

THE TIE THAT BINDS

Rocky Mount United Methodist Church
35 North Main Street, Rocky Mount, VA 24151

Phone: 540-483-5338 Fax: 540-484-1698

E-mail: admin@rm-umc.org

Website: www.rm-umc.org

Our Mission: *"To Know Jesus and Share His Love"*



December 2022/January 2023



Christmas Season Schedule

Friday, December 2

5:30 p.m., Our UM Men will sell their world-famous chili at the annual "Come Home to a Franklin County Christmas" on Franklin Street.

Saturday, December 3

10:30-11:30 a.m., dress rehearsal for children's Christmas play. Note: children will give a "preview" of their play as they sing a selection during morning worship on December 4.

Sunday, December 4

7:00 p.m., The children will present their musical "Carol and the Bells."

Sunday, December 11

10:55 a.m., Our Chancel Choir will present their cantata "Peace."

Following worship, Special Needs Adults' Luncheon

4:00 p.m., Franklin County Community Choir Concert

Saturday, December 24 (Christmas Eve)

7:00 p.m., Christmas Eve Service - Join us for a candlelight communion service in our sanctuary. We hope that you invite a neighbor who may not have a church to celebrate this most blessed of news - God with us!

Sunday, December 25 (Christmas Day)

10:00 a.m., Combined Small Group Class for all ages

10:55 a.m., Worship



ROCKY MOUNT

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

35 North Main Street
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To Know Jesus And To Share His Love

Dear RMUMC,

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given." - Isaiah 9:6

As we gaze back on the year that was, and as we anticipate the year that will be, we ponder. We ponder what went well. We ponder what came crashing down. We've seen wars and heard rumors of wars in Ukraine and North Korea. We've heard of famines developing in South Sudan and Afghanistan, Somalia and Ethiopia. We've endured an ever-deepening division politically across the US. We've fallen into a deep inflationary cycle.

It has been a tough year globally and nationally.

We do some serious reflecting this time of year. And at some point, while we do that pondering, we will hear Handel's *Messiah* echoing through the sanctuary. The story of Handel's *Messiah* is well-loved. During the 1743 premiere of George Frideric Handel's *Messiah*, King George II stood up during the "Hallelujah" chorus, a tradition that continues today. We cannot know exactly why he stood. We can speculate. Were his legs numb from sitting for over 2 hours? Did he want to hear a particular choral singer better? Or was he, as I tend to believe, wishing to give God the Glory for the great things he hath done? Could he not stay seated as he reflected upon God sending Jesus to us?

These are some of the words of Handel's *Messiah*, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given." Think on this. Unto us. The ones that make a muck of it all. The ones that can't seem to get along. The ones that are breaking up all across Methodism.

We're the ones that a Child is born to. We're the ones that a Son is given to.

Handel understood this. He saw his own insufficiency in the light of the sufficiency of Jesus. It is said that Handel had a hair-trigger temper. According to *Smithsonian Magazine*, Handel was furious with a fellow composer, Johann Mattheson, and called for a duel. During the duel, Mattheson stabbed Handel with a sword. Only because of a metal button on Handel's coat did Handel survive. His anger wasn't just towards composer colleagues. When practicing with a noted singer, Francesca Cuzzoni, she did not follow his every instruction. He grabbed her and even threatened to throw her out of a window. He is noted as saying, "I know well that you are a real she-devil, but I will have you know that I am Beelzebub!" He knew himself. He included these words from Isaiah *because* he knew who the us really was. It was him. And everyone else.

(continued on page 3)

While reflecting on Handel and the human soul, I watched a video of the launch of Artemis I. This morning, it departed Earth on a journey to the Moon. If you see the video, you may be struck as our planet diminishes in size. All of our hatreds, all of our pain, all of our hopping-mad anger takes place on this blue dot. As the rocket sprinted towards the Moon, I wondered yet again about this place we call home. The mountaintops - literal and figurative - that we celebrate upon. And the valleys - literal and figurative - that we make our way through, all on this singular place we call home. All of them, made smaller, as this rocket left this earth. Maybe that's the solution, just leave the planet behind. Disgusted? Just disengage.

