Jesus is coming! It's our responsibility to "prepare the way" and get ready. What are we doing to make a place for Christ to be known in our lives, in our community and in our world?

We invite you to journey with us over the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons as we prepare our hearts and lives for the coming of Jesus. This joint sermon series between Concord and Villa Rica First will include a weekly bible study led by Pastors Erik and Todd. Two sessions will be offered. No book or sign-up is required. Simply come as you are to either session.

**Sermon Series Overview:**
December 2: Prepare the Way: Stand
December 9: Prepare the Way: Refine
December 16: Prepare the Way: Do
December 23: Prepare the Way: Welcome
December 24: Prepare the Way: Arrive
December 30: Prepare the Way: Search
January 6: Prepare the Way: Find

**Bible Study:**
Wednesdays (Dec 5, 12, 19, Jan 2)
Locations:
Villa Rica First (11am DIG Classroom)
Concord (7pm Administration Building)
All are welcome!
You matter to God. I don’t know if anyone has told you that lately, but you do. You matter to God and God loves all people. Jesus took on the cross for each and every one of us. Included in that are people who lie, cheat, steal, commit adultery, murder, people who worship other Gods or no God at all. God meets us where we are. God gets up close and personal and offers us abundant life. That’s how God sees us. God sees the imperfections and the sadness and yet still offers us the gift of abundant life. My friends, when Jesus looks at us we aren’t a number, we aren’t a vote, we are children of God and, just as the prophet Isaiah says, “we are” each called by name. Names like…. Ava Rose, Becca, Ben, Carlos, Eric, Isaac, Nolan, and Ricky.

These eight names are important to God, and they are important to me and you. These are the names of the eight confirmation students in our 2018 Confirmation Class. Over the last four months these eight young people have studied together, prayed together, and considered what it means to be claimed by Christ.

These eight young people are saying Yes to following Jesus. (Can I get an “Amen”!?). By the grace of God, they have made the decision to get up close and personal with Jesus because Jesus has gotten up close and personal with them.

On Sunday, December 16th we will confirm the faith that is at work in these eight young people. I shared with the confirmation class last week that completing Confirmation Class isn’t the end – it’s the beginning. Like Zacchaeus, they are climbing down out of the tree to walk a new journey with Jesus that is up close and personal.

When was the last time you got up close and personal with Jesus? Have you gone out of your way to discover something new about God recently? Are you still curious about the awe and mystery of faith?

My prayer for these eight young people is that as they grow in years, they will grow in faith. I pray that as they grow in faith, they will never stop being curious about the God that has called them, and each of us by name.

Faith takes practice and it’s important that we find ways to get up close and personal with a God who wants nothing more than to be up close and personal with us.

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus but couldn’t, but he found a way. And I say the same thing to our confirmands - find a way, because Jesus has already found you. And every time you find Jesus – you’ll experience a God who loves and cares for you deeply no matter where life takes you; whether it be up in a tree or in the lowest point of your life.

Don’t settle for just life – work towards abundant life spent in the presence of an up close and personal relationship with Jesus. If you’ve lost your curiosity about God, find a tree to climb and know that wherever you are, God is there also. Find a way. Find a way to join us on the 16th as we give praise to God and celebrate the faith commitments of these young people.

Blessings, Pastor Erik
Royal Women’s Circle Meeting at Monday, December 10, 6:30 pm.
Childcare will be available. We invite all ladies to attend. Please bring your favorite dish and copies of the recipe for it. We will swap recipes. We will also have our annual ornament swap, so if you would like to participate, please bring a wrapped ornament, $10 limit.

United Methodist Men’s Fellowship & Meeting
Monday, December 10 at 6:30pm
We encourage men of all ages to attend.
We will have pizza for dinner and have discussions about upcoming events. Bring a friend.

The ladies of the Caring Hands ministry share great fellowship as they create hats for preemies; baby blankets; prayer shawls, hats, mittens & scarfs for the needy; greeting cards and more. The ladies enjoy one day a month for just fellowship.

All are invited to come on any Tuesday morning at 10 a.m. to the church to join the ladies in fellowship and crafting with your caring hands.

Please bring your favorite craft to work on or come to learn a new one.

Join us for our Upcoming Events:

Tuesday, December 11— We will meet at the church at 10am. We will head to Ben’s Antiques and then go to lunch.

Tuesday, December 18— Caring Hands Christmas Party at 11:30am. Bring a covered dish and a wrapped handmade gift.

