

# ternstown

United Methodist Church | 3239 Valley Pike, Winchester, VA 22602-5303 540-667-7298 | www.kernstownumc.org

Rev. Dr. Victor Gomez pastor@kernstownumc.org or 540-662-2432



December 2025 & January 2026

"Amazing Grace, How sweet the sound..."

The last couple of weeks, I have especially been thinking about God's purpose in my life and facing some personal struggles, so I have been taking extra time in prayer and discern-

A couple of years ago, I received an email from a former pastor-student of mine in Cuba. In his email, he said that he woke up at around 2:00 in the morning, humming in his head the hymn Amazing Grace, and for some reason he was thinking about me. He said that he got up from bed and began praying for me and singing this hymn. Then he said in his email, that when we face our faith battles, even though we don't see others sticking around, even when we feel that we are alone, even when we don't see the light at the end of the tunnel... God is always faithful and God is with us.

After I read his email, I started singing this beautiful hymn. At the end of the first verse, I was reminded that I am not blind anymore, that God's grace is so amazing, which allows me to see the light at the end of the tunnel, and indeed, God is with me.

John Wesley's last words were exactly that: "The best of all is, God is with us." I am reminded of God's amazing grace, and I am reminded of the presence of God without ceasing. I know that I will face struggles throughout my life. I know that I worry, but most important, I know that God is with me, all the time. At times you may feel that this is too far away from you. What about now? What is your best of all? What are you holding onto to get you through today? Then, I am reminded of John Wesley's words, that God-with-us is the best news of everyday, not just one's final day. That in Jesus, God has come to us, to live with us, and in us share that Amazing Grace.

God has promised to be with you even in the worst moments of life. God's presence is not the guarantee that worse will not come, but that God's best for you will never leave.

GOD is with you. No matter what! Pastor Victor

# Finance

Care & Connect Reach & Serve-UWF Worship & Wonder

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Advent

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# GIVE ONLINE Kernstown UMC

## Oct. Financial Info

Received \$ 23,381.00 Needed \$ <u>26,1</u>89.32 Difference \$ 2,808.32

Advent Theme: "Be Present"
Theological Insight: Advent invites us to wait—not passively, but attentively—for the coming of Christ. In a world that constantly pulls our attention toward what's next, Advent reorients us toward *presence*: God's presence with us, and our presence with one another.

The incarnation—the mystery of Emmanuel, God with us—is at the heart of this theme. John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh and lived among us." God did not love us from a distance. God showed up—in time, in space, in the vulnerability of human life.

To "be present" is therefore to live as God lives—with attentiveness, compassion, and embodied love. It is a theological statement that our faith is not merely about believing, but about *being*—rooted, aware, and open to God's movement in each moment.

In Wesleyan terms, being present reflects "holiness of heart and life." Holiness is not only about moral purity, but about loving God and neighbor fully—being truly there for others, just as Christ is with us. When we are present, we participate in God's sanctifying grace, allowing Christ's love to shape our relationships and our pace of life.

Practical Application: "Be Present" can guide the con-

gregation through the Advent weeks in simple but powerful ways: Be Present with God: Set aside quiet moments each day for prayer or Scripture reading. Instead of rushing through devotionals, take time to listen. Advent is less about doing more and

Be Present with Others: During the holidays, it is easy to be surrounded by people but disconnected from them. Make it a goal to give the gift of attention—put the phone down, make eye contact, listen deeply. Presence is one of the most meaningful gifts we can offer.

• Be Present with Yourself: The season can stir both joy and sorrow. Allow yourself to feel what you feel. God meets us in our real emotions, not just in the festive moments.

• Be Present in the Community: Look for Christ in the faces of neighbors, the hungry, the

lonely, the refugee, the child. Serving others becomes an act of recognizing God's presence in the world.



#### **Care & Connect**

Our mission is keeping people in our congregation safe and connected to God and each other. Through fellowship, food, visiting, health ministry, and sharing information about our lives, we believe the Holy Spirit moves throughout our congregation and community. Care & Connect Meeting -We meet every other month at 10 am in the fellowship hall. Our next meeting is Tuesday, January 21. All church members are welcome to attend.

Prayer & Care - You are welcome to join Pastor Victor and our group on Wednesdays at 11 am in the fellowship hall as we pray for our congregation and the needs of our members. Complete the yellow attendance cards in the pew racks each Sunday for attendance and list any prayer requests that you may have.

