



Volume 26, Issue #11

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The Connexion



On the Christian Journey... with Pastor Christopher

“Advent is a season of profound expectation and hope that stubbornly shows up amid very real brokenness.” Adam Russell Taylor penned that line writing in Sojourners magazine about how watching the World Cup has been a part of his Advent journey, as it has my own. The World Cup in Qatar has been problematic (allegations about bribes, worker exploitation) and beautiful. The world comes together in amazingly wonderful ways at these kinds of events, despite the problems. As I write, the US team was just eliminated from the competition, but did reach the final 16. They frankly exceeded my expectations and I am excited about the next World Cup in 2026, which will be hosted here in North America. Yesterday, the US Senate voted to compel railroad workers to continue working under a contract that provides no sick leave. None. Their work is “too essential to the economy” to allow them to strike for better conditions. Perhaps Qatar is not alone in exploiting workers. I cannot solve any of the above problems, but I can bear witness and I can dream. As I gave myself permission to take some time off, enjoy the World Cup and recenter myself – I have noticed something I’d missed. I’m dreaming again. I’ve had a number of vivid dreams in the last week or so – in my franticness the last few months, I hadn’t noticed that I hadn’t been dreaming, which means I also hadn’t been getting real rest. Dreaming is essential to seeing and dwelling in the sacred. Dreaming is essential to healing brokenness.

Advent is a time of preparation. A time of acknowledging that we are not there yet. A time to dream. To notice and intentionally draw nearer the sacred. Marcia McFee writes *“We too often think that something “sacred” is far away and not available to us. This Advent season, we are “reframing” the way we recognize the sacred reflected all around and through us. As we prepare to move into the world, we begin to reframe our view of the world and our circumstances, illuminating ...the Christ (Anointed One), tangibly present.”* I am blessed to be with you on the journey here in Fort Scott. Thank you for your patience and support.

Yard Signs Available. Take One Home!

Last week, we set our our Advent yard signs out around the church. You are again invited to take one home – just pull it from our yard and take to your yard for the next few weeks - as a way of inviting friends and neighbors to prepare for and celebrate Christmas with us!




As prior sets have been, these signs, as well as the two banners we used on the parade float and will put up in the yard, were made

available to us at no cost through a partnership between United Methodist Communications and Outreach, Inc.

The Gift of Hope has, indeed, arrived – our Creator loves us and desires us and all of creation to live in wholeness. Christ comes to us in humility and gentleness, calling us to seek, recognize and respond to the holy in our midst. When you see lights twinkle, when you catch a reflection in a mirror, when you notice the sunlight dancing on a surface or a nightlight glowing in the darkness, let these be signs that the Christ Light is revealed in and through this world – in and through each of us, the people of First United Methodist Church!

Angel Tree – Our



congregation has stepped up this year for the kids of Fort Scott and the Beacon. If you are one of the generous folks that took a family, please have your gifts wrapped and labeled with the child's name and family number and return them to the church by 9am Wed. Dec. 14th! **Thank you!**



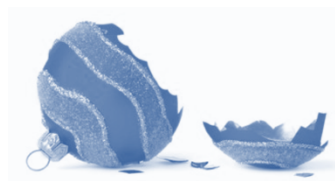
United
Women
in Faith

UMW / UWF Officers Installation Dec. 8. We will gather to celebrate a new season of ministry together. Pastor Christopher will lead an installation service for our 2023 officers as we prepare for a new year and UMW becomes known as United Women in Faith.

Potluck Dinner Dec. 11th at Noon after Worship

Bring your favorite and join us for food and fellowship! We will plan to gather in fellowship hall after worship, but won't start the meal until noon – that gives choir time to practice, as well as anyone who wants to run home a bit of time. Bonnie Milburn and Debra Wood are coordinating the meal if you have questions.

SPECIAL SERVICES PLANNED – mark your calendars and invited friends to these upcoming services, as well as our regular Sunday services during Advent and into 2023!



Wednesday, December 21st 7pm – Longest Night / Blue Christmas.

The holidays can be difficult – especially if we've lost a loved one or undergone a life change recently. In these times there is much to grieve – the last several years have been tough for all of us and the accumulated trauma of these times – even if we personally haven't suffered much – weighs on us. Especially when we feel like we are supposed to be happy and joyful. This service will create a space to

acknowledge these feelings – to engage in the sacred practice of lament and share our burdens. Come lay your burdens on the altar and experience Christ's presence in both joy and sorrow as we seek the light.

Saturday, December 24th, 7pm – Christmas Eve Service of Carols, Communion and Light

Christmas Eve worship is one of the most cherished traditions. We will gather to share beloved hymns and celebrate the birth of Christ, God with us! Light amidst the darkness, that darkness cannot overcome!