Artemis I ain't the story of the Gospel, folks. Rather than staying away, God stayed with. Rather than leaving, God came to. Rather than beating feet, God was born. To us. To you.

And to that home, unto *us*, a Child is born. Unto *us*, a Son is given. May we all stand up.

Hallelujah,
Will



For the past two years, we have partnered with the Franklin County Sheriff's Department for Operation Christmas Joy. Through our service, we have fed, clothed, and showered joy upon numerous families in Franklin County. This year will be no different.

We have two families this year we will be caring for. One family, a family of 4, will receive food for all and clothing for their children. The other family, composed of 5 students, will receive clothing.

Surely, there is nothing like offering love this time of year. We will have opportunities to provide shirts, pants, canned foods and delicious treats in the month of December. Watch for emails and information from the pulpit. And thank you for your love that you so generously give.



The Franklin County Office of Aging will brighten a Senior Citizen's holiday this year. Pick up a star with a Senior Citizen's needs at the Essig Recreation Center. All unwrapped gifts need to be delivered by December 12.



Just a reminder to pray daily for your Advent friend and extend other acts of kindness such as personal visits, calls, cards and special food items. 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.



In December and January, our church is in charge of serving lunch at Stepping Stone Soup Kitchen the following days:

- Thursday, December 22
- Tuesday, December 27
- Tuesday, January 24
- Thursday, January 26

Please sign-up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board located at the steps going down to the preschool. Thanks!



UMM

United Methodist

Men

(Mark Newbill,
President)

The United Methodist Men will again be selling their “locally famous” chili for the “Come Home to a Franklin County Christmas” in downtown Rocky Mount on December 2.

The next scheduled breakfast meeting will be on December 18 at 8:45 a.m.

We will have the annual Christmas dinner in January. Watch the bulletin for more details.



United
Women
in Faith

(Phyllis Lavinder & Debbie Caulder, Co-Presidents)

Christmas Luncheon: Monday, December 5 at the Hotel Roanoke. Meet at the church at 10:30 a.m. to carpool.

Next Meeting: Monday, January 9, 2023 at 11:00 a.m., Soup Luncheon in the Assembly Room. Please join us!

Officers for 2023: Co-Presidents – Phyllis Lavinder and Debbie Caulder; Vice President – Linda Walters; Treasurer – Charlotte Hill; Secretary – Nancy Middaugh. Thanks for serving!

The Reading Program continues. You may check out any of the books on the shelf labeled UWF Reading Program in the Assembly Room. Simply sign each book out in the red folder and sign it in when you return it. If you take the children’s books, please keep track of the names of the children to whom you read. Children count as readers too!

The UWF continues to collect soda can tabs and stamps. The box for the collections is in the hall to the left of the Narthex on the windowsill near the mailboxes.

We welcome all women of the church to join us. Please contact Debbie Caulder (540-204-2266) or Phyllis Lavinder (540-420-8381) or any other member if you are interested or have questions.

“The Lord is coming, always coming. ...
Life is Advent; life is recognizing the
coming of the Lord.”

—Henri Nouwen



Sontag Nutrition Program

(Kelly Peterson and Terri Naff, Coordinators)

Below is the schedule for baggers and deliverers for December and January.

DECEMBER

Baggers: Judy Anderson and Mitzi Secrest

Deliverers:

Week of November 28-December 2:

Benny and Annette Board

Week of December 5-9:

Jack Collins

Week of December 12-16:

P.D. Hambrick

Week of December 19-20:

Linda Handy and Charlotte Hill

JANUARY

Baggers: Johnny and Penny Guilliams

Deliverers:

Week of January 2-6:

Benny and Annette Board

Week of January 9-13:

Jack Collins

Week of January 16-20:

P.D. Hambrick

Week of January 23-27:

Linda Handy and Charlotte Hill



Sunday, January 1, immediately following the worship service help is needed to take down and pack up decorations. Subway sandwiches will be available for lunch and nursery will be provided. Feel free to dress in casual wear this Sunday.

