



THE GRACE MESSENGER



Grace United Methodist Church

Mission: To love God completely and to serve Jesus Christ unselfishly

201. S. Church Street, Union, South Carolina 29379

Office: 427-1266

Rev. David Bauknight, Pastor

Cell Phone: 803-480-2153

From the Pastor

January 2019

It's... ..IT'S... ..2019!



We all knew it was inevitable. We kept seeing it around the corner. We even attempted to make things different as it was creeping closer. And now...we officially say "HAPPY NEW YEAR." 2018 had great moments...but 2019 promises 365 new and exciting days (8760 hours, 525600 minutes or 31,536,000 seconds) for each of us. With the New Year comes resolutions. "I will start a healthier lifestyle." "I will be a better husband/wife/parent." "I will focus on developing a new skill." Well, we know our intentions. With the promise of a new year, the real question is, "What would be the most important step in our lives we can take for Jesus?" Could it be growing faithfulness, intentional witnessing, or proactive attitude? What would it take to actually put Christ first in everything?

In Charles Sheldon's book "In His Steps," Rev. Henry Maxwell was preparing the Sunday sermon based on 1 Peter 2:21, *"To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps."* Interrupted by the doorbell, he went downstairs, and opened the door to find a homeless man. Rev. Maxwell didn't have anything to offer and the dejected man left with his hat in his hand.

Henry's wife came home later and told him about a young man who came to the nursery holding a dirty hat in his hand. They agreed it was the same man and went about their business.

The next Sunday at First Church, the worship service was outstanding. The music, the anthem, the prayer response, the sermon, everything bolstered the congregation. *"Suddenly into the midst of this perfect accord and concord between preacher and audience, there came a very remarkable interruption."* The sound of a man's voice, the same man who had visited Henry earlier at his home, was standing in front of the church. He shared his plight, not wanting anything from anyone, but offered a ponderable question, *"What do you Christians mean by following the step of Jesus?"*

Now, that's a great prompter for us to consider as we begin the first moment of 2019, *"What does following Jesus mean?"* We each have our thoughts and Scripture has many verses for us to consider.

The First Church of Raymond found a true challenge in their midst that Sunday morning. (January will be a great time to read the book and I have a couple copies I'll be glad to lend.) As we begin a new year as followers of Christ, laying claim to membership in the family of God, I wonder, if rather than church & life as usual, what would happen if we would pledge ourselves "earnestly and honestly for this entire year not to do anything without asking the question, 'What Would Jesus Do?'" (Remember WWJD? Its hay day was in the 90's but it truly is still the right and best way.)

In the year 2019 of our Lord Jesus Christ, we are offered a new resolution. There are a multitude of things we would like to do, like becoming more physically fit, a better husband or wife, or developing a new skill, all of which are good. We, at Grace and all other Christian churches, have laid claim to be followers of Jesus Christ. So, as we begin this new year let's set our hearts and sights on growing our relationship with God by accepting the challenge to follow Jesus. Let's truly ask God what He wants us to think, say and do for Him in order that our witness will be so compelling that folks will hunger for the spirit living in and through us.

Is it a challenge? You bet! Do we step out alone? Never! Christ promises He'll never leave us or forsake us. Now, my precious sisters and brothers is our opportunity to truly show the Living Spirit to a starving world. All it takes is for us to lift our foot to make the first step. Before any decision is made, we need to seek our Lord's intercession. In all things, Christ first. That our work! Looking forward to a New Year in a new way.....Pastor David.



Stewardship Report 2019

Offering Report as of	December 23, 2018
2018 Budget:	\$ 375,516.00
Needed for 2018 Budget YTD:	\$ 368,294.54
Budget Rec'd YTD:	\$ 354,764.46
Surplus/Deficit YTD:	\$ -13,530.08
Weekly Offering Needed :	\$ 7,221.46
Expenses YTD:	\$

Please put Grace as a priority in your financial planning. Our combined gifts keep the Church's mission alive and growing. Thank you so much!!
Sincerely, Pastor David

UMW Officer Training

Officers Training (which includes all executive members and circle leaders) will be held on January 12, 2019, at The United Methodist Church of the Covenant, 9020 Asheville Highway, Spartanburg, SC. The schedule is as follows:

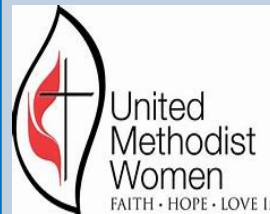
9:00-9:30	Registration & Fellowship. Refreshments served.
9:30-10:00	General Session and Devotional.
10:00-11:15	Break-out Sessions.

