427.2]" (source: <https://www.unitedmethodistbishops.org/about-the-council>)

The Council of Bishops has designated a bishop to work directly with leadership of the UMCJM in developing a plan of action to bring creation care to the forefront within the denomination. We will be sure to share all developments with Pastor Gary, our wonderful staff and lay leadership team, as well as members of the congregation as information becomes available. With a United Methodist membership worldwide estimated to exceed 10,000,000, this could be great news for God's creation!

Again, I want to thank you and the team for the chance to help my fellow brothers and sisters. This week was a chance for me to renew my desire to use the talents that God gave me to make a difference to those in need. It's been a few years since I've done mission work and last week reminded me of how great I felt working on and completing the projects. The smiles on the homeowners' faces and their kind words of appreciation was a powerful message to me from God to continue. I also enjoyed learning new skills that will help me going forward. Thank you again and I plan to return next year.

Thanks,  
Joe Ross (brother of Jim Ross)



The Adult Discipleship Council is sponsoring another “mini” Connections event this fall and during the Advent season. Most groups will have three sessions. We have a fun and inviting lineup that will offer a time to learn, connect, and grow together!



To sign up, visit this link: [docs.google.com/forms/d/1Hxj0cBQ53Xcra0RfSdieIMyI127En9UCoPghrRg-288/edit](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1Hxj0cBQ53Xcra0RfSdieIMyI127En9UCoPghrRg-288/edit) or scan the QR code.

All are WELCOME (including youth)! You can attend as many events as you would like and feel free to bring a friend!



Here is a list of the groups that will be offered this season:

- **Advent Bible Study**  
Facilitator: Pastor Gary  
Wednesdays: December 3, 10 & 17 ~ 3:00-4:00pm in the Cokesbury Room
- **Curious Christians: Methodist Social Principles**  
Facilitator: Ceil Hodgin  
Wednesday, December 3 at 6:00pm in the Church Parlor
- **Chicken Pie Workshop**  
Organizer: Charlotte Alwine  
Thursday, December 4 at 6:00pm in Craven Kitchen
- **Crafting Your Own Williamsburg Christmas Decorations**  
Facilitator: Hank Sigmon  
Saturday, December 6 ~ 2:00-4:00pm **OR** Sunday, December 7 ~ 2:00-4:00pm  
in the Cokesbury Room
- **Cookie Decorating for the Burn Center Staff (See more details on nest page)**  
Facilitators: Lynn, Bailey, Jill Gordon  
Monday, December 15 ~ 5:00-7:00pm in Craven Kitchen and Cokesbury Room

Once again MSUMC will be providing a box of Christmas goodies to the staff of the Burn Center at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist. We will deliver the boxes on Tuesday, December 16. You are invited to participate in the cookie decorating event on the Monday, December 15, after which the decorated cookies will be donated to the Burn Unit. Light refreshments will be served and plenty of fellowship will be had by everyone!

If you cannot join us for the Cookie Decorating event, bring your favorite cookie or confection to the kitchen on Sunday, December 14. We need to put together 50 boxes, so we will need lots of cookies, fudge, and other goodies. Contact Lynn Bailey at 336-817-2492 or [rlbailey59@att.net](mailto:rlbailey59@att.net) if you have questions.



MAPLE SPRINGS  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rooted in CHRIST.

