

# The Good News!

open hearts  
open minds  
open doors



open hearts  
open minds  
open doors



A Publication of  
Smithville United Methodist Church  
Smithville United Methodist Church is a Stephen Ministry Congregation  
December 2021 & January 2022

The people of The United Methodist Church

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## THE GOOD NEWS PUBLICATION

Published once a month by:  
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### MISSION STATEMENT

*"To Love Christ,  
To Serve Christ,  
To Share Christ,  
No matter What It Takes"*

**DEADLINE** for the  
February newsletter is:  
**January 15, 2021**

## FROM PASTOR JAMES LANCE'S DESK



It's Christmas!!!!  
Ok, it's actually  
Advent. But,  
given that this  
newsletter is for December and January,  
and it is the Season, it's Christmas!!!!

As I await with joy and expectation,  
for Christmas, singing the carols and hymns  
we know and love, celebrating with decorations,  
and some Christmas cookies, I am reminded of a  
discussion I heard earlier this year. When we remember the birth of  
Christ our Savior, we do so remembering more than just his birth.  
We remember Jesus' birth, life, teachings, and his sacrifice for us. In  
all that, we remember our call to love the Lord and love our  
neighbors. Part of that call as Christians is to give, freely and without  
return, for the sake of others, following our example in Jesus Christ.

The conversation I am reflecting on was around presents on  
Christmas morning. When we are young, we rejoice at the idea of  
what gifts we will receive. We look forward to waking up Christmas  
morning and dancing for joy at the gifts we received and feeling loved  
when we get what we want. As we grow up, at some point, we make  
a shift. We are no longer excited for the gifts we receive. No longer  
filled with joy and yearning at what may be under the tree for us.  
No, at some point we make the shift to having joy in giving. We take  
care in shopping for others. We await with anticipation the happiness  
others will get from our gift. We hope they will love it. We no longer  
find joy in receiving; instead, we find joy in giving. While this shift  
from receiving to giving is a good shift, the truth is, in many ways, it's  
still about us.

The truth is, for many of us, we give during the holiday  
season, for ourselves. We buy presents, wrap them, put them under  
the tree hoping we got the right gift for others. We do it for the joy  
we get when we see them open it and know that it makes them  
happy. We start giving because it makes us feel good. This isn't a  
bad thing. I don't want us to beat ourselves up this holiday season  
because we rejoice at getting something others will love. But we do  
need to pay attention to why we give. When we give gifts this season  
do we do so for others alone, or is it, in many ways, still about us? Is  
our giving about how we feel when we give, as much as how they  
feel in receiving?

It's not a bad thing to take joy in giving to others. However,  
we do need to be aware how that affects our understanding of giving.

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## Worship Schedule

## FROM THE DESK OF AIMEE HARE

## Sunday Mornings

Sunday, December 5

Communion &

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-6; Luke 3:1-6

Sermon: "Prepare the Way"

~ ~ ~

Sunday, December 12

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent

Luke 1:24-38; Luke 1:39-45

Sermon: "The Long Wait is Almost Over"

~ ~ ~



~ ~ ~

Sunday, December 19

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

Psalm 101; Luke 19:35-40

"Christmas Cantata:

"Christmas Forever Amen"

~ ~ ~

Saturday, December 24

Christmas Eve

Luke 2:1-7; Luke 2:8-21

"A King ... Not What We Wanted"

~ ~ ~

Sunday, December 26

Luke 2:22-32; Luke 2:41-52

Sermon: "Home Alone in the Temple"



These last few weeks, since I have been under the weather, have been rough on Grace's bedtime lullaby ritual. But after days and days of her begging "mommy sing," I was finally able to softly squeak out a few short tunes for her. She snuggled in and off to sleep she went. She

never mentioned that the song was missing half the words (*nothing came out on notes that were too high or too low*) or that the tunes were shaky. She was just content that we were together, that she was snuggled up and all was right in her world. She didn't need things to be perfect ... she just wanted the comfort of the one who cares for her ... of the one she knew would never leave her.

