

THE TIE THAT BINDS

Rocky Mount United Methodist Church
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Our Mission: *"To Know Jesus and Share His Love"*



December 2020/January 2021



On November 29, we began Advent, a season of expectation, waiting, and hoping for the arrival of Christ, born in Bethlehem, and promising to return again to Earth. This is a perfect time for families and individuals to practice waiting as you pray together, worship together, and grow together in Christ.

To assist you in your journey this Advent, we are using a day-by-day Advent journey guide that you can do every single day. This journey comes to us from Church of the Resurrection, a United Methodist Church located in Kansas City, KS. Each day on the Church's Facebook page (facebook.com/rockymountumchurch) or on the website, (rm-umc.org), you can access the day's activity. Post pictures on Facebook with the hashtag (#RockyMountAdventJourney) as we can't wait to see how it's going for you!

Seasons of hope

The Christmas message is that there is hope for a ruined humanity — hope of pardon, hope of peace with God, hope of glory — because at the Father's will Jesus Christ became poor, and was born in a stable so that 30 years later he might hang on a cross.

—J.I. Packer



Just a reminder to pray daily for your Advent friend and extend other acts of kindness such as a personal call, a greeting card or other special treats. This is a time for you and your family to be in mission as you reach out and touch the lives of other members who need your care and concern.



During Thanksgiving Week, a survey was sent out via the church email system regarding Christmas Eve celebrations. You won't want to miss out on future notifications and our weekly email, "The Mount." Go to our website, www.rm-umc.org/newsletters and sign up today!

"Bless us, Lord, this Christmas, with quietness of mind; teach us to be patient and always to be kind."

—Helen Steiner Rice



ROCKY MOUNT

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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To Know Jesus And To Share His Love

Dear RMUMC,

We're spending Thanksgiving in Rocky Mount. That wasn't the plan, as northern climes beckoned us this November like reverse Canadian geese. But, due to rising numbers, Emily, Zeke, and I have had a change of plans, and we are going to have a 540 Thanksgiving. We've vowed that we're going to have strange fixins' this Thanksgiving as a nod to the odd year 2020 has been. Tacos? Maybe! Vietnamese pho? Could be! Mozzarella sticks? We'll find out!

We're embracing the untraditional way of doing Thanksgiving, and maybe by the time you read this, you did too. And, as if you need any reminder, before we know it, Christmas will be here and that will require some new kinds of thinking too. Do we have 1 or 2 Christmas Eve services? Do we sing "Silent Night" outside rather than inside? Do we take communion inside or outside this year? We don't know yet but hope that you'll complete the survey to help our worship team decide. Certainly, December 24 at the church building will look differently than in year's past.

Still, we shouldn't be too nervous about doing things differently. The ancients had a phrase appropriate for 2020: *Ecclesia semper reformanda est*. It means, reformed, yet always reforming. This phrase means that we as Christians have been changed, yet we remain in progress, becoming more like Christ.

On a larger level, the church is reformed, yet always reforming. And the church too can be known for being nimble, able to persevere in spite of changes. From an early time, the church navigated its new reality as it reached out to Gentiles, despite the first believers being Jewish. It adapted to persecutions which began right away. It met the needs of the widows even before it had a checking account with a bank. Flexibility and being agile were elements even in the first days of the church. They're certainly required now.

Even before the church, the Jewish people understood nimbleness. They traveled through the desert with the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was a portable tent. This allowed the Israelites to journey through the wilderness with the presence of God housed in the Ark of the Covenant within the tent. We benefit from knowing that is a part of our heritage too.

I've never been great at predictions. But I do predict that perseverance and nimbleness will be required even after you flip your calendar to January. If you're struggling with staying nimble, staying flexible, here's a prayer you can say as we set for into 2021:

"Lord, give me strength for today with the ability to meet any challenge with the knowledge that you are with me. Amen."

In Christ,
Pastor Will



United Methodist Women

(Debbie Caulder, President)

UMW

Our group met on November 9, 2020 via Zoom. It was good to get together again. Our next meeting will be Monday, January 4, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom. If COVID conditions allow, we may also have an in-person group at the church for this meeting. All are welcome!