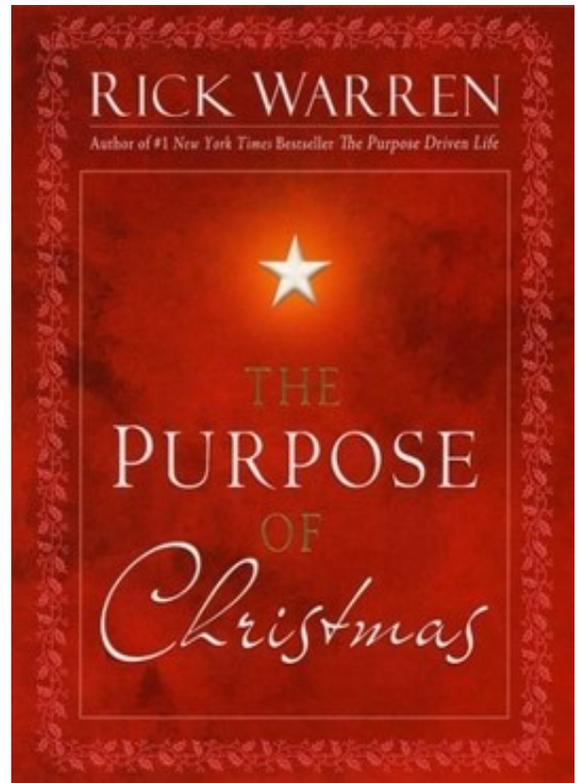
Growing in CHRIST.

Bearing Fruit for CHRIST.

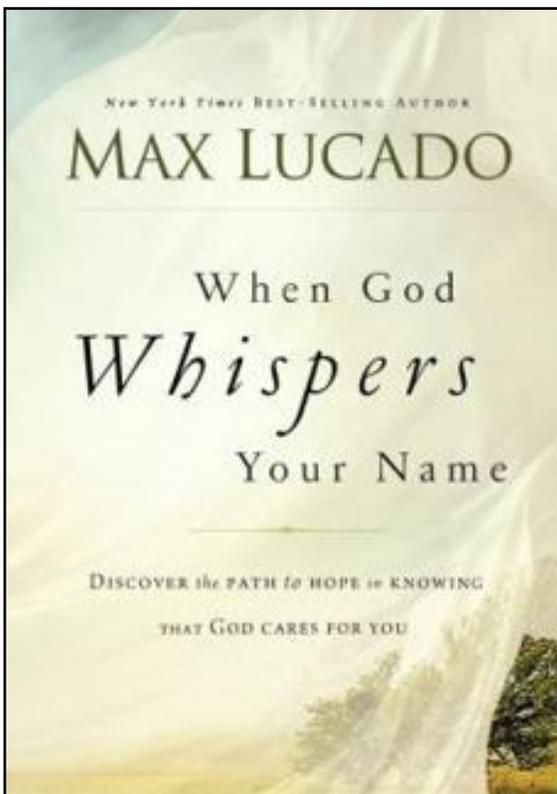
The Tuesday Morning Women's Bible study group will begin Rick Warren's Advent study, *The Purpose of Christmas*, on December 2 at 9:30am.

Christmas is the most celebrated holiday of the year for billions of people. But what makes Christmas so special? In this three-week video series, we will see three purposes of Christmas announced by the angel at the birth of Jesus. Teaching from the gospel of Luke, Rick Warren will help us discover why Jesus is the greatest gift God gave to the world.

All ages are invited - bring a friend! For more information contact SueEllen Thomas at [sthomasrn@hotmail.com](mailto:sthomasrn@hotmail.com).



## Pat Rothrock Circle



Are you interested in discovering the path to hope in knowing that God cares for you?

Join us in studying *When God Whispers Your Name* by Max Lucado.

Become a part of a caring group that explores scripture, prays for the expressed needs of others, and supports the mission of the church and our senior friends.

We meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month at 9:30am in the Church Parlor. Our next meeting will be on November 18.

Are you ready to hope? Is God whispering your name? Contact Pat Craver at 336-972-5809 or the church office for more information.

Join us for our Maple Springers Luncheon on Thursday, December 18 at **11:30pm** in Craven Hall. (Please note the earlier starting time!) Lunch will include baked ziti from Old Richmond Grill. The children from the 4-year-old Maple Springs Preschool classes will be there to entertain us with Christmas songs. Santa and Mrs. Claus will also be there. Please call the church to RSVP at 336-722-7563 by Friday, December 12 at 12:00noon. You can also make your reservation by emailing Jill at [maplespringers@maplesprings.org](mailto:maplespringers@maplesprings.org).



