

“A Prayer for Advent”

A Note From Our Pastor

Many of my memories of early childhood involve the magical days leading up to and including Christmas. They include Christmas pageants and candlelight services at church but also getting out of school for two weeks, buying gifts for family members, anticipating gifts I would get, and either receiving them, or not, at our family Christmas Eve gathering or finding them beside the tree early, early Christmas morning. I get up long before the sun does most mornings now, but never so eagerly as I would get up on Christmas morning to see what Santa had brought.

I remember the emotions at Christmastime when my wishes were fulfilled, when I was surprised, and when I was disappointed. All of those feelings were important for me to experience, and in our house they were accompanied by a moral lesson. Give thanks for wishes fulfilled. Accept surprises as a gift like God’s grace which He gives even though you did not deserve it. Keep a good attitude when faced with disappointments and something good will come. All these lessons have proved important over time.

The prayer below is one I found and adapted for use during the Advent season. I believe it accurately plots the position we are in as those who believe *God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.* Someone has said that The Lord’s Prayer is a revolutionary prayer to pray. Would you dare to make the following your prayer for Advent? Read it aloud daily. Pray it before you compose your wish list. Pray it as you consider the gifts you will give. Pray it before and after you shop. Conclude the Prayer with The Lord’s Prayer and then observe how God transforms your observance and celebration of this Holy season.

O God, in these days before Christmas, I will be surrounded and bombarded by forces stronger than I am seeking to draw my attention away from this most blessed and holy event, the birth of your Son. These forces lure me to make the focus of this season acquiring material objects I crave. Help me to distinguish between the profane and the sacred, between my needs and my wants, between caring for my neighbor in need and patronizing, and to remember You are the first and final source of lasting joy and hope. Help me to refocus my mind and heart on Your loving and most precious gift to me and to the whole world, Your Son, my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ in whose name I pray. As He taught, so now I pray, “Our Father, who art in heaven...” Amen.

Enjoy a Blessed and Holy Advent.

In Christ,
Hughey

Special Note from Your Finance Committee

We can report to you that through November your church has spent less than the prudent budget approved for 2015. Spending for the year is under good control.

As 2015 comes to a close, we need all members and friends to help our beloved church meet its Ministry Budget obligations and opportunities on time and in full. For the last three years your church has covered all expenses and ended the year with no budget deficit. To achieve a fourth such year and extend this record we need generous Ministry Budget offerings between now and December 31.

Thank you for your consideration of all possible pledged and unpledged Ministry Budget offerings to help your church end 2015 successfully.

During this special Advent Season we wish you the merriest of Christmases and a blessed New Year. We thank you for your service, your attendance, your financial support, and your witness.

Respectfully,
Your Finance Committee
David E. Scott CPA, Chair

Note: To ensure credit for 2015 tax purposes, your offerings must be received in the church office by 12:00 noon on December 31.

Patrick’s Musical Notes - Mark Your Calendar - Advent Activities

On December 9th we will have the children’s choir “Christmas Pageant” at 6:00 p.m. These services will both be held in the sanctuary, and the “Christmas Pageant” on Dec. 9th will have a Covered Dish Church Family Christmas Dinner in the Fellowship Hall following the service. In addition, the church will partake in a **Lessons and Carols service at both the 8:45 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. services on December 20th.**

Lastly, Decatur FUMC invites all to attend its annual **Christmas Eve service which will be held this year at Noon and 5:00 p.m.** I hope all will be able to attend these wonderful services that have been prepared for the Christmas and Advent Season.

God Bless,
Patrick McCormick



Sympathy

Sharing sympathy with the family of **Louise Banks**. Louise was 94 years old and was a long-time member of FUMC. She died on November 16th.

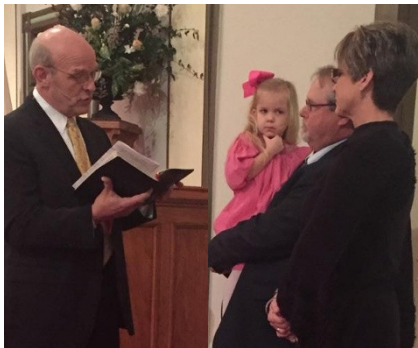
Sharing sympathy with **Jean** and **Franklin Elliott** on the death of her sister, **Johnnie "Mary" Wallace**. She died on November 12th. This family remains in our prayers.

