

# THE BEACON

Sunrise Presbyterian Church

December 2023 Newsletter

## Christmas Season Events

AND

## Worship Services

**Sunday, December 3:**

***1st Sunday of Advent***

10 AM Single Service

10 AM Family Service

Christmas Joy Luncheon following services

**Saturday, December 9th:**

Live Nativity and Bethlehem Village presentations at 5, 5:30, 6, and 6:30 p.m.

**Sunday, December 10th:**

***2nd Sunday of Advent***

10 AM Single Service with handbells ringing an Advent hymn, choir performing Vivaldi, and Noah Parker playing carols on the guitar

10 AM Family Service

**Sunday, December 17th:**

***3rd Sunday of Advent***

10 AM Single Service featuring harpist Holly Avesian and violinist Graham Parker playing *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*

10 AM Family Service

**Sunday, December 24th:**

***4th Sunday of Advent***

10 AM Single Service featuring trumpet duet

4 PM Family Christmas Eve Service - Sanctuary

7 PM Candlelight Christmas Eve Service featuring trumpet duet - Sanctuary

**Sunday, December 31st:**

10 AM Single Service

. . . *they shall name him Emmanuel,*” which means, “*God is with us.*” (Matthew 1:23)

The deep meaning of the birth of Christ is contained in the name, Emmanuel (God is with us). It is a celebration of presence, of sharing our lives with God and one another. When we think of the Christmas season, we think of getting together with family and friends.

This year, there are three themes that will be woven together during the Christmas Season:

The Advent Sermon Series is titled, ***Coming of the Light***. We will be reflecting on the Coming of the Light into the world as experienced in the birth of the Christ Child. Beginning with the prediction of the birth of John the Baptizer and continuing to the angels appearing to the shepherds, the four Sundays of Advent will lead us to the manger on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, Christmas Eve morning.

**Please Note:** During December there will be a Single 10:00 a.m. Worship Service in the sanctuary. Family Services will be held on the first three Sundays in December (12/3, 12/10, and 12/17).

2023 is the 250th Anniversary of the composing of the beloved hymn, *Amazing Grace*. During Lent, we did a sermon series on *Amazing Grace*. The Lenten devotional was based on this hymn. For Advent, our Advent devotional is also based on *Amazing Grace*. References to this devotional and the amazing grace of God's love for us in the birth of Jesus will be a theme in each sermon during Advent.

The third theme of this series is based on living a *happier* life. The four pillars of a happier life, *friends, family, faith, and purpose*, will be a part of each Advent sermon. The theme of living a happier life is about making intentional choices in our lives. As we draw to the close of the calendar year, we are also celebrating the beginning of the Christian Year with the First Sunday of Advent.

An important choice in our lives is the place of faith, worship, and our church community. How do you answer the question: *What Does the Church Mean To Me?* Is it an anchor in your life that gives you a deep confidence in God's love and the love of God's people? We use the phrases, *church family* and *church friends*. What do these people mean to you? How important are these connections for your wellbeing?

A part of this answer involves the sustaining of your church, its ministry and mission, with your gifts, both your personal presence and contributions. As our Treasurer, Cal McRae, puts together the church budget for 2024, he asks if you ordinarily make an annual pledge and have not yet turned it in, it would be very helpful to him if you could do so before the end of December.

This Christmas Season is all about presence, being with one another and celebrating God's presence in our lives and the world. As you can see, the focus for this year is bringing us together to hear the amazing *Christmas Story* again and share it with each other. Please plan to participate in these wonderful opportunities!

In God's grace,



# CHRISTMAS JOY Special Offering Sunday, December 3

By supporting the Assistance Program of the Board of Pensions, the Christmas Joy Offering honors the faithfulness of current and retired church workers and their families in need. Thanks in part to support from this Offering, church workers can receive critical financial assistance to support them through life's challenging circumstances. These generous actions bear witness to our faithful response to God's charge to love one another as Christ commanded.