MAPLE SPRINGS  
PRESCHOOL

## 1st Sunday Breakfast

# 1st Sunday Breakfast



IF YOU'RE NOT CURRENTLY CONNECTED IN A SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS, WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN IN THIS TIME OF FELLOWSHIP ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF EVERY MONTH.

BREAKFAST WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE CHURCH!

JOIN US FOR A CHURCH WIDE BREAKFAST, A TIME FOR FELLOWSHIP AND FUELING OF OUR BODIES AND SOULS.

**JANUARY 4TH**

10 AM  
CRAVEN HALL

# December KIDS DATES

6

**Breakfast with Santa**  
Make sure to sign up!

7

**Homemade Gift Making Party- 4-5:30**  
Maple Springs Kids and Tweens will have the chance to make homemade gifts for loved ones.

13

**Nativity Practice at 9am in the Sanctuary!**

14

**Children's Nativity Program at 10am in Sanctuary**  
**Dig Deeper into the Nativity Story- 4-5:30pm**

21<sup>st</sup>

**Christmas Caroling**  
Dinner at 5pm- caroling after! You don't want to miss it!



**BREAKFAST WITH SANTA**

SATURDAY, DEC. 6TH  
MAPLE SPRINGS UMC

USE THIS QR CODE TO SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER!

SIGN UP USING THE QR CODE FOR ONE OF OUR TWO SEATING TIMES, 8:30AM OR 10 AM.

**Christmas Caroling**



Sign up for  
**Christmas Caroling**  
December 21st  
5:00 PM

We will meet in Craven Hall for dinner and leave on the bus for caroling at 5:45 PM!

Use the QR code to sign up and reach out to Mary Taylor or Carlyn with questions!

**Tween**  
**CHRISTMAS**  
**Party**

**ON SATURDAY, DEC. 13<sup>TH</sup>  
OUR TWEENS ARE GOING  
TO SEE THE  
TANGLEWOOD LIGHTS  
ON A HAYRIDE!  
WE'LL MEET AT CHURCH  
AT 4:30 PM.**

EMAIL CARLYN OR  
MARY TAYLOR TO SIGN UP!

Cookies and Cider

**MAPLE SPRINGS YOUTH  
INVITES YOU TO:**

**COOKIES  
AND CIDER**

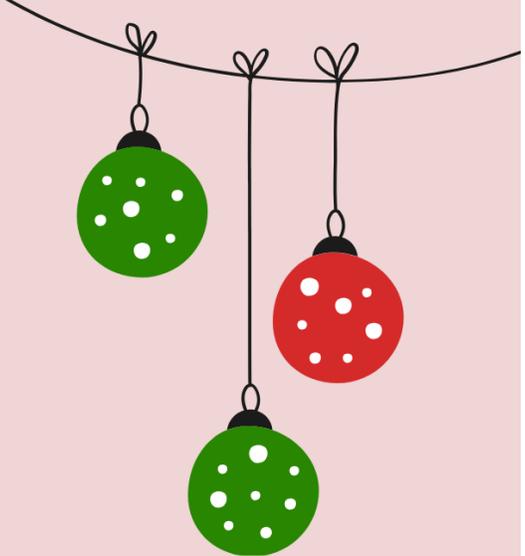
**DEC 14 11 AM**

JOIN US AFTER THE CHILDREN'S NATIVITY IN THE  
COKESBURY ROOM FOR A TIME OF FELLOWSHIP!

HOMEMADE COOKIES AND CIDER PROVIDED BY OUR YOUTH  
AND THEIR FAMILIES!

# YOUTH EVENTS

December



### Youth: 12-2PM

Join us for lunch, and Advent lesson and making luminaries!



### Youth: 12-2PM

Join us for lunch and an introduction to handbells with Christmas music!



### Progressive Dinner Party

Meet at church at 5PM for our annual progressive dinner. Bring a wrapped gift for a gift exchange (\$15 value or less).



### Christmas Caroling

Meet at church at 5PM to join our church family in Christmas Caroling!



**Give light.** Christmas lights are symbols of the Light that came into the world with the birth of Christ. Enjoy them and use LEDs to take care of the world that Jesus lit up with his presence. LED lights use 1/10 as much energy as conventional holiday lights, and they last years longer.

