

PREPARE

3rd Sunday of Advent

Changing Lives by Sharing Christ, Making Disciples, Serving and Giving Hope

Sermon Notes: Thursday, December 14 and Sunday, December 17

In your United Methodist Hymnal, you will find "There's a Song in the Air." The first verse is, "There's a song in the air! There's a star in the sky! There's a mother's deep prayer and a baby's low cry! And the star reigns its fire while the beautiful sing, for the Manger of Bethlehem cradles the King!" This week there is a song in the air at First United Methodist Church. You will find it with the choir concerts on Tuesday and Thursday at 6pm and with Christmas Unplugged in the Chapel on Sunday at Celebration worship at 9 am. You will especially hear it on Sunday as we are blessed with a special time of Christmas worship with the choir during traditional worship at 11am.

This week as you hear the songs in the air, may we remember the song which rang out that first Christmas, "Glory to God in the Highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!" (Luke 2:14).

Advent Blessings,
Rev. Sherri

Thursday Worship will meet in the Chapel, Room 118, on December 14 .

*Celebration Worship will meet in the Chapel, Rm 118, at 9 AM on Sunday December 17, for "Christmas Unplugged."

Cookies & Hot Chocolate @ HeBrews in the Chestnut Foyer will follow the Celebration Service.

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Worship Opportunities

5:30 pm Thursday Worship

Sunday Mornings:

Celebration 9 am* Traditions 11 am*

*In Person (Sanctuary) and Online

ACOLYTES

December 17 Clementine & Rhett Hilburn
 December 24 Volunteers

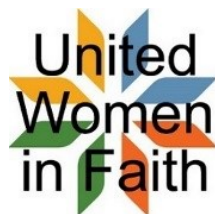
Security for Thursday Worship

December 14 Mark Condra, Chapel
 December 21 George Fant
 December 28 No Service

Tech Team Schedule

December 17
 Celebration Christmas Unplugged, in Chapel, Rm 118
 Traditions Mark Casey, Parker Casey, Brad Barnes
 December 24
 One Service at 10:00 am: Sheila Freeman,
 Carmen McKiven, Jacob McKiven

Christmas Boutique



Visit the UWF Christmas Boutique on Sunday mornings between the worship services in the Chestnut Foyer during Advent. All proceeds benefit UWF Missions! There will be new Christmas Cards and Note Cards (blank inside) featuring our stained glass windows, Chrismons and more, plus some favorites designs. There will also be handmade jewelry and specialty items that will make wonderful Christmas gifts. We look forward to seeing you this Sunday morning at the UWF Christmas Boutique.



Sunday SCHOOL
Sunday School Classes for All Ages!

Children's Sunday School Rooms 108 and 104
 Youth Sunday School Room 211
 New Adult Sunday School Room 209
 Pathfinder/Seekers Room 208
 Living Water Room 116
 (Nursery provided for Children under 3)

SUNDAYS 10:00 AM

FIRST UMC GADSDEN
 115 S. 5TH ST, GADSDEN, AL 35901

It's Time for New Beginnings...Maybe you have never participated in Sunday School or you have been out for a while! YOU Belong in Sunday School! Choose a class to visit—there are lots to choose from!

***Please note: Sunday school classes will not meet on
 Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24
 or on New Year's Eve, Sunday, December 31!***

***Please join us at 10 am in the Sanctuary on these two
 Sundays for United Worship Services in the Sanctuary!***

***Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24, United Worship Service at 10 am
 New Year's Eve, Sunday, December 31, United Worship Service at 10 am***

Men at the Well Thursday Mornings, 7:00 am

You are invited to join the weekly Bible study with the Men at the Well small group. They are currently meeting at the Choice Restaurant at 7 am. Their current study is the "12 Tribes of Israel".

Contact Todd Rains, Mark Condra, Mark Casey, or any of the Men at the Well for more information.

**Wonderful Wednesday
 Fellowship Dinner 5:15 pm**

Will resume on January 10

**\$7 per person
 \$3 for 11 and under**

Adult Small Groups @ Wonderful Wednesdays

Will resume on Wednesday, January 10.