## Contribution Deadline

The end of 2023 is drawing near. Please remember that your year-end checks must be dated and post marked (if you mail your contribution) by December 31, 2023 in order to be considered a contribution for the 2023 year. I will be closing the books early in January and mailing your contribution statements soon after. If you have any questions, please call the church office on any Monday or email me at: [financesunrisepc@gmail.com](mailto:financesunrisepc@gmail.com) ~ Bob Ingram



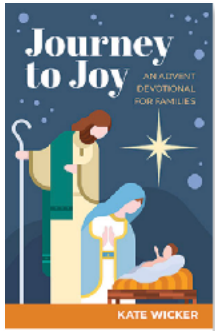
**Live Nativity and Bethlehem Village** planning and preparation is underway! Live animals and our congregation will present the "Live Nativity" and Bethlehem Village featuring crafts, bread & pottery making, coin stamping & refreshments. The event will be Saturday, December 9th from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. with showtimes at 5:00 p.m., 5:30 p.m., 6:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. **There is a volunteer signup sheet in the Fellowship Hall and Narthex.**

**Elementary-age children are especially invited to participate in the Live Nativity** beginning at 5pm. All ages are welcome to participate! You may take part in all or some of the presentations. No rehearsal necessary. Costumes will be in the Sanctuary.

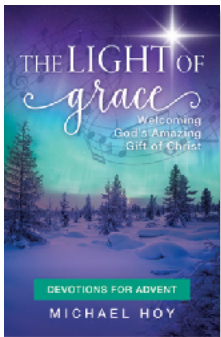


**Calling all bakers to bring in cookies for the Live Nativity on Saturday, December 9th. Cookies may be dropped off at the church on Friday, December 8th between 8 am and 12:30 pm or on Saturday afternoon. Thank You!**

Advent Devotionals are available for families and adults in the Narthex. You can also find family Advent devotionals on the bookshelf outside the Family Chapel.



The focus of this Advent devotional for families is joy, the kind of joy that is soul-deep, rooted in our Lord and Savior, Jesus. True joy can rise up within us even when our Advents—or our lives—aren't glittery gold and even when we feel more broken than whole. With Bible-based reflections to ponder, prayers to pray, and simple faith-based actions, author Kate Wicker helps families to seek the joy of Jesus' birth throughout the Advent season.



The light of grace is coming to greet us in this Advent season as we ponder the free gift of God's Son, Jesus, born on Christmas. In honor of the 250th anniversary of the hymn "Amazing Grace," these devotions enlighten the heart, mind and soul with the Good News that the Light of the World graces us with his presence every day of our lives.



**Coats for the Neighbors Together Coat Drive are due Sunday, December 3rd. Please drop them off in the orange bin in the Narthex or in the rubbermaid bin outside the Fellowship Hall doors. Thank you for helping keep your neighbors warm this winter!**



Angel Tree gifts are due back to the church by Sunday, December 3rd. Thank you all so much for your generosity!



A special thanks to the kids at the Family Service for beautifully decorating the angels for the Meals on Wheels Angel Trees this year!



Thank you for your generous donations for Christmas at Sea. Together we packed 53 boxes!



Poinsettia and Music Dedication order forms are in the Narthex and will be in the December 3rd bulletin. The deadline for ordering is Sunday, December 17th. Dedications will appear in the December 24th Christmas Eve service bulletins.

### Sunrise Columbarium and Memorial Garden

Many thanks to the Session and the congregation for their approval and support of the Sunrise Columbarium and Memorial Garden. A Columbarium Committee has been formed:

**Chair** – Ida Havelka

**Construction & Maintenance** – Lamar Graves

**Legal: Niche Contract, Rules & Regulations** – Phil Riker

**Niche Sales, Donations** – Ralph Byers

**Finance** – Cal McRae

A planning meeting was held on November 19. Plans are moving forward for the selection of a columbarium company and landscape architect. We look forward to sharing the progress of this self-funded project with the congregation. For additional information, contact Ida Havelka at 843-412-1884 or at [ihavelka@comcast.net](mailto:ihavelka@comcast.net).



**Thank you for your generous contributions to the Remembrance Garden...**

*~ Roberta Blanchard & Family in memory of Dick Blanchard with love*



If you'd like to help keep the garden beautiful, please complete the donation form located in the narthex and note Remembrance Garden on the check memo line. Contributions given in memory of or in honor of someone will be included in the Beacon & Dedication book.

# December at Sunrise

## Growing FAITH

*Growing Faith* will meet December 10th at 9am in the upstairs classroom. Please feel free to share this message with any older elementary & middle school students (4th - 8th grade) you know who might be interested in joining. ~ Reece



**The Adult Sunday School** will continue their study with *Forgive: Why Should I and How Can I?* by Timothy Keller Sundays at 11 am in the Library. Forgiveness is an essential skill, a moral imperative, and a religious belief that cuts right to the core of what it means to be human.



