



Salem Scoop

Note from Norm

*In the bleak midwinter,
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, Long ago.*

Christina Rossetti wrote the words to one of my favorite Christmas hymns, *In the Bleak Midwinter*. Christina authored three collections of mostly religious poetry and four devotional books and she came from a family steeped in the arts. Her deep faith is thought to be partially from the comfort that she found in writing as a result of her poor health from age sixteen. Her most famous hymns texts are "Love Came Down at Christmas" and "In the Bleak Midwinter." In the Bleak Midwinter first published as the poem "A Christmas Carol" in *Scribner's Monthly* in January 1872. It first appeared as a hymn in *The English Hymnal* (1906), where it was paired to a tune by the famous English composer Gustav Holst.

As Michael Hawn notes, the first memorable stanza, Rossetti creates a dreary and desolate image of the world into which the infant Jesus appeared. She is not suggesting that it literally snowed in Bethlehem, but is drawing on a long-established literary idea of associating snow with Christ's birth. The famous 17th century poet, John Milton, used the winter imagery in his poem, "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," as a pure covering to hide the sin of the world. Rossetti exploits this metaphor in the opposite way. The Incarnate One, the Light of the World, brought warmth into the most forlorn and dreary of sinful situations. The second stanza uses the device of antithesis to make the point that the eternal One whom "heaven could not hold" nor "earth sustain" appeared during the "bleak winter" of human existence where "a stable place sufficed."

The final stanza is perhaps one of the most endearing:

*What can I give him, Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give him; Give my heart.*

When a woman wrote these words, women were largely excluded. Like the shepherds; she was not employed; like the wisemen, Rossetti had no degree. The writer invites us to offer our own gift to the Christ Child just as the shepherds and wisemen did. Rather than the present of a lamb or expensive gifts, however, we offer the most important gift- our hearts.

Advent can be filled with worry about finding the perfect Christmas gifts. Deep down we want people in our lives to know they are special and that we love them. But sometimes we overlook the greatest gift of all... our very presence. The last verse reminds us that even if we are feeling poor — in resources, in body or spirit — we can simply be a gift of presence, we can give our hearts. This season, we are invited to be the gift of presence for our loved ones, for our communities, for those who need it most. Join us this December for our worship series *The Gift of Being Present* as we unwrap with anticipation the gift that God will reveal.





St. Matthew's UMC

Has graciously invited us to participate in their Longest Night Service

Dec 18 @ 6:30pm

(201 Shady Rest Road)

All are invited to this Service of Grief and Lament during the holidays... but especially those who may be experiencing some form of grief or loss.



United Women of Faith Christmas Dinner

Dec 7 @ 6pm

(All are welcome)

Catered by Timberwoods
Cost \$12 - RSVP by Dec 5

*Bring diapers & wipes for the Pregnancy Care Center mission

Community Christmas Cantata

FIRST UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH
MORGANTON

December 17
4pm



You're Invited.... To the Big Reveal!

Secret Angel 2023 Celebration Dec 10 @ 5:30pm

Several of you signed up and were paired to be a secret buddy to someone in the congregation earlier this year. Throughout the year, you have found ways to encourage and nurture someone and someone has done so for you. Now it's time to find out who? Bring a final card or gift to exchange & bring a holiday treat or dish for everyone to share!



Journey to the Manger

A walk-thru living nativity

Salem UMC

1206 Salem Rd. / Morganton

Dec. 3
5 ~ 7pm



All volunteers & participants please arrive by 4:10pm on Dec 4. (Please park behind Ed Bldg or along road on dumpster side).

What to expect when attending:

Journey to Bethlehem to experience the joy and wonder of Jesus' birth.

Hot Cocoa is available at the Hope Tree where outdoor tours depart every 10 minutes. Soup/sandwiches and kids crafts are served in the FH following the journey.

Prayer Requests & Concerns: Gerald & Mozelle Duckworth, Steve & Jane Stroup, Kevin & Joann Patton, Shirley Causby, Laqueta Carroll, Zach & Lucy Cagle, Billie & Garland Ross, Wanda & Gary Byrd, Kelly Basting, Bill Hutchins, Doris Garrison, Katie Gordon, Lopez Family, Brenda Dellinger, Barbara Harbour, Lynda Woody, Arnold Tucker, Deeston Brown, Katie Marler, Sue Bunch, Lindsay Cabe, Bob Compton

Home Bound: Millie Avery, Leota Garrison, Brenda Autrey, Janet Koon

Nursing Home Residents: - Doris Garrison, Jackie Pruett,

Our Financial Stewardship:

Thru November 30, 2023

Weekly budget need: \$3,987.40

Yearly Budget needed: \$211,332.00

Budgeted need to date: \$191,395.20

Total Received for Budget: \$175,561.22

Ministry Expenses to Date: \$188,519.97

We are \$15,833.98 behind budget for the year!

