

The Lamplighter

December 2024 • Volume XVII • Issue XII

Have You Got Room?
Luke 2:7

"And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." (RSV)

Well, Thanksgiving is now past (though the turkey may yet linger in some altered form). But even before we took a bite from that drumstick, or saw the first larger than life comic strip character make its way past Macy's, the media and stores bombarded us with advertisements, sales and displays all pointing to the coming Christmas season (as if we would forget without their "gentle" reminders). There's a change in the air, and not just from the dropping temperatures. All around us, we can feel the excitement of Christmas on the way, and it feels pretty good.

But, amid all the holiday whirl of Christmas shopping, bargain hunting and present wrapping, we need to stop for a few moments and examine ourselves. Are we somehow letting the grand central historical fact of the Advent of our Lord and Savior, who came as the real "reason for the season," to redeem a lost world, be crowded out by the "...visions of sugarplums" which dance in our heads? Sadly, this is an all too real danger for us in this season.

As we once again hear the story of the Nativity, and remember its characters, we will again be touched by their story. And, along with remembering the heroes of the story, we will also be reminded of its villains, as well. No doubt, we will hear the usual criticism of one of these, the Bethlehem innkeeper, who had "no room" for the Holy Family on that far away December night. However, instead of holding him in self-righteous indignation, let us instead turn our love and compassion to all those who still say to Jesus, as He knocks at the doors of their hearts, and say, "Sorry, no room."

In this Advent season, we need to ask ourselves, "Have we got room for Jesus in our lives, not just at Christmas, but in all of our lives?" Let us resolve here and now that we won't allow the real reason for Advent and Christmas to get lost amid the red tag sales and television specials. Let us allow ourselves to be open to this special time of God's love. May all of you have a joyous, blessed and meaningful Christmas season. See you in church Sunday!

Ken

Baby Book Program

A children's book is placed in the Church Library in honor of each child born to our church family. The following child was honored with the book listed below:

God Gave Us You by Lisa Dawn Bergren and Laura J. Bryant

In honor of: Archie Guthrie Griffin, "Gus" (born October 12, 2024)

Parents: Archie and Zannah Griffin

Grandparents: Steve and Pam Griffin



Mary Ella Peele helps advertise the Salvation Army Angel Tree



FMCW CHILDREN AND YOUTH

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Merry Christmas from Pastors and Staff

First Methodist Church Washington (established 1784)

From Your Associate Pastor of Missional Discipleship

Differently Waiting

To My First Church Family,

Waiting patiently has never been a great virtue of mine. I have a feeling, it's not a strong virtue for anyone; at least not naturally. Waiting around fills us with angst. It makes us nervous. We don't always know what to do when we have to wait. However, as a self-proclaimed visionary person, I find that I'm called to wait for ideas and visions to come to fruition more often than I like.

There are plenty of unresolved issues that we've been waiting to see resolution to for quite some time. Waiting is not fun, especially when there are serious and real matters at stake. The reality is God may need us to wait even longer.

As much as we don't like the concept of waiting, it's important to remember that waiting is a hallmark of the Christian identity. From the moment of Christ's ascension, Christians have lived and died in a state of waiting. We are people in waiting for Christ's return. We look for that day when all will be made right again. We look for that time when "swords will be transformed into plowshares, and spears into pruning hooks, where nation will not lift up sword against nation, and where they will learn war no more" (Isaiah 2:4, Joel 3:10, Micah 4:3). We are waiting for the Kingdom of God to finally be established forever on earth like it is in heaven. We wait for His glory and righteousness to reign in our souls and communities. We have been waiting for a *looonnnng* time for these promises to come to pass. So much so that it is part of who we are; we are a people who wait.

As people who wait, we wait differently than the rest of the world. While the world waits in states of anxiety and impatience, Christians wait in **anticipation**. While we wait for the Kingdom, we don't just sit on our hands and do nothing. Nor do we force the world to bend to our will. Waiting in anticipation means that we are working for the Kingdom in conjunction with its being built. We live as though it is already present, active and has dominion over our life. We worship welcoming Christ's presence with us every week in full anticipation that he will indeed be with us.

