



FIRST NEWS

DECEMBER 2022

PASTOR'S PAGE

"Advent derives from the Latin *adventus*, which means 'coming.'" ¹

What an exciting thought! The Creator drawing near to everyday people like us. Wait...maybe when I stop to think about it, God drawing near to someone like me could be a terrifying thought!

What will God think?

What will God see?

What will God say?

Thankfully, these are questions that the grace of Jesus can answer in full, but does that free me from responsible living? Absolutely not! *The goal* is to be made whole in love just as God is complete in loving (cf. Matt. 5:48, Common English Bible). Therefore, in response to *the goal*, my anticipation of God drawing near must move me to some sort of preparation. And ironically, by faithfully preparing, much of the above-mentioned anxiety regarding what God will think, see, and say is alleviated.

Think about it. Proper preparation can help us move from high levels of anxiety to high levels of joy, and this truth regarding preparation stretches across all facets of our lives. Essentially, proper preparation can enable us to dance with our anxieties, rather than wrestle with them.

Advent allows us ample opportunity to engage in proper preparation. Each week as we worship, we will look at preparing for Christ's drawing near and coming toward us. Also, over the next few weeks the world around us will undoubtedly bid us to be prepared for countless events, gatherings, and productions.

However, if we are anticipating the things that are to come, and we are preparing ourselves for their arrival, even busy, everyday folks like you and me can dance our way through a joyous Advent season.

Advent Blessings,
Rev. Andy Curtis

¹The United Methodist Book of Worship, pg. 238.

What are Chrismons?

The meaning of Chrismons is "Christ monograms." They are traditionally white and gold designs made from Christian symbols that signify Christ. Chrismons are often displayed on an evergreen tree during the Advent season. Symbols such as stars, crosses, fish, crowns, and the alpha and omega remind us of Christ's identity, his story, and of the Holy Trinity.



Thank You!

Thank you to all the ladies of our church who spent so many hours updating the Chrismons for our tree in the front of our sanctuary.



Youth & Children's News

Christmas Party!!! - All children are invited to our Christmas Party December 14 at 6:00 pm.

No children's or youth activities December 21 & 28 so that you may spend time with your families. We will resume activities January 4, 2023.

The youth had a great time at a bonfire November 2. If you missed it, join us next time!



Merry Christmas!
Chrystal Whitehead, Director of Youth Ministries
Leslie Lucas, Director of Children's Ministries

Kindergarten/Day Care News

MANY THANKS TO THE KINDERGARTEN BOARD

There are many components needed for anything to run more smoothly. We have a wonderful staff, good parents, and great children. These all help to make First Methodist Kindergarten/Day Care the fantastic ministry it is. A support system is also very important. Our Kindergarten Board has worked together over the past 6 years to make sure we stay on the 'right track' in all we do. Thank you to Clarene Jackson, Lynn Hodges, Bebe Andrews, Bonita Powell, and Andy Curtis. Your time, wisdom, and energy is greatly appreciated. (I also must thank Stephanie McGhee and Tim Allen). Please keep up the good work and may God continue to bless all of us.

Dee Dee Mathews, Director

Worship & Arts!!!

Hello Worship & Arts Friends!!!

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD, let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. (Ps.95:1-2)

December is FULL of opportunities to lift our voices (and instruments) in praise to the LORD! We hope you will take advantage of these opportunities to do your part in corporate Worship!!

Here are the Worship Offerings coming up in December

- *Dec. 4 **Christmas Musical "At Last Noel"** featuring Chancel Choir & ASO String Ensemble
- *Dec. 9 **Christmas with THE HOPPERS** featuring Sylacauga Community Choir @ BBCMHS, 7pm.
- *Dec.11 3rd Sunday of Advent / Sunday Worship
- *Dec.18 4th Sunday of Advent / Sunday Worship
- *Dec.24 **Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion**, 5pm
- *Dec.25 Christmas Day Sunday Worship
- *Jan.1 (2023) New Years Day Sunday Worship

If you would like to get on board, just let us know!!

Love of Christ!

David Simpkins, Director of Worship & Arts

ALTAR & NARTHEX FLOWERS

December 4th - ALTAR FLOWERS in the Sanctuary are presented to the glory of God and in loving memory of **Willa Dean Lewis** by Earl Lewis; Steve & Charmelle Lewis; Robin Lewis; Rebekah & Joe Barnett.