Wonderful Wednesday @ 6 pm

Rev. Sherri Reynolds Room 208

Advent Study

Small Group with Harriet Murray

6 pm, Room 110

Advent and Christmas at Gadsden First UMC - PREPARE

Thursday Worship

Nov 30, 5:30 PM
"Celebration of the Chrismons"

Dec 7, 5:30 PM
"Preparing for a Perfect Christmas"

Dec 14, 5:30 PM
Meet in the Chapel, Room 118, this week.
"Preparing with Joy"

Dec 21, 5:30 PM
"Preparing for the Unexpected"

Dec 28, No Thursday Worship

Celebration

Nov 26, 9 AM
"Preparing for Holy Seasons"

Dec 3, 9 AM
First Sunday of Advent
"Hanging of the Green"

Dec 10, 9 AM
Second Sunday of Advent
"Preparing for a Perfect Christmas"

Dec 17, 9 AM
Christmas Unplugged, Chapel
"Preparing with Joy"

Dec 24, 10 AM One Worship Service
"Preparing for the Unexpected"

Dec 31, 10 AM One Worship Service
"Preparing for a New Year"

Traditions

Nov 26 "Preparing for Holy Seasons"

Dec 3, 11 AM
First Sunday of Advent
""Celebration of the Chrismons"

Dec 10, 11 AM
Second Sunday of Advent
"Preparing for a Perfect Christmas"

Dec 17, 11 AM
Third Sunday of Advent
Christmas Music
Chancel Choir With Orchestra

Dec 24, 10 AM One Worship Service
"Preparing for the Unexpected"

Dec 31, 10 AM One Worship Service
"Preparing for a New Year"

Advent and Christmas: PREPARE

Sunday, Dec. 17, 9 AM, Christmas Unplugged, followed by Cookies @ HeBrews, Chapel, 118
11 AM, Christmas Music, Chancel Choir and Orchestra, Sanctuary

Sunday, Dec. 24, 10 AM, One Worship Service

Sunday, Dec. 24, 4 PM, Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

Sunday, Dec. 24, 5 PM, Live Nativity, Corner of Chestnut and 5th Street

Sunday, Dec. 24, 6 PM, Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

Sunday, Dec. 31, 10 AM, One Worship Service



Order Poinsettias to be placed on the Altar during Advent and Christmas Worship Services!



Cost: \$25.00* # of Poinsettias

Select Date: Dec 24

(Poinsettias will be placed in both services.)

Circle One: In honor of In memory of

Name(s): _____

Given By _____

*subject to change

Orders must be placed Monday at noon prior to the date you are requesting.

ELC News

Our 3K and 4K students gave a great performance for the Judicial Staff at their Christmas party on Monday, December 11th at the Judicial Building. The ELC will be closed for Christmas Break Friday, December 8th through Tuesday, January 2nd. Regular hours will resume Wednesday, January 3rd.

—Helene Haller



Youth Ministry News

Youth will meet at the home of Lori Corley Sokol on December 13 for a celebration of Hannukah.



The Youth will participate in the live nativity on Christmas Eve at 5 pm.

Youth Counselor
Carmen McKiven

Wonderful Wednesday Fellowship Dinner
Will resume on January 10

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Children's Ministry

GFUMC CHILDREN'S CALENDAR

JANUARY 2023

Children's Church, Sunday's 9:00 & 11:00

Wonderful Wednesdays @6:00

MEASURE UP: JESUS' EARLY LIFE

January 10: God guides us to safety

January 17: Love God with our actions

January 24: We can follow Jesus

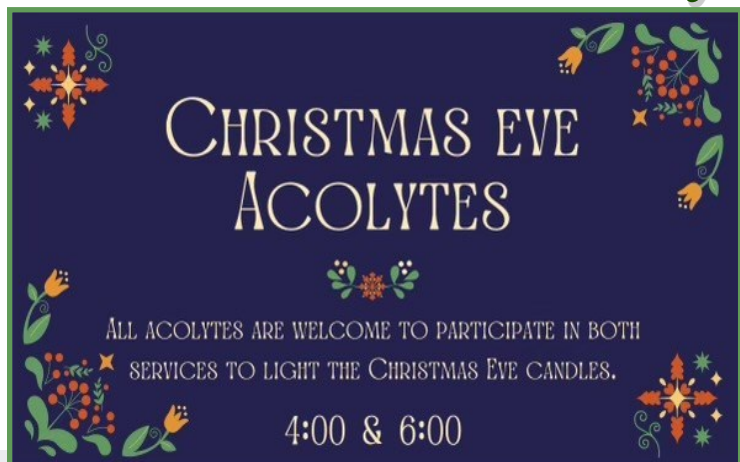
January 31: We are ready at the right time