Soup Sale: Thanks to Phyllis Lavinder and Linda Walters for coordinating this fundraiser. Soup will be ready for pick up on December 11 and 12. Please see a separate article in this newsletter for details.

Christmas Luncheon: Contact Phyllis Lavinder (540-483-4905) if you are interested in going to Roanoke for a Christmas lunch in December.

We welcome all women of the church to join us. Please contact Debbie Caulder by phone or email Debra.Caulder@yahoo.com or any other United Methodist Woman if you are interested or have questions.

Flower Chart

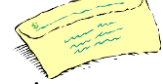
The flower chart for 2021 is here. Reserve your "special Sunday" now to provide altar flowers during the worship service. Also, remember that the piano is available for an arrangement should there be two individuals interested in the same date. You will be responsible for ordering the flowers. Call the church office or stop by the chart on the bulletin board that is located at the steps that go down to the preschool to reserve your special date.



2021 Offering Envelopes

The 2021 offering envelopes will be available December 13 for pickup on a table in the Atrium. If you are interested in using envelopes and do not have one assigned, please call the church office. Likewise, notify the office if you were assigned envelopes and will not be using them. Thank you.

Offering Envelopes



PUZZLE

WHITE AS SNOW

Jesus, our Savior, came to earth to purify sinners.

Directions: Figure out which path through the puzzle is correct. Choose one to try, starting at the first picture under the "Path" box. Follow each picture's directional cues to see if the words make sense when placed in order in the blanks below. If not, try a different path until you figure out the Bible verse.

PATH 1	PATH 2	PATH 3	PATH 4	PATH 5	PATH 6
for	give	come	together	around	after
self	into	settle	eternal	thanks	forgive
God	LORD	says	without	Christ	warmth
love	sins	scarlet	other	light	praise
red	star	white	snow	winter	peace

EXIT

"_____ now, let us _____ the matter," _____ the _____ . "Though your _____ are like _____ , they shall be as _____ as _____"

ISAIAH 1:18, NIV

Answer: Path 3: come, settle, says, LORD, sins, scarlet, white, snow



United Methodist Women's Soup Sale

The United Methodist Women has been approved by the Virginia Conference to carry out its annual soup sale. The approved plan is as follows:

- The soup will be sold by pre-orders and promoted to the congregation by announcements, e-mails, and newsletters.
- A small team of three to five UMW members will prepare and package the soup in the Fellowship Hall kitchen of the church.
- Hand washing, surface cleaning, cleaning of pots and utensils will be employed. Masks and gloves will be worn at all times during cleaning, preparation of foods, cooking, and packaging.
- Soup will be packaged in new plastic containers or sterilized quart jars. Packaged soup will be promptly refrigerated.
- During the pick-up of orders, social distancing will be observed. UMW members will wear masks and gloves at all times.

We are taking orders now for quarts of homemade potato, with or without meat, and vegetable beef soup. **All soup must be preordered.** Simply fill out the order form and give it to a UMW member or email it to lindaw@shentel.net or call Linda Walters at 540-346-2004 to order. (Please leave a message if I don't answer.) Cost is \$8 a quart. Your soup can be packaged in a sterilized quart jar for an extra \$1 per quart. Otherwise soup will be packaged in a new plastic quart container. You may pick up your soup on Friday, December 11 or Saturday, December 12 between 11:00 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the church. You can come in or we will bring it out to your car. All payments will be made upon pickup. Cash or checks made out to RMUMW will be accepted and exact change is appreciated. All funds raised will be used for UMW mission projects.

United Methodist Women's Soup Sale

Name: _____

Phone # _____

Available:	Quantity
Potato Soup (contains ham/bacon) @ \$8/quart	_____ qts.
Potato Soup (no meat) @ \$8/quart	_____ qts.
Vegetable Beef @ \$8/quart	_____ qts.
Total quarts @ \$8	_____ qts.