Advent is about remembering how to wait as a Christian. We wait for Christmas, for Christ to come again into our world. In our waiting we anticipate Christ's presence with us already. Let us remember after a year where a lot of waiting has occurred, that we know better than most how to wait differently. And may we, as we wait, continue to live as though Christ's rule is here and now.

In Christ's Love,
Stephen Bazan

SHEPHERDING MINISTRY - "NO SHEEP LEFT BEHIND"

"Then I will give you shepherds after My own heart, who will feed you on knowledge and understanding."
Jeremiah 3:15

Dear Church Family:

This is an exciting time in our church here in Washington as we worship, pray, minister, witness, and grow. The Shepherding Ministry at First Methodist Church is an important part of it. The ministry is celebrating its first year. Shepherding is one of the doorways to our church family and to those who want to be a part of our membership. This ministry is made up of faithful lay members of our church, willing to love, serve and connect with others.

This year we have had 17 Shepherds who did their very best to connect with each of their church family flocks. They committed, at least twice a year, to contacting each of their assigned church members and welcomed new attendees.

We have enjoyed meeting so many church family members both seasoned and new. It has been a true blessing! Shepherding is about loving your neighbor, in this case your church family, and stepping out in faith to love, pray, show compassion and concern for people you care about. Please pray about being involved in this ministry which not only blesses those who participate but also blesses our ministers because it is difficult for them to "check-in" on every member. It's not a burden and doesn't take that much time. Some Shepherds make phone calls, some send notes and/or see each other at church.. **WE NEED MORE SHEPHERDS** which allows our flocks to be smaller and provide better contact with our church family members. What better way to love our family than to have the

(Shepherding continued at bottom of page 3)

		December 2024						
		SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1	First Sunday of Advent 9:00 AM Blended Worship Service and Children's Church 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:15 AM Traditional Worship Service	2 9:30 AM Methodist Women's Executive Board Meeting 5:30 PM Child Care Board Meeting 7:00 PM Troop 99 Meeting	3 Circle Meetings 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 6:00 PM Methodist Women Christmas General Meeting	4 9:30 AM WWBS "Prepare Him Room" Event 4:00 PM Men of Redemption 5:30 PM Family Night Dinner 6:15 PM Children's Ministry Activities 6:15 PM Advent Study 6:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Cantata Rehearsal 7:30 PM Praise Team Rehearsal	5 7:00 AM Men at the Table	6	7	
8	9:00 AM Blended Worship and Children's Church 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:15 AM Traditional Worship Service 6:00 PM Yahoos	9 5:30 PM Missions Committee Meeting 7:00 PM Troop 99 Meeting	10 10:00 AM Staff Meeting 7:00 PM Church Council Meeting	11 4:00 PM Men of Redemption 6:15 PM Family Night Dinner 6:15 PM Advent Study 6:15 PM Children's Ministry Activities 6:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Cantata Rehearsal 7:30 PM Praise Team Rehearsal	12 7:00 AM Men at the Table 6:00 PM SPRC	13	14 11:00 AM Matthew 25 Fellowship Meal	
15	8:00 AM Methodist Men's Breakfast 9:00 AM Blended Worship and Children's Church 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:15 AM Christmas Cantata 1:00 PM Youth Christmas Party 4:00 PM Channel's Missional Community—Christmas Bags for John Cotton Tayloe	16 Newsletter Deadline Preschool Closed 5:30 PM Missions Committee Meeting 5:30 PM Child Care Board Meeting 6:30 PM Preschool Board Meeting 7:00 PM Troop 99 Meeting	17 10:00 AM Staff Meeting	18 4:00 PM Men of Redemption 5:30 PM Family Night Dinner 6:30 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Cantata Rehearsal 7:30 PM Praise Team	19 7:00 AM Men at the Table 6:00 PM Child Care Staff Meeting 6:30 PM Preschool Christmas Program	20 First Day of Winter	21	
22	9:00 AM Children's Play 10:15 AM Sunday School 11:15 AM Traditional Worship Service	23 Preschool Winter Break Begins 7:00 PM Troop 99 Meeting	24 Child Care Closed Christmas Eve 9:00 PM Candlelight Communion Service	25 Christmas Day Church Office Closed Child Care Closed	26 Church Office Closed Child Care Closed	27	28	
29	10:00 AM Combined Worship Service—Lessons and Carols	30 1:00 PM Matthew 25 Board Meeting 7:00 PM Troop 99 Meeting	31 New Year's Eve					