December 11th - ALTAR FLOWERS in the Sanctuary are presented to the glory of God and in loving memory of **The Deceased Members of Our Class** by The Upper Room Sunday School Class.

December 18th - ALTAR FLOWERS in the Sanctuary are presented to the glory of God and in loving memory of **all the Prince & Gammage family members who have passed on** by Benny & Nancy Prince.

December 24th - ALTAR FLOWERS in the Sanctuary are presented to the glory of God and in loving memory of **Joe & Janet Swindall** by Leslie, Lilly Kate & Lexi Lucas.

December 25th - ALTAR FLOWERS in the Sanctuary are presented to the glory of God in loving memory of **E. L. Graves, Margaret Graves and Peggy Graves Garris, Steven Graves** by The Graves Families.

Prayer Concerns

| | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Cindy Diffie | Jake Montgomery | Ollie Heath, Jr. |
| Cheryl Dobson | Tiffani Persons | Brandi McDonald |
| Mack Howell | Linda Morris | Pete Baker |
| Lee White | Amanda Farr | Wes Coleman |
| Fay Simpkins | Ben & Linda Gamel | Tanner Bowen |
| Marese Rayfield | Pat Pownall | Lenette Calvin |
| Ginger Marable | Larry Reynolds | Christopher Brown |
| Kelsey Abrams | Bill Roberts | Dennis Buckner |
| Amy R. Thomas | Diane Atkinson | George Gilbert |
| Lou Kyle | Vaughn | Sue White |
| Barbara Bailey | Pastor Joel Maxwell | Johnnie Tankersley |
| Rosie Cochran | Catie Simpkins | |
| Jim Isbell | Kenneth Turner | |
| Dylan Durden | Sally Werling | |

Van Junkins Family (Carolyn Etness' brother), Ken and Ozaline Carter (Karen Parker's parents), Gene & Mary Sasser, Terry Sasser (Jan & Steve Rousseau's family)

~ SPECIAL GIFTS TO THE CHURCH ~

~ November ~

In Memory of Stephanie McGhee by Steven & Janine Moses, Sammy & Gayle Jones, Mahlon & Selena Felkins, Jim & Kay Nail, Danny & Jenny Tolley, Wilbur & Nola Ann Owens, Kevin R. Wiggins, Lee & Eugenia Burch, Mrs. James A. (Renee) Wolfe, Jim & Bellie Hood, Mr. & Mrs. Raymond Styres, Gene Brown & Susan Brown, Tommy & Donna Brown, Grant Taylor, Jean Campbell, FUMC Kindergarten Board (Clarene Jackson, Lynn Hodges, Bonita Powell & Bebe Andrews), First United Methodist Kindergarten, Karen Foote, Joe & Debbie Garner, Rietta Shivers Broom, Van & Lisa Wilkins, Alabama Education Association, Danny & Mandy Johns, Steve and Amy Marlowe, David O Bryant, James McGrady, Virgil & Brenda McGrady, Rex & Linda McAdam, Tom & Terri Tolley, Don & Lynn Hodges, Anne O. Gray, Alina Perrine, Bobby Guet, Shirley Perrine, Susie Bagwell, Josephine Edwards, Jane Cobia & Calvin Miller, Bob & Nancy Steverson, Jim & Joyce Snowden, Grant Taylor, Kim Gallops, Cliff Owens, Nick & Janice Menzies, Sammy & Bebe Andrews, David & Laurie Wilbanks, Bob & Betsy Smith, Jerry & Libby Fielding.

In Memory of Frances Parker by Jim & Kay Nail.

In Memory of James L. Skip Deupree by Virginia Mills.

In Memory of Dr. John & Ann Thompson, Susan T. Conrad by Col. Jim Conrad.

In Memory of John Brown by Jerry & Libby Fielding.

In Memory of Robert Huffman by Jerry & Libby Fielding.

In Memory of Gary Lott by Jerry & Libby Fielding.

In Memory of Edna Lusk by Jerry & Libby Fielding.

In Memory of Ann Porter by Jerry & Libby Fielding.

October Worship & Generosity Report

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Average In-house Attendance: | 83 |
| Average Sunday School: | 20 |
| Average Livestream views: | 27 |
| Average Facebook views: | 59 |
| Community Thanksgiving: | 72 |
| Receipts | \$ 44,083 |
| Expenditures | \$ 48,921 |

Church Announcements

Monday Morning Bible Study will resume January 23 at 9:30 am in the church library. They will begin a study of Amos.