**The Miriam-Naomi Circle** will meet December 5th at 10 am in the Library using the book *Romans Learner Session Guide: Books of Faith* by Matthew J. Marohl. The church has the books available for purchase. Please see Pastor Vance to get your copy. We welcome new participants in the Circle. After we meet, those of us who are able to do so usually regroup for lunch at a nearby restaurant. If you have any questions or if you would like to be added to our mailing list, please call Patsy Hindman at (843) 906-8653.



The Women's Evening Bible Study will be taking a winter break in December and will start back up in January using *Journaling the Psalms: A Guide for Reflection and Prayer* by Paula Gooder. Please see page 7 for more detailed information from Reece.



**Cents-Ability** is collected the 2nd Sunday of each month. Thanks to you, donations have been made to Neighbors Together, East Cooper Meals on Wheels, and East Cooper Community Outreach. Please continue to give at least two cents per person per meal in the bowl in the Narthex. This simple act is an expression of thanksgiving for what we have received.



Start off your Tuesdays with the Jerry Dillon Men's Prayer Breakfast at 7:30 am in the Fellowship Hall. Start the day off right with great food, fellowship, and a devotion.

# Calling all Sunrise Women!

In the event you missed it, below is the reflection I wrote on November 13. It explains why I'm so excited about the theme for next year's Women's Evening Bible Study. We meet each month (except July and December) on the third Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm at the church. There is also a Zoom option for those who are unable to join in person. If you are interested in participating, please contact me at [reecehumphreys23@gmail.com](mailto:reecehumphreys23@gmail.com) and I will provide you with information about our group and how you can get the study guide. I look forward to another year of learning and fellowship! -Reece

For as long as I can remember, I've heard Christians talk about how much they love the Book of Psalms. I've heard how the beautiful poetry of this book of Hebrew scripture/song comforts and inspires. And while I was also able to appreciate the emotive words of the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 46<sup>th</sup>, and 100<sup>th</sup> Psalms, when I looked at many other psalms in this book, I found them less than inspiring. I often found I was confused or disturbed by the language the psalmist used. I can't tell you how many times I started reading a beautiful psalm and suddenly found myself facing words that seemed jarring. I'm not going to bore you with a comprehensive list of psalms I found less than comforting, but I'll give you a couple of examples. If you have a Bible close by, pick it up and look at Psalm 139. It is a beautiful psalm, and opens with language many of us have heard, "O LORD, you have searched me and know me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away." But when you get to verse 19 the mood shifts, and psalmist begs God to "...kill the wicked...and that the bloodthirsty would depart from me." There are other psalms that speak from the very depths of the troubled soul of the psalmist. In Psalm 44 we hear the psalmist crying out to God in deep lament, "Why do you forget our affliction and oppression? For we sink down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground." As a result of the "dark" language I've found lurking throughout the psalms, I'll confess to you that, with a few exceptions, I've avoided them.

This semester in seminary I've been forced to take a new look at Psalms—and not just the "joyful" ones. The name of the class I'm taking is "Suffering, Lament, and Human Existence in the Hebrew Bible," which gives you some idea of the subject matter. We've discussed Job, Lamentations, and Psalms—specifically, the language in these books where we find sadness, anger, and other emotions most of us would like to avoid in our lives. But just like our ancestors did millennia ago, we find ourselves needing to express painful emotions because we experience pain. It might not be what we want to chat about over coffee with coworkers; it might not be what we want to post on Facebook or Instagram; it might not be what we want to think about when we're trying to fall asleep at night—but it is there. In many of the books of both the Old and New Testaments, we hear our ancestors turn that pain to God. We hear them ask, "why?" We hear them ask, "where are you God?" We hear them say, "I don't deserve this, God!" We hear them say what we may be thinking but are afraid to express out loud. We hear them talk about subjects we'd just as soon keep to ourselves.