First Methodist Church Meetings & Activities Calendar



Letters

Dear First Methodist Church,

On behalf of The Salvation Army of Washington, please accept my thanks for your generous contribution. We greatly appreciate tyour donation which enables us to continue our mission of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ and meeting human needs in His name.

May God continue to bless and keep you!

Lord Bless,
Sgt. Les Ashby
Corps Officer

Dear Staff.

I am blessed by the outreach ministry of Neva and Tim Cashion for their prayers, cards, phone calls, and communion services. Request prayers for healing from colon surgery on September 23, 2024. Doing well and expect recovery. May God bless our church.

I will continue to pray for the people of Western North Carolina.

With love,
Ann Warner

Dear Friends of Open Door Women's Shelter,

Thank you for your support of Open Door Women's Shelter. With your help, we continue to provide a safe place for women and their children to live together while gaining skills and resources necessary to transition into a stable, long-term home.

Open Door Women's Shelter welcomed our first residents in January 2019 and has since served 120 women and 56 children. We recently transitioned a mom and her 9-year-old daughter. They arrived at our shelter just after Christmas and remained residents through May, eventually finding their own home with the assistance of our community. Today that mom is a volunteer with our shelter's Day Center program, sharing her experience with homelessness with our current residents.

Open Door is expanding! We are working toward raising funds to add a 3,000 square foot addition that will provide 15 more beds for women and children! Please visit our website for more information.

We could not assist any of our clients without the support of community members like you!

Thank you,
Laurie Stewart
Executive Director

Eagle's Wings Food Pantry Christian Love in Action

We acknowledge with appreciation
Your donation to our ministry.

Update on Safe Harbor Helpline:

Whether it is a fire, a lost job, illness, a financial challenge resulting in an eviction, leaving an uninhabitable living space, domestic conflict, or the lack of affordable housing, individuals and families end up living in their cars or other unsafe places. Imagine not knowing where your next meal will be, not having a place to take care of personal needs, and not feeling safe! It is a traumatic experience, especially for children. Safe Harbor provides a temporary safe solution. Everyone deserves to be safe!

Safe Harbor Helpline is now a non-profit program under the umbrella of Agape Health Services. Agape's mission is "To provide high quality, comprehensive, coordinated primary healthcare and supportive services to the communities we serve and improve health through effective interventions, patient education and chronic disease management." We feel that Safe Harbor Helpline is a good fit with Agape.

We continue to collaborate with Zion Men's Shelter, Region 12 Coordinated Entry, and Open Door Women's Shelter, as well as many local agencies including DSS, Trillium, and Ecu Health Beaufort.

Safe Harbor Helpline continues to assist individuals and families experiencing homelessness. In the last fiscal year, 226 callers were given information and referrals on local agencies. Thirty-nine family units that met the HUD definition of homelessness were placed in the motel until an alternative could be determined. A total of 366 nights were purchased for these families. The breakdown of people assisted was: 31 women, 20 men, and 37 children. Twelve families, assisted by our case manager, went directly into housing from the motel.