Delighting In God,
Sunday Mornings
10:00 a.m. in room 205.
Go from “Bah, Humbug!” to a blessed Advent and Merry Christmas!
Contact Linda Rogers 770-948-5666 for more information.

Family Christmas Tree
Please donate an ornament from your family to be displayed at The Garden for years to come.
Make sure to put your last name and date on the back.
The collection basket is located in the front lobby and the tree will be on display upstairs in the front window for the Christmas Season!

Pictured: Handmade mittens and hats for our backpack ministry.
The Stewart Family
Dave, Christine, Seth and Becca

Join us for our Annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Monday, December 24 at 9pm.

The Church Office will be closed Monday, December 24 through Friday, December 28.

The Church Office will also be closed on Tuesday, January 1.

Thank you to all who submitted a Generous Card as part of our 2019 Stewardship Campaign. Your commitment of your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness will help us plan more effectively for the mission and ministry of our church for 2019.

If you haven’t submitted your Generous Card, you still can! You can drop it off by the church office during office hours, place it in the offering plate, or mail it to the church.

Thank you for your continued stewardship!

A LETTER HOME...
Thank you all for the cards and prayers! I miss y’all very much. Y’all are always in mind when Sunday comes. Worship here gets me through the week. I wouldn’t say this music is as good but it’s good to worship and reminds me of y’all. Tell everyone hey and I love them. I hope youth has gotten bigger and Casey’s class is fuller then what we had. It is the best church I have ever been to so it shouldn’t be hard to get people in there. Youth and JAM do your best through these next semesters of school. All the college kids get through your classes and study hard. I miss seeing y’all on Wednesdays and Sundays! Can’t wait to get to y’all. –Aaron

VRFUMC Preschool is hosting a “Mom And Me” paint party Sunday Dec 9th at 3:00pm.

The cost is $35 and includes a 16”x20 canvas along with a mini canvas for the kids. All supplies and step-by-step instructions included. Sign up sheets are in each lobby or rsvp to Sami Glisson at samiglisson@gmail.com. Proceeds benefit the Preschool program.

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS

The Stewart Family
Dave, Christine, Seth and Becca

GENEROUS CARD
Thank you to all who submitted a Generous Card as part of our 2019 Stewardship Campaign. Your commitment of your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness will help us plan more effectively for the mission and ministry of our church for 2019.

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Thank you for your continued stewardship!
Villa Rica First UMC Preschool at the Garden

The Preschool had a successful Thanksgiving Family Art Show. The Sanctuary was full of families enjoying fellowship! We are looking forward to celebrating Christmas and of course Jesus, the reason for the season. We hope everyone will be able to come to the December 9th Modern Worship Service where the Preschool children will be singing. Also, on the 9th, Sami Glisson will be leading a paint party which is a Mom and Me themed event. If you are interested in joining us, please sign up the lobby or email your interest to: vrfumcpreschool@gmail.com

Join us Sunday, December 16, during the 11am Modern Worship. The Children’s Choir will sing during the Children’s Moment.

Children’s Ministry

Wednesday Night Schedule

Jesus and Me (JAM) December Schedule:

J.A.M. sessions will take place on December 5 &12

December 19– Pjs and Pancakes, 6pm-7:30pm
No JAM or Choir Wednesday, December 26th.

JAM is Wednesdays from 5:30 pm- 6:30 pm.
Children’s Choir Practice will start at 6:30pm- 7:00 pm for grades kindergarten through 5th grade.

PJs & Pancakes

Wednesday Dec 19

6PM-7:30PM

Join us!

All children are invited to eat pancakes, make crafts and watch a Christmas movie.

Taekwondo every Monday from 5:30pm-6:30pm at Villa Rica First UMC.
See Carlos Morales or Frank Jones to sign up!

Wednesday Night Schedule

Dinner starts at 6:15 pm
Welcome and worship begins at 7pm.
Youth ends at 8pm.
Wednesday Night Youth will only meet December 5 & 12th.

The Youth Council is having a Christmas Party on Sunday, December 2 at 6pm. Sign ups for the Winter ski trip have concluded and it seems we are in for another great retreat full of fun, fellowship and worship. This time we will be diving into the book of Jonah, so feel free to give yourself a refresh between now and February.

Thank you to the church for allowing the Youth Praise Band to lead worship on Sunday, November 25. They truly enjoyed it.
**Two Shirts Thrift Store**

A Mission and a Ministry of VRFUMC

If you have **Two Shirts**, share with someone who has none. Luke 3:11

*Merry Christmas from everyone at Two Shirts*

As we begin the celebrations of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany we wish for each of you a wonderful time of hope, peace, joy and love.