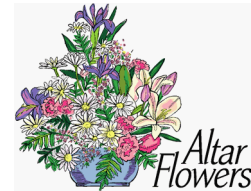


Are you a new member of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee, Trustees Committee, Finance Committee? If so, you are invited to attend a special training session on January 2, 2023 starting at 5:00 p.m. The Nominations & Lay Leadership Development Committee will share the best practices for you. If you've been on one of these committees, you're welcome to learn some tricks of the trade. Come to the Assembly Room to learn how to serve on these important committees.

5:00-5:30 p.m., Trustees Committee

5:30-6:00 p.m., Finance Committee

6:00-6:30 p.m., Staff/Parish Relations Committee



The flower chart for 2023 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.

"Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson



Calling all parents and invested parties in our children's ministries!

On January 16, 2023, we'll have a special gathering to discuss how well our children's ministries are going. As Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Children are vitally important to Christ and our church and we want to see them thrive! As such, Callie Angle will be hosting a meeting of the minds starting at 5:00 p.m. that night. We're going to dream for our children's ministries for 2023 and beyond.

If you and your child haven't participated in some time (or ever) in our children's ministries, we really, really want to hear your voice! Please attend that night. Childcare will be provided and food too.



We need nursery volunteers. Anyone wanting to work in the nursery on Sunday mornings during the worship service, please contact the church office (540-483-5338 or admin@rm-umc.org). Thank you.

"If you can't fly, run. If you can't run, walk. If you can't walk, crawl, but by all means, keep moving."

—Martin Luther King Jr.

POSITION AVAILABLE



Starting next year, the lead teacher for the Little Lambs Christian Preschool will be Kelsey Dillon. She'll be taking over for Casey Reffett who will be going on maternity leave starting in March. Kelsey has already been serving as the lead teacher for the 4-year-olds.

The Little Lambs Christian Preschool have begun a search for a teacher aid to begin as soon as they are hired. The person should love Jesus, love children, and love to teach. The hire will work under the supervision of the lead teacher/director. They will be expected to provide additional supervision daily like helping with the children's needs like bathroom visits, washing hands, interacting with the children during play time, setting up and cleaning of snack, wiping down tables and the room after the day is over, attending school field trips and decorating the classroom and bulletin boards.

This is an excellent position for someone wanting part-time work in an enjoyable environment. Apply today to Jessica Mitchell, head of the Little Lambs Christian Preschool Advisory Council. Email your resume to jessica.mitchell@frco.k12.va.us.

"Life, with its rules, its obligations, and its freedoms, is like a sonnet: 'You're given the form, but you have to write the sonnet yourself.'"

—Anna Quindlen, "An Appreciation," in *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L'Engle

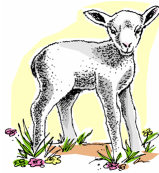


Vital Congregation Statistics for October

I. Finances—Church Operating Budget

Amount Brought Forward From 2021	\$54,974	
Prepaid 2022 Contribution	\$ 5,040	
Budgeted Offerings Expected to Receive through 10/31/22		\$217,090
Actual Offerings Received through 10/31/22	\$248,536	
Budgeted Expenses Expected to Spend through 10/31/22		\$258,330
Actual Expenses Paid through 10/31/22	<\$288,506>	
Ending Balance, 10/31/22	\$20,044	

- II. Average Worship Attendance = 100
 Average Online Viewers = 27
 Average Small Groups Attendance = 27



Little Lambs in the News

(Kelsey Dillon, Director)

Everyone at the preschool hopes you had a wonderful Thanksgiving! The Little Lambs had a wonderful November. We are thankful for everyone who was able to attend the Thanksgiving feast. The feast was full of yummy food and great fellowship.

The preschool is excited for our upcoming Christmas program and the New Year. The children will learn the true meaning of Christmas this December at preschool. JESUS! Our Bible verse we will learn for the month of December is, *For unto us a child is born. To us a son is given.* (Isaiah 9:6)

The preschool wishes you all a very Merry and blessed Christmas and Happy New Year!

Blessings!
Kelsey



God came to earth in the Christmas birth of a tiny baby boy,
Whose life and death are redeeming us yet with blessings, grace and joy.

