

*The Methodist Messenger*  
DECEMBER 2020  
Whiteville United Methodist Church

Sunday School - 9:00 a.m.  
Sunday Worship Service - 10:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Holy Communion Service/Bible Study - 6:00 p.m.

Mission Statement of Whiteville United Methodist Church

As people of the body of Christ, we will gather for and be strengthened by Word and Sacraments, participate in loving fellowship, grow in discipleship, and serve our community and the world in Christ's name.

FROM  
THE  
PASTOR



*The people who walk in darkness will see a great light – a light that will shine on all who live in the land where death casts its shadow. – Isaiah 9:2*

Reflecting over the past 26 years of pastoral ministry, I started thinking that I need to do things differently this year. Over the past couple of years Christmas has seemed to me to be a short breather between times of great busy-ness. It has become little more than a holiday speed bump.

I long for the days when the anticipation of Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and the 12 Days of Christmas were almost palpable. So, I am thinking this year I am going to do things differently. I am going to focus more on our present season of Advent – the time of preparation.

The Isaiah verse above reminds us that this world can cast a shadow of death on our lives if we get too caught up in it. When we spend too much time grinding at work to the neglect of our families, the shadow of death looms over us. When we expend too much energy embracing the popular notions of Christmas, the shadow of death can block the light. What is going on in your life that is blocking the Light that is inbreaking your darkness?

Our hope is not in this world, it is in the Light that shines on all who live in it. Maybe you need to do Christmas a little differently this year. A time of preparation is key to being able to fully embrace an event of great significance. The Lord says, “Shout and rejoice, O Jerusalem, for I am coming to live among you.” (Zechariah 2:10) Surely you will agree that is an event of utmost significance! So, beginning with this present moment of Advent, I hope you will join me in preparing to make this Christmas a most joyous one by readying your family and your life for the Christ.

*Pastor Terry*

## BIBLE STUDY/HOLY COMMUNION

The Wednesday evening Holy Communion Service/  
Bible Study on the book of Galatians begins at 6:00. p.m.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES

Adult Sunday School: Fellowship Hall at 9:00 a.m.  
Children's Sunday School (ages 3-12):  
Upstairs classroom at 9:00 a.m.  
Christians Under Construction Sunday School:  
Via Zoom at 9:00 a.m. (Receive a link to join by emailing  
Carolyn Hankins at [carolynjhankins@msn.com](mailto:carolynjhankins@msn.com))

## FINANCE REPORT

Good news from the finance committee! After trailing last year's pace of giving by \$13,000, offerings are now \$4,054 ahead of last year. Thank you so much for your response during these difficult times. Our in person attendance has stabilized at 47. This is a few more than half our normal attendance. I hope many of you are taking advantage of the YouTube broadcast of our Sunday morning services. Several non-members have told me they are tuning in and are blessed by the service. Thanks to our soundboard team who are learning new video broadcast skills.

Our new online giving program is up and running with some initial activity. You can access the program several ways, including through our website [wumc@whitevillumc.org](mailto:wumc@whitevillumc.org). Pastor Terry is our 'go to guy' and can help with any questions you may have. Many thanks to him for introducing us to this program and managing the implementation.

The annual pledge campaign has evolved over the years from primarily a member to member canvas to increase pledges, to a system for encouraging and tracking pledges. The 2021 campaign resulted in 25 pledges totaling \$135,828. Both number and amount are 14% less than last year. Thanks to Kevin Bullard and Pastor Terry for their leadership of the campaign.

We likely will not raise our full budget this year, but the pandemic and other issues reduced our budgeted expenditures. Current offerings are covering our expenses. The 2021 budget has been approved and copies will be available soon. It is very similar to last year, but with a 3% reduction. It is a challenging budget in these uncertain times but we move forward in faith. Application has been made for forgiveness of the SBA Payroll Protection Program loan. If forgiven it will provide a cushion for the remainder of this year and into next.

Please stay safe and trust that with God's guidance we will soon be able to resume our full worship, fellowship, and ministries.

Tom Leggett  
Finance Chair

## SUNSHINE CIRCLE

In a recent telephone survey, active members of the Sunshine Circle agreed to discontinue group meetings until exposure to the COVID-19 virus has abated. Hopefully, this will be sooner than later. A notice will be posted in the newsletter and the church bulletin when meetings are rescheduled. In the meantime, if you have pertinent information that needs our attention regarding our purpose please call Chairperson Shirley Kennedy at (910) 642-7802. Let's keep others in our prayers and give thanks to our Lord for His love in all circumstances.