Last week a classmate of mine, a United Church of Christ pastor, introduced me to a quote from my second favorite Presbyterian minister (after Vance, of course!), Fred Rogers. I grew up watching Mr. Rogers Neighborhood every weekday, and was delighted when I realized I had as much to learn from him as an adult as I did when I was a child. When considering the need to talk about the bad things, he said, "Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary. The people we trust with that important talk can help us know that we are not alone." In the Book of Psalms, people talk about the entire range of emotions they're experiencing. They share their feeling, positive and negative, with God—and ultimately, with each of us. Over the semester I've come to believe that the passages that made me uncomfortable are there for a reason, and they have something to teach me—to teach us. That's one of the reasons I'm so excited that the 2024 Women's Evening Bible Study will be studying The Book of Psalms. I've found a wonderful book that will guide us through the individual psalms and help us connect what happened thousands of years ago to our 21<sup>st</sup> century lives. I'm eager to see what I've been missing in this ancient book. If you are a woman who is interested in participating, we are thrilled for you to join our group! -Reece



## BIRTHDAYS

- |                    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Shawna Tully     | 15 Kristen Champagne     |
| 1 Hannah Floyd     | 15 Lily Evans            |
| 2 Heather Heckart  | 15 Kizer Nettles         |
| 3 Bob Smith        | 15 Mae Elizabeth Nettles |
| 3 Nancy Guss       | 17 Alan Henderson        |
| 3 Annalise Hipps   | 17 Susi Hasapis          |
| 4 Ed Weathers      | 17 Genevieve McKee       |
| 6 Jack Heidenreich | 18 Marty Belk            |
| 6 Linda Parker     | 19 Teagan Hinton         |
| 6 Bonnie Lee       | 22 Bruce Hainley         |
| 6 Katie Catalana   | 22 Tim Kane              |
| 9 Gail Jackson     | 22 Owen Kimker           |
| 10 Marty Wisse     | 27 Carol Bulwinkle       |
| 12 Kathy Clark     | 29 Judy Collins          |
| 12 Liz Nimmich     | 30 Mimi O'Brien          |
| 12 Corinna Borden  | 31 Hannah Fowler         |
| 14 Jacob Long      | 31 Eric White            |
| 14 Regan Walters   |                          |
| 15 Karen Pinson    |                          |



# December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26 9am - Devotional Service 9:30am - Fellowship 10am - Choir Practice 10am - Family 11am - Worship Service 4:30pm - Boy Scouts -	27 9am - Veritas Class 1:30pm - Music Lessons 5:30pm - Agape Do	28 7:30am - Men's Breakfast	29 10am - AA Meeting	30 9am - Veritas 5:30pm - Agape Do 6pm - Choir Practice	1 12:30pm - Bridge -	2
3 Communion 9am - Choir Practice 10am - Family Service 10am - Single Service 11am - Church Luncheon 4:30pm - Boy Scouts -	4 9am - Veritas Class 1:30pm - Music Lessons 5:30pm - Agape Do	5 7:30am - Men's Breakfast 10am - Miriam-Naomi	6 10am - AA Meeting	7 9am - Veritas 5:30pm - Agape Do 6pm - Choir Practice	8 12:30pm - Bridge -	9 5pm - Live Nativity
10 Cents-Ability 9am - Choir Practice 9am - Growing Faith - 10am - Family Service 10am - Single Service 11am - Adult Sunday	11 9am - Veritas Class 1:30pm - Music Lessons 5:30pm - Agape Do	12 7:30am - Men's Breakfast	13 10am - AA Meeting	14 9am - Veritas 5:30pm - Agape Do 6pm - Choir Practice	15 12:30pm - Bridge -	16
17 9am - Choir Practice 10am - Family Service 10am - Single Worship 11am - Adult Sunday	18 1:30pm - Music Lessons 5:30pm - Agape Do	19 7:30am - Men's Breakfast	20 10am - AA Meeting	21 5:30pm - Agape Do 6pm - Choir Practice	22	23
24 9am - Choir Practice 10am - Single Service 4pm - Family Service - 7pm - Candlelight Service	25 Christmas Day	26 7:30am - Men's Breakfast	27 10am - AA Meeting	28	29	30
31 9am - Choir Practice 10am - Single Worship	1 New Year's Day	2 7:30am - Men's Breakfast	3 10am - AA Meeting	4 11am - SIPD Blood Drive 5:30pm - Agape Do 6pm - Choir Practice	5 12:30pm - Bridge -	6

**Church Office Hours:**  
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
Monday through Friday

Phone: (843) 883-3888  
[www.oursunrise.org](http://www.oursunrise.org)

## *Sunrise Staff*

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