TSTS Giving History

October 2018 Giving - $1,500  
Year to Date Giving: $13,500

Total Giving:  
October, 2013 - September, 2018 - $63,500

Recipient this month: Budget

Christmas sales are going so well that we are almost out of Christmas merchandise. As you begin your holiday decorating remember that anything you are no longer using will be much appreciated at Two Shirts!

Thank you to everyone who has stepped up to help out at Two Shirts while I have been unable to be there. Your help and support is appreciated more than you know.

**Store Needs**

Coke, Coke Zero or Sprite, super glue, gorilla glue

**Want to know how to get involved?**

Chris Obenauer 770.367.1978  
Nancy Wise 404.374.4154  
Heather Shead 770.362.6859

Please return your Angel Tree items no later than December 5. Please bring them unwrapped with the tag you got off of the tree.

“It’s time to remember our fur person friends.”

The Carroll County Humane Society partnering with the Animal Shelter in Carrollton and the West Georgia spay/Neuter Clinic in Villa Rica needs our help as they work to prevent unwanted reproduction and find loving homes for dogs and cats. Please help this worthy cause by taking a fish or bone, or both from the small tree in the lobby and buying the item listed on the tag. Place the items under the tree with the tag. No need to wrap items, bags are fine. This mission is from December 2 through December 30.

If you have any questions please contact Nancy Wise at 404.374.4154

“*We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.”*  
—Winston Churchill
Happy Birthday!!

12/1 Donald Foster
12/3 Richard Freeman
12/3 Mikey Whitlock
12/4 Juanita Eberhart
12/4 Shannon Shadix
12/5 Michael Burns
12/5 Jane Searl
12/5 Kenny Smothers
12/6 Ellisyn Backus
12/6 Lloyd Jones
12/6 Becky Short
12/6 Mark Smith
12/7 Hannah Harris
12/9 Steve Sheppard
12/11 Bruce Hawk
12/12 Lindsey Mays
12/14 Elizabeth Bell
12/14 Chase Lolly
12/15 Marianne Fowler
12/17 Chloe Sadowsky
12/17 Opal Spake
12/18 Chuck Astin
12/19 Jeremy Jones
12/19 Anna Tullis
12/20 Greyson Childers
12/21 Dustin Thomas
12/22 Oaklee O’Neal
12/23 Jaclyn Townsend
12/25 Irma Andrews
12/27 Kay Gorman
12/27 Frank Jones
12/27 Holden Rosinklu
12/27 Joslyn Townsend
12/29 Susan Lewis
12/30 Alexander Morales
12/30 Sophia Randolph
12/31 Joshua Backus

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

12/01 Larry & Mary Boggs
12/09 Steve & Renee Gamble
12/13 Austin & Alexis Osment
12/14 Rob & Michelle Cason
12/14 Bruce & Barbara Hawk
12/20 Vincent & Sonja McNeil
12/22 Gregg & Sandra Brown
12/23 Doc & Jennie Ringlaben
12/27 Randy & Sheryl Williams
12/30 Eddie & Debra Bradley
12/30 Jonathon & Carrie Keller
12/31 Woody & Deborah Holland
12/31 Andrew & Alison Huggins
12/31 Tim & Sharon Jeffers

DECEMBER SERVANTS

Open - Kip Tackett

9a.m. Servants
Greeter @ 9 am
Dec 2 & 9 Debbie Kibbe
Dec 16 Barbara Myers
Dec 23 & 30 Sandra Brown

Ushers
Joe Willoughby
& Mike Cowan

11 a.m. Servants
Greeters @ 11 am
Volunteers Needed
*See Luz Morales

Youth Acolytes
December 2
Anna & Will B
December 9
Addison & Hayden
December 16
Reagan & Claire
December 23
Luke & Mikey
December 30
Tanner & Tyson

Ushers
Jason Whitlock, Shane Hall
& Jon Keller

Student Usher
Mikey Whitlock

Close - Carlos Morales

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT
(as of November 28)