Birth

Olivia Suzanne Easterwood was born on Nov. 19th to **Brad** and **Katherine Easterwood**. Great-grandparents from this congregation are **Charles** and **Loena Boling**.

Baptism

The baptism of **Emma Suzanne Earwood** took place on November 15. Her parents are **Keith** and **Vickie Earwood**. **Dr. Hughey Reynolds** presided over the ceremony.



Thank You Note

Marcia and I would like to express our gratitude for the love, prayers, and kind words from our church family. It is hard to express in words just how much this meant to us. My oldest brother had a long battle with his illness and when it is never easy losing a loved one, we can have comfort knowing he is now at peace. We are sincerely grateful for all your love and thoughtfulness.

Sam and Marcia Haynes

United Methodist Men's Breakfast

Everyone is invited to join the United Methodist Men on Sunday morning, December 13 at 7:30 a.m. for "A Traditional, Old Fashioned Christmas!" For \$5, you will get breakfast which includes McDonalds sausage biscuits, fruit, sweet rolls, and grits. Along with breakfast you'll get Christmas entertainment! Gail Warth will be playing the piano and helping lead the group in singing Christmas carols. We'll also hear the story of Jesus' birth being read from the gospel of Saint Luke. We hope all men and their wives will attend this event. **Please contact Phil Corazzari, Larry Sturges or Beth Green if you plan to attend.** We want to be good stewards with our resources while making sure we have enough food for everyone! Merry Christmas!



Our Stewardship of Presences

Attendance Worship Numbers Sunday, Nov. 22, 2015:
Total Count for 8:45 a.m. = 117
Total Count for 11:00am = 131
Total Count for November 22 = 248

Sunday School Nov. 22:
Children 24 + 7 adults
Youth 8 + 2 adults
Adults 136
Total Sunday School Nov. 22 = 177

Attendance Worship Numbers Sunday, Nov. 29, 2015:
Total Count for 8:45 a.m. = 102
Total Count for 11:00am = 111
Total Count for Nov. 29 = 213
Hanging of the Greens Nov. 29 = 178

Sunday School Nov. 29:
Children 17 + 9 adults
Youth 15 + 2 adult
Adults 96
Total Sunday School Nov. 29 = 139

First Fellowship Attendance Numbers Nov. 18, 2015:
Children 15 + 7 adults
Youth 11 + 4 adults
Adults 68
Total First Fellowship Nov. 18 = 105

Our Stewardship of Resources

<u>Ministry Budget</u>		<u>Capital Fund</u>
Received YTD	\$710,167.83	191,791.18
Needed YTD	789,653.62	
Given This Week	8,119.00	1,740.00
Needed Weekly	16,115.38	

Making Christmas Merry for Austinville Elementary



- Austinville Backpack Program Needs Nonperishable Food Items**

December is our month to pack bags of food for Austinville Elementary. Thank you to our Children's Ministry for packing 55 bags for this first week!

We need a lot of help for this month, pretty please! The children will be out of school for 17 days. We will be packing boxes of food to send home over the Christmas holidays to supply that need.

Please bring any non-perishable food items to the church blue barrels by Monday, December 14th. Examples of appropriate items would be canned goods, fruit cups, box of saltines, jar of peanut butter, Pop Tarts, Campbell's soup, and mac & cheese.

Every little bit will help and will help make Christmas merry for these children and their families! Thank you very much and Merry Christmas!

