



First United Methodist Church
PO Box 130
Cleveland, MS 38732
(Return Service Requested)

Our Mission: Win people to Christ, involve people in ministry, and nurture all people



The Bellringer
First United Methodist Church
318 South Court Street
Cleveland, MS 38732
(662) 843-3414

Dear Church Family,

Each year Becky and I host a Christmas party for the church staff. We do a gift exchange where we each bring an inexpensive gift or something from our house. This year, I “won” the reindeer pictured in the photo. It came from Anne Henry, who is one of the most creative and fun people I know. The actual gift bag contained only carrots with instructions for “feeding” an animal, and then she went to her car and brought in the reindeer. Needless to say, it was quite a surprise! But one that brought much laughter.

Becky took this great picture of the Christmas Tree, the reindeer, and the JOY sign. I laughed at the photo, then started reflecting on what that picture shows. For me it shows three things: **Memory, Joy, and Surprise.**

Memory: Almost every Christmas ornament on our tree has a story. As we decorate the tree, we celebrate the memories created by those many loved ones we have known over the years in the many places we have lived..

Surprise: The reindeer is a reminder that you never know what a particular day will bring, and surprises are often literally around the corner!

Joy: It reminds us of the joy of the season as we celebrate the Christ-Child. There is much joy in this life, and we have eternal joy through Jesus Christ.

It’s hard to believe, but we are beginning a new year, 2024. This time **next** year we will be looking back on all that happened in 2024. What is yet to come will eventually become memories to be shared. We don’t know what is yet to come, though, and that is the surprise to be revealed. When those surprises come, we will have the opportunity to decide how we will receive them. Not all surprises are pleasant or fun ones of course. There will be difficult times as well as fun times that catch us off-guard, but that is where the JOY comes in. When we center our lives in Christ, fundamentally we can have that joy in Christ that transcends any particular circumstance.

But, we have to decide how we will approach each day of this year. In the surprises as well as the daily routines of life, what kind of memories will you create? Will you approach each day with fear and anxiety, or will you approach each day with hope, expectation, and joy? It’s a new year, so it is a good time to reflect on such things. But, we don’t have to wait until special seasons or times of the year to see each day as an opportunity to make lasting memories, be joyful in spirit and bring joy to others, and be surprised by the goodness of the Lord.

Peace in Christ,

Chris



First United Methodist Church Staff

Rev. Chris Young
Pastor

Angela Jefcoat
Director of Christian Education and Children's Ministries

Collis Thorn
Director of Music

Joyce Sledge
Organist

Anne Henry
Pianist

Julie Jackson
Handbell Director

Don Conger
Church Secretary/
Financial Secretary

Pam Butler
Nursery Supervisor

Isaiah Davis
Custodian

Administration

Nott Wheeler, Jr.
Lay Leader

Alan Morgan
Chair, Administrative Board

Gary Crews
Chair, Trustees

Marcia Houser
Chair, Finance Committee

Becky Nowell
Chair, Staff/Parish Relations

Joseph Crews
Church Treasurer

Sunday School and Bible Study Information

Children's Sunday School - 9:45 a.m.
In the Education Building

5K - and under will meet downstairs.
1st - 3rd Grade will meet upstairs with Ashley Williams.
Tweens will meet upstairs with Emily Alford.

DIG IN and Confirmation Class

DIG IN resumes on Sunday, January 28 from 5:00-6:30 p.m. Bring your friends!

Confirmation Class schedule to be announced.

Youth

- Youth Sunday School meets at 9:45 a.m.
- Youth meet on Sundays at 5:00 p.m.
- They will NOT meet on Sunday, December 31. They will resume meeting on Sunday, January 7 but will NOT meet Sunday, January 14.

Adult Sunday School Classes

- 9:45 a.m. - Upper Room/Cornerstone Class led by Joyce Kennedy
- 10:00 a.m. - Women's Sunday School Class meets in the Parlor.
- Men's Sunday School Class meets in the Fellowship Hall.