Prayer Chain KneeMail – Contact Cathy Lichvar via cell 540-664-7280, email prayer@kernstownumc.org or from the web kernstownumc.org/prayer-request. Contact her or call the church

request. Contact her or call the church office with info on any immediate need for prayer, such as admission to hospital, deaths of loved ones, etc.

**Thanksgiving Eve Service** is on Wed., Nov. 26, at 7 pm. Kernstown UMC will host the service with Opequon Presbyterian Church and provide refreshments following the service.

Fellowship times together-Save these dates: Dec. 21 & Jan. 18. Coffee & teatime with Pastor Victor every Sunday at 10:00 – 10:20. Doris Miller, Chairperson. Coffee Bar/Kitchen— Keurig machine missing from coffee bar, see Doris if you know whereabouts. Cakepan/lid left in kitchen, owner pick up, please.

Health Ministry Mission is to promote Wholistic health and prevent/minimize illness at KUMC and surrounding community. Parish Nurse: Doris Miller BSN, RN, Faith Community Nurse, 540-303-3135, email <a href="mailto:Pameric2021@Outlook.com">Pameric2021@Outlook.com</a> Blood Pressure Checks: 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays in mission rm. Outside fellowship hall after service.

Walk with a DOC (Exercise) – 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed.'s at 11 am. Meet at Valley Health Wellness & Fitness Center for a talk by a physician and walk around the lake with others for exercise.

**Flu Season**: If you have not received flu vaccine, you can still receive it. Do not attend church if you have fever or feel ill. You can watch service on line.

Scripture: Psalms 46:10 NRSV "Be still and know that I am God!" Health Education: Loneliness during the holidays, 7 Ways to Combat Holiday Loneliness:

Put something to look forward to on your calendar

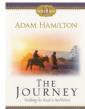
- Even brief conversations have important benefits
- 3. Invite others into your life
- 4. Enjoy your community's holiday offerings
- 5. Call or text people you care about
- 6. Volunteering can change your perspective
- 7. Create new solo traditions create a new holiday tradition that reflects your special interests, brings you satisfaction and is something you would look forward to in the future. Ref.: Suzanne Degges-White PhD

**Christmas Gift Suggestions:** 

- To your enemy, forgiveness
- To an opponent, tolerance
- To a friend, your heart
- To a customer, service
- To all, charity
- To every child, a good example
- To yourself, respect Reference: Chaplain Kathy Mattone

#### **Educate & Equip**

Beginning the first Sunday of Advent, Nov 30, we will begin an encounter study at 9:00 entitled *The Journey*, by Rev Adam Hamilton. This is a four-week study that "travels from



Nazareth to Bethlehem and tells us the story of the birth of Jesus following the footsteps of Mary, Joseph, the shepherds and others". Books are available-no charge. Please contact Carolyn Carney or Ric Dunkle if you have any questions. Hope to see you there!

#### **Reach & Serve**

**WATTS Dinner** – we will provide dinner for clients at Opequon Presby. Church on Tues., Dec. 30. Anyone who would like to assist with this meal, contact Doris Miller (Pameric2021@Outlook.com).

United Women in Faith (UWF)

**Scripture:** 2 John: 5 ...commandment we have had from the beginning, let us love one another

**Meetings:** next meeting on Tue., Jan. 13, at 10:00 in fellowship hall. Program will be Installation of Officers for 2026 by our guest Mary Preston, Shenandoah River District UWF Pres.

Christmas Luncheon: Tues., Dec. 9, at 11:00 am at Hayfield Restaurant. Invite husband or friend to attend with you. Bring Christmas gift for your Secret Sister. Also bring gifts valued at less than \$10 for Thieves Exchange.

**District UWF Christmas Lunch**: at Camp Overlook in Blessings Lodge on Mon., Dec. 1, & Tues., Dec. 2, at noon. Christmas Stockings for Shut-Ins: Bring items to place in stockings to church on Sun., Dec. 14, when we will fill the stockings after worship service.

Reading Program: Sept. 25 to Aug 26. Complete your reading form as you read books and report to Polly Look. All members of church are welcome to read the books. Just sign out the book and sign in when you return it.

"Lighting the Path to the Christ Child" Advent Project for local missions – See the lighted shrubbery outside the sanctuary during Advent.