Option: I would like my soup in sterilized quart jars. _____ jars @ \$1 per jar _____

Total amount due _____



2020 Report

Bishop Sharma D. Lewis called the 238th session of the Virginia Annual Conference to order virtually on Saturday, October 31, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. She shared this year's theme, "See All the People", based on Romans 15:7 "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." (NRSV)

The memorial service and ordination service which were done earlier are available on the conference website at www.vaumc.org/Ac2020. Bishop Lewis shared she is calling the conference to three days of Praying and Fasting for the Healing of the Nation. The letter from Bishop Lewis is available at <https://vaumc.org/bishop-lewis-issues-prayer-and-fasting-for-the-healing-of-the-nation/>.

The retired Rev. Raymond Wrenn, who turned 102 in June, brought a prerecorded opening prayer along with Danielle Cloud, a youth member from Fredericksburg UMC, Rappahannock River District.

Elections were as follows:

Assistant secretaries: the Rev. Delano Douglas and Mrs. Bev Myers (Elected)

Chancellor: Mr. Steven D. Brown (Elected)

Election of the treasurer and statistician were delayed until a General Conference is held.

Editor of the *Journal*: Mrs. Madeline Pillow White (Elected)

General Evangelist: the Rev. Gregory West (Elected)

Annual Conference Committees as found in the *Book of Reports* (Elected)

2020-2024 Conference Lay Leader nomination of Mrs. Martha Stokes was put forth to replace Mr. Warren Harper, outgoing conference lay leader. (Elected)

Reports were given and accepted. All reports can be found in the Book of Reports that Pastor Will and I have. Please see one of us if you would like to review any of these reports.

Six congregations are discontinued as of October 31, 2020 including Pleasant Hill United Methodist Church on the Danville District. Two new faith communities have been launched this year, New Life International UMC @ St. Andrew's in the Alexandria District and Impact UMC in the Elizabeth River District. Glory Sighting Videos were shared. One featured our very own Henry Fork Service Center, Danville District and the second featured Una Familia on the Eastern Shore. Those videos are also available online.

Conference Lay Leader, Warren Harper shared remarks and introduced incoming Lay Leader Martha Stokes. She emphasized the partnership between laity and clergy. "Laity are 99.2 percent of the church, and our voices matter. This is holy time, this is holy ground," she said. She invited everyone to "take off your shoes" to stand on that holy ground. "Our words and actions matter now more than ever. Holy ground certainly doesn't need to be within the walls of our churches."

(continued on page 6)

The Conference Statistician report was presented. The conference is 314,000 members strong. Some 2500 people professed their faith. The conference received \$192 million to support the ministries of the conference.

Awards were presented, one being The Silver Torch Award presented to Bishop Lewis by Bill Chaffin, conference Scouting coordinator.

The bishop prayed for the Annual Conference offering fifty percent of which is designated to Virginia area food banks and fifty percent to our Virginia Partnerships of Hope International Ministries – formerly called the Initiatives of Hope serving Methodists in Brazil, Cambodia and Mozambique. The amount of the total offering will be shared in an upcoming e-Advocate. A separate collection basket will be available in the sanctuary for contributions to this offering on Sunday, December 6.

The Treasurer’s report was given. There has been a shortfall in annual conference receipts which was partially offset by lower spending. Apportionment receipts are down 6%. Conference leadership has reduced expenditures for 2021. The president of the Council on Finance and Administration reported that the conference budget is more than 11 percent lower than last year’s budget so that more dollars can remain in the local church. Bishop Lewis adjourned the 238th conference at 2:10 p.m. with prayer, giving thanks to God for the clergy, laity, faith communities, ministries, churches, and fight against racism and asking for prayers to guide us through the pandemic.

Thank you for the opportunity and privilege of representing RMUMC at the Virginia Annual Conference 2020. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

Linda Walters
RMUMC Lay delegate to Annual Conference 2020



Vital Congregation Statistics for October

I. Finances—Church Operating Budget

Amount Brought Forward From 2019	\$39,580	
Budgeted Offerings Expected to Receive through 10/31/20		\$221,670
Actual Offerings Received through 10/31/20	\$188,533	
Budgeted Expenses Expected to Spend through 10/31/20		\$234,310
Actual Expenses Paid through 10/31/20	\$189,412	
Ending Balance, 10/31/20	\$38,701	

- II. Average Worship Attendance = 55
Average Online Viewers = 52



(Lynn Meeks, Director of Music Ministries)

As December begins, we will be “hearing bells”. Each Sunday, we will be called to worship with a bell tree peal and we will be blessed with special music by our Jubilant Ringers. The ringers will even be playing on Christmas Eve!