## ELECTRONIC ONLINE GIVING

The Finance and Stewardship Committees are pleased to announce the introduction of an electronic online giving option for making regular offerings. Contributions can now be debited automatically from your checking or savings account or processed using your credit or debit card. Our new electronic giving program offers convenience for you and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.

**If you are currently giving on a weekly basis through writing or automatically sending checks, we encourage you to continue your method of giving.**

When travel, illness or other circumstances prevent you from attending services or giving in your usual manner this program will allow your weekly offerings to continue on an uninterrupted basis. This will also give family and friends who live in other areas of the country, who watch online, or listen to our radio ministry, the opportunity to give on a regular basis or special occasion such as giving to a memorial or food pantry.

You can give online or through text-to-give option using your cell phone. Begin by visiting the church website: [whitevilleumc.org](http://whitevilleumc.org). Just click on the "Donate" button that is found at the top right corner of the home page. Select the option you would like to do and follow simple directions. Either option allows you to make donations to the church as a one-time gift or recurring gift.

Feel free to call the church office (642-3376) anytime for support and any questions. Thank you all and God bless.

## CALL MULTIPLIER

We hope you are enjoying receiving messages from the church on the Call Multiplier! One of the favorite features offered is the Message Playback. If you picked up the phone and listened to the message, but didn't quite get all of it, you can call 877-333-9336 to listen again. Please keep this number close by, it's sure to come in handy!

## PARISH NURSING

It is a most special time of year as we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Christ Child! Hopefully, we shall remember that Love truly came down on a long ago night in Bethlehem. Perhaps you are already thinking about ways to honor Jesus's birth and share God's love with others. What kind of gift-giving will we choose in this year of pandemic that continues to impact us all, not just locally, but across our country and around the world?

Perhaps we can engage in some reflection as we consider a plethora of possibilities for old and new ways to celebrate Christmas. Here are a few ideas for my own personal reflection as I anticipate the possibility of Christmas physically away from my family.

**R**emember special joys from past years.

**E**njoy looking at old pictures.

**F**ind a new game for families to share.

**L**ight a few candles, place in a safe place and enjoy their glow. (Consider safety precautions with this idea.)

**E**xercise throughout the Christmas season together or by yourself. A short walk is always a good choice.

**C**ook using an old favorite holiday recipe or try a new version while listening and singing Christmas carols.

**T**elephone, write notes, email, text, face time, ZOOM or other virtual options – just reconnect with family and friends, both old and new.

**I**magine what Christmas might be like next year.

**O**btain at least one new book to read.

**N**utritious meals and adequate sleep is a gift we should give ourselves throughout advent and Christmastide, and into the New Year!

With prayers of gratitude to God for the gift of His love in our lives and His guidance as we seek to share His love with others, Patricia Ray

## ANGEL TREE

If you are interested in adopting a child for Christmas please feel free to get a star from the tree in the Narthex. For those of you who are not coming into church for Sunday services, please call Ashley Wilson at our office and she will give you a name, sizes and needs/wants for the child. If you want to get a doll for your child and do not know what race that child is, you can also call Ashley. Some suggestions for gifts are: An outfit (including socks, underwear), a toy and a book. We will suggest the child's interests on the stars and let you know if you call. Ashley can be reached at 910-642-5996. Thank you for your support and let me know if you have any questions.

– Vickie Pait

## BIRTHDAYS IN DECEMBER

5 <sup>th</sup>	Kevin Bullard
6 <sup>th</sup>	Betty Hamilton
10 <sup>th</sup>	Zoey Hunt
13 <sup>th</sup>	Darryl Diefes
16 <sup>th</sup>	Anna Georgis Phelps Mary Hutchins
18 <sup>th</sup>	Anne Williamson
21 <sup>st</sup>	Camden Collins
22 <sup>nd</sup>	Mac McGougan
23 <sup>rd</sup>	Lonnie Bullard, Jr.
25 <sup>th</sup>	Sandy Duncan Lonnie Bullard
27 <sup>th</sup>	Nancy Bullard
29 <sup>th</sup>	Jenny Barnhill
31 <sup>st</sup>	Paul Gore

## WORSHIP COMMITTEE

As another year ends in the life of our church, I would like to take a moment to express my thanks and appreciation for the many "labors of love" so many of you have given to Whiteville United Methodist Church. Whether it's leading or playing music, teaching Sunday School, preparing the altar or arranging flowers each week, overseeing the soundboard, or any one of the countless other (usually unseen) tasks that keep our church running, your willingness to use your gifts and abilities has strengthened the ministry of this church, and you have been true examples of servant-leadership and giving—a real blessing to this congregation.