We have received a generous challenge grant from the Eddie & Jo Allison Smith Family Foundation, and we must raise \$3,000 prior to December 31, 2024, to receive the matching funds. Please donate to help us meet this challenge. Use this address: 303 West 13th Street, Washington, NC 27889.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sally Love

Safe Harbor Helpline
A non-profit program of Agape Health Services

Celebrating the gift of life during the month of December:

- 3rd Kay Smithwick, Arlene Peele
- 5th Judy Griffin, Holly Cook
- 6th Seth Talley Sr., Moses Moye III,
- 8th Delane Fuquay, Melonie Lewis
- 9th Jane Page
- 10th Alice Pfeiffer
- 13th Molly Moore
- 14th Brenda Singleton
- 15th Ron Alligood, Walter Jessup
- 16th Dixon Davis, Emma Harris
- 18th Ed Anderson, Edward Lewis, Caleb Woolard
- 21st Bill Bowes, Elizabeth Sweatland
- 22nd Stephanie Capehart, Emily Lobos
- 23rd Kay Smith, Laurie Weston, Tammy Howerton
- 24th Beth Page, Nancy Rowe
- 25th Willie Peebles
- 26th Carol Ann Rawls
- 28th Chic Gurganus
- 29th Sonny Swanner
- 30th John Ashley
- 31st Pat Talley

(Shepherding continued)

best communication possible. **We will have an informational meeting for those who would like to know more about this ministry and for our existing Shepherds on Saturday, January 4, 2025 at 10:30 a.m. in Wesley Hall. Please come and hear about the blessing of this ministry.**

Thank you and God Bless,

George (724) 822-4749) and Bonnie (724) 822-1529) Isovitsch
John (910) 650-8263) and Janie (910) 620-8720 Hauser

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen" 1 Peter 4:10-11.

Christmas Cantata

On December 15 at the 11:15 service in the traditional sanctuary of First Methodist Church, the Chancel Choir, along with guest soloists and instrumentalists, will present *Joy Has Dawned* by Lloyd Larson. Please join us as we celebrate this joyous season awaiting the birth of our Savior!

Family Ministries

There are so many things that are going on, it is hard to pick just a few things to share with you all this season. A thank you goes out to the Family Ministries Committee who has been meeting and coming up with several ideas for our church family to participate in to achieve our church's mission to Know Christ, Grow in Christ and Share Christ. I thank Pastor Stephen for his teaching for our Advent season *When Heaven Comes To Earth - A Study on Advent*. We learned about the meaning of Advent using Scripture and John Wesley's sermon *The Way To the Kingdom* and sang a few hymns as we prepared to celebrate the birth of Jesus this Christmas.

The adult ministries is working to share information on all of our Sunday School classes and the different offerings. Please reference these to help you pick a place on Sunday morning that you can continue to grow in your relationship with Christ. The ABC Sunday School Class is currently focused on the minor prophets - a study which should run through the summer. The Joy and the Young Adult classes are studying the Book of Matthew, both of which have different facilitators, so maybe attend both to see which one is a better fit for you. The Friendship Class is now focused on the Gospel Project - a study of Genesis.

We continue our search for a leader of children and youth ministries. While we have had a few applicants, we are still trusting God to prepare and bring to us the best match who will become part of the team that disciples and teaches our Children and Youth about Christ and helps guide them in their spiritual journey. This will be someone who will join me in preparing and teaching our children and youth about Christ and helping guide them in their spiritual journey. Our young people face so many things that pull them away; this person will help them build firm foundations in their faith. The job description is here and on our website. If someone comes to mind, please encourage them to apply or reach out to me with questions. My prayer every day is for God's will and His timing in bringing this person to join First Methodist in sharing Christ with our children and youth.

As we walk in this Advent season, where God is preparing the way and our hearts for the celebration of His Son Jesus, my prayer for each of us is that we are keeping our eyes focused on Christ. Despite all the twinkling lights and smell of Christmas trees and the hustle and bustle of parties, our true focus should be to share God's great love with others in all that we say and all that we do so that He may be glorified!