January 24 🤡

National Belly Laugh Day

Bring a joke this Wednesday!

www.fumcgadsden.org/children 



CHRISTMAS EVE
ACOLYTES

ALL ACOLYTES ARE WELCOME TO PARTICIPATE IN BOTH
SERVICES TO LIGHT THE CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLES.

4:00 & 6:00



JOIN US FOR A
Pancakes & pajamas

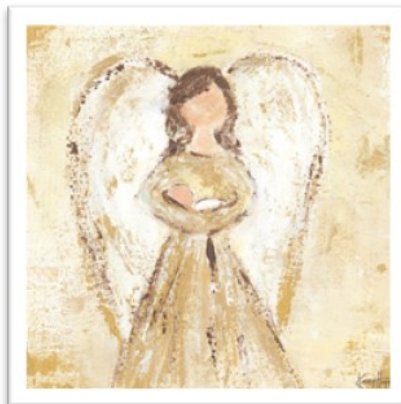
ONE UNITED SERVICE, 10:00AM
CHILDREN'S CHURCH
DECEMBER 31

December Missions

The Angel Tree

The Angel Tree is located in the Sanctuary.

Thank you to all who have shopped and donated for our Angel Tree! All our Angel gifts have been delivered to the Salvation Army to be given to boys and girls for Christmas! Your generosity has given JOY this Christmas! Thank you. —Mission Team



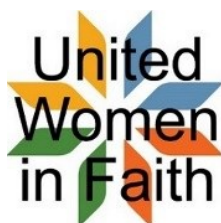
Be the light

Each year during the Christmas season, we are reminded there is no greater joy for us than giving to others. For decades, the White Christmas Offering has enabled Methodists to share their blessings with those whose circumstances in life just haven't been fair. These children and young adults certainly didn't sign up to be in the situation they're in, and with your support, they have the hope of a much brighter tomorrow. If you would like to give a donation to the White Christmas Offering, you may make your check marked "White Christmas", payable to GFUMC and a record of your giving will be here at the church. One hundred percent of your gift will be sent to Embrace Alabama Kids, which was formerly known as the United Methodist Children's Home.

United Women in Faith

**Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year!**

Visit the UWF Christmas Boutique on Sunday mornings between the worship services in the Chestnut Foyer during Advent. All monies benefit UWF Missions.



GFUMC



"By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:35

Ladle of Love

Fridays, 11:00am-12:00pm,
at the Portico entrance.

Donations may be made to the Ladle of Love Fund in honor or in memory of a loved one.

Clothes Closet Workdays
are Tuesdays before open days from 9:00-11:00 am.

Open to Public

1st & 3rd Wednesdays

December open dates are

12/6 and 12/20

9:00 am to 11:00 am

516 Broad Street Gadsden

Find out more about mission and service opportunities @

www.fumcgadsden.org/serve

Phone: 256-543-8200

Email:

fumc@fumcgadsden.org

#gfumcreconnect2023

Clients Served

October 2023

Ladle of Love 377

Clothes Closet 247

November 2023

Ladle of Love 294

Clothes Closet 248

**Thanks to our
Volunteers!**

"I'm about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." Isaiah 42:19

I wanted to follow up on Generosity: New Beginnings. In this emphasis you were invited to consider how God is calling you to a new beginning and how you are committing to a new beginning. Through the spiritual disciplines of prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness God transforms us and makes us new. God may have called you to a new prayer emphasis, or a renewed commitment to worship. The Lord might have invited you to tithe or a new avenue of service. God could have nudged you to invite someone to church or share your faith in another way. I am so excited about all the ways First United Methodist has stepped up and responded. Many of you have answered the call to follow God into a new discipline in the coming year. This new commitment includes an increased commitment to giving, with a greater amount pledged for 2024 and being just three commitments shy of surpassing last year's number of pledges.