It is vital for the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer to attend. Training will be available for other offices also. I ask that you please consider attending this training session. Let Pat Owens or Sheryl Price know if you're able to attend. It has proved very worthwhile in the past.

Happy New Year everyone!

Young at Heart

Come on! Mark your calendars for Wednesday, January 9th and join us at Andy's for good food and fellowship. JoAnn Mason will be there to check blood pressures. We'd love to see you there!



Circle of Hope:

Mon., Jan. 7th, 10:00 AM

Johnnie Sanders Circle:

Mon., Jan. 7th, 11:00 AM

Lucy Lee Shuler Circle:

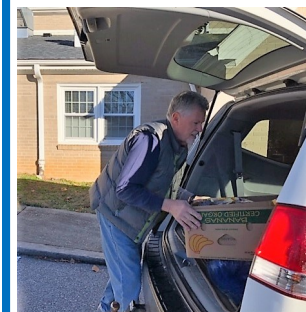
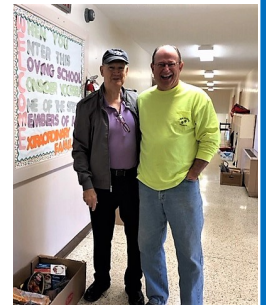
Wed., Jan. 9th, 6:00 PM



White Christmas Thank You

Due to generous food and monetary donations by our members as well as our Boy Scout Troop 42, our Grace delivery teams became the hands and feet of Jesus on Monday, December 17, as they delivered 38 abundant White Christmas Baskets to our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

A special thank you goes to each member of our delivery teams: Jim and Mary Jane Cunningham; Billy Jack Moore, Jack James, and Mallory McGee; Jerry Lipscomb and Buddy Blackmon; Curtis Dunbar, Bob Love, and Glenn Hibbard. Thank you also to Laura Estrada who



delivered a wonderful donation of fruit from Publix. We also appreciate the dedication of Charlie Kelly, Sally Palmer, and Karen Hibbard. Grace is an awesome team!





Chancel Choir

Wed., Jan. 2 - No
 Wed., Jan. 9 - 7:30pm
 Wed., Jan. 16 - 7:30pm
 Wed., Jan. 23 - 7:30pm
 Wed., Jan. 30 - 7:30pm



Family Night Supper
 Wednesday, January 23

Our Family Night Suppers will resume on January 23, 2019, at 6:00 pm with The Upper Room Class hosting and the ReConnection Youth providing the meal. Your donations will help send our youth this summer to a Salkehatchie Service Camp. Come and enjoy the good food, great fellowship, and fun! You're always welcome!!

UMW News

2019 A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial Begins

OBJECTIVE: To provide an opportunity for United Methodist Women members to learn more about the difficult circumstances children and youth face around the world, how United Methodist Women is promoting their well-being and equal opportunities for them, and how members can support children and youth in need through the Call to Prayer and Self-Denial offering.

Theme for 2019: The offerings received from the Call to Prayer and Self-Denial observance will support programming and advocacy for children. Programs may include but are not limited to:

- Advocacy to end the school-to-prison pipeline
- Anti-violence and child-protection programs
- Afterschool and wraparound programs
- Vocational livelihood training for refugees and vulnerable children and youth
- Formal and informational workshops on healthy living
- Equal access to education
- Access to education and life opportunities for children with disabilities

BUILDING A THRIVING GENERATION OF CHILDREN

For more information on planning an observance, visit:

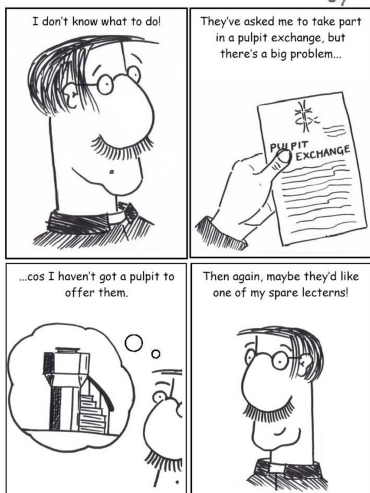
<http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/call-to-prayer>

United
 Methodist



Women

the adventures of cassockman by *Chaz*



www.cassockman.com

CM 22

©Charles M Young 2007

January 27, 2019 UCCOM Pulpit Exchange

On Sunday, January 27th we will observe the UCCOM Annual pulpit exchange during our morning worship service. Reverend Mike Scales from Carlisle UMC and Whitmire UMC will be our guest preacher. Pastor David will be at Bethlehem UMC and Foster's Chapel UMC. Please mark your calendars and plan to be present.





Grace's Beautiful Christmas Sanctuary



A Prayer for the New Year: Wesley's Covenant Prayer

By Jonathan Andersen

For countless years of my youth, I was at Conyers First United Methodist Church on New Year's Eve.

Each year, the youth group at my home church hosted a lock-in on New Year's Eve. These long nights were filled with lip-singing contests (I won many of these), games that involved us running through a huge dark church, pizza, and a pancake breakfast on New Year's day. It seems like every year there was also a broken stained glass window discovered the Sunday after.

While vague memories of those fun times have lingered, I'll never forget being in the sanctuary when the clock struck 12:00 each year.

We didn't have a fancy service. We would gather in the sanctuary, which was always filled with a little more mystery without the sun-lit stained glass and loud organ present. Typically, we would sing worship songs played off of the latest WOW Worship CD. Our youth minister would give a short message. Then, we would sit in the pews and pray as the New Year arrived.

I don't remember many specifics of my prayers on those evenings. But I always remember feeling the transcendent presence of God in the darkened space. I also remember asking myself this question each year: "Am I closer to God this year as compared to last year?" Some years this question was very convicting. Other years it led me to celebration. Little did I nor the youth minister know that our gathering in the sanctuary on New Year's Eve was a Methodist tradition that began years before.

In 1755, John Wesley began leading Covenant Renewal services. These services were times in which people would remember the covenant made at their baptism—a covenant to serve God with all one's heart and soul. Wesley found that these services were very encouraging and powerful for everyone involved, and soon they began being held in numerous Methodist societies.

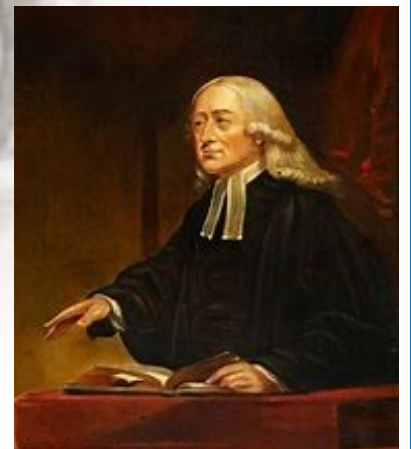
Over time, many British Methodist churches began to hold these services on New Year's Day or the first Sunday of the year since these were natural times of renewing commitments. These services continue with regularity in British Methodism today. While only a small number of congregations in America hold these services each new year, the order of worship for a Covenant Renewal service can be found on page 288 of the UMC Book of Worship.

One of the most powerful aspects of the service is the "Wesley Covenant Prayer." While John Wesley admitted that he was not the originator of this prayer, it has served as a powerful tool for spiritual formation in the Methodist church over the last two centuries.

Throughout my first six months of ministry I have prayed this prayer regularly in the mornings in order to help orient my heart for the day. I plan to continue to pray it throughout this new year, and I'd like to invite you to pray this prayer with me as well.

