

SPUMC NEWS

Volume 12, Issue 12

December 2021

Mission Statement

The mission of
Spruce Pine United
Methodist Church is
to be a
Beacon on a Hill
spreading the Good News
of
Jesus Christ through:
Worship, Fellowship,
Education, Nurturing
and Service.

In this issue:

- Pastor Rick's Column
- December Scripture
- Polity & Doctrine 101
- Did you know?
- Community Assistance
- United Methodist
Memes
- December Calendar /
Birthdays / Anniver-
saries /Thanks

Sermons and Bulletins:

Watch the sermons and
read the bulletins (and
newsletters) at:

www.sprucepineumc.org



From the Pastor's Desk: Advent & Christmas



Here we are, beginning the last month of 2021, and I can't help but think about the line in "Deck the Halls" that states: "...fast away the old year passes..." This year has gone very quickly, and we find ourselves in the season of Advent. The word "Advent" derives from the Latin word *adventus*, which means "to come." And that's what Advent is about. We prepare ourselves, focus upon, and wait for the coming of Christ. The season of Advent starts four Sundays prior to Christmas Day and continues until Christmas Eve. Every Sunday, we light a candle on the Advent wreath – the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.

Continued on Page 2



Weekly Scriptures

December 5, 2021

- ♦ Malachai 3:1-4
- ♦ Luke 1:68-79
- ♦ Philippians 1:3-11
- ♦ Luke 3:1-6

December 12, 2021

- ♦ Zephaniah 3:14-20
- ♦ Isaiah 12:2-6
- ♦ Philippians 4:4-7
- ♦ Luke 3:7-18

December 19, 2021

- ♦ Micah 5:2-5a
- ♦ Luke 1:46b-55
- ♦ Hebrews 10:5-10
- ♦ Luke 1:39-45

December 24, 2021

Christmas Eve

- ♦ Isaiah 9:2-7
- ♦ Psalm 96
- ♦ Titus 2:11-14
- ♦ Luke 2:1-20

December 25, 2021

Christmas Day

- ♦ Isaiah 52:7-10
- ♦ Psalm 98
- ♦ Hebrews 1:1-4 (5-12)
- ♦ John 1:1-14

December 26, 2021

- ♦ 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26
- ♦ Psalm 148
- ♦ Colossians 3:12-17
- ♦ Luke 2: 41-52

December 31, 2021

- ♦ Ecclesiastes 3:1-13
- ♦ Psalm 8
- ♦ Revelation 21:1-6a
- ♦ Matthew 25:31-46

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK *Continued from pg. 1*

In our Christmas Eve candlelight service, we will light the Christ candle to symbolize the birth (and reign) of Christ. And, as we noted in this past Sunday's service, Advent is not about celebration; it's about preparation. We prepare ourselves for the One who brings true peace, hope, joy, and love to the world. And part of our preparation is paying attention to the details in our lives... and in the lives of others. God has created us to live in community and in deep, meaningful relationships with God and each other. As such, Advent challenges us to examine our attitudes, our habits, our relationships, and every aspect of our lives.

During our Sunday services this Advent season at Spruce Pine UMC, we will examine four significant life-journeys – journeys that made the Christmas story possible. We began on November 28 by looking at Mary's journey, and oh, what a journey it was! We'll also look at Joseph's journey and consider some things we might usually overlook or not think about. Then, we'll talk about Mary and her cousin Elizabeth's journey, and the significance of their power-packed family. Lastly, we'll unpack the harrowing journey Mary and Joseph made to Bethlehem, where their baby is born.

Advent is an important season for us. It marks the beginning of a new liturgical-calendar year (the Christian calendar year goes from Advent to Christ the King Sunday), and it reminds us to slow down (and even stop) and make time to spend with God and others. Our days are so full of busyness, noise, decisions, and chaos that God sometimes gets crowded out of our daily life. This time of year reminds us that God is always close... chooses to be close with us – all the time. And God doesn't want us to lose sight of God in our lives. God also doesn't want us to forsake the significant relationships in our lives. Life is too short for us to not make time for those we love – those who mean the most to us. Advent tells us to be intentional about maintaining our relationships and offering grace to others.