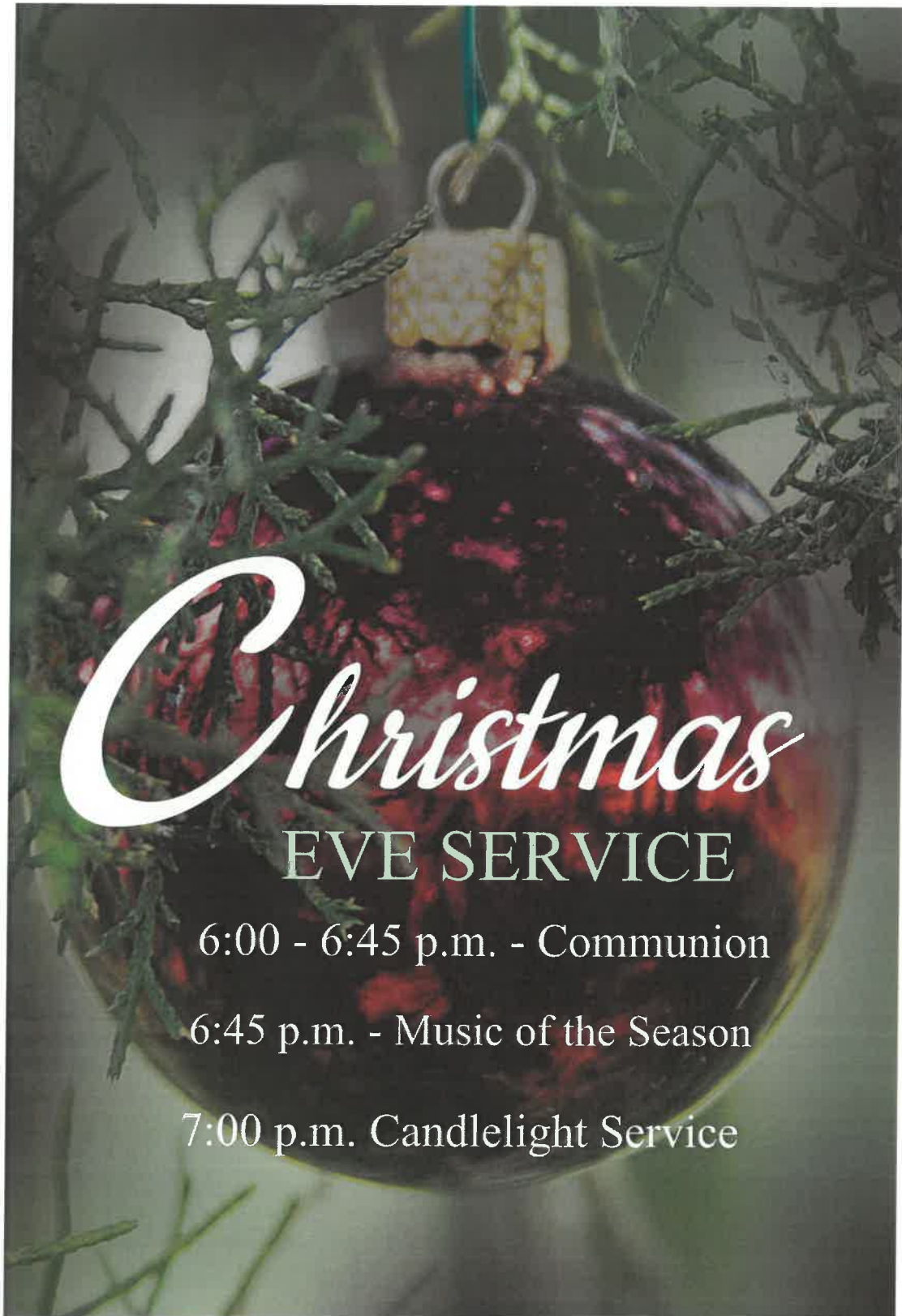
I wonder if Jesus' mom felt that way? How great would it be to sit in your kitchen over a cup of coffee and listen to her talk about her life as the mother of the Savior?!?! There are so many things about her journey I would like to know more about. I especially wish I could ask her about that trip to Bethlehem with Joseph – talk about a bonding experience for a newlywed couple! Did she and Joseph question what God was thinking? What if God had said to one of us, "Hey, let's pack up your very pregnant wife, put her on a donkey, take her far from home into a strange and crowded and busy city so she can give birth where animals eat and sleep. Oh ... and then let's have you take off from there to go to Egypt for a while so you can hide out from a mad man that wants to murder your child! Sounds fun right???" Not many of us would have taken God up on what had to have been an incredibly stressful journey. But Mary said, "Yes." I wonder if she had any idea of what her "yes" would cost her?

Truth be told, I imagine that Mary had the wisdom to know that being the mother of the Messiah would not be an easy task. If she had not realized it before he was born, I am certain that when Simeon said to her, "And a sword will pierce your very soul," that every fiber of her being knew it then. So why was she so willing to serve the Lord in this incredibly important but unspeakably challenging way? She was willing because she knew who it was that called her to this ... and she knew the One that would never leave her no matter where this road led. She knew the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Creator, the Master and Ruler of all things would be with her every single second. This journey did not have to be perfect or easy ... it just had to be made with her God. He was her comfort, her strength, her provider ... He was why it was worth it ... no matter what it cost her.