But then the chosen time came. God sent his Son. A woman gave birth to him. He was born under the authority of the law. ⁵ He came to set free those who were under the authority of the law. He wanted us to be adopted as children with all the rights children have. Galatians 4:4-5

In Christ's service,

Child Care

The gifts of Christmas are so deep and overwhelming. The very thought of trying to help children 5 years and younger understand the magnitude of the sacrifice God made for each of us can be daunting. How to simplify that yet not lose the awesomeness of it all is a joy-filled challenge. Then I listened to a young child telling about how Jesus lives in his heart, forgives his sins and the child pours out thanksgiving and any angst at sharing the marvel of it all flees. The simple "God loves us this much, can you imagine it" is enough. The children of the Child Care will spend December hearing and learning and celebrating that marvel, that amazing thing God did and the miracle of Jesus Christ, the greatest gift ever. Thank you all for your prayers and support of this ministry that has the privilege of touching so many little hearts and minds all year long.

Diane Van Staaldouin

Child Care Director

Director's Cell: 252-947-2836

Missions

Our Mission Committee purpose is reflected by our mission statement:

"To connect the congregation to opportunities to be hands and feet of Jesus locally and the broader community".

Events and Actions of the Missions Committee This Year

On January 21 and Wednesday, January 24. Missions helped to support Open Door Community Center. Doreen Trottier gave a presentation on their 5-year Open Door Celebration and their capital campaign.

House of Hope - On February 14 to March 31. This is a ministry in Bolivia that provides a haven to serve those who have been trafficked. House of Hope needed more funds to provide housing for those who are waiting on accommodations. The Mission Committee dedicate our 2024 Lenten Offering to the House of Hope

Then on April **5 2024** FMCW supported a fundraising dinner for the House of Hope in Wesley Hall to help finance housing it was a joint effort with Harvest Church.

Youth Prayer Breakfast on March 14 Missions, Men of Redemption, Channels Missional Community and Methodist Men helped sponsor the youth event with a biscuit breakfast and helped provide Christian motivational speakers to address the group.

Yard Sale happened on April 21 to April 27, 2024 a huge success because of so many volunteers and church and community participation.

May 26, Rise Against Hunger a food packing event that was held in Fellowship Hall, raise a record amount and we were joined by 5 neighboring churches.

October 27, The Church Has Left The Building another great success where we leave our church building to serve our community.

November 5, The Chili Cook-Off we had a fantastic turn out and plenty of Chili. Thank you to the chef's, the many volunteers, those who made donations and the planning committee of Jane Dockins, Kaye Alligood, Deb Branch, Carolyn Erwin, and Patty Jackson. This fundraiser made \$667 for missions. PTL!!! Well Done Church Family!!!

Upcoming events.

Salvation Army Angel Tree,
Shoobox Operation,
Shop with a Safety Officer (Washington Police Department)

Missions budgeted support of seven local missions and one global.

1. Saturday Night Jamboree
2. Open Door Community Center
3. Salvation Army
4. Eagles Wings
5. Ruth's House
6. Zion Shelter
7. Purpose Of God Annex
8. And now TMS Global supporting the Tisho family operating an orphanage in Tanzania.

First Methodist Church Women's Christmas Dinner!

The Circle of Kind Blessings will be catering the Christmas dinner this year on December 3, at 6:00 PM in Wesley Hall! Circles come together that night to enjoy great food, fellowship, and entertainment!

If you have joined our church or have been visiting our church and are not a member of a circle, we would like to invite you to our Christmas dinner!!! If you are interested in coming, please call Kaye Buckman at 252-946-9591.

**Methodist Women
Circle News**

Monday, December 2, 2024
MW Executive Board Meeting
9:30 AM, Asbury Conference Room

Tuesday, December 3, 2024
MW Christmas Dinner and General Meeting
6:00 PM, Wesley Hall

Tuesday, December 3, 2024
MW Circle Meetings:

Agape Circle
9:00 AM, Fellowship Hall, Backpack Pals
and Child Care Snacks
5:15 PM, Parlor

Circle of Kind Blessings
5:00 PM, Wesley Hall

Circle of Mary and Martha
9:00 AM, Fellowship Hall—Backpack Pals
and Child Care Snacks
10:00 AM, Asbury Conference Room

Circle of Joy
5:30 PM, Wesley Hall

SONshine Circle
5:30 PM, Asbury Conference Room

IT'S POINSETTIA TIME!