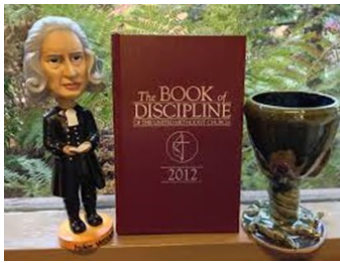
So, in the midst of the busyness of the season, I challenge you to make time for God, others, and yourself. Also, make worshipping a priority this Advent season. Be among your church family and seek God's guidance in your life (and the church's collective life). Get together with friends and family (and still be safe and healthy) while you still can. Forgive someone. Ask for forgiveness. Be humble. Be kind. Remain open to God's still, small voice. Let go. Don't fear or worry. Pray. Celebrate the birth of our Savior. End the year on a good note.

Christ is coming; that's what Advent reminds us. Are we ready and willing to encounter Christ not just at Christmas, but every day? Come, Lord Jesus, come. Stir in us the desire to bring about God's Kingdom here on earth.

In hopeful, peaceful, joyful, and loving service with you... Pastor Rick

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

will take place on Friday, December 24 at 7:00 p.m. This will be a wonderful service of carols, special music, and candlelight as we celebrate the birth of our Messiah. Please plan to worship with your church family in-person this year!



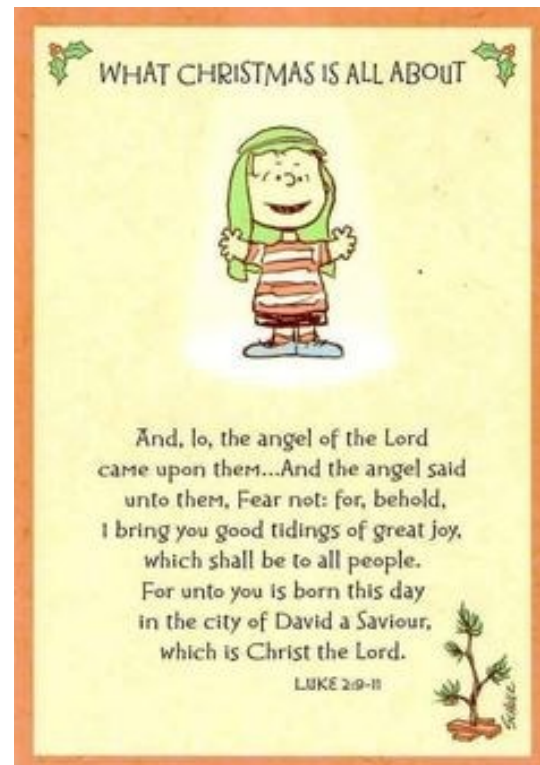
Methodism 101: Spiritual Formation – Grace (Part 4)

Wesley affirmed that God's grace is universally present in all, and yet, we are provided the freedom to say “no.” Contrary to the Calvinists of his time, Wesley affirmed that we can lose our responsiveness to grace and shut ourselves off from God's grace. And yet, God's grace remains steadfast. In other words, we grow in Christlikeness as we open our lives to God's presence and power at work in us and the world. Because the One who liberates us and writes a better story for us also enables us to live toward that new creation by providing the means by which we can grow in grace. And here's something else to keep in mind – John Wesley identified acts of mercy and compassion, as means of growing in grace. Through them, we express our devotion and open our lives to the presence and power of God to transform us and the world. They become means by which we are nourished in grace and grow in love for God and neighbor. So, I guess you could say the goal is to grow and go in grace. As we wrap up our discussion of grace, as defined by our Methodist tradition, a final thought: grace is like an exchange of gifts. Our identity as beloved children of God is the Creator's gift to us. Living in this beautiful world as Christ followers is our gift to God. Hope lies within that reciprocity.

Christmas Service for Sunday, December 26:

The Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church is graciously offering an online worship service for Sunday, December 26. It will feature congregations from around our Conference, and is being offered as a gift to the Conference so that we can enjoy time with our family and friends. We at SPUMC will not have an in-person worship service on December 26 to allow all of us to catch our breath and get ready for 2022.

The link will be emailed at a later date.



Did You Know?

