



NEWS FROM THE PEWS

A Holly Jolly Christmas *December Edition*

Sunday Schedule

9:30 AM Sunday School
10:30 AM Worship

When you receive this newsletter, I'll be in the Upstate for Ben's wedding. The planning has had plenty of moments of stress and a few miscommunications. That seems to be typical for weddings. We want them to be perfect. Our focus on some ideal can prevent us from seeing God's work and the blessings of the moment. Like so many others, my wedding planning focused on a dress, the cake, the location, the decorations, the invitations... We rarely focus on it being a covenant worship service. I wonder how that might change the stress levels if we were focused on God rather than the image, we have created for ourselves. Weddings would likely be simpler.

Office Details

Hours: 8:00-1:00

(Emails answered throughout the day)

Aldersgate@ftc-i.net

(803) 775-1602

211 Alice Drive

Sumter, SC 29150

The same is true about the holidays. We can get caught up in the decorating, shopping, baking, and parties. The tree to be perfect and the lights to twinkle. We want to quickly find a parking space, our idea to be in stock in the right size. We want to pick the perfect gifts and keep them as a surprise. We want lines to be short in the stores and the gifts to be on sale. We want the cookies to be beautiful and delicious. We want life to look like it came from Southern Living Magazine or the best Pinterest posts.

The reality that we face each year is that life is messy. In our house the dog beats the tree with his tail. Shopping is often done from my iPad. While I might enjoy not having to find a parking place there is something missing without the collective anticipation of people shopping. When the children were little, they would spoil surprises because they couldn't wait to share. If (and that is a gigantic IF) I bake, I'm often overwhelmed by the mess that has been created in the process. The sink is full of dirty dishes, flour is scattered, and life doesn't really look so "perfect". Reality crashes into my expectation for a "holly, jolly Christmas".

Staff

Senior Pastor:

Rev. Laura Whitt

(Ext. 101)

Office Manager:

Brooke Staniec

(Ext. 100)

Custodian: Shpendi Dani

Others enter this season keenly aware that this season isn't going to be perfect. All the holiday sights, sounds, and smells trigger memories and stir up grief. The grief comes because the holiday season This is when we really need community. That is why we offer a Longest Night Service for those who grieve. This service is designed to offer hope that convinces us that God can redeem our lives and the world. If you know someone who is struggling, I hope you will not only extend an invitation to this service, but also offer to come be with that person.

Let's offer the world the hope of Christ who brings light into the darkness. Rather than holding onto unrealistic expectations, let's cling to a God who enters our messy world and walks alongside us. God is present and at work in our midst.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Laura



December 21st at 6PM we will have The Longest Night Service. We will have a traditional Christmas Eve Service on the 24th at 6PM with Holy Communion and Candlelight. Sunday, December 25th we will gather around the piano as we sing Christmas carols and celebrate the birth of our Savior.



Saturday, December 10th 9AM-11AM, Santa will be coming to visit Aldersgate. We will have finger foods for breakfast with Santa, photo opportunities, coloring stations, etc. We'd also like to see our congregation come get involved as we take this opportunity to show our community the real reason for the season, Jesus our Savior.

LOVE OFFERING

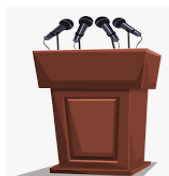
Each year we show our appreciation of our staff by taking up a love offering. The offering is split between all of the staff and we like to give them the gift before Christmas. If you feel led to give please note the love offering on your envelope.



If you would like a wreath or poinsettia in memory or honor of someone special please let Brooke know. **Poinsettia orders must be in by Friday, December 9th.** Poinsettias will be \$9.00 each this year, 16" wreaths will be \$30.00, & our two large (36") wreaths will be \$50.00.



The UWF will have a Christmas Luncheon on Saturday, December 17th at noon. All women of the church are more than welcome to come attend and have a fun afternoon.



If you are interested in being a Lay Reader for next year please reach out to Krista Jennings ASAP and let her know.



With the year coming to an end, please be sure all of your information is updated with the office to ensure you're getting all information/letters from our Church.

OUR PRAYERS:

- Lynn Boan
- Betty Hodges
- Betty Heacker
- Mariean Northrup
- Griffin/Smith Family
- Larry & Garland Nettles
- Allen Prescott
- Gene Hunter
- Ed & Carolyn Hudson
- Everett Burroughs
- Bill Brattain
- Bill Fleury
- Marvin Vannoy
- Rex Riddle
- Arawana
(Family of The Cox)
- Bobbi Land
- Wilma Crayton
- Phyllis Volland
- Sebastian Volland
- Bill Reither
- Sam Crawford
- All Homebound Members



DECEMBER 2022

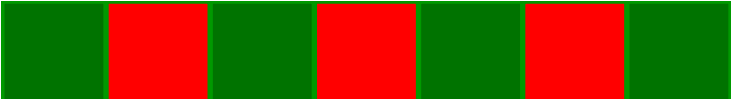
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 UMM 7AM Discipleship Study 9AM & 6:30PM	8 Knitters 10AM	9	10 Breakfast and Pictures with Santa 9AM-11AM
11	12	13	14 UMM 7AM Discipleship Study 9AM & 6:30PM	15	16 Seekers Christmas Party 6 PM	17 UWF Luncheon 12 PM
18	19	20	21 UMM 7AM Discipleship Study 9AM Longest Night Service 6PM	22	23 Office Closed	24 Candlelit Service 6 PM
25	26 Office Closed	27	28 UMM 7AM	29	30	31

9:30 AM Sunday School
10:30 AM Worship

Stewardship Report:
January 1– October 31st, 2022

Actual Received: \$377,693
Budgeted: \$458,333
Expenditures: \$315,891

Apportionments paid through October 2022
\$43,150 of 2022 Budgeted \$53,477
(70% of conference request)



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2 Linda Gohn	16 Allie Boan	30 Frank
3 Fay Cook	16 Ted Jones	Edwards
4 Dick Davis	17 Bobbi Land	
7 Bill Johnson	19 Lynn Boan	
9 Anna Polston	21 Chip Hanzlik	
9 Caleb Brady	21 Nancy Hodge	
10 Judy Shuping	28 Amy Graves	