The Wesley Covenant Prayer

*I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine.
So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.*





Because We Care

Heartland Residential: Raye Hellams
Mary Jo Rogers
Jack and Betty Rash
Ellen Sagar: Jane and Bernard Bishop
Kat Willard
Summit Hills, Sptbg: Elwood and Barbara Eason
Dr. Bob Kincheloe
Home: Harold Simmons
Pacifica Senior Living, Sptbg: Amy Bruce

Universal Church Directory

It's that time again to create a new church directory. The picture dates will be February 22 and 23, 2019 and there will be sign-up sheets available by mid January. Please plan to come and get your picture made. You will receive a free 8 x 10 portrait of your choice and have the opportunity to buy extra sizes. Friends and family members can also get their portraits made. They need not be a Grace member. So, invite them to come. More information will come after the January 3, 2019 meeting! Let's all get our smiles Ready!!

2019 Altar Flowers



Please consider placing flowers on the altar for morning worship in honor of or memory of a loved one. This not only helps with our church budget but also beautifies our sanctuary. You may sign up on the calendar located by the water fountain in the education

building or in the church office. Thank you for your help in this ministry.

On Wings of Eagles Men's Retreat January 25th - 27th

On Wings of Eagles 9th annual men's retreat at Asbury Hills Retreat Center is January 25-27, 2019. There is still time to register and is for clergy and laity. All those attending may receive 2 CEU's. This year's guiding principle and theme is our relationship to God the Father, through the Means of Grace, using the Means of Grace to nurture our spiritual life and being set free from burdens, and finding healing as we lay those burdens down at the foot of the cross.



January

- 1 Ginger Buchanan
- 2 Karen Hibbard,
Connor Hudson
- 4 April Glenn
- 6 Charles Whitaker,
7 Charles Whitaker II
- 9 Judy Caston
- 10 Curtis Dunbar
- 11 John Fallaw
- 15 Kat Willard
- 16 Crystal Ham
- 17 Robert Cody, Kim Fast,
Freeda Rinaca, Don Winslow
- 18 Jim Cunningham
- 19 Susan Lawson
- 21 Harold Simmons, Keldin
Zimmerman
- 23 Corley Turner
- 24 Allen Owens, Rusty Price
- 27 Ruth Jean Kincheloe
- 28 Barbara Rippy
- 30 Maggie Berry

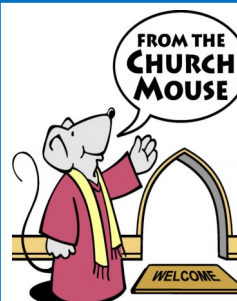


A Birthday Prayer

May our God bless you today
and each day that follows.
May you hear his voice
Follow His footsteps
Be comforted by His care
And live in His grace
Now and forever.

Amen.

www.lords-prayer-words.com



Keep on reading the newsletter for great Grace information! Please continue to send in articles, too! It takes all of us working together to have the best possible newsletter. **Deadline for the January Grace Messenger will be January 16th.**

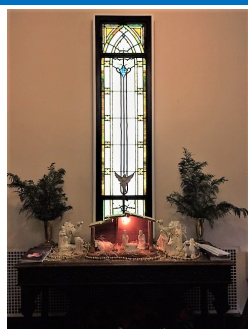


What a Glorious Christmas Cantata On December 2, 2018



The Chancel Choir presented the Cantata "A Candlelight Christmas" by Benjamin Harlan during the worship service on Sunday, December 2nd. Pastor David and Leroy Kennedy were our narrators and read passages in between the choir's musical performances. From Advent to Nativity, the message of Christmas was conveyed in fresh musical mo-

ments through traditional carols and new Christmas songs by the choir and organ and the spoken word through narration. Those present enjoyed this special Christmas musical celebration immensely. We are so thankful to Tommy Bishop, our organist/choir director, for leading our Chancel Choir and for his beautiful organ performances. Let the choir members and Tommy know how special they are to Grace next time you see them!



If You Missed Sunday, December 16th...

