



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church®

The Kedron Connection

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From Our Pastor

“How happy they were, what gladness they felt, when they saw the star! They went into the house and saw the child with his mother Mary. They knelt and worshipped him; then they opened their bags and offered him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. God warned them in a dream not to go back to Herod; so they went back home by another road.”

Matthew 2:10-12

Advent is upon us! And thoughts tend toward December 25th. At least the road we are on in December leads to a specific day, hoped for glad moments, and the wealth of family and friends.

But since the days and age we live in are full and mixed with all sorts of “unwelcome” events we are like the Magi visiting the baby, happy and glad but aware of threats!

Here is an entry I made in a journal back in 1993. It captures a December moment all too realistically: “Took off half a day to go Christmas tree hunting with the fam. Went to Shirewood Tree Farm in Thompson Station. Perfect gray day for an outing. RH called office to ask me to check on fellow employee whose baby was sent from Knoxville after aspirating.”

A good day full of family fun outdoors as well as an urgency for prayer and pastoral care at Vanderbilt Hospital with a child and parents.

It’s our life story in example. The good and not-so-good coming in wonderful anticipation and in the unexpected struggles we will all face at some point.

Nevertheless, God’s story at Christmas is the good that triumphs in spite of threats and warnings. We rightly focus on the “gladness, the gifts, the Child.”

Regardless of your struggles both persistent and unexpected may you find the Christmas Joy that God intends for each and all!

Merry Christmas!

Pastor Barry

Men's Breakfast – All Invited

Please note the time change.

All of our congregation is invited to the December Men's Breakfast on Saturday, December 1. Breakfast will be served at 8:00 a.m. in the fellowship hall. This will be a time of good fellowship and good food.

Thank you, Men.

Fellowship Supper

There will not be a First-Wednesday Supper in December.

Choir Notes

Delann plans to practice for the Christmas program on Sunday afternoon. An announcement will be made of the date and time. The choir may want to practice our music before practicing with everyone; we will discuss this. The choir would welcome any that want to sing Christmas music with us.

Bible Study

The Bible Study led by Rev. Travis Perry continues. The group meets at the home of Lytle Hodge on Tuesdays at 10 a.m. The address is 507 Hazelwood Drive, Smyrna.

Bucket Offerings

In December our bucket offerings at Sunday morning worship will be used at Kedron for Christmas gifts for our children and youth.

Happy Birthday to:

Charles Sprinkle	December 3
Kristy Fraley	December 6
Martha Fraley	December 8
Marc Fraley	December 11
Linda Pagello	December 11
Lawrence Alfred Elam Rhodes	December 12
Danny Fraley	December 14
Jane Watts	December 24

Happy Anniversary to:

Ricky and Lynn Fann December 22

Psalm 100 was the Psalm quoted in the November newsletter.

Sunday Morning, December 23

We hope all can join us on this Sunday before Christmas Day. Our time of worship will be as usual, 9:30 a.m.

Christmas Program – Our Christmas program will be presented during the morning worship service. Delann Dunbar is writing and directing the program.

Fellowship – Following worship service we will gather in the fellowship hall to share snacks.

Christmas Cards – If you want to bring cards for the church family, they will be distributed. There will be a basket for the money you would have spent on postage if you want to donate this to the church.

Christmas Eve

Our Christmas Eve Service will be at 6:00 p.m. This year the service will be at Lock's Memorial UMC as the service was at Kedron in 2017.

Food Bank

You may bring food donations for the local food bank to the church the first and second Sundays of the month. Place the food items on the pew in the narthex. The food will be delivered to our local food bank. The suggested items for December are sugar-free foods. All non-perishable foods are accepted and appreciated.

Laity Meeting

The Rutherford County Laity Fellowship will not meet in December. The next meeting will be in January.

Outreach

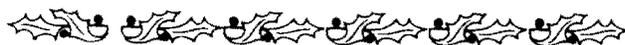
On November 25, a special offering was received to be donated to scholarships for students at United Methodist colleges and universities.

Who said this?

"She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

-NRSV

(hint – Book of Matthew)



Advent – a time to prepare

What if you were given eight hours to chop down an enormous tree? If you're like most people, you probably would grab your axe and swing furiously with all your might for eight hours straight. Abraham Lincoln said he would do something different. He said, "If I had eight hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend six of the eight hours sharpening my axe."

A dull axe demands much strength; a sharp axe saves strength. Lincoln was not referring merely to axes and trees, however, but to preparation in every area of life.

Advent is our axe sharpening time, a time to pray, meditate, and prepare for the commemoration of the greatest event in the history of the world. "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

– Illustration Sourcebank III

Take time to be aware that in the very midst of our preparations for the celebration of Christ's birth in ancient Bethlehem, Christ is reborn in the Bethlehems of our homes and daily lives. Take time, slow down, be still, be awake to the Divine Mystery that looks so common and so ordinary yet is wondrously present.

–Edward Hays

Christmas Gift Suggestions:

To your enemy, forgiveness,
To an opponent, tolerance,
To a friend, your heart,
To a customer, service,
To all, charity,
To every child, a good example,
To yourself, respect.

–Oren Arnold

One year A Christmas afternoon visitor asked five-year-old Ruth, "Did you get everything you wanted for Christmas?" She answered, "No, but then it's not my birthday."