Sincerely,
Jan Dean





Children's Ministry

Alexia Claborn
Director of Children's Ministries
aclaborn@decaturfumc.org
Office: 256-355-0277; Cell: 256-606-8646

Acolyte Schedule - December 2015

Date	8:45 Service	11:00 Service
Dec. 6	Bristol Rayne Teal / John Benton Claborn Cross- Hunter Claborn	Miller Roberts / Mary Emma Harper Cross- Aiden Garriss
Dec. 13	Bristol Rayne Teal	Mattie Fite / Lulu Underwood
Dec. 20	Susan Floyd	Hunter Claborn / Lydia Matthews
Dec.24	Christmas Eve 12:00pm service	Christmas Eve 5:00pm service
	Miller Roberts / LuLu Underwood Cross- Christopher Reavis	Mattie Fite / Bristol Rayne Teal Cross- Nelson Earley
Dec. 27	Susan Floyd	Mary Emma Harper / Lydia Matthews

Sunday Morning Volunteers

Volunteers for Sunday, Dec. 6

Sunday School

Pre-school - Leigh Ann Blankenship / Jessica Mitchell

K-2nd Grade - Lindsey Faulkner / Assistant-TBA

3rd-5th Grade - Molly Ferrell / Ginny Pylant

Children's Church

8:45 Teacher- Alexia Claborn / Assistant- Jim King

11:00 Teacher- Alexia Claborn / Assistant- Davia Newman

Volunteers for Sunday, Dec. 13

Sunday School

Pre-school - Leigh Ann Blankenship / Jessica Mitchell

K-2nd Grade - Lise Greene / Assistant-TBA

3rd-5th Grade - Molly Ferrell / Ginny Pylant

Children's Church

8:45 Teacher- TBA / Assistant- Mary Ila Ward

11:00 Service Teacher- Betty Ann Mitchum
Assistant- Barbara Ashwander

Thank you for sharing God's word and his love with our children!

"Christmas Pageant" & Covered Dish Church Family Christmas Dinner

- **Wednesday, December 9 at 6:00 p.m.**
Please join us as we celebrate the true meaning of Christmas!

The meat, bread, and beverages will be provided by the church. Each family needs to bring a side to share. **No desserts please!** We have asked specific families to provide dessert.



Volunteers Needed

- If you are interested in helping to teach Children's Church, we need your help for the 8:45 service on Dec. 13th, 20th & 27th.
- We are also in need of teachers to rotate once a month for the 3rd-5th grade Sunday School Class.

Thank you for prayerfully considering working with our children.

Important Dates for Children's Choir

- **Sunday, December 6th**
(4:00 - 6:00 p.m.)... Pageant **DRESS REHEARSAL**
- **Wednesday, Dec. 9th...**
CHRISTMAS PAGEANT AT 6:00 P.M. Children should arrive at 5:15 and meet in the church parlor.



Decatur Christmas Parade


- **December 7th**

6:00 p.m.- Decatur Christmas Parade!! FUMC has a float in this year's parade!




Church & Community

Advent Taizé Prayer Service

An Advent Taizé Prayer Service will take place at First Presbyterian Church (701 Oak St. NE, Decatur) on Tuesday, Dec. 15 at 6:30 p.m. This will be an evening of Contemplative Prayer, Scripture, and Singing as we celebrate the birth of Christ. This service will feature **Emily Herring** as Cantor and Soloist and **Dr. Hughey Reynolds** as Co-Clergy. 

Sunday School News

On Sunday, December 27, the children and youth will not have Sunday School, but a nursery will still be provided. Each individual adult class will decide if they are or are not having class that Sunday. 

Ministry at Decatur Morgan Hospital

For several years, we have had a ministry that provides snacks to the mammography center at Decatur General Campus of Decatur Morgan Hospital. Over these years, some members of the ministry group have had to drop out for various reasons. Members take about 100 snacks (raisins, breakfast bars, trail mix bags, cheese crackers) about once a quarter. If you are interested in becoming a part of this group, please contact Ann Henry at 256-466-2599 or schoolmse@gmail.com.

Church Cookbooks


We still have an abundance of our Church Cookbooks available for purchase. You will find these in the Church office for only \$10 each. These make wonderful Christmas gifts. Pick one up today!


Hilltoppers


The Christmas Luncheon will be on Thursday, December 10 at 11:00 a.m. We'll meet in the FUMC Fellowship Hall for lunch made by Sandy and Kenny Callahan. (Poulet, green beans, rolls, arctic salad, and red velvet cake) Doug Maze will entertain us by singing Christmas Carols and he'll also have a wreath making demonstration. At the lunch, you'll have the opportunity to choose an "Angel" from the tree. The angels are part of the "Operation Santa Claus" program through the Mental Health Association.