UWF United Women in Faith will meet January 17.

2023 Church Leadership List The list of church leaders for the 2023 calendar year is available in the Narthex and the church office. These individuals will officially assume their leadership roles January 1. We are deeply appreciative of each leader and the work he or she will help the church do this coming year. Please get a copy of the list, keep it handy for reference and remember not only to pray for all of them but to take time to encourage them as well.

IMPORTANT CHRISTMAS DATES

December 4 - **Christmas Musical "At Last Noel"** featuring Chancel Choir & ASO String Ensemble in the Sanctuary at 10:00 am.

December 9 - The Sylacauga Community Choir will present **"Christmas with the Hoppers"** in the B. B. Comer High School Auditorium at 7:00 pm.

December 11 - Third Sunday of Advent, Service 10:00 am

December 18 - Fourth Sunday of Advent, Service 10:00 am

December 19 - **"Christmas with Friends"** concert will be at Sylacauga First Baptist at 6:30 pm. Donations will benefit the Care House.

December 24 - **Christmas Eve** candlelight and communion service 5:00 pm

December 25 - Christmas Day, Service 10:00 am



CHURCH STAFF

Andy Curtis - Pastor

David Simpkins - Director of Worship & Arts

Chrystal Whitehead - Youth Ministries

Leslie Lucas - Children's Ministries

Robin Lewis/Charmelle Lewis - Pianists

Karen Brewer - Church Administrator

Dolly Perry - Administrative Assistant

KINDERGARTEN INFORMATION

Monday - Friday 6:30 am - 5:30 pm (256) 249-2300

Dee Dee Mathews - Kindergarten Director

Amanda McDaniel - Financial Secretary



December 2022



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|--|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| | | | | <i>1</i> 6:00 pm - Christmas with the Hoppers Rehearsal (First Baptist Church) | <i>2</i> Church Office Hours Monday - Thursday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm | <i>3</i> 10:00 am - Optional Choir Practice |
| <i>4</i> Christmas Musical 8:30 am - Prayer for Worship 9:00 am - Sunday School 10:00 am - Worship | <i>5</i> 6:00 pm - APPS Group 6:00 pm - Christmas with the Hoppers Rehearsal (First Baptist Church) | <i>6</i> 5:30 pm - Handbells | <i>7</i> 6:00 pm - Children's Activities, Youth, Choir, Bible Fellowship 7:00 pm - Worship Team | <i>8</i> | <i>9</i> 7:00 pm - Christmas with the Hoppers (B. B. Comer Auditorium) | <i>10</i> |
| <i>11</i> Third Sunday of Advent 8:30 am - Prayer for Worship 9:00 am - Sunday School 10:00 am - Worship | <i>12</i> 9:00 am - K3 Christmas Program 5:30 pm - Trustees 6:00 pm - APPS Group | <i>13</i> 9:00 am - K4/5 Christmas Program 5:30 pm - Handbells | <i>14</i> 6:00 pm - Children's Christmas Party, Youth, Choir, Bible Fellowship 7:00 pm - Worship Team | <i>15</i> | <i>16</i> | <i>17</i> |
| <i>18</i> Fourth Sunday of Advent 8:30 am - Prayer for Worship 9:00 am - Sunday School 10:00 am - Worship | <i>19</i> 5:00 pm - Finance 6:00 pm - Admin. Board 6:00 pm - APPS Group 6:30 pm - Christmas with Friends (First Baptist Church) | <i>20</i> 5:30 pm - Handbells | <i>21</i> No Children or Youth 6:00 pm - Choir, Bible Fellowship 7:00 pm - Worship Team | <i>22</i> | <i>23</i> | <i>24</i> Christmas Eve 5:00 pm - Candlelight and Communion Service |
| <i>25</i> Christmas 8:30 am - Prayer for Worship 9:00 am - Sunday School 10:00 am - Worship | <i>26</i> Church Office Closed | <i>27</i> Church Office Closed | <i>28</i> No Children or Youth 6:00 pm - Choir, Bible Fellowship 7:00 pm - Worship Team | <i>29</i> | <i>30</i> | <i>31</i> |