John Wesley taught four key points fundamental to Methodism:

1. A person is free not only to reject salvation but also to accept it by an act of free will.
2. All people who are obedient to the gospel according to the measure of knowledge given them will be saved.
3. The Holy Spirit assures a Christian of their salvation directly, through an inner “experience” (assurance of salvation).
4. Christians in this life are capable of Christian perfection (maturity in love) and are commanded by God to pursue it.

If some or all of this feels like a challenge to your personal beliefs or understandings, sit in the struggle. Question what Wesley said and what he means for our spiritual lives. Seek God and search inside for answers. And then grow in your faith.

A GREAT BIG THANK YOU

to all who made the Artisan's Sale for the Community Assistance Fund such a success: the contributors of multitudinous art and crafted pieces, those who helped set up 8 tables and three bookcases of displays, those who visited, and those who purchased.

Diane Sheeley was our winner of the Ruffley Bowl Drawing!

Our total collected so far is \$1280 and counting with several sales pending!

December Calendar

1st - Angel Tree Gifts Due back to SPUMC

7th - SPUMC Book Club - 10 am

9th - Finance Committee - 5:30 pm - Fellowship Hall

15th - Wonderful Wednesday - 6:00 pm - Fellowship Hall - Please sign up in the Welcome Center.

24th - Christmas Eve Service - 7 pm

25th - Christmas Day

26th - No in person service (Online Service Provided by the conference)

31st - New Year's Eve

December Birthdays

1 - Joe Campbell	13 - Matt Hollifield	22 - Lloyd Glenn
1 - Sam Deyton	14 - Waylon Stout	22 - Blake Thayer
2 - Larry Hutchinson	14 - Ginny Wearn	23 - Doug Williams
2 - Andrew Shock	15 - Marie Walker	24 - Jennifer Barnett
3 - Jim Dunn	16 - Trip Binford	26 - Stan Cook
7 - Lucy Murphy	16 - Melissa Martin	26 - Amanda Ikard
8 - Lisa Leahy Royer	17 - Jameson Bell	30 - Lisa Cook
11 - Sarah Haney	18 - Charles Wesley	30 - Millie Hudson
12 - Lorraine Campbell	20 - Beverly Greene	
13 - Tracy Deyton	22 - Ray Alvarez	

December Anniversaries

16 - Scott & Mary Wray	22 - Phil & Angie White
18 - Brad & Laura Hodges	26 - Michael & Mariea Tountasakis
19 - Ed & Donna Martin	27 - Tim & Kathey Hollifield

Thanks to:

- Everyone working with Lamplighters!
- Summit students and leaders!
- Bill Sparks for the Christmas tree!
- Kathey Hollifield for having music with the children each Sunday.
- All who helped with decorating the Church inside and out in November!
- Artists who contributed their work for the Community Assistance Fund!
- All who brought their Nativity Scenes on November 28th.
- All who remember the less fortunate and contribute to the Community Assistance Fund.
- All who have contributed to the AV Fund.
- Everyone who gives to the Shepherd's Staff, who allowed us to contribute 138 items in November 2021.
- All who help at the M-Y Parish Food Bank.
- Members who take meals to the sick and shut-ins, those who give rides to church and to the doctor for those who can't do it themselves.
- All who serve: lectors, children's time, Greeters, etc.
- All working on Church facility renovations!
- Everyone working in quiet, behind the scenes ways each week.

Contact Us

Spruce Pine UMC
11090 Hwy 226 S
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Phone: (828) 765-7446
Pastor Cell: (704) 604-1888
Suzanne: (704) 604-2429

Office email:
sprucepineumc@gmail.com
spumc3@bellsouth.net
Pastor email:
rev.rick.schilling@gmail.com

Visit us on the web at
www.sprucepineumc.org

Shepherd's Staff

**Food Donated over the years to
Shepherd's Staff:**

2014 - 1202
2015 - 1078
2016 - 1030
2017 - 1062
2018 - 1213
2019 - 1526
2020 - 769

January 2021 - 122
February 2021 - 65
March 2021 - 218
April 2021 - 225
May 2021 - 269
June 2021 - 335
July 2021 - 397
August 2021 - 494
September 2021 - 157
October 2021 - 258
November 2021 - 138
Total - 2678

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE UPDATE

Thanks to your generosity we have helped 25 families and individuals with projects totaling than \$7,772.56 in November 2021.

Since 2013, we have helped families and individuals with \$204,571.69 through community assistance.