**Give a creature to love.** Browse [gifts.worldwildlife.org](https://gifts.worldwildlife.org) for the perfect gift choice for your children or grandchildren. The organization ([WWF](https://www.worldwildlife.org)) offers adoption options for many amazing creatures, plus numerous cute plush animals to choose from. Give the gift and talk with your young person about loving all of God's creatures.

**Give the story.** When you shop online for gifts, check the "About" portion of the website before you buy. Find out what the company is or is not doing to care for creation and justice. Look for [B Corp](https://www.bcorporation.net) and other companies that give back [1% for the planet](https://www.1percentfortheplanet.org). Tell the story to the gift recipient too.

**Give the past for the future.** Ask parents and grandparents to give you an ornament that has been a part of your growing-up Christmas traditions. Pass along its story to your children. Or make your own tree ornaments representing something meaningful to you. Glue family photos to card stock and hang the picture on the tree. Create some new stories to tell each Christmas.

**Give an awesome experience,** perhaps a trip to a nature preserve or state or national



park, a local museum, a concert. If you have young sports enthusiasts in your life, take them to a high school or local college basketball game. Give an adventure—an experience that can be shared, talked about, and remembered long after the usual “stuff” has been covered over in the landfill.

**Give the gift of giving.** Help a young person experience philanthropy directly. Give the funds and then together explore local non-profits related to environmental care or international ones such as [Heifer International](#) that are likely to connect with your young person. Talk about why you give and encourage them to remember God’s gift of love for people and planet.

**Give gifts that last.** Sustainability applies not only to the toys you give but also to the interest of the child. Toy companies like [EarthHero](#) and [Green Toys](#) provide cognitive, memory, mobility, and educational toys and games from materials like wood and recycled plastic—encouraging natural play in young ones that isn’t just staring at a screen. These toys tend to survive in good enough shape to pass along to another generation.

**Give without waste.** Parties and holiday meals can be merry without plastic and food waste going into the landfill. Choose reusable tableware and decorations. Use silicone bags or glass containers to send home with guests any extra food, and compost scraps. Give a gift to Earth.

**Give to help others.** The innkeeper gave shelter to the Holy Family and likely some food too. Who in your community is struggling with meeting basic needs? Volunteer at a local shelter or donate to a food drive. Seek out opportunities that help people and planet. Both are in need.

**Give an art project.** Fill a box with items like broken or mismatched jewelry, construction paper, colorful leaves, smooth rocks, pinecones, feathers, paints and brushes, an empty frame, glue, scissors—whatever might spark creativity. Give the gift to a specific person or to the family as a fun Christmas Day project.

Dear Church Family,

I have never had a send off like you gave me on my last Sunday with you. The brunch was wonderful and the staff's musical performance was amazing (Gary, your lyrics composition was masterful). I love the church family picture. It will always hold a special place in my home and my heart. I appreciate so much your generous love offering.

Thank you also for continuing to be with me after my fall and injury. Your thoughts and prayers mean so much to me and words are inadequate to express my appreciation for the Maple Spring angels (Jeff, Lee, Jim, Mike) who came and built the ramp. It is such a blessing. I continue to worship with you on Sunday via livestream.

Thank you again for enriching my life in so many ways.

Love and prayers,  
Pastor Sylvia



“Maple Springs Angels”

Jim Ross, Mike Young, Lee Spencer, Jeff Jackson

*In memory of Jack Frye  
for the Food Pantry  
by Chris Halt*

*In memory of Tony Hartman  
for Grace Space  
by Bet Wilson*

*In memory of Lisa Johnson  
for the Food Pantry  
by Barbara Rouse*

*In memory of Lisa Johnson  
for Grace Space  
by Bet Wilson*

*In memory of Lisa Johnson  
for the Prayer Garden  
by*

*Robert & Heather Johnson*

*In memory of Mark Rose  
for Missions  
by*

*Chaplain & Mrs. Charles Caudill*

*For the Food Pantry  
by  
The Pioneers for Christ  
Sunday School Class  
at Mount Tabor UMC*