The Kaye Buckman Circle will be placing poinsettias in the church sanctuary and Wesley Hall on Sunday, December 22. If you would like to purchase a poinsettia in memory of or in honor of a loved one, please fill out the form below and attach \$10 for each poinsettia ordered (checks should be made out to the Kaye Buckman Circle). Forms and payment must be turned into the church office (or put in the collection plate) by 12 noon on Tuesday, December 17. A special insert, with the names of your loved ones, will be placed in the bulletin on December 22. The poinsettias will remain until Christmas Eve, at which time you may pick up your poinsettias. All funds raised will be used for the special needs of the special needs of our church family.

IN HONOR OF _____
BY _____

IN HONOR OF _____
BY _____

IN HONOR OF _____
BY _____

IN MEMORY OF _____
BY _____

IN MEMORY OF _____
BY _____

Please provide your telephone number in case there is a question about your order. _____

Family Night Dinner Menus

<u>December</u>		<u>January</u>	
12/4/24	Marinated Pork Tenderloin, Green Beans, Pineapple Casserole, Rolls, and Dessert	1/1/25	NO MEAL — NEW YEAR'S EVE
12/11/24	Chicken Pastry, Cooked Cabbage, Baked Yams, Cornbread, and Dessert	1/8/25	Chicken Pastry, Sweet Potatoes, Cabbage, Yeast Rolls, and Dessert
12/18/24	Chili, Baked Potato Bar, Mixed Green Salad, Cornbread, and Dessert	1/15/25	Spaghetti Casserole, Mixed Green Salad, Garlic Bread, and Dessert
12/25/24	NO MEAL — CHRISTMAS DAY	1/22/25	BBQ Pork, Slaw, "Up the Creek" Potatoes, Cornbread, and Dessert
		1/29/25	Chili, Baked Potato Bar, Salad, Crackers, and Dessert

Please sign up each week or call the church office by Noon on Monday.

Preschool

The month of November began the wonderfully busy holiday season for the preschool. Our Chapel time was focused on thankfulness. The children learned about Daniel being thankful to God for saving him from the lions, Jonah giving thanks to God for always being with him, even while in the belly of a big fish, and Jesus feeding the 5000 after simply thanking God for the sacrifice a little boy made. All of the teachers and children worked hard to prepare songs for our Thanksgiving Program this year. Parents and grandparents were able to come watch a short program and have a special snack with us. The children did an amazing job with their songs.

The Preschool once again is participating in an effort to provide the foster children of Beaufort County with an amazing Christmas. We "adopted" two children and the preschool teachers and families came together to buy gifts for them. We will have a special lesson for the children this month to teach them about the joy of giving and pray over the different items collected.

We know that December will go by very quickly, but look forward to the joy that the children will have. It is always a fun time filled with crafts, singing, and bringing praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Our Christmas program is planned for December 19th. We will resume class on January 7th with students after the holiday.

As always, we appreciate the congregations support of our program. Here a few ways you might be able to help out the preschool during this busy time.

1. Pray for our students and staff. It is always needed, but especially around the holidays. Pray for our energy to match the children's enthusiasm as we prepare our hearts and minds to welcome the Christ child once again.
2. Attend our Christmas Program. The church is invited to attend our Christmas Program as well. It would be great to see congregation members supporting our efforts and making connections with our families and students. (December 19th at 6:30pm in Wesley Hall)
3. In the spirit of giving, we are still in need of funds for our Scholarship Program for the remainder of the school year. Please be in prayer over possibly giving to this cause and if you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me.

