

SPUMC NEWS

Volume 13, Issue 12

December 2022

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.

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Sermons and Bulletins:

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

www.sprucepineumc.org

Christmas Presence



I didn't grow up going to church. We didn't attend worship services on the "big three" days – Christmas, Easter, and Mother's Day. My family wasn't religious, but I knew about God. We kids prayed before our nightly meals, and when I was very young, I would say prayers before going to sleep. As a child, that was the extent of my understanding of God. So, when Christmas rolled around each year, I was giddy with excitement because I looked forward to the Christmas presents. The ones Santa would bring, the ones my parents and siblings gave me, those from grandparents, aunts and uncles, and even some friends. When I was a youngster, Christmas was all about the presents.

And I still enjoy presents, though, nowadays I enjoy giving the gifts more than receiving them. I also understand that giving gifts to those we love is a beautiful and prophetic part of our Christmas traditions. We express our love towards those we give our gifts, and we remind them (and ourselves) about the gift God gave to us – God's presence among us. And this is the real reason for the season – Christmas presence. I often refer to the first chapter of the Gospel of John, as told by Eugene Peterson's "The Message" translation. There it says, "...the Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish" (John 1.14 The Message). God planned all along to pay us a visit through the person of Jesus. And Jesus taught and showed us that a meaningful life is all about showing up – being present for and with others.

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Weekly Scriptures

December 4, 2022

- ♦ Isaiah 11:1-10
- ♦ Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19
- ♦ Romans 15:4-13
- ♦ Matthew 3:1-12

December 11, 2022

- ♦ Isaiah 35:1-10
- ♦ Luke 1:46b-55
- ♦ James 5:7-10
- ♦ Matthew 11:2-11

December 18, 2022

- ♦ Isaiah 7:10-16
- ♦ Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
- ♦ Romans 1:1-7
- ♦ Matthew 1:18-25

December 24, 2022 **Christmas Eve**

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

December 25, 2022

Christmas Day

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

December 31, 2022

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

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

Along with focusing on the coming of Christ during this Advent season (the four weeks prior to Christmas), we're also looking at ourselves – at who we really are – through our “From Consumer to Disciple” series. This time of year can bring added stresses because of the consumer culture we live in. It constantly tells us to buy and consume – both for others and ourselves. But God desires that we don't fall into patterns to where we feel the need for everything and everyone to cater to our every wish. We're not created to fill ourselves to overflowing, and then continue to keep filling ourselves. This is an endless and fruitless cycle that separates us from God and each other and moves us far away from the image after which we were created.

When we light the Advent candles each week, those of hope, peace, joy, and love, we are reminded of Christmas presence. God showed up (and still shows up) to show us His better ways... the Kingdom of God ways. And these ways tend to rub against the grain of a consumer culture. God asks that we empty ourselves so that He can fill us. Jesus teaches us that if we want to be great, we need to serve others. If we want to save our lives, we need to lose them. God's story reveals God's character of closeness with us. And during Advent, we are reminded of God's presence among us. And we are challenged to be present with others. So, who do you need to be present with this Advent and Christmas? Who do you need to allow to be present with you? What can you let go of (or say “no” to) so that you can offer your presence in a miracle-offering, life changing way? Could you take a meal to (and eat with) someone? Could you offer a few moments to read with and mentor a Lamplighter child? Could you sacrifice some time to give warmth to those who will visit the Beacon Center this winter? What else? Who needs you?

The best gift God gave us is His presence. And the best gift we can give others is... you guessed it... presence. When we get involved in and invested in other's lives, people will be changed and transformed. The Christmas story shows us the depth of love and commitment to presence. And look at how many lives have been transformed because of God's presence! Let's be intentional this Advent and Christmas to spend less... but give more. More of ourselves. More time. More love. More forgiveness. More patience. More presence.

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

Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. LUKE 2:4-5



Have a Blessed Advent!

Methodism 101: Doxology



Merriam-Webster defines the word “doxology” as an expression of praise to God, usually liturgical. It is a combination of the Greek words *doxa*, meaning glory, splendor or grandeur, and *logos* which means “word” or “speaking.” The word, doxology, itself dates back to the 4th century and is best known today as the term used for the last paragraph of the Lord’s Supper.

Doxologies are an expression of praise to God. In the Christian church, we often hear them sung or chanted as they are a tradition that has meaning and importance for all Christ-followers. Since the early church, doxologies have been a way for Christians to express their love and thankfulness for what God has done in their lives. One of the most common one is found in our United Methodist Hymnals: “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow.”