Sunday, December 16, was a Sunday of beautiful music, Advent candle lighting, special awards, a heartwarming Secret Santa report and a wonderful message from Pastor David. Grace is blessed with so many talented members. We enjoyed Katie Wagner and Cole Heatherly who so willingly shared their musical talents of beautiful singing. We are in awe of the beauty of our sanctuary so lovingly decorated by our Altar Guild and the Lion's Club. Then we were delighted to see the generous heart of Mrs. Barbara Rippey recognized with two

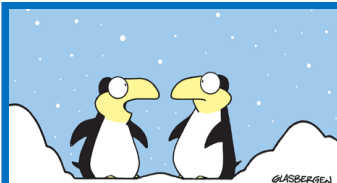
awards. Mike Farr presented her with the Woodman of the World Caring for Others Award. Katie Wagner also thanked her for her donation to help support a Charleston trip by the Junior Civitan Club to participate in a Junior Civitan Fundraiser. Three of our Youth: Katie Wagner, Grant Berry, and Brianna Bailey participated in this trip. Brad Valentine gave a report of a very successful Secret Santa year #29 due to a dedicated group of volunteers. We have so many blessings at Grace!



Thank You



Your Grace Church Staff: Karen, Pat, Sheryl, Grayson, and Pastor David wish to thank everyone for a wonderful 2018 and for our bonus Gifts. We wish you all a Happy New Year!



"Faith means believing in things you've never seen...like your feet!"

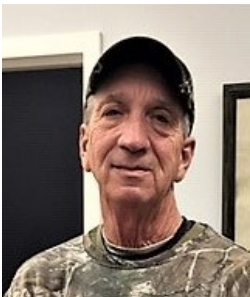


Highlight on Grace's New Members



Kim Love Harris

"I have lived in Union most of my life and have had affiliations with Grace throughout the years whether it be through friends that attended Grace or my son, Grant, attending GUMCEP from the age of two. He began attending Sonshiners and Vacation Bible School with friends he met through GUMCEP. We became acquainted with the caring members at Grace through these programs and always admired the welcoming and loving spirit of the church members. Even though I just made it official to become a member, Grace has felt like "home" for many years. My Son's spiritual growth through the children's programs and youth programs made it obvious to me that there was something very special about this congregation. I am so happy to finally have become a member and look forward to continuing my own spiritual growth as part of the Grace family."



Mike Farr

Mike tells us he stopped attending church when he was 17. A Grace member, Johnny Sinclair, invited him to Grace on several occasions. He remembers being nervous as he approached the church doors, but the closer he came, the better he felt. When he walked into our sanctuary, he felt the love and welcoming friendliness of our members. He was warmly greeted by Jack and Betty Rash and he knew he had found his church family! We are happy to highlight Mike and welcome him once again into our church family!



Darla Love

"I have had a connection with Grace Methodist Church for many years. While working with the youth at First Presbyterian Church, we combined the Grace and Frist Presbyterian youth. When my son and his family joined a Methodist church in Edgefield, South Carolina, David Bauknight was the minister there. We always attended special occasions at his church. And, finally, my grandson, Grant, started attending Grace's youth and enjoyed your church so much. Kim and I decided to start attending church with him and here we are with our old and new friends."



Secret Santa Says Thank You!!

The 29th year of Secret Santa was another success! This year we were able to help 250 + children. Neil Valentine, Abbie Valentine, Sheryl Price, David Maness, Diane Kell, Brooke Valentine, Freada Rinaca, Jan Thompson, Sally Palmer, Rusty Price,



Dusty Harmon, and Brad Valentine assisted parents as they arrived to pick up gifts on Tuesday, December 11th. It was a wonderful joy to see. Thanks go out to all who helped make Secret Santa's 29th year a success. Special thanks go to Brad and Brooke Valentine who have selflessly coordinated this program for the past 18 years.

November 28, 2018 posted by *Jessica Brodie*



A Hope and a Promise

By Bishop L. Jonathan Holston

(Excerpt From the December Advocate)

"But the angel said to them, do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." Luke 2:11

For many of us, this season will be an endurance marathon of way too much to do, way too much to eat and way too much stress. However, the true blessing of the Christmas season can be discovered when we focus on preparing our hearts to receive again the greatest gift given to humankind: the hope, comfort, joy and glad tidings the baby Jesus brought to earth.

The birth of the Christ child was the fulfillment of God's promise. This is really good news! Even though our minds are often distracted by other thoughts, preoccupied with schedules and not always thinking about heavenly things, the Christmas story still clearly speaks to us today. While we live in such a highly competitive society—one that produces winners and losers, not only in sports, but also in the business world, in office settings and even in the church—we have the opportunity to let God come and minister to us in this Christmas season. And even though we live in a world that encourages personal gain, it is important to remember that the same message delivered to the shepherds is shared with you and me. Once again, it is the story of God's love coming down to save, to restore and to forgive. It is a message we have heard before. It is a message of hope that God is with us, looking on.