Don’t forget our Six at Six concert on December 13 at 6:00 p.m. Jeanne and I will be playing some beautiful Christmas Carol piano/organ duets and the Jubilant Ringers will present some familiar favorite carols. You can watch by tuning in to our Facebook page or go to our website and follow the link.

Wonderful Webday with the children has been happening each week. We will continue with Zoom meetings at 6:00 p.m. on December 2 and December 9. There will then be a break and Zoom meetings will resume on January 13. If your child has not joined us yet, please email me at music@rm-umc.org to get the meeting code and password. The more the merrier!

Since we are thinking “out of the box” as we celebrate Advent/Christmas this year, there will be a Carol Sing on December 20 at 3:00 p.m. To keep everyone virus safe you are invited to join us in the parking lot where we will be having a service of lessons and carols while you remain in your cars. You can make a joyful noise as loud as you want! Let’s celebrate the newborn King with singing! More information will be coming in our e-newsletter and during announcements on Sunday mornings.

And finally, join us on December 24 for our annual Christmas Eve Service. You will be greeted by candlelight in the parking

lot, up the sidewalk and lining the porch entrance up to the sanctuary front doors. We will have special music and solos. Weather permitting, we will process to the parking lot where we will end our service by lighting our candles and SINGING Silent Night!

Mike, the girls, and I thank you for another wonderful year together. Each one of you means so much to us. We pray for your continued safety in this time of COVID. And we wish you a joyous holiday season and many, many blessings in the new year!

January Music Notes...

After a Christmas break, Wonderful Wednesday will resume on January 13. At the present time we will still be meeting remotely. I pray we can get together in person soon.

Jubilant Ringers will resume rehearsals on January 12 at 7:00 p.m.

We will have a treat for our Six at Six concert on January 10. It will be a concert of liturgical dance!

Love and Peace,
Lynn



Little Lambs in the News

Little Lambs Christian Preschool is excited to announce that two teachers have been hired to serve in 2021. Starting in January, Kelsey Dillon and Casey Reffett will be serving as the teachers of the 4-year-olds and the 3-year-olds, respectively. Ms. Dillon will be serving also as the new Director of Little Lambs. Bios and pictures of our newest staff will be available soon. Pray for them as they assume leadership, make preparations, and take on the important responsibility of caring for our littlest ones.



Have you ever scored a front-row seat? Maybe you were the winner of a radio contest or you have a friend of a friend of a friend who is in the band? Maybe you forked over the money that you had been saving for years to see your favorite speaker in person, buying the VIP pass, and getting the meet-and-greet? Or maybe you forced your way to the front with a bombardment of “excuse me,” “pardon me,” and “coming through.” However, you had to get there; you were getting there. Whatever you had to do, you were going to do it. Front-row seats were on the line, and you pledged to be in one of them.

That’s true of serving in youth ministry too. You get a front row seat to faith formation. Faith formation is really cool, actually. It’s the growth period that happens in a young person’s life when they start to put away childish things. It’s the time when decisions are made about the course of their life. It’s the time when they are still mighty playful, yet seriously thoughtful. As I have for many months now asked for your participation, I continue to ask today. I ask you to have a front-row seat to these young people’s faith formation. You get to see them grow as they ask hard questions - plenty of which you’ve probably asked too. You get to see them do silly things like jump into freezing cold bodies of water in Wintertime (our polar bear plunge is December 13; there’s room for you to jump in too)! Mostly, you get to be like Paul was to Timothy, encouraging young people as they explore their faith.

So, come on up, there’s a seat here on the front row for you.