Sunday, December 25th, 10:30am - Special Christmas Day Worship Celebration.

Since Christmas Day falls on a Sunday this year, we will gather at our normal time for a special, interactive service of celebration, joy and thanksgiving.

Sunday, January 1st, 10:30am - New Year's Day Worship Celebration. We begin a new calendar year even as we are well into the Christian calendar. This again offers us a chance to reflect on our journey, to dream, to seek to live out our faith anew. The early Methodists put great stock in what they called "watch night" services, with the most popular event being Dec. 31st to Jan. 1st. We will draw on those traditions and proclaim the holy name of Christ as the light enters into the year of our Lord, 2023. We will also provide chalk and instructions to share an ancient tradition:

Chalking the Doors – an Epiphany Tradition

In Deuteronomy 6:9 God tells the people of Israel: "These words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house... You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."

Chalking the door is a tangible way to honor God in our lives and be intentional about living into God's blessings in the new year. The first and last numbers simply refer to the year – so we'll use 20 and 23. The letters C M B come from the traditional names for the Magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar. Alternately, they can stand for "Christus Mansionem Benedicat" which in Latin means, "May Christ bless this dwelling!" Join us January 1st for more on this practice!





Save Best Choice Labels for UWF!
 you can leave them in the glass jars by each entrance. Thank you!

Contact Jackie Warren with questions

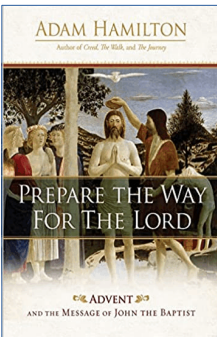
HOCROC Thank you,

Thank you to those who donated icing cups to be decorated at the Parents Day Out. Though we did not have a turn out for this event, we decorated the cups to go toward the UWM shut-in project. Thank you to all who stayed and help decorate. ~ by Pat Hartford

Christmas Parade Float

Thanks to Tom Braker for towing, Ron Sharp for use of the trailer and setting up our banners, Debra Wood, Delaney and Delci Tucker for helping create the cardboard gingerbread house, Dani Tucker for bringing the gingerbread person costume to life and to Kelley Tucker, Robin Eshelman, William, Kristin, Winston and Lindon Bishop for riding along and helping us distribute 720 pinwheels and a tub of candy! Additional thanks to Zandra Hood for putting our logo and website on a sticker on each of the pinwheels and coordinating a number of volunteers (sorry I don't have everyone's name to thank) who assembled them!

Parade Pinwheels are becoming a signature item for our church as we seek to engage new families and our community! The Spirit is Moving at First UMC!



Faith Builders in December

We will continue in Advent with our study of the message of John the Baptist in a multimedia program, "Prepare the Way for the LORD."

We will review and discuss this for the first three Sundays in December. The fourth Sunday is Christmas, and we will not meet that day. We would like to have some new voices in our discussions. Please come join us in fellowship and discussion.

~Ron Wood

Library Event Volunteers Sought – by Valetta Cannon – Library Staff

After seeing how awesome your members were in helping with the summer reading program this year, I wanted to ask if you would share this volunteer & donor opportunity with your parishioners:



Fort Scott Public Library is seeking volunteers and donors to help make its annual holiday party a success! The event will take place on Dec. 19 from 4-5:30 pm, is free, for all ages, and open to the public. We've made a list of food & gift items needed. Here's the form (with a link to the list) to sign up to help: <https://forms.gle/T82wB4atMgwub4aj6>

Volunteers are needed to run the following activities:

Family Games: Snowball Fight and Candy Cane Hunt

Family Crafts: Decorate Cookies, Decorate Edible Christmas Trees, Coding Bracelets, and Creamer Bottle Snowmen

Other Stations needing volunteers: Food & Gifts

Teen games (including the saran wrap ball game & scavenger hunt)



December Birthdays: 1-Madi Davis, Kyle Perry, 2-Lee Davis, Cheryl Barker, 6- Kip Smilie, 10- Bret Heiser, Eric Popp, 1- Jean Tucker, 13- Kyle Green, 14- Piper Denning, 16- Stephanie Denton, Brennan Popp, Dana Tucker, Delaney Tucker, Delci Tucker, 17-Chase Comstock, 18-Laine Beerbower, 19-Zack Reynolds, Jessica Ballou, 20-Reed Hartford, 22- Vlad Clark, Kelly Slinkard, 23- Connie Neil, Sue Sayers, 24-Mike Carnes, 25-Jeffrey Blanz, Zack Russell, 26-Donna Davis, Shaun Grant, 27-Marianne Culbertson, 30-Nolan Stark, 31-Carolyn West

December Anniversaries: 17-Ken and Jennifer Engle, 31-Ken and Deb Anderson

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Return Service Requested

*Here is your December 2022
Newsletter from:*



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