I wish I had known earlier in life what Mary seemed to know ... life is not about having an easy road to walk. Life is about living every moment knowing that our faithful God walks the road with us.



Aimee



*Christmas*  
EVE SERVICE

6:00 - 6:45 p.m. - Communion

6:45 p.m. - Music of the Season

7:00 p.m. Candlelight Service

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Continued from page 1

When we discuss Christian charity, to love others as Christ calls us, we must understand that this is a call to give without receiving. This is giving for the others sake and not our own. Sometimes we start thinking we should always feel good when we give. We should get a joy from serving and taking care of others, because that's how we felt at Christmas. And this is the problem. Jesus didn't feel joy at the crucifixion. Yet, Jesus still gave. When we celebrate the Christmas season, all that Jesus means to us, when we look at the example Jesus has shown us, we must remember that our call to give is a call to love others, not a call to get happiness. The Lord loves us, has saved us, and sustains us. The Lord wants us to be happy and helps us in our lives to be so. But our call to give is to take care of others. The truth is, when we give, serve, and take care of others, it won't always give us the warm feelings we get on Christmas Day at seeing our loved ones open the presents we gave them. Even with that being true, we are still called to give.

So let us enter Christmas with a song in our hearts. Let us shout for joy and celebrate! Let us buy gifts and wrap them for our loved ones. Let us find joy in receiving and giving this year. But let us also reflect on how we view giving. How we view charity. This season let us be challenged at times to ask what it means to truly give without receiving. How will we give to share Christ's Love next year? How will we, as individuals and a church, give without expectation of receiving? How will we share the Light of Christ?

*Pastor James*



## Prayer Concerns

**Unspoken requests, Friends, Relatives, Associates, Neighbors, Our Youth, Our Church**

**Liberty Prep, Smithville Schools & Career Center Students, Teachers & Administration**

**Please pray for ... health concerns ...**

**Coronavirus victims & families, 6-yr. old Autumn Regula, Jackie Becker, Jenny Wagers, Paul Finley and others in our Church Family**

**Please pray for our shut-ins ... if unmarked ... Wooster Addresses**

**Nina Benek**—The Avenue at Wooster, #122, 1700 E. Smithville Western Rd.

**Jane Harrison**—Brookdale Senior Living, Apt. 10, 1615 Cleveland Rd.

**Dorothy Hochstetler**—Westview Manor, #212, 1715 Mechanicsburg Rd.

**Louise Holt**—Wayne County Care Center, #105, 876 S. Geyers Chapel Rd.

**Ross Leach**—Home, 6848 Back Orrville Road

**Marguerite Miller**—Westview Manor, #515, 1715 Mechanicsburg Rd.

**Nancy Mills**—Wayne Manor, 3110 E. Smithville Western Rd.

**Judy Reese**—Wayne Manor, #110, 4110 E. Smithville Western Rd.

## Biblical Resolutions

- Hold firmly to your faith (Hebrews 4:14)
  - Assemble with the saints (Hebrews 10:25)
  - Pray and thank God earnestly (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)
  - Petition God for great blessings (Malachi 3:10)
  - Yield not to temptation (1 Thessalonians 5:22)
  - Notice opportunities to serve others (Galatians 6:10)
  - Examine yourself daily (2 Corinthians 13:5)
  - Work diligently for the Lord (2 Corinthians 15:58)
  - Yearn for righteousness (Matthew 5:6)
  - Exercise godliness (1 Timothy 4:7)
  - Aim for sinless perfection (Hebrew 6:1)
  - Redeem the time, live wisely (Ephesians 5:15-16)
- Gus Nichols (adapted)



## Prayer Chain Coordinators

Gail Bersch is the Prayer Chain Coordinator. Call her at (330)347-4699 with your prayer requests. If you are interested in joining this important ministry, please give her a call.

## Being Neighborly

The last time you moved into a new community, did your neighbors welcome you? From previous moves, I fondly recall receiving smiles, handshakes, baked goods and houseplants. Because one new neighborhood included two parsonages, I wasn't surprised to receive invitations to worship. After that, I began anticipating similar invitations, even though we had a home church. We don't always take our neighbors up on the offers, but knowing that church goes live nearby is comforting.

When a new family moves into your neighborhood, how do you respond? Does it cross your mind to invite them to worship? Maybe they're waiting for — even needing that invitation. To ask, you don't even need to be a pastor or a member of the evangelism committee ... just a friendly neighbor.