Amanda Bazan
Preschool Director
Cell: 252-532-7604
fmcwpreschool@gmail.com

Matthew 25

The 80 guests of Matthew 25 and 17 church member homebounds were provided an honest-to-goodness fish fry by the fish fry crew led by Tim Copeland and crew members Rick Howdy, Tom Willey, Reid Brodie and Brandon Floyd. This group of men were really enjoying what they were doing. The Friendship Sunday School class led by Paula Willey and team of Kim Copeland, Wendy Ingalls, Jean Ash and Bonita Arvizo provided the sides of slaw, baked beans and hushpuppies with The First Presbyterian Church contributing desserts.

During the October Board meeting, it was decided that it would be nice for the victims of hurricane Helene in western North Carolina to receive an Agape card wishing blessing, saying hello and sending prayers from the eastern part of North Carolina. Pam Deese explained that as the guests left, we would like for them to sign the cards. It was an absolutely overwhelming response.

The regular volunteers for November were Susan Zachary taking care of hygiene supplies, nurses Sharon Williams and Wanda Lilley conducting 11 blood pressure checks, Beth Litchfield in her fish hat welcoming folks in the parking lot as they arrived, and John Gunnels sharing Bibles and giving prayer support. Kay Smithwick provided hymns and Thanksgiving songs on the piano with Lorre Bowen sharing a devotion from Romans 8. Ann Cherry provided special desserts for the homebound which were delivered by Diana Tew, Missy Deaner, Barbara Smith, Jane Weaver and Cathy Oestreich with Cathy Burdi cutting and wrapping the desserts. Other volunteers were Buffy and Catherine Lich, Eleanor Davis, Yamilet Martinez, Anne and Bruce Mears and Caroline, Cate and Madison Swanner. Robert Smithwick is instrumental in putting up and taking down the signs each month as well as making sure the Fellowship Hall is left in good order along with anything else he is asked to do.

Psalm 118:1 "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever."

Youth Ministry

November was filled with fun events and digging deeper into God’s word along with some service opportunities. In Sunday School, the Youth were learning in Genesis about the covenant that God made with Abraham and why a covenant with God is so much better than any other sort of promise. They learned about how God made good on his promise with the birth of Isaac, then with Isaac and his wife Rebekkah raising their twin boys, and still God promised wonderful things.

The youth had opportunities to do some mission work, including a fun night going to Walmart to pick out items to fill Operation Christmas Child boxes. The Youth worked with the Children’s Ministry and were able to pack 29 boxes that will be shipped out to children all over the world to share Jesus with them. On November 24, the Youth gathered in the Fellowship Hall and had a Friendsgiving event with Ham and Turkey and all the fixings! It was a time of great fellowship, with some time spent thinking about what we all have to be grateful for, and then playing fun games as well.

In December, the Youth are invited to a Progressive Dinner in Washington Park. This will be on Sunday December 8 at 5:00 p.m. We will start at 212 Riverside Drive and will finish by 7:30 p.m. at 215 Isabella Ave, Washington, NC. This should be a fun event for our youth to spend time together and with church members. Youth are also invited to join the Children’s Ministry on Wednesday, December 11, at 4:30 caroling at the Willows.

Looking to January, the youth will be preparing and serving the meal for Matthew 25 on Saturday January 11. Lots of hands are needed this Saturday to help with food preparation and serving the meal. If you are able to help, please contact Sarah Beth.

Youth will also be going on a winter retreat January 24-26 in Blowing Rock, North Carolina with Club Ministries. This will be a great time of fellowship for our group but also of hearing the Word of God and worshipping our awesome God. We will also have the opportunity to do some snowtubing while there. We will leave at 3 p.m. on Friday January 24 – it is a long 5-plus-hour drive to Blowing Rock from Washington. Please contact Sarah Beth ASAP as she must turn in numbers by December 1.