We are \$12,958.75 behind expenses for the year.

Gifts given in Memory or in Honor

Freddie Causby by Beulah Duckworth

Sexton Dale, Jerry Dale, Avis Williams, Bruce & Kay Pollard

Jerry & Clarice Shuping, Virginia Robinson

by Edith Dale

Dean Garrison, Charles Garrison Sr., Charles Jr,

by Leota Garrison

Cheryll Garrison, Obie Carswell

by Mary Ann & Lisa Propst, Cary Clark

Mildred Pollard Earwood

by Jerry & Clarice Shuping

Reading the Torah Together in 1 Year

Space these out and read some of the passage each day or all at once. You have a full week to read the chapters. But it's usually better to at least divide it into 2 days.

Schedule Week of:

Dec 3 - Deut 26:1-29:9

Dec 10 - Deut 29:9-30:20

Dec 17 - Deut 31

Dec 24 - Deut 32

Dec 31 - Deut 33-34

Our Back pack ministry is serving 10 families, 25 children this year and in need of canned soups and pasta, macaroni and cheese, boxed pasta, and hamburger helper. Drop off your donations on the cart outside the church office. 10 families/ 25 children equals 50 breakfast and snack items, 20 lunch items, and 20 supper items weekly. Thank You



- 4 Connor Wellman
- 5 Garland Ross
- 6 Christina Benfield, Wes Bunch
- 7 Carrigan Causby, Catherine Causby
- 10 Fred Horton
- 13 Nicole Mull, Bob Harbour
- 14 Lora Whitener
- 18 Stanley Coffey
- 26 Sue Bunch
- 27 Edith L. Dale
- 29 Eric Carswell, Robert A. Pruett
- 30 Lewis P. Dale

ANNIVERSARIES

- 20 Joe & Lynda Woody
- 23 Troy & Joann Patton
- 29 Wynn & Lora Whitener

CHURCH STAFF

Norm Jones, Jr.—Pastor (rev.norm@alumni.duke.edu)
Johnathan Greer, Director of Music (music@sumcm.org)
Sue Bunch, Pianist (s_bunch@att.net)
Zachary Cagle, Office Admin. (salemumchurch@ymail.com)

Monthly Greeter list

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1 st Sunday- | Jack Bridges | 2 nd Sunday- | Charles Autrey |
| 3 rd Sunday- | Holly Keller | 4 th Sunday- | Kevin Reinke |
| 5 th Sunday- | Jodi Brown | Alternate- | Bruce Pollard |

We are...



LIGHTHOUSE
Congregation

A place to belong...

A place of refuge...

A haven of peace & grace



Family friendly service

Dec 24
@
7pm



December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3 9:30 Sunday School 10:35am Worship 3pm Cantata Practice (FUMCM) 5-7 pm Journey To the Manger	4 10am Prayer Shawl (Ed Bldg)	5 JIRDC Angel tree gifts due	6 5:45pm Praise team (Sanct) 7pm Choir (Sanct)	7 6pm UWF Xmas Dinner (FH)	8	9
10 9:30 Sunday School 10:35am Worship 3pm Cantata Practice (FUMCM) 4:15pm Church Council (FH) 5:30pm Secret Angel Party (FH)	11 10am Prayer Shawl (Ed Bldg) 6pm G. Scouts (FH)	12	13 5:45pm Praise team (Sanct) 7pm Choir (Sanct)	14	15	16
17 9:30 Sunday School 10:35am Worship 4pm X-mas Cantata (FUMCM)	18 10am Prayer Shawl (Ed Bldg) 6:30pm Longest Night Service (St Matt)	19	20 5:45pm Praise team (Sanct) 7pm Choir (Sanct)	21	22	23
24 9:30 Sunday School 10:35am Worship 7pm Candlelight Service	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS!	26 Office Closed	27 5:45pm Praise team ?	28	29 (FH reserved)	30
31	Jan. 1 Happy New Year!	Jan 2 Office Closed	(Pastor Norm away for vacation Dec 26 -Jan 7)			