As we speak glory and praise to God each day (hopefully, each day) it is a way for each of us to know more about our awesome Creator. As disciples, we are called upon to worship in a way that brings glory to God, and the use of a doxology is a beautiful way to say to God and others that you know where your daily blessings come from. Additionally, it is a powerful way to show that you love a God that has it all under control and will never leave your side. Praise be to God!

UNITED METHODIST MEMES



Hold off there! There's still two more weeks of Advent! (Meme shared from United Methodist Memes)

Did You Know?

- The word, doxology, is not found in the Bible.
- A Jewish doxology most known today is the “Yigdal.” The inspiration for the words of the Yigdal come from the first two of the Ten Commandments.
- “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow” was written by Thomas Ken in 1674. Talk about a great hit! It’s still being sung 348 years after it was penned!

CHURCHWIDE CHRISTMAS LUNCH

We’re having a churchwide Christmas lunch in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, December 11 at 12:00. The Care and Fellowship team is providing turkey and ham, and we are asking all to bring a side dish or dessert. So that we know how much turkey and ham to provide, please sign up and let us know how many from your family will attend. The sign-up sheet is in the Welcome Center. Please also let us know the side dish and/or dessert you’ll bring. Come out and enjoy great food and fellowship as we celebrate the upcoming birth of our savior!



December Calendar

5th - Beacon Center Official Opening
6th - SPUMC Book Club - Parlor - 10 am
8th - Habitat Meal - Fellowship Hall - 5:30-6:30
11th - Church Christmas Meal - After Worship Service
12th - UMW/United Women in Faith Meeting - at Norma's House - Noon
17th - Baskin Meal - Fellowship Hall - Afternoon
18th - Choir Cantata - 11 am Service
18th - Baby Shower for Jessica & Killian Wustrow - 3 pm - Fellowship Hall
21st - Winter Begins
21st - Choir Party - Fellowship Hall
24th - Christmas Eve Service
25th - Christmas Day
31st - New Years Eve

December Birthdays

1 - Joe Campbell	13 - Tracy Deyton	22 - Ray Alvarez
1 - Sam Deyton	13 - Matt Hollifield	22 - Lloyd Glenn
2 - Larry Hutchinson	14 - Waylon Stout	22 - Blake Thayer
2 - Andrew Shock	14 - Ginny Wearn	23 - Lily Grace Buchanan
3 - Jim Dunn	15 - Maria Walker	23 - Doug Williams
7 - Lucy Murphy	16 - Trip Binford	24 - Jennifer Barnett
8 - Lisa Leahy Royer	16 - Melissa Martin	27 - Bobbi Abele
11 - Sarah Haney	17 - Jameson Bell	30 - Lisa Cooke
12 - Lorraine Campbell	20 - Beverly Greene	30 - Millie Hudson

December Anniversaries

12 - Don & Bobbi Abele	19 - Ed & Donna Martin
16 - Scott & Mary Wray	22 - Phil & Angie White
18 - Brad & Laura Curtis Hodges	27 - Tim & Kathey Hollifield

Thanks to:

- Everyone working with Lamplighters!
- Everyone working to start the *Beacon Center*!
- All who keep us updated on the Prayer List.
- All who contribute to the Community Assistance Fund, allowing us to help 17 families in November.
- Everyone who gives to the Shepherd's Staff, who allowed us to contribute 208 items in November.
- All who help at the M-Y Parish Food Bank.
- Those who take meals to the sick & 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.
- Everyone working in quiet, behind the scenes ways each week.

Contact Us

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Visit us on the web at

Shepherd's Staff

Food Donated over the years to
Shepherd's Staff:

2014 - 1,202
2015 - 1,078
2016 - 1,030
2017 - 1,062
2018 - 1,213
2019 - 1,526
2020 - 769
2021 - 2,892

January 2022 - 101
February 2022 - 118
March 2022 - 180
April 2022 - 130
May 2022 - 119
June 2022 - 116
July 2022 - 142
August 2022 - 108
September 2022 - 111
October 2022 - 131
November 2022 - 208
2022 Total - 1464

COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE UPDATE

Thanks to your generosity we
have helped 17 families and in-
dividuals with projects totaling
\$11,380.22 in November 2022.

Since 2013, we have helped
families and individuals with
projects totaling \$256,365.49
through community assistance.