The Worship Committee met November 10, 2020, and discussed plans for the Christmas Season/December. Sunday, November 29, was the first of the four Sundays of Advent where we celebrated our church's annual Hanging of the Greens service. On December 20<sup>th</sup>, a variety of beautiful music and readings will be shared as we celebrate the miracle, the joy, and the wonder of Christmas together. Our Christmas Eve service will be December 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. in the sanctuary, as well as it being streamlined.

Come, this is the season to worship and reflect on the blessings we have received, and not the ones we haven't. Christmas isn't about giving gifts, but acknowledging the gifts we have been given. This season, ask yourself, "What blessings have I been given and how can I show that I am thankful for them?"

We are scheduled to meet again on February 9, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Until then, I wish all of you and your loved ones a healthy, happy, and peaceful holiday season.

Betty Gray, Chair

## “L” for Layton



The Whiteville Methodist Preschool celebrated Mr. Layton Dowless during Letter of the Week activities. Mr. Layton is dearly loved by the church and our students. This was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate a great man who not only loves God but his country. Mr. Layton came and spoke to three of our preschool classes on serving in the military. The classes presented him with personal art work showing their thanks! Mr Layton is our favorite veteran!

## OUTREACH TEAM HAPPENINGS

Families First will have a Christmas tree with angels of children who could use gifts at the holidays. Available in the narthex on the first Sunday in Advent, there will also be a virtual method of choosing a child. Vickie Pait indicated the staff is not hearing from many of those who usually volunteer to adopt children, yet the list of needs has grown during these difficult times. A toy, an outfit of clothing and a book to read are the suggested items to provide each child.

We are reviewing options to assist victims of a home fire with temporary housing if requested. More about this opportunity next month.

A Service of Lights for the Columbus County community will be prerecorded and broadcast on Tuesday, December 29 at 6:00 pm. Watch for details to be shared.

Among things I am thankful for in this season: new ways of reaching out and communicating with technology - - and the ‘opportunity’ to practice learning to use them reasonably well.  
– Carolyn Hankins, team leader

## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

Debbie Conway again offered her gifts of creativity and time to enable us to assemble gift bags for specific people to be distributed prior to Thanksgiving. Usually remembrances have been given prior to Christmas, but we thought folks would appreciate an early surprise. There were 18 or 20 bags with some common and some individually chosen items included.

We gave a gift card to the Preschool to help with costs of materials for activities.

The officers met to finalize a budget for 2021 and establish our ‘wish list’ of how meetings will be able to proceed. For the early part of next year, our speakers will be able to join via Zoom so we can be safe at home as seems best.

The annual fund raiser will be modified in February to offer frozen soup (pre-ordered). We’ll miss the fellowship and sandwiches usually shared. Perhaps later in 2021 we can host such a gathering after church.

## DECEMBER 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1  7:00 p.m. Cub Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	2 9:30 a.m. Bible Study/Parlor  6:00 p.m. Holy Communion/ Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Handbell Practice/ Fellowship Hall	3	4	5
6 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship	7  7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	8  5:00 p.m. Worship Meeting/Parlor  7:00 p.m. Cub Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	9 9:30 a.m. Bible Study/Parlor  6:00 p.m. Holy Communion/ Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Handbell Practice/ Fellowship Hall	10  6:30 p.m. SPRC	11	12
13 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship	14  7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	15  7:00 p.m. Cub Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	16 9:30 a.m. Bible Study/Parlor  6:00 p.m. Holy Communion/ Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Handbell Practice/ Fellowship Hall	17	18	19
20 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship	21  7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	22  7:00 p.m. Cub Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	23	24  5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Service	25  Christmas Day	26
27 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Worship	28  7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	29  7:00 p.m. Cub Scouts/ Fellowship Hall	30	31  New Year's Eve		

Acolytes: 6<sup>th</sup> - Grace High; 13<sup>th</sup> - Emily Sauls; 20<sup>th</sup> - Peyton Hunt; 27<sup>th</sup> - Andrew Bullard.  
Soundboard: 6<sup>th</sup> - TBD; 13<sup>th</sup> - Suzanne Hall; 20<sup>th</sup> - Lynne Inman; 27<sup>th</sup> - Kathy and Terry Simmons.