UM Day at Va. General Assembly, Richmond – Thursday, January 29.

Recycling Plastic bottles. Only plastic bottles are accepted for recycling. We cannot accept other plastics at this time. Please place other plastics with the trash. This project is to meet our Social Justice Program's goal for Climate Justice. Place them in the blue recycling container in the fellowship hall.

**Cookbooks:** We still have cookbooks at \$3 each in the mission rm. outside the fellowship hall. See Doris Miller or Cheryl Spurr to purchase them.

**The Upper Room** is in the narthex for your use. They are provided by Reach and Serve. *Doris Miller, President* 

#### Worship & Wonder

Christmas Music - It's the holiday season and that means it's time for everyone's favorite thing, Christmas music. There are two special musical presentations during the Advent season this year. The first is called "Presence of the

Past." It's a concert with David Landrum and several special guests that's all about memories and reuniting with friends and family which is such a wonderful part of the holiday season. It will be the evening of Decem-



ber 14th at 7 PM. A love offering will be collected for the Winchester Rescue Mission. Just one week later will be the choir Christmas Cantata entitled "Christmas Presence." It's a heartwarming old-fashioned style program that, through music, helps us "Be Present" as we welcome into our hearts the real "Christmas Presence." That will be during the worship service on December 21st. If that wasn't enough, we will kick off epiphany and the new year with a piano and cello concert entitled "Two Wise Guys Celebrate the Three Wise Guys." It is January 4th at 2 PM. We look forward to seeing you at these wonderful programs.

Carolyn Carney

Daniel Conklin

Brianna Jackman

Lisa Dawson

Barb Mosser

Steve Spurr

Richard Nenge

Nora Seabright

Rev. Dr. Gomez

Nom. & Leadership Dev.

Ric Dunkle

#### Worship & Wonder, continued

**Thanksgiving Eve Service** - On Wed., Nov. 26, at 7:00 p.m., we will be joined by Opequon Presbyterian Church to celebrate Thanksgiving here at KUMC. Pastor David Witt will provide the sermon. Refreshments to follow. Offering benefits WATTS.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Service** - On Thursday, December 24 at 7pm. "Reclaim Christmas" is the message with communion.

**Christmas Decorating -** On Fri., Nov. 28, at 9 a.m., we will decorate the church for Christmas. We invite everyone to come out to join in the fellowship.

We'll be undecorating Jan. 2, 9 am.

#### **VOLUNTEER NEEDED**

Kernstown United Methodist Church is looking for a

Membership Secretary to help maintain and update our church membership records. This important role supports the ministry of connection- helping us keep in touch with our members and celebrate milestones in our church family.



If you're detail-oriented, and organized, we'd love to have you serve in this vital ministry. Training and support will be provided.

If you're interested or would like to learn more, please contact Pastor Victor.

### **December Birthdays**

	.,-
DeLaney Newcome	05
Steven Ayers	06
Jonathan Hill	06
Tina Raia	06
Mike Newcome	10
Roger Hill	11
Heather Gomez	13
Richard Nenge	13
Carla Ay	14
Clinton Ritter Jr.	15
Loretta Lantz	16
Judy Chapman	17
Aria Lorusso	17
Tammy Look	19
Sandra Keiter	20
Betty Phillips	21
Debbie Martin	24
Roy Walker Jr.	24
	26
Nora Seabright	27
Nancy Chick	
Christina Gibbs	28
Lorraine Wilson	28
Aiden Fields	29
Emma Fields	29
Brianna Jackman	29
Kevin Mosser	29
McKenna Newcome	30
Madonna Sponaugle	30
Wendy Aube	31



#### **January Birthdays**

Gary Yost	02
Anele Nenge	05
Betty Lou Langager	06
Jim Markley	10
Elizabeth Reed	12
Linda Straight	12
Beth Heaton	16
Don Adams	17
Jennifer Hill	17
Aaron Rust	19
Zachary Dawson	24
Nicholas Dawson	24
Barbara Mallory	28
Edna Renner	29

	ate
Jonathan & Jennifer Hill	04
Jim & Dolly Park	06
DeAnn & Scott Whitacre	14
Doug & Nora Seabright	20
Steve & Linda Straight	23
Gary & Beth Heaton	30

Members & Friends: Birthday or anniversary missing? Call the office to update the database or if you have directory questions.