If you have not made a commitment to your new beginning and completed your estimate of giving card, I encourage you to do so. Your card may be turned into the church office, in the offering plate, or electronically on the church website/app. If you have lost your card, blank estimates of giving cards are available at the information table in the Chestnut Street lobby. Your commitment is not a binding contract but helps the leadership plan for 2024 and to be good stewards of resources. The information is kept confidential by the financial secretary. In addition to the logistical aspect of stewardship, this year's card includes a space for you to indicate and commit to how God might be calling you to step up in 2024. If you are planning on carrying your 2023 commitment to the coming year, please let our financial secretary, Sheila Witherspoon, know even if the amount remains the same. All of this allows you to be a part of new beginnings which are happening here.

I am so excited about the year ahead. By the power of the Holy Spirit, I can feel that God is doing a new thing at First United Methodist Church, and I am blessed to be on this journey with you!

In Christ,

Rev. Shu Reynolds

**Sixty-two (62)
"New Beginnings
Estimate of Giving" Cards
have been returned
as of 12.12.23
Thank You!**



See Page 7 for information on End of Year Giving to First UMC Gadsden.

Generosity: Ways to Give

In-person, at the offering time during worship.

www.fumcgadsden.org/give

Text to Give: 256-344-8464

Mail your tithe or gift: 115 S. 5th Street ,
Gadsden, AL 35901



Secure Online Giving



Scan the QR Code or
Text to Give: 256-344-8464
First United Methodist Church of Gadsden

Poinsettias December 17

In memory of Joyce & Charles Strickland, given by Susan & Keith Copeland.

In memory of Doris & Buford Copeland, given by Susan & Keith Copeland.

In memory of DeLeath Rives, given by Carma Rayburn.

In memory of Jim Bennett, given by Carma Rayburn.

In memory of Mr & Mrs. Robert Loveman & Robert Loveman, Jr. given by Louis Loveman & Maure Meyer.

In memory of Mr. & Mrs. C.T. Holdridge given by the William D. Clark Family.



Guidelines for End of Year Contributions:

In order for contributions to be posted to your 2023 giving record, they must meet one of these requirements:

1. The gift is received & posted to your account before December 31st.
2. The contribution is put into the offering plate or delivered to the office on or before December 29th.
3. The envelope in which the gift is mailed is postmarked on or before December 31st.
4. An online E-Giving transaction is dated on or before December 31st. (Find link at fumcgadsden.org/giving)
5. Gifts of stock should be transferred before the market closes on December 29th. Please inform the financial office at the church about a stock transfer.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact Sheila Witherspoon or Pam Deru in the church office at giving@fumcgadsden.org or 256-543-8200, no later than December 29th. **(Church office closes at 4:00 pm, Friday December 29th)**

DOES AN IRA ROLLOVER MAKES SENSE THIS YEAR?

Did you know that you can reduce your taxes by making a gift from your IRA to your church? An IRA rollover is a simple and easy way for you to use your IRA to help Gadsden First United Methodist Church fulfill its mission.

By transferring some of your IRA required distribution to the church, you may be able to lower your taxable income and capital gains taxes this year. Check with your advisor to see how an IRA rollover gift could impact your taxes while helping the ministries and missions of the church.



Inviting Ministries

Please join us for HeBrews Coffee Café

between the Sunday morning worship services, from 10 am to 11 am. *We can't wait to see you there!!! This Sunday, following Christmas Unplugged in the Chapel, there will be Cookies and Hot Chocolate @ HeBrews! Everyone is invited!*

BILL & HELENE HALLER



Bill grew up in Gadsden and attended Westminster Christian School (now Westbrook) in Rainbow City. He attended Birmingham Southern College, graduating with a degree in Business Management. He then attended UAB Medical School, followed by an Orthopedic residency at UAB. He moved back to Gadsden in 2002 and started working at Gadsden Orthopedics (now Orthopedic Specialists). Helene was raised in Murfreesboro, TN. She went to Birmingham Southern, where she received a degree in Elementary Education and met her future husband, Bill. They were married at our church by Julius Brasher in 1994.