About hope, retired Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan Page says, "When you have no hope, you want to destroy the society around you. When you have hope, you want to protect the society. The goal is to give hope and provide opportunity."

Choosing hope makes all the difference.

At the heart of the Christmas message there is a baby born who could change everything. Christmas is all about Jesus coming to be with us. It is about Immanuel, God with us, looking on. So despite all the distractions around us, we focus on this hope that exists because of the birth of baby Jesus. We anticipate the joy of experiencing God's promise fulfilled, and in so doing, our hearts are prepared both to receive the greatest gift and to share it freely with others.

Let us focus on sharing the gift of hope with all whom we meet, and let us remember in prayer those still recovering from the storms of past and present that have caused damage for many people in South Carolina, those who have been elected to lead us in government in our communities, our state and our nation, and let us also remember in prayer the South Carolina Conference delegation along with the global United Methodist Church as all prepare for the called General Conference in February 2019.

May this prayer of hope be a gift to you during the Christmas season:

For every beginning, there is an ending. For every memory, there is a dream. As we share in the excitement of this season and the hope that it offers, may we cultivate the capacity to respect and honor one another. May we live with a purpose bigger than ourselves. May we recognize that our lives will be measured by our actions more than our words. May we be vigilant in service to all regardless of their place or station in life. May we be ever mindful to:

Watch your thoughts, because they become your words;
Watch your words, because they become your actions;
Watch your actions, because they become your habits;
Watch your habits, because they become your character;
Watch your character, because it determines your destiny.

May we walk through this Christmas season inspired by the hope found in the birth of baby Jesus and determined to be active members in our churches and in our communities, and may we move beyond ourselves. May the God of grace and mercy go with us.
Amen.

*"Rejoice, Rejoice! Our Savior
Jesus Christ is Born!"*



Hallelujah!



Children's Christmas Program December 2, 2018



The MCF/Sonshiners presented "A Shepherd's Prayer" on December 2, 2018. They portrayed the manger scene complete with angels, wise men, shepherds, a lamb, and Mary and Joseph with Baby Jesus. Sally read the prayer and sang "Move Me Closer". A big THANK YOU goes to our MCF/Sonshiners, their dedicated leaders, and especially Sally Summers for the sweet musical program presented after "Singing Around the Christmas Tree". We also enjoyed the children ringing their bells to "Joy to the World". Afterwards, everyone was ready for delicious hot chocolate and homemade cookies provided by UMW. Everyone's contributions added so much to our Christmas season of love, joy, peace on earth, and good will from God toward men!



MCF/Sonshiners' "Happy Birthday, Jesus" Christmas Party

After a bus ride through Union looking at all the pretty Christmas lights, the children enjoyed a pizza meal while watching a Christmas movie on December 16th. Following the movie they enjoyed a cake decorated with "Jesus" in the manger. Everyone had a great time! Thanks go out to all who help the MCF/Sonshiners. You make the difference!



"Singing Around the Chrismon Tree" and Cookies and Cocoa

Due to inclement weather on December 2, "Singing" was held in the church sanctuary. After Pastor David reminded us of the coming birth of the Christ child, we all sang familiar Christmas carols lead by Bob Love playing the guitar. Afterwards, the children presented their program, and then...well, we had delicious cookies and hot cocoa prepared by Grace UMW. It was a joyous evening!