There are so many opportunities, I pray that many of our Youth will come out and share in growing in Christ. We are so thankful for Jesus, may we all focus on why we celebrate - *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord.* Luke 2:11

In Christ’s Name,

Sarah Beth

Children's Ministry

December is such a busy month with our children being so excited for all the joy that comes out for Christmas and that is no different for our Children's Ministry here at church. I am so excited that our play practices have been going well. We have 22 children who are participating in our play this year! I pray that everyone will plan to join us in this wonderful telling of Jesus's birth on Sunday, December 22, at 9:00 a.m. This will take the place of worship that day, and we plan to have a little something special for the children after the play.

In Sunday School, the Children have studied through the book of Genesis learning about creation, Noah and the Ark, Abraham and his son Isaac and then Jacob and Esau. We are looking forward in the new year to learning about Joseph and his brothers and God guiding the people in and through Egypt!

During Wednesday nights, we had a great time carving pumpkins and seeing how we are like a pumpkin! We were also able to do some mission work like packing shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. We invite families to join us on Wednesday, December 4, to decorate Advent wreaths to have at home, and then on December 11, we will meet at the Willows (Willow Court, Washington NC) to sing some Christmas carols for the residents there. After we sing, we will come back to the church for dinner and a celebration. There will be a break on Wednesday nights, and Children's programming will start back on Wednesday, January 15.

There are many things going on, but I pray that we will all share in the focus of the true reason for this wonderful season - *"A child will be born to us. A son will be given to us. He will rule over us. And he will be called Wonderful Adviser and Mighty God. He will also be called Father Who Lives Forever and Prince Who Brings Peace.* Isaiah 9:6

In Christ's service,

Sarah Beth

Leader, Children and Youth Ministries

Job Overview:

Seeking a passionate and dedicated Leader, Children and Youth Ministries to lead and nurture our children (birth through 12th grade) and their families to grow in spiritual maturity and pursue a relationship with Jesus Christ. The ideal candidate will have a heart that desires to foster a vibrant community of faith through engaging programs and activities.

Responsibilities and Duties:

- Direct and grow a comprehensive ministry program for children and youth that includes Sunday school, children's church, weekly programs for children and youth, camps, retreats, and special events including vacation Bible school, Christmas pageant, fall and Easter activities and summer events.
- Actively lead and build a vibrant, relational community for our youth through activities that include Sunday school, youth group and missional outreach.
- Work alongside Children's and Youth volunteer committees to choose a curriculum that is content-rich and Biblically strong to create an enduring program appropriate for all age levels.
- Recruit, train, and support volunteers to assist in various aspects of the youth and children's ministry and provide needed curriculum, materials, and schedules to volunteers.
- Encourage active involvement from children and youth in weekly worship such as audio-visual team, praise team, praises and prayers, Scripture reading, ushering, communion servers, etc.
- Provide opportunities for children, youth, and their families to foster community among mixed age groups. Meet with youth outside of the church building to nurture relationships.
- Provide regular and clear communication with parents, youth and volunteers about programs and events. Utilize and maintain social media outlets as it relates to the promotion of activities.
- Serve as ex officio member of the Children's and Youth sub-committees.
- Maintain a safe and welcoming environment for children and youth, adhering to Child Protection Plan training.
- Participate in yearly reviews with children and youth sub-committees and Senior Pastor.

Qualifications:

- A personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a desire to continue to grow and strengthen his/her walk with Christ.
- Have passion, joy, and enthusiasm to work with children and youth while playing an integral role in their spiritual development.
- Strong organizational, communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to relate to children, youth, parents, and volunteers effectively.
- Exhibit leadership skills to direct and grow a transformational ministry for children and youth.
- A seminary degree and/or degree in youth ministry is highly desirable, along with experience in youth ministry.
- An understanding and affirmation of Wesleyan theology and Global Methodist doctrine and policy, and/or willingness to learn and grow in this tradition through reading, workshops, and other forms of professional development.

Employment Status/Benefits and Salary:

Full time salaried position. Salary ~\$50,000; Stipend (amount tbd) for work-related expenses; Stipend (tbd) for health insurance; continuing education based on experience and performance.