## January's Sunday Morning Scripture & Messages

### Sunday, January 2

*Communion & Epiphany*

*Luke 4:14-21; Luke 4:22-30*

*"Do We Let our Children Grow Up?"*

### Sunday, January 9

*Jonah 1:1-10; Luke 5:1-11*

*"Deep Waters"*

### Sunday, January 16

*Matthew 5:1-12; Luke 6:17-26*

*"Blessings and Woes"*



### Sunday, January 23

*Matthew 25:34-46;*

*Luke 7:36-50*

*"Do You See Them?"*

### Sunday, January 30

*Philippians 2:1-11; Luke 8:22-25*

*"When Do We Care?"*



## From "The Stable of Bethlehem"

'Twas not a palace proud and fair  
 he chose for his first home;  
 No dazzling pile of grandeur rare,  
 with pillar'd hall and dome;  
 Oh no! a stable, rude and poor,  
 received him at his birth;  
 And thus was born, unknown, obscure,  
 the Lord of Heaven and earth. ...  
 Come to your Savior's lowly bed,  
 ye vain and proud of heart!  
 And learn with bowed and humble head  
 the lessons 'twill impart;  
 'Twill teach you not to prize too high  
 the riches vain of earth —  
 But to lay up in God's bright sky  
 treasures of truer worth.  
 —Rosanna Leprohon (1829-1879)

**Our 2021 Advent Studies:****Advent Bible Study on the Four Loves****Tuesday Mornings at 10–11 a.m. in the Parlor**

Starting Tuesday, November 23 we will be exploring a four-week Advent Study of the four loves. This study will explore the four Greek loves often discussed and how C.C. Lewis wrote about them in his book *The Four Loves*. We will spend a week looking at each love, Storge, Eros, Philia, Agape. We will explore where they occur or don't occur in scripture, what C.S. Lewis wrote about them, and how our understanding of them can help us live out our call to love the Lord our God and love our neighbor as ourselves. Study dates: 11/23, 11/30, 12/7, 12/14. Join us ...

~ ~ ~

**An Advent Bible Study on the Four Gospel Openings****Wednesday Evenings at 6:00—7:30 p.m. in the Parlor**

This study will be exploring the opening of the four Gospels, how they set up the rest of the Gospel, and how that calls us today. We will be exploring the first couple of chapters of each Gospel: Mark, John, Matthew, Luke (*in that order*). Special attention will be given to how each beginning of the Gospel prepares the reader for each Gospel and how that can help us understand Advent and Christmas.

The first week of this study we will meet on Monday, November 22 from 6-7:30 p.m. The following weeks we will meet on Wednesdays (12/1, 12/8, 12/15 from 6–7:30 p.m. All are invited to join us.



Christmas Family Baskets

**CHRISTMAS NEEDS**

Please consider helping a Green Elementary School family to have a Merry Christmas by providing a gift for one of the family members.

Ornaments, with needs listed, are available in the Narthex, beginning Monday, November 8. **Please return wrapped gifts with the label attached to the Church Office on Sunday, December 5.** The gifts will be delivered to the families.

Your generosity is greatly appreciated as you give to others this Holiday Season.

Thank you!  
Katie Smith  
Green Elementary School

**The Example of Mary**

*"We must look to Mary's example to know how to deal with the glorious impossibilities of God,"* writes Calvin Miller, in the *Christ of Christmas*. *"Look how she turned the world upside down by making one simple statement."*

Jesus surely could have come to earth without Mary's aid. But God seems to prefer partnering with people to accomplish miracles such as salvation and healing. So God chooses Mary to carry the Savior. Later, Jesus often declares people's own faith crucial to their healing. And today, God works justice through us, not apart from us.

God doesn't force us into collaboration. Yet, notes Miller, *"God needs only a little of our agreement in order to work mighty wonders."* Like Mary's humble assent: *"I am the Lord's servant. ... may your word be fulfilled"* (Luke 1:38) NIV. And like yours—for whatever partnership God invites you into. God will do the heavy lifting, for certain, but he hopes you'll say yes.