First Grace News

Mark your calendar for Saturday, December 5 from 7:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. for Pancakes with Santa.


The cost will be \$5 per person with a family max of \$20. This will be an "all you can eat" with pancakes, sausage, and drinks. There will also be an ornament keepsake making station with Mrs. Clause, pictures with Santa, and Baked Goods Sale. This event will be open to the public. 

We had 173 total at our Thanksgiving Feast. A huge thank you goes out to all volunteers who helped with set-up, serving, and clean-up. It was a great event and we look forward to our **First Grace Christmas program that will be on Thursday, December the 17th at 5:30 p.m.** 

Thank you to **Susan Estes** for donating a Christmas tree to First Grace. 

Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study

The Tuesday Morning Women's Bible Study will not meet in December. We will resume our studies on January 5th with the book *Paul: A Man of Grace and Grit* by Dr. Charles Swindoll. If you would like me to order a copy for you, contact me at 256-616-5373 or peggy.black@hotmail.com.

We invite all ladies, members of FUMC or not, to join us for discussion, prayer, (occasional treats) and laughter as we grow in our faith, knowledge and love of each other and God. 

See You in January,
Peggy Black

Church Library

The **library committee** is beginning to take inventory and restructure the library at FUMC. During this time, no materials will be able to leave the room. If you have a need, please see Cindy McCulloch in the church office or call Caroline Sanders (256-565-9597). We are also asking that all library materials be returned to the office to be included in the inventory.

Thanks ~ Library Committee

Youth Dates Coming Up...



Sunday, December 6

10:00 Sunday School
6:15-8:30 Committed Holiday Concert at Athens State

Monday, December 7

5:30 p.m. line up for the De-
catur Christmas Parade



Wednesday, December 9

6:00 Children's Christmas
Program and dinner

Thursday, December 10

7:30 SH Prayer Breakfast at Chick Fil A

Sunday, December 13

10:00 Sunday School
5:00-7:15 Youth Christmas Party

Monday, December 14

7:45 Jr High Prayer Breakfast at Bojangles

Wednesday, December 16

12:00 College/ Young Adult Christmas lunch

Thursday, December 17

12:00 SH Prayer Lunch at The Brick

Youth Christmas Party

The youth will have their annual Christmas party on Sunday night, December 13. We'll have a progressive dinner enjoying appetizers, a main course and dessert. Parents can drop off at Lise Greene's House (1805 Birch St SE) at 6:00 for appetizers and pick up at Kathy Clay's house (2049 Brookmeade Rd. SE) at 8:15 after dessert. In between, we'll travel by church bus to a third house for the main course. Each youth who wants to participate in the "Dirty Santa" game will need to bring a NON GAG gift for a boy or a girl costing no more than \$10. The "Dirty" part is that we'll be stealing from each other... it's not "Dirty" because they are gag gifts! I hope you can all join us!



Stone Mountain, GA Christmas Trip



On December 28-29, the youth will be traveling to Stone Mountain, GA to celebrate Christmas on the Mountain and tube down "Snow Mountain." We'll stay one night in a hotel and travel by church bus. The cost is \$100 per person which will cover transportation, hotel, a few meals, admission to the park and tubing. Each person will be responsible for 2-3 meals. The deadline to sign up is Sunday, Dec. 6! Please call Beth with any questions.

UMYF

United Methodist Youth Fellowship (UMYF) occurs on Sunday nights. If school is out on a Monday, we will not have UMYF the Sunday night before. We meet on the youth floor (third floor, enter the building on the ally side) at 6:00. Bring your own dinner (fast food or from home) and eat with the group until 6:30 when we'll start our programming. We'll rotate between different activities that may include games, outings, worship, programs and missions! We typically end at 7:30.



- Dec. 6- Committed Concert at Athens State
- Dec. 13- Christmas Party
- Dec. 20- Ice Skating in Downtown Huntsville
- Dec. 27 & Jan. 3- No UMYF

College Graduates

Congratulations to the following FUMC students who are graduating from college this month!