# Kernstown UMC Leaders for 2026 🕻

Church Council
Brian Henshaw
Danna Doyle
Ric Dunkle
Roy Walker
Dave Ford
Carolyn Carney
Cathy Lichvar
Lisa Dawson
Doris Miller
Sam Henshaw
Danny Aube
Steve Wells
Lorraine Shelton

tbd Mbrship Secty

Rev. Dr. Gomez

<u>Trustees</u>

Dave Ford

Susan Hill

Chris Lutz

Brenda Long

Edward Jackman

Barbara Mallory

Dwight Miller

Dennis O'Neal

Finance
Roy Walker
Lisa Dawson
Cathy Lichvar
Brian Henshaw
Carolyn Carney
Dave Ford
Ric Dunkle
Cheryl Spurr
Polly Look
Roger Hill
Edward Jackman
Gary Lantz
Kevin Mosser
Rev. Dr. Gomez

Kevin Mosser
Rev. Dr. Gomez
Mary Anton
Lisa Dawson
Ric Dunkle
Sandy Dunkle
Sandy Dunkle
Sherry Ford
Lisa Dawson, R&S
Steve Wells, R&S

Lay Servant

Doris Miller

Approved Chrg Conf 10/26/2025

Leadership Recognition Sunday, January 4, also Epiphany Sunday

Ric Dunkle, Acting E&E



**Sympathy** to the family of Rev. Dr. Victor Gómez on the recent loss of his father, *Victor* Gómez *Matilla* 

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STAR **SHEPHERDS** ANGELS PEACE GOLD BETHLEHEM **JESUS** FRANKINCENSE JOY CANDLE NATIVITY CHRISTMAS WREATH LOVE WISEMEN MESSIAH MYRRH **ADVENT HOPE** 

Answer last month puzzle PRODIGAL SON

From the Office ~ In the spring, we will moving to a digital, email newsletter. Please check our directory in the narthex (dated 10/16/2025) to ensure that we have your correct email address as printed We will still mail to homebound and those without an email on file. Hard copies are currently printed and will still be printed and available in the narthex each month.

Kernstown United Methodist Church Worship at 10:30 | Rev. Dr. Victor Gomez pastor@kernstownumc.org | 540-662-2432 3239 Valley Pike, Winchester, VA 22602-5303 540-667-7298; office@kernstownumc.org

www.kernstownumc.org | facebook.com/kernstownumc/

Pam Brannon, Admin. Asst./Communications Coordinator David Landrum, Dir. Music; Kelly Henshaw, Chancel Choir Director Charles Harless, Pastor Emeritus Ric Dunkle, Lay Ldr., Cathy Lichvar, Treas.; Doris Miller, Parish Nurse

Church Purpose Statement. .

"Strives to welcome ALL into a loving church family that glorifies God through worship, nurture, and outreach to our neighbors."

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#### **December & January 2026 Lectionaries**

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
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Winchester, VA

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28 1≠Sunday after Christmas 9 Encounter, 10 Coffee 10 <sup>30</sup> Worship	53	30 124Bridge fth 10 <sup>30</sup> Freedge 11 Music Dir hrs WATTS dinner @ OPC serve 7-7:30	31 5th TOPS upstrs 11 Prayer & Care fh	1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2 11.3 <sup>30</sup> Brdg fin Office Closed 9 W&W Decorate	m
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11 Baptism of the Lord 9 Encounter, 10 Coffee 10 <sup>30</sup> Worship	12	13 124 Bridge fit 10 UWF, 10 <sup>30</sup> Freedge 11 Music Dir hrs	14 9-11 <sup>20</sup> BSF upstr 5 <sup>20</sup> TOPS 11 Prayer & Care fh 6 Handbells/7 Choir	15	<b>16</b> 11-3 <sup>30</sup> Brog fin	17
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<b>25</b> 3" Sunday after Epiphany 9 Encounter, 10 Coffee 10 <sup>30</sup> Worship	<b>3</b> 6	27 12-4 Bridge fit 10 <sup>30</sup> Freedge 11 Music Dir hrs	28 9.11% BSF upstr 5% TOPS 11 Prayer & Care fh 6 Handbells/7 Choir	29	<b>30</b> 11-3 <sup>30</sup> Brdg fh	31