Blessed Christmas

December Calendar

Saturday, December 1:

8:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast, All Invited

Sunday, December 2:

1st Sunday of Advent

8:45 a.m. Sunday School

9:30 a.m. Worship Service

Tuesday, December 4:

10:00 a.m. Bible Study

Sunday, December 9:

2nd Sunday of Advent

8:45 a.m. Sunday School

9:30 a.m. Worship Service

Tuesday, December 11:

10:00 a.m. Bible Study

Sunday, December 16

3rd Sunday of Advent:

8:45 a.m. Sunday School

9:30 a.m. Worship Service

Tuesday, December 18:

10:00 a.m. Bible Study

Sunday, December 23:

8:45 a.m. Sunday School

9:30 a.m. Worship Service

Christmas Program

10:30 a.m. Shared Snacks

Christmas Cards

10:30 a.m. January newsletter

information due. Email:

Monday, December 24:

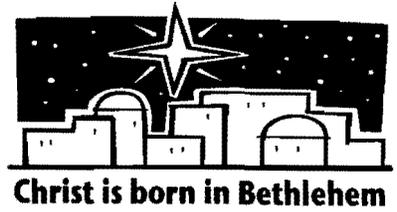
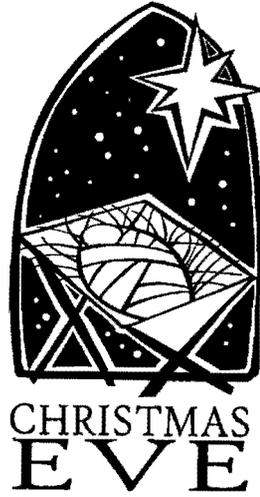
6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service at
Lock's Memorial UMC

Sunday, December 30:

8:45 a.m. Sunday School

9:30 a.m. Worship Service





Finding Bethlehem

Can you help Joseph and Mary find the way to Bethlehem?

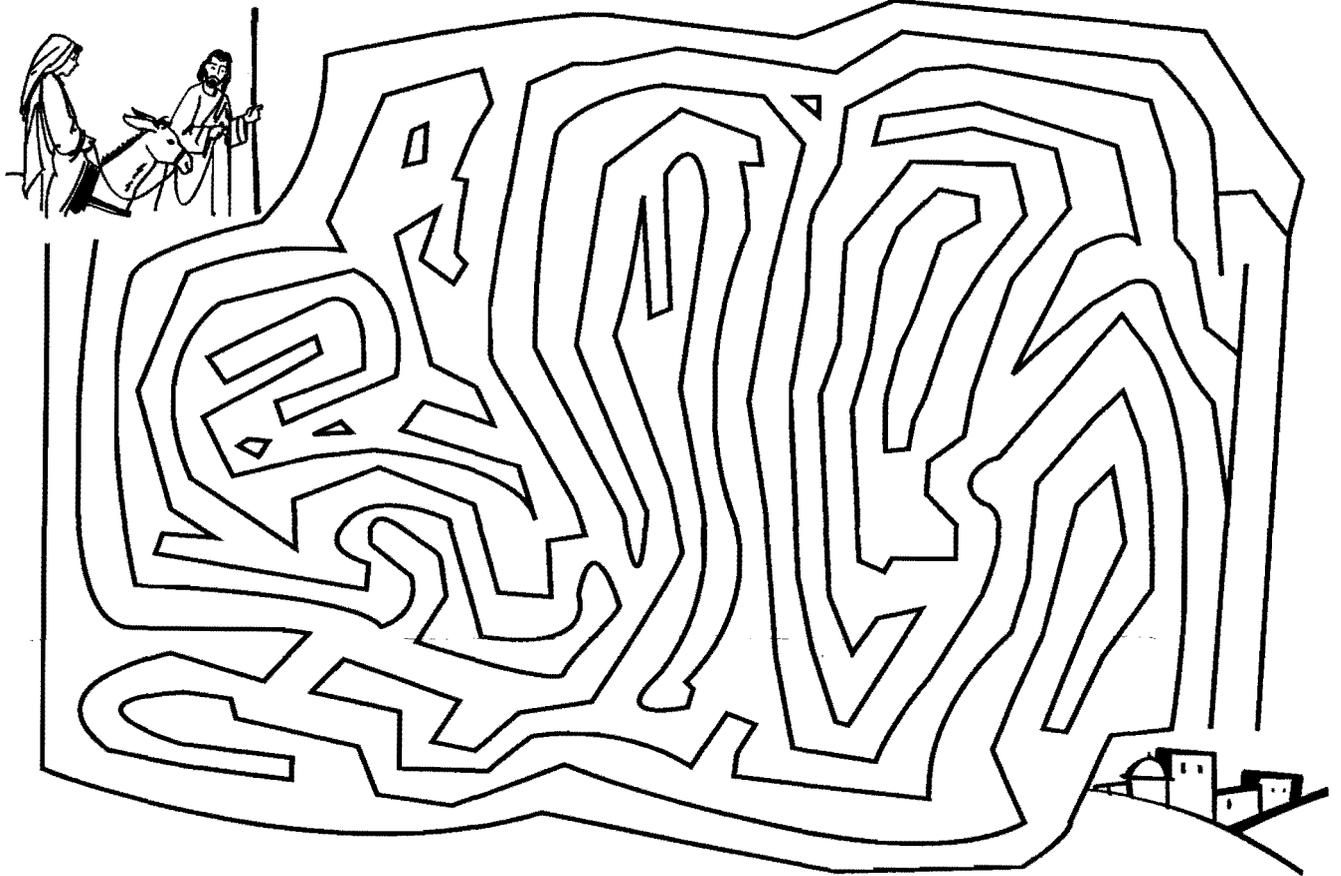


Table Grace

In this holy season
join our hopes, dreams, and prayers
for peace in our world
with those of all humanity
Bless us and this food we eat
and strengthen us to serve others. Amen.