- Wiley Underwood, graduating from Auburn University
- Sarah Sherrill, graduating from University of Alabama
- Antonio Miland, graduating from Shelton State



"Remind" Youth Messages

Youth parents are encouraged to sign up for "Remind" messages from Beth. You can receive reminders and messages via text or email.

To sign up for text messages, text @b43ddd to (205) 224-0165. To receive messages via email, send an email to b43ddd@mail.remind101.com. Reminders are sent to inform parents of upcoming youth events/ meetings, sign up deadlines, cancellations of events due to weather, etc.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Parents' Night Out
Friday, December 4 from 5:00 - 10:00 p.m.

Pancakes with Santa (details on insert)
Saturday, Dec. 5 from 7:00 - 10:00 a.m.

Pageant DRESS REHEARSAL
Sunday, December 6th from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Committed Holiday Concert at Athens State
Sunday, December 6th from 6:15-8:30

Trustees, Courtyard Conf. Room
Monday, Dec. 7 at 5:00 p.m.

Decatur Christmas Parade
Monday, Dec. 7 at 6:00 p.m.

We will have a float in the parade

If you are walking with or riding in the Christmas parade float, gather in Zone A by 5:30. Within the zones, it is first come first serve. Zone A will line up on Second Ave. between Gordon Dr. and Prospect Dr.

Worship Team Practice / Monday, Dec. 7 at 6:00 p.m.

Finance Meeting, Minister's Conf. Room
Tuesday, Dec. 8 at 5:00 p.m.

SPRC Meeting, Minister's Conf. Room
Tuesday, Dec. 8 at 6:00 p.m.

Alabama Emmaus, Fellowship Hall
Tuesday, Dec. 8 at 6:00 p.m.

Church Christmas Program & Meal (details inside)
Wednesday, Dec. 9 at 6:00 p.m.

UMM Bible Study, Minister's Conf. Room
Thursday, Dec. 10 at 6:30 a.m.

UMM Breakfast, City Café
Thursday, Dec. 10 at 7:30 a.m.

Sr. High Prayer Breakfast at Chick Fil A
Thursday, Dec. 10 at 7:30 a.m.

Hilltoppers Christmas, Fellowship Hall
Thursday, Dec. 10 at 11:00 p.m.



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Alexia Claborn, Director of Children's Ministry, aclaborn@decaturfumc.org

Shannon Booth, Director of Outreach, shannon@decaturfumc.org

Charlie Elliott, Custodian

Melissa Wiley, Housekeeper

Sandy Callahan, Food Manager

Wayne Keller, Accompanist

Gail Warth, Interim Organist

Upcoming Worship Services

(8:45 & 11:00 AM)

VISION STATEMENT:

Growing in Christ, Sharing God's Love through...

Inspiring Worship, Empowering Ministries

Equipping Persons for Ministry

Promoting Well-Being

8:45 and 11:00 a.m.

**Dec. 6 - Dr. Hughey Reynolds, preaching
Luke 1: 26-38 "A Decision That Saved the World"**

**Dec. 13 - Dr. Hughey Reynolds, preaching
Luke 1: 39-56 "A Blessing Given Away"**

Scheduled To Serve Dec. 6

Acolytes:

8:45 a.m. - Bristol Rayne Teal & John Benton
Claborn / Cross - Hunter Claborn

11:00 a.m. - Miller Roberts & Mary Emma Harper /
Cross - Aiden Garriss

Greeters:

8:45 - Fay Copeland, Billy & Diane Hudson

11:00 - Larry & Leslie Weaver, Charles Adams

Ushers:

8:45 - Ronnie Dukes, Mike Boozer, Michael Boozer
and Jolly McKenzie

11:00 - Mark Maloney, Greg Clemons, Ken
Chandler, Jim Milner, Judson Davis

First Fellowship Over for the Season

Thank you to all the teachers who led children, youth, and adult classes this fall! We look forward to resuming First Fellowship on January 6, 2016. Be on the lookout for the class options soon!