Our minds may know this history but stand in awe at mystery.
So faith becomes the way to make our hearts like "manger hearts"
where Christ can dwell and God imparts his wondrous love each day.

—Peggy Ferrell



(Lynn Meeks, Director of Music Ministries)

December is full of music! The children will have a dress rehearsal for **the Christmas play on Saturday, December 3 at 10:30 a.m. We will meet in the sanctuary.** The children should be finished by 11:30 a.m. They will give us a “preview” of their play as they sing a selection during morning worship on December 4. (Parents, we will meet upstairs at 10:45 a.m.) **At 7:00 p.m. that evening,** the children’s choirs will present their musical “Carol and the Bells.” All children should be dressed and in the church parlor by 6:30 p.m. (Join the fun and come in your best 50’s outfit! There may even be dancing in the aisle!!) Add this date to your calendar! You’ll receive a real Christmas blessing!

The Jubilant Ringers will play a beautiful arrangement of Natalie Sleeth’s “How Far is it to Bethlehem?” for worship on December 18 and don’t miss the Chancel Choir presentation of the musical “Peace” **during worship on December 11.**

We are honored this year to host the **Franklin County Community Chorus at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 11 in our sanctuary.** Four of our Chancel Choir members are singing with this group. Plan to make this wonderful concert part of your Christmas season.

And finally, join us on December 24 at 7:00 p.m., for our annual Christmas Eve Service. Trumpet music will greet you as you arrive, we’ll have special solos and instrumentalists, and of course “Silent Night.”

Mike, the girls, and I thank you for another wonderful year together. Each one of you means so much to us. We wish you a joyous holiday season and many, many blessings in the new year!

January Music Notes...

Wonderful Wednesday will take a break and resume on January 11. I will be making up the full volunteer schedule for the rest of the school year to be circulated by the first of January. If you are a volunteer and don’t receive a list, please check in the Wonderful Wednesday area on the fourth floor for extra copies. If you would like to be a new volunteer, please let me know. We can always use more help!

Chancel Choir will resume rehearsals on January 4 and handbells will begin the New Year with practice on January 10. If you are thinking about joining any of our choirs, January is a great time to start. We can always use more singers and ringers!

Remember if Franklin County Public Schools are closed or dismiss early on a choir practice day due to bad weather, we will not meet. When in doubt, call me. (483-9799)

Love and Peace,
Lynn

Fresh starts

I suppose when we wake on January 1 the world will look the same. But there is a reminder of the Resurrection at the start of each new year, each new decade. That’s why I also like sunrises, Mondays and new seasons. God seems to be saying, “With me you can always start afresh.”

—Ada Lum



A few years ago, we had an article listing some common youth sayings. Gone are the days of “Homeboy” and “Don’t be a square” and “Gag me with a spoon.” There are some new kids on the block.

To test your Gen Z knowledge, here’s a quiz, with the answers at the bottom. What do the following words/phrases mean:

1. CEO
2. I’m dead.
3. That’s fire.
4. Flex
5. Lives Rent Free in Your Head
6. Tea
7. Hits Different

While you’re pondering these words/phrases, let me just remind you that knowing the answers doesn’t matter all that much. Don’t worry about it. Why? Well, to be honest with you, we serve a Savior who talked about lilies and wolves, agriculture and lambs. Many of us don’t know a lick about flowers or wild dogs, farming or sheep. Yet, that doesn’t stop Jesus from being our Savior. It doesn’t stop us from jumping into what Jesus has for us in the here and now. It doesn’t stop us from talking to Jesus, listening to Jesus, and knowing Jesus. So what if you don’t know many (or any) of the above phrases and words. That shouldn’t stop you from serving the youth of our church. It never stopped you in knowing Jesus, born two millennia ago!

1. Doesn’t have to be the CEO of a company, but rather someone who is especially able to do something. *She’s like the CEO of cross-stitch.*

2. No, you haven’t died. You’ve just been overwhelmed by how impressive something is.
3. Like #2, that’s fire isn’t what a millennial firefighter might say. Instead, that’s fire is something that’s cooler than cool (which “that’s fire” can be...cool).
4. Flex has to do with showing off something you’re especially capable of doing. “What a flex,” said the client to his accountant after finding a lucrative tax loophole.
5. Live rent free in your head is when someone that may not particularly like captures many of your thoughts and concern.
6. Tea isn’t what you drink in the morning. It’s the gossip that you may discuss, while over your morning hot beverage.
7. Hits different has to do with something that causes a new reaction. That antique grandfather clock just hits different, you might say, after seeing a new Howard Miller model.