Helene's work history includes tutoring, working in retail, and working for Health South Rehabilitation and Compass Bank before becoming a stay-at-home mother for their two children, Megan (now 24) and Allie (now 18). Since 2013, Helene has been the Director of our church's Early Learning Center (ELC). In her spare time, she loves to read fiction—mostly drama and suspense—and the occasional "feel good story." She and Bill work out in the gym, as well as walking 10-15 miles per week while exercising their 2 dogs. They love to travel as a hobby and have enjoyed trips to Africa, Hawaii, and Paris and look forward to visiting other fun places.

Do You Know?

A weekly interview column by Anna Mullin & Inviting Ministries to help our church family get to know one another. Anna may be calling you soon, so we can get to know you too!

Silent night, holy night,

SON OF GOD

love's pure light...

Dec 17 Sunday

9:00 am Celebration Worship, "UnPlugged", Chapel

Followed by Cookies & Hot Chocolate @ HeBrews

10:00 am Sunday School for all ages

HeBrews Coffee, Chestnut Street Foyer

11:00 am Traditions Worship, Christmas

Choir Concert, Sanctuary

Dec 18 Monday

ELC closed, will re-open Jan 3, 2024

9:00 am-10:00 am Exercise Group, Gym

Dec 19 Tuesday

9:00 am-10:00 am Clothes Closet workday

No Yoga

Calendar for Dec 17-Dec 23, 2023

Dec 20 Wednesday

9:00 am-11:00 am, Clothes Closet open

No Wednesday Morning Bible Study

No Wednesday night meal

No Children or Youth activities or Small Groups

No Choir practice

Dec 21 Thursday

9:00 am-10:00 am Exercise Group, Gym

5:30 pm Thursday Worship, Chapel

Dec 22 Friday

Office Closed

No Ladle of Love

Honorariums & Memorials

General Budget Fund

In memory of Jeff Blackwood, given by Mr. & Mrs. Mark Condra.

Flower Fund

In memory of Jane Leatherbury Newman given by Marian Ford.

*In Memory of His Life
George Davis Varner, Sr.
December 13, 2023*



*The ministers and congregation of First United
Methodist Church of Gadsden extend Christian
sympathy to Wayne & Jamie Payton
in the death of his sister,
Janette Willingham on December 9, 2023*



*The ministers and congregation of First United
Methodist Church of Gadsden extend Christian
sympathy to Todd & Dawn Rains
in the death of her mother,
Anne Weston Morris on December 12, 2023*



Birthdays

Dec 17 Leone Norris, Lenora Arnold,
Genevieve Corley

Dec 18 Mary Ann Watkins, Jim Moss,
Delores Abney, Brandy Berry,
Dylan Skipper

Dec 19 Grover Kitchens, Nancy Beane,
Jesse Norris, Drew McNair

Dec 20 Laura Condra, Cheryl Midgley,
Sara Kate Thornburg

Dec 21 Robert Branch, Mikeal Martin,
Matt Ross, Davis Varner

Dec 22 Jane Gargus, Caroline Long

Dec 23 Rodney Thompson,
Russell Hopper

Week of December 10, 2023

In Person Total *170 Worship Total 668

Online 498 Thursday Worship *12

Traditions Service *96/272

Celebration Service *62/226

Sunday School-Adult *38 Children *12

Sunday School-Youth *7 Nursery *1

Bible Study Groups *26 Children *41

Youth *12 UWF *33 *in person

General Offering Budget \$12,777.00

General Offering Received \$16,752.00

YTD General Offering Budget \$638,850.00

YTD General Offering Rec'd \$593,872.09

Immediate Prayer Concerns

Lisa Dobbins

Janie Gray

Family of Annette Willingham

Family of Anne Weston Morris

Family of George Varner

Continued Prayer Concerns

Asher Mae Collins

Rodney Thompson

Juanita Hammons

Bessie Crow

Nancy Smith