Mortgage Balance $332,230.22

Annual Budget Requirement $503,298.38

November Contributions Received: $25,441.00
November Expenses Paid: $22,622.33

2018 YTD Budget Report
Contributions Received $ 396,800.94
Expenses Paid $ 420,396.66
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Saturday, December 1</td>
<td>8:30 am Emmaus Meeting (Trailer) 9:00 am Decorating &amp; Donuts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, December 2</td>
<td>9:00 am Communion Sunday 10:00 am Sunday School 11:00 am Modern Worship Service 11:15 am Children's Church 11:15 am Bible Class for 3rd Grade 1:00 pm Youth Band Practice 3:30 pm Confirmation Class 6:00 pm Youth Council Christmas Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, December 3</td>
<td>5:30 pm Taekwondo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, December 4</td>
<td>10:00 am Caring Hands 4:00 pm God’s Food Pantry 6:30 pm Boy Scouts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, December 5</td>
<td>8:30 am Preschool Chapel 11:00 am Prepare the Way Advent Study (VRFUMC– DIG Classroom) 5:30 pm Safety Team Meeting 5:30 pm JAM (Jesus and Me) 6:00 pm Children/Youth Dinner 6:30 pm Children’s Choir 7:00 pm Prepare the Way Advent Study (Concord UMC– Administrative Building) 7:00 pm Youth– Worship &amp; Lesson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, December 6</td>
<td>6:00 pm Praise Band Practice 7:00 pm Adult Choir Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, December 7</td>
<td>12:00 pm Drama Team 7:00 pm AA Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, December 9</td>
<td>9:00 am Traditional Service 10:00 am Sunday School 11:00 am Modern Worship Service 11:15 am Children’s Church 11:15 am Bible Class for 3rd Grade 1:00 pm Youth Band Practice 3:00 pm Mom &amp; Me Paint Party 3:30 pm Confirmation Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, December 10</td>
<td>5:30 pm Taekwondo 6:30 pm Finance Meeting 6:30 pm UM Men’s Meeting 6:30 pm Women’s Circle Christmas Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, December 11</td>
<td>10:00 am Caring Hands 6:30 pm Boy Scouts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, December 12</td>
<td>8:30 am Preschool Chapel 11:00 am Prepare the Way Advent Study (VRFUMC– DIG Classroom) 5:30 pm Safety Team Meeting 5:30 pm JAM (Jesus and Me) 6:00 pm Children/Youth Dinner 6:30 pm Children’s Choir 7:00 pm Prepare the Way Advent Study (Concord UMC– Administrative Building) 7:00 pm Youth– Worship &amp; Lesson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, December 13</td>
<td>6:00 pm Praise Band Practice 7:00 pm Adult Choir Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday, December 14</td>
<td>12:00 pm Drama Team 7:00 pm AA Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, December 15</td>
<td>Sanctuary Reserved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, December 16</td>
<td>Confirmation Sunday 9:00 am Traditional Service 10:00 am Sunday School 11:00 am Modern Worship Service 11:15 am Children’s Church 11:15 am Bible Class for 3rd Grade 1:00 pm Youth Band Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, December 17</td>
<td>5:30 pm Taekwondo 7:00 pm Administrative Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday, December 18</td>
<td>10:00 am Caring Hands 4:00 pm God’s Food Pantry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, December 19</td>
<td>8:30 am Preschool Chapel 11:00 am Prepare the Way Advent Study (VRFUMC– DIG Classroom) 5:30 pm Safety Team Meeting 6:00 pm Pancakes &amp; PJ’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DECEMBER CALENDAR**

**VRFUMC Office Contact Information:**
1789 Carrollton-Villa Rica Hwy, VR 30180
Phone: 770.459.3067
e-mail: vrfumc@bellsouth.net
website: www.villaricafumc.net

**Office Hours:** Monday-Thursday 9am-2pm, Friday 9am-12pm

**Staff:** Ministers of Faith - Our Congregation
Rev. Erik Mays, Senior Pastor: 770.861.3096 or erikmays@gmail.com
Rev. Todd Dudich, Associate Pastor/Pastor of Concord: todd.dudich@ngumc.net
George Eidsion, Choir Director: gteidson@att.net
Rick Quinton, Pianist: DonnellQuinton@gmail.com
Matt & Allison Williamson, Worship Leaders: mattwilliamson@gmail.com
Sami Glisson, Creative Arts Director: samiglisson@gmail.com
Patsy Hendricks, Nursery Coordinator
Amanda Miller, Children’s Director: amanda.miller.villarica@gmail.com
Jason Backus, Youth Director: youth.villarica@gmail.com
Carrie Keller, Administrative Assistant, vrfumc@bellsouth.net
Kip Tackett, Church Caretaker (404) 723-3023