Don’t let these phrases scare you. Serve today with the youth group!

A prayer to the Christ-child

You have come to us as a small child, but you have brought us the greatest of all gifts, the gift of eternal love. Caress us with your tiny hands, embrace us with your tiny arms and pierce our hearts with your soft, sweet cries.

—Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)



Family of Jerry Leonard who passed away on October 29

Sammy St. Clair and Family in the death of his cousin, Craig Morris

Tim Funk and Family in the death of his brother, Michael, on November 16

Janet Blankenship and Family in the death of her mother, Gina Browning, on November 18

Bill Collins and Family in the death of his sister, Mary Patton, on November 22



Prayer Concerns:

Our country, our church and those serving in our armed forces; People of Ukraine;

REQUESTS FOR PRAYER ack Dillon; Robin Cooper; Jason Lavinder; Hazel Henderson; Peggie Foster; Kathleen Higgins; Lillie Hatchett; Jerry Davis; Barbara Huffman; Lynn Cooper; Anna Campbell; Betty Dillon; CO Brickey; Dick Shoemaker; Jennifer Cooper; John Cooper; Arnold Dillon, Sr.; Cheryl Peck (Sandra Funk); Janis Odom (DJ Pritchard); Becky Bennett (Jennie Ardis); Mike Shea (Enna Roseberry); Debbie Ford (Ben Whitesell); and Dennis Holland (Cyndee Holland).

Forget-Me-Nots:

Eleanor Woody



Thank you so very much for all the prayers, food, cards and loving support I received during my recent hospitalization and recuperation. I felt very loved. I was able to share my faith with the nurses and others who provided loving care to me. God is good all the time.

Martha Collins and Family

I would like to give a big thank you to every person who helped with my community service project in October. Thanks to your food donations, I surpassed by goal and raised over 200+ items. Because of all of the surrounding help, a collective total for the pageant, Helping Hands ministry received over thousands of items that weekend. I am very much appreciative of your help.

Love,
Caedyn Riddle

Rocky Mount UMC is being recognized as a 2022 Pinnacle Living Samaritan Award congregation. This recognition offers appreciation to the top ten local Virginia Annual Conference congregations in giving to the Samaritan Program.

Thank you for your generous support of the special Samaritan Offering from Mother's Day to Father's Day and for gifts throughout the year to the Samaritan Program.

With Deep Appreciation,
Martha Stokes
Director, Church and Community Relations
Charles W. Wickham
Director, Donor Development



DECEMBER
Birthdays & Anniversaries

Happy Birthday to:

December 2 Robin Cooper
 December 3 Henry Hambrick
 December 3 Mitzi Secrest
 December 3 Ethan Smawley
 December 4 Lili Call
 December 5 Russell Gordon
 December 6 Martha Collins
 December 6 Abbey Justice
 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 Glenda Thompson
 December 15 Ben Whitesell
 December 16 Sue Jones
 December 20 Evan Hatchett
 December 20 Dick Shoemaker
 December 21 Sam Roseberry
 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 Bruce and Rebecca Tuttle
 December 28 Adam and Abigail Bennett
 December 31 Steve and Lisa Angle



JANUARY
Birthdays & Anniversaries

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 Steve English
 January 12 Julie English
 January 12 Brenda Wright
 January 13 Tracy Jenkins
 January 13 William Revercomb
 January 14 Dana Kelley
 January 14 Kyle Lewis
 January 15 Bobby Hodges
 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 23 Tara McBride
 January 24 Lillie Hatchett
 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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35 North Main Street
Rocky Mount, Virginia 24151

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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
Rebecca Dillon, Children's Church Coordinator
Brad Hodges, Custodian

(Church Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.)



SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE:

10:00 a.m. Small Groups
10:55 a.m. Worship