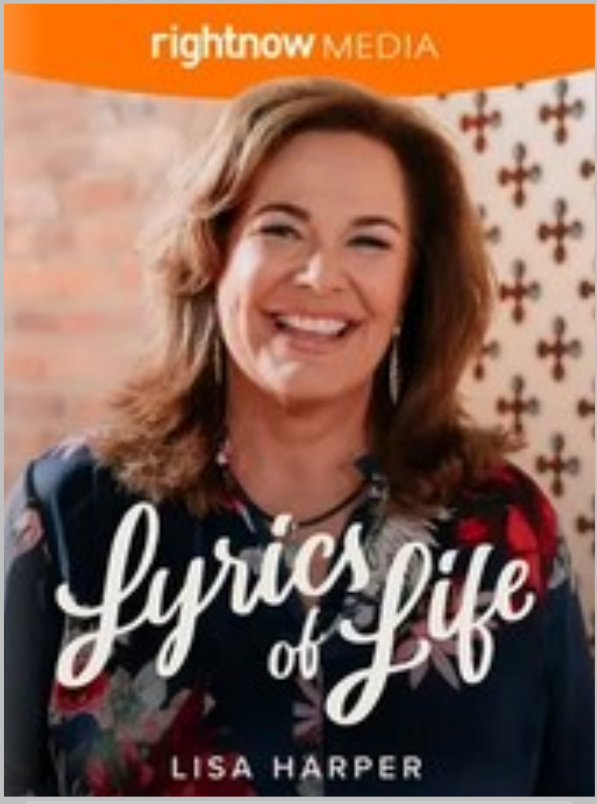
Abide Bible Study Group

Abide Bible Study Group meets on Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m. in the Parlor. They will resume meeting on January 10. They will do a study on the life of Paul, and then will join with the other churches for the Lenten lunches starting on February 21.


Wednesday Evening Bible Study
Resumes on January 10 at 5:30 p.m. in the Parlor. We will look at Parables of Jesus for the first several weeks, and then we will do a special Lenten study titled "24 Hours That Changed the World" that looks at the last day of the life of Jesus from the Last Supper through the rucifixion. That study will conclude around Easter as we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

CHURCH MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- Women's Bible study meets on Mondays at 9:00 a.m. in the Parlor.
- Prayer Chain meets on the second Sunday of each month at 4:00 p.m. in the Parlor.
- Methodist Men meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.
- Chancel Choir practice resumes on January 10 at 6:30 p.m. in the Choir Room.
- Finance Committee meets Tuesday, January 16 at 5:30 p.m. in the Parlor.
- Administrative Board meets Sunday, January 20 at 4:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.



Ladies Sunday School Class
In this eight-session series, learn how to find comfort in any situation based on this songbook of the people of God.
Starts Sunday, January 8, at 10:00 in the Parlor.



We are excited about our Rise Against Hunger Meal Packing Event on February 4, starting at 3:00pm in the Fellowship Hall. We will partner again with St. Luke UMC and package 25,000 meals in two hours! There is something to do for EVERY AGE, and we need 100-120 people to make sure we get it all done in time.

If you would like to donate, you can donate online or write a check to the church and put Rise Against Hunger in the memo section. In the coming weeks we will have registration available to sign up to participate in different ways, but go ahead and put it on your calendar and on your prayer list.

CHURCH IN PRAYER

Charlene Wolfe	Alberta Tucker
Paul Rainey	Chris Mitchell
Dr. Jon Meyer	Nolan Williams
Jack Nowell	Nancy Gerrard
Pittman Edwards	John Thornell
Peggy Miller	Cack Meyer
Porter Antici	Clay Matthews
Joyce Kennedy	Joanne Crews
Rose Bizzell	Dawn Raybon
Nicky Griffith	Tim Sewell
Bobby McArthur	Hazel Cox
Robert Martin	Cookie Newman Jones
Cynthia Weeks	Jimmy Bobo
Lila Tatum	Jimmie Best
Lee Speakes	Kevin Creasy
Richard Graham	Leslie Griffin
JoAnn Box	Susie White
Clint Horne	Fred Johnson
Larry McCalop	Robertta Wiggins Edwards
John Henry	
The family of Pat McCaleb	
The family of Jack Fletcher	

Prayer request cards are available in the office and in the church bulletin on Sundays.