The ReConnection Youth Secret Santa Shopping



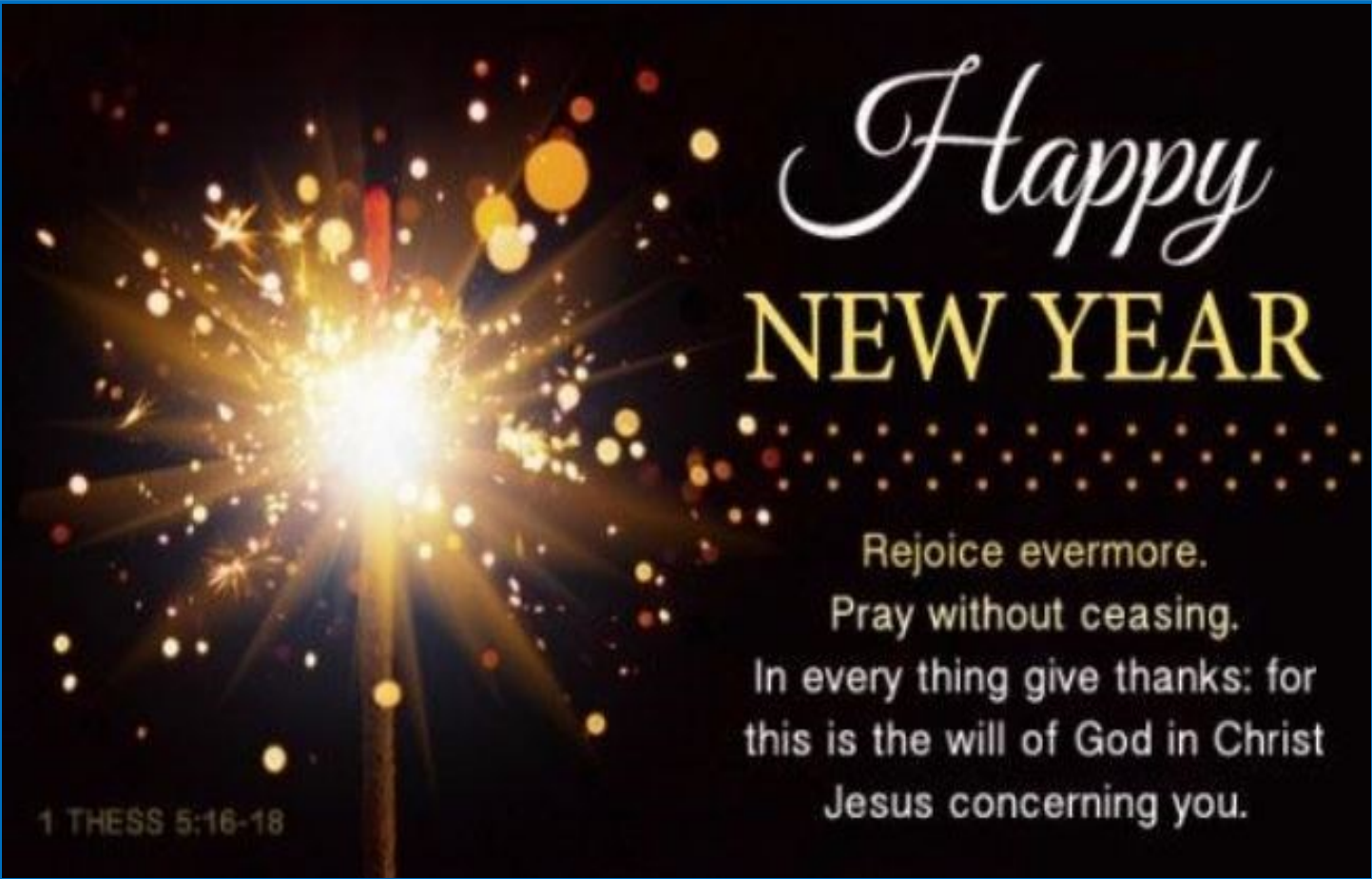
Grayson has been doing a fantastic job leading our youth. Recently, he and The ReConnection Youth went Secret Santa shopping for several children. Afterwards, they enjoyed a fun filled time of fellowship while eating out at Zaxby's.

If you're in grades 6-12 and haven't come to a youth meeting, you have missed good times, great lessons, fellowship, games, events, and much more! Come on! Grayson would love for you to be there!



THE GRACE MESSENGER

Grace United Methodist Church
201 South. Church Street
Union, SC 29379
E-mail: mail@graceunion.org



Happy
NEW YEAR

Rejoice evermore.
Pray without ceasing.
In every thing give thanks: for
this is the will of God in Christ
Jesus concerning you.

1 THESS 5:16-18