Prayer Concerns:

Our country, our church and those serving in our armed forces; Coronavirus victims and healthcare front-line workers; Judy Anderson; CO Brickey; Dick Shoemaker; Sonny Vaughn; Jennifer

Cooper; Eva Prillaman; Jim Henderson; Johnny Guilliams; Tim & Sandra Funk; John Cooper; Jeanette Singleton; Arnold Dillon, Sr.; Mark Singleton; William Worley (Brenda Wright); Trevor and Rachel McKinley (Pat Cundiff); Mary Maxey (Don Ranson); Tricia Custer (Linda S. Handy); Shirley Green (Will Waller); Melissa Hays-Smith (Marsha Robertson); Mary Kay Smith (Lynn Cooper); Marion Pritchett (Pam Pritchett); Regina Stanley (Rebecca Dillon); Debbie Ford (Ben Whitesell); DJ Snider (Patsy Swain); Dennis Holland (Cyndee Holland); Jennifer Tatum (Tracy Jenkins); and Tiffanee Anderson (Judy Anderson).

Forget-Me-Nots:

Eleanor Woody



Jack Watts and Family in the death of his brother, George Watts.

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

—Mahatma Gandhi



Happy Birthday to:

December 2 Robin Cooper
 December 3 Henry Hambrick
 December 3 Mitzi Secrest
 December 3 Ethan Smawley
 December 5 Elizabeth Martin
 December 5 Russell Gordon
 December 6 Martha Collins
 December 6 Abbey Justice
 December 6 John Lox
 December 7 Terry Moran
 December 7 Kelly Peterson
 December 7 Bob Swain
 December 7 Ryan Weaver
 December 9 Ricky Matthews
 December 11 Daniel Cundiff
 December 12 Asher Bryant
 December 13 Linda S. Handy
 December 15 Ben Whitesell
 December 20 Dick Shoemaker
 December 21 Sam Roseberry
 December 22 Arlene Brammer
 December 25 Daniel Bowles
 December 26 Taylor Jones
 December 26 Kathy Palmieri
 December 27 John Clements
 December 30 Roger Middaugh
 December 30 Donald Riddle, Jr.
 December 31 Will Ardis
 December 31 Tim Funk
 December 31 Keri Jackson

Happy Anniversary to:

December 3 Johnny and Penny Guilliams
 December 10 David and Susan Clements
 December 27 Lewis and Ann Coffey
 December 27 Bruce and Rebecca Tuttle
 December 28 Adam and Abigail Bennett
 December 31 Steve and Lisa Angle

Happy Birthday to:

January 1 Joshua Bowles
 January 1 Bob Huffman
 January 3 Ashley Dillon
 January 4 Rodney Cundiff
 January 4 Jason Lavinder
 January 6 Arnold Dillon, Jr.
 January 8 Chris Teeple
 January 8 Melissa Teeple
 January 10 Rachel Hall
 January 11 Sonny Vaughn
 January 12 Brenda Wright
 January 13 Tracy Jenkins
 January 14 Dana Kelley
 January 14 Kyle Lewis
 January 15 Dot Harper
 January 15 Bobby Hodges
 January 15 Katie Hutcherson
 January 16 Russell Damron
 January 16 Mauri Sink
 January 18 Whitney Angle Colaprete
 January 19 Susan Whitesell
 January 20 McKenzie Prillaman
 January 21 Addison Gibson
 January 21 Ainsley Gibson
 January 21 Conrad Lavinder
 January 21 Sara Weterrings
 January 23 Tara McBride
 January 26 Benny Gibson
 January 27 Kevin Clements
 January 29 Patsy Swain
 January 30 Sarah Bowles

Happy Anniversary to:

January 1 Jack and Martha Collins
 January 11 Dan and Linda Walters
 January 14 Bob and Barbara Huffman

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**ROCKY
MOUNT**
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Open Hearts...

Open Minds...

Open Doors...

The People of the United Methodist Church

CHURCH STAFF

Reverend Will Waller, Pastor
Lynn M. Meeks, Director of Music Ministries
Jeanne Banks, Music Accompanist
Valerie Latimer, Administrative Assistant
Jennifer Ardis, Nursery Attendant

(Church Office Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.)



SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE:
10:55 a.m. Worship