Members of our prayer chain who pray for you daily: Joyce Kennedy, Margaret Tullos, Joyce Sledge, Ramona Rizzo, Susan Sledge, Joanne Crews, Jill Mahaffey, Phyllis McCalop, Cristyn Holder, and Betty Sullivan Johnson.



The Christmas Experience

KYLE IDLEMAN

6 Sessions
Avg Session – 26 Min

Monday Women's Bible Study will finish The Christmas Experience on Monday, January 8. They will not meet on January 15 and will have a brunch on January 22 and begin a new study on January 29.



Honorariums

Becky & Chris Young
The Church Staff
by
Joyce Kennedy

THE CHURCH IN SERVICE

January Volunteers:

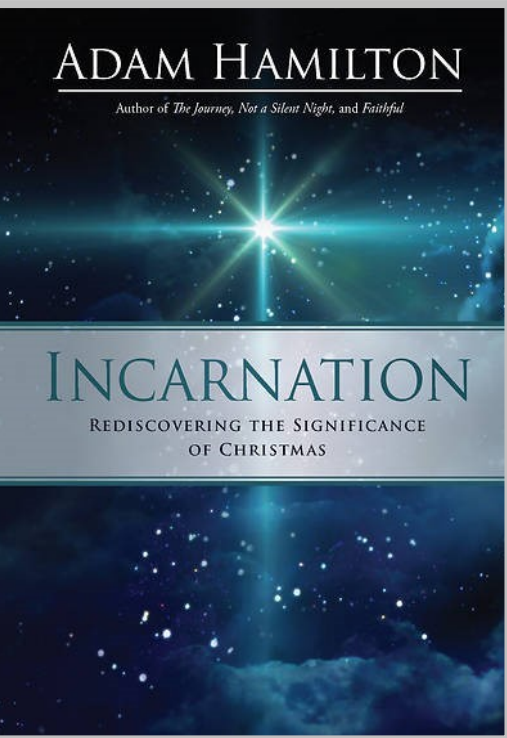
Ushers: Jim Steen, chairman; Russell Gainspoletti; William Roberts; H.L. Dilworth; Chris Lofton
Coffee Detail: Jim Steen and Jeffrey Farris

Acolytes:
January 7: Candles: Ann Spencer Griffin; Cross/Offering: Judson Jefcoat
January 14: Candles: Anelise Houser; Cross/Offering: Nolan Williams
January 21: Candles: William Makamson; Cross/Offering: Noah Gainspoletti
January 28: Candles: Lannin Murphy; Cross/Offering: Christopher Crews

Liturgist:
Flowers: Altar and Foyer:
January 7: Church, both
January 14: Carolyn Johnson, altar;
January 21:
January 28:

Liturgist:
January 7: Don Conger
January 14: Chris Ouzts
January 21: Cynthia Morgan
January 28: Kay Long

Stewardship Quote:
Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 1 Peter 4:10



Monday Women's Bible Study
Best-selling author Adam Hamilton examines the names of Christ used by the gospel writers, exploring the historical and personal significance of his birth.
This new study begins on January 29 at 9:00 a.m. in the Parlor.

Memorials:

Pat McCaleb
by
Kay & Buddy Long
Don Conger
Betty & Fred Johnson
Jasmine & Rob Shipp
Caroline Gaines
Tommy Barrett
Watt Bishop
Mary Hobbs
Connie & Danny Smith
Anne & John Henry
Mary Jean & Dennis Gates
Glenda & Chip Otts
Peyton Chambers
Cindy Ware
Mary Anne & Wally Ashley

Jack Fletcher
by
Don Conger
Mary McKay & Danny Griffith
Joyce Kennedy
Kay & Buddy Long

Jane Hart McMillan Hargett
by
Don Conger