**RECIPE OF THE MONTH ... Charlotte Harrison, North Providence, RI****Blueberry Upside-Down Cake**

6 Tablespoons Butter, softened, divided  
1/4 cup packed Brown Sugar  
2 cups Fresh Blueberries  
3/4 cup Sugar  
1 Egg  
1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract  
1 1/4 cups Cake Flour  
1 1/2 Teaspoon Baking Powder  
1/2 cup Milk  
Whipped Topping, optional

**Directions:**

1. In a small saucepan, melt 2 tablespoons butter; stir in brown sugar. Spread into an ungreased 8 in. baking dish. Arrange blueberries in a single layer over brown sugar mixture; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, cream remaining butter; beat in sugar. Add egg and vanilla; mix well. Combine flour and baking powder; add to creamed mixture alternately with milk. Carefully pour over blueberries.
2. Bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center of cake comes out clean. Immediately invert onto a serving platter. Cool. Serve with whipped topping if desired. Yield: 6-8 servings.



- 2 Sandy Hadsell
- 3 Jeffery Shull
- 7 Stacey Miller
- 8 Kristi Gill
- 9 Rev. Carolyn Berry  
Michael Thompson
- 13 Angela Eichholz
- 14 Charles Thomas
- 15 Rick Tilton
- 17 Katie Nickles
- 19 Aimee Hare
- 20 Elizabeth Shold
- 22 Eleanor Hohenshil
- 23 Landon Grimes
- 26 Mary Ann Ickes  
Betty Peachey



- 8 Gary & Melinda Gingery
- 12 Jeffery & Cynthia Shull  
Andrew & Elizabeth Shold
- 29 Scott & Aimee Hare

*"All the Christmas presents in the world are worth nothing without the presence of Christ."*

—David Jeremiah

~ ~ ~

*"God goes to those who have time to hear him — and so on this cloudless night he went to simple shepherds."*

—Max Lucado

LETTERS OF THANKS



Dear Church Family,

**With Special Thanks**

This extra-special thank-you note sent to you today holds more appreciation than any words can say ... For you're among the nicest people I have ever known, And you'll never be forgotten for the thoughtfulness you've shown. Thanks for Everything.

I can't tell you how much your love & support has meant during this difficult time. Your prayers, cards, visits all

lifted us up and are so appreciated.

The words 'thank you' just don't seem to cover my heartfelt gratitude and love I feel for all of you, but I do thank you from the bottom of my heart. I also want to say what a blessing those of you who came and worked and helped U.C.C. with wedding events, we couldn't have don it without you!

In Christian Love,  
Sue Sayre & Family  
Brian, Amber, Emma & Nick



- 2 Emma Nickles
- 4 Tracy Hicks  
Norah Vincent
- 12 Ed Gresser
- 14 Gail Bersch
- 17 Cory Williams
- 21 Helen Hicks  
James Holderman
- 27 Ross Leach
- 28 Elaine Sayre



We want to take this chance to say "Thank You!" to each and every person and group that donated food or Money to the "Stuff the Turkey!" Food Drive

This year! With your help and donations, we

**Overflowing With Thanks**

were able to

provide a complete Thanksgiving meal to 36 families! Because of your kindness, generosity, and love, we were able to give them an abundance of food!

Thank you for being a blessing!!

The SUMC Youth Group

*Thanksgiving Dinners*

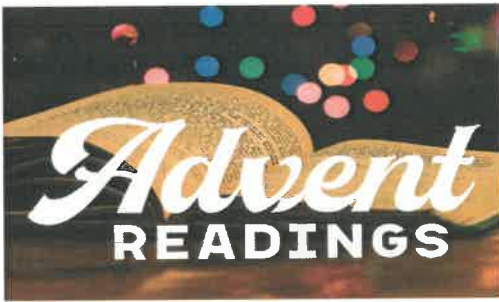


**Special Birthdays...**

**Charlie Thomas**

12-14





SMITHVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
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Address Service Requested

**Reader's Schedule**

**November 28 @ 9:30 a.m.**  
**The Kyle Krownapple Family**

**December 5 @ 9:30 a.m.**  
**Martha Scaggs & Jan Pierce**

**December 12 @ 9:30 a.m.**  
**The Tracy Hicks Family**

**December 19 @ 9:30 a.m.**  
**Barbara McCleary Tennent**

**December 24 @ 7:00 p.m.**  
**The Ed Gresser Family**

Thank you to all those who shared  
with us this Advent Season.

**Blue Christmas Service**



**Sunday, December 19 at 3:30 p.m.**

This year we, Smithville UMC, will be hosting a Blue Christmas Service in partnership with the Green Ministerial Association. Blue Christmas is a somber service that recognizes the hardship of the holiday season for many. It is a Christmas service that invites reflection, mourning, grief, prayer, and care. You are invited to join us on Sunday, December 19 at 3:30 p.m. for the Blue Christmas service. All are invited to the Blue Christmas Service.

*(This service will NOT be live streamed or recorded to honor the privacy of those who attend).*

**Join Us ...**