*In honor of Bill Blackburn  
for Missions  
by Susan Carter-Hope*

*In honor of Bill & Pam Senter  
for Grace Space  
by Bet Wilson*

*In honor of Sylvia Wilhelm  
for the Food Pantry  
by Dot Atkinson*





# Altar FLOWERS update

Emily Ruebel has taken over the Altar Flower Ministry. She has enjoyed glorifying God each Sunday with her arrangements. Flower prices have increased which means our Altar Flower arrangement price will need to be adjusted. Altar Flower prices will be increasing to \$75 plus tax (\$80.25). If you would like to have more flowers added to your arrangement, this can be done for an additional cost. Payment can still be made to Emily Ruebel by cash, check, or electronic payments. A new sign up sheet for 2026 has been posted outside the Sacristy room near Pastor Gary's office.



## Our Christian Sympathy

*Our Christian Sympathy is extended to the families of*

*Tony Gray Hartman*

*(husband of Katherine Hartman)*

*January 4, 1952 ~ October 31, 2025*

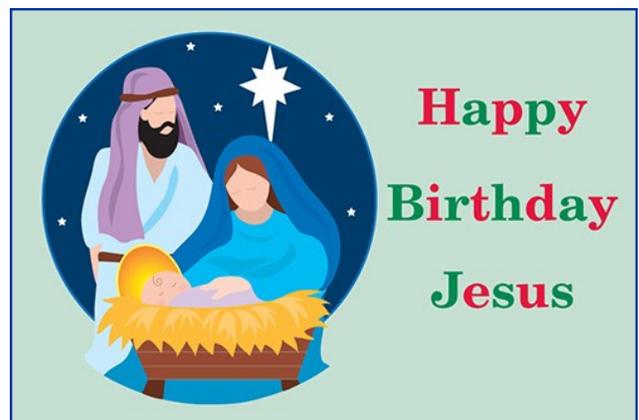
*Charles Reid Bame*

*September 15, 1930 ~ November 2, 2025*



- 11 Drew & Mary Taylor Setliff
- 18 Frank & SueEllen Thomas
- 22 Chuck & Sandra Kupsky
- 27 Hank & Kathy Sigmon
- 28 Steve & Kim Richmond

- |                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1 Tommy Sprinkle   | 12 Natalie Juran     |
| 2 Anna Sparks      | 13 Lee Kimmel        |
| 3 Jan Blackburn    | 14 Elizabeth Gault   |
| 3 Matt Taylor      | 14 Becky Keller      |
| 4 Steve Ashley     | 18 Lee Spencer       |
| 4 Jim Ross         | 19 Martha Lytle      |
| 5 Claire Sparks    | 21 Sawyer Bowen      |
| 5 Kate Sparks      | 22 Steven Rose       |
| 6 Martha Snyder    | 23 Caren Morgan      |
| 7 Beth Juran       | 23 Emmanuel Moses    |
| 7 Carolyn Morgan   | 24 Sam Plaster       |
| 7 Juniper Nichols  | 26 Tina Smith        |
| 7 Laura Warren     | 27 Betty Faulkner    |
| 8 Alice Bumgarner  | 28 Diane Greer       |
| 11 Vickie Howard   | 29 Adler Green       |
| 11 Kaylynn Suttles | 29 Andy Rybak        |
| 12 Sheree Godwin   | 31 Tricia Seitz-Wood |
| 12 Iris Jones      |                      |



**Published Monthly by  
Maple Springs United Methodist Church  
2569 Reynolda Road  
Winston Salem, NC 27106-4696**

**Postmaster, Send Address Changes to:  
Maple Springs Life  
2569 Reynolda Road  
Winston Salem, NC 27106**



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Church Office Hours:  
Monday - Friday  
8:30am to 4:30pm

Sunday Worship Times:  
8:45am & 11:00am  
Sunday School - 9:55am

*Rooted, Growing, and  
Bearing Fruit for Christ*



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