



The Connection

December 2024

A monthly publication of the

**Millington United Methodist
Church**

Our Mission: To Know Christ, and to

December Scripture Readings

- 1 Micah 5:2
- 2 Isaiah 7:14
- 3 Psalm 72 :9-11
- 4 Jeremiah 31:15
- 5 Numbers 24:17
- 6 Isaia 11:1-2
- 7 Luke 1:26-28
- 8 Luke 1: 29-31
- 9 Luke 1:32-33
- 10 Luke 1:34-35
- 11 Luke 1:37-38
- 12 Luke 1:46 –48
- 13 Luke 1:49-50
- 14 Luke 1:51-52
- 15 Luke 1:53-55
- 16 Luke 1:67-69
- 17 Luke 2:7
- 18 Luke 2:8-9
- 19 Luke 2:10-11
- 20 Luke 2:13-14
- 21 Luke 2:29-32
- 22 Luke 2:33-35
- 23 Matthew 2:1-2
- 24 Matthew 2:10-11
- 25 Matthew 2:16-18
- 26 John 1:1
- 27 John 1:4-5
- 28 John 1 :14
- 29 John 1:15-16
- 30 1 John 5:1
- 31 Romans 8:2-7

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December National Days

- 1 National Pie Day
- 2 National Mutt Day
- 3 National Roof Over Your Head Day
- 4 National Sock Day
- 5 National Bathtub Party Day
- 6 National Mitten Tree Day
- 7 National Slime Day
- 8 National Brownie Day
- 9 National Christmas Card Day
- 10 National Dewey Decimal System Day
- 11 National Stretching Day
- 12 National Poinsettia Day
- 13 National Cocoa Day
- 14 National Monkey Day
- 15 National Cat Herders Day
- 16 National Chocolate Covered Anything Day
- 17 National Maple Syrup Day
- 18 National Twin Day
- 19 National Hard Candy Day
- 20 National Go Caroling Day
- 21 National Flashlight Day
- 22 National Date Nut Bread Day
- 23 National Pfeffernusse Day
- 24 National Eggnog Day
- 25 National Pumpkin Pie Day
- 26 National Whiners Day
- 27 National Fruitcake Day
- 28 National Card Playing Day
- 29 National Tick Tock Day
- 30 National Bacon Day
- 31 National Make Up Your Mind Day



- 6 Karily Dickson
- 9 Sam Crawford
Lee Schriber
- 10 Alex Newcombe
- 13 Kamryn Olejnik
- 14 Chad Fabbro
- 18 Jennifer Shores
- 19 Janine Britt
- 22 Gary Talaski
- 23 Richard Lumsden
- 23 Ed Ingram
- 23 Jason Trato
- 23 Kim Blackmer
- 25 Jesus Christ
- 29 Jeff Newcombe
- 30 Kayla Levi
- 31 Kendall Pridemore
- 31 Griffin Gohsman

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Pastor David's Corner

December is upon us and that means decorations sparkling, and bells tinkling, and lights twinkling, and carols ringing, bringing in the festive joy of the season. We don't know if we will have snow crunching under our feet or not. But we can always dream of the white Christmas like we used to know.

In Church speak, we call this the Season of Advent. I stole this following from somewhere, but I didn't write down the source. So just let it be known that I may be plagiarizing but it isn't intentional....

Advent is a Christian season of preparation that means "coming" and is a time to reflect on the birth of Jesus. It is a four-week period that begins on the Sunday closest to November 30, four weekends before Christmas.

The word "Advent" comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which is a translation of the Greek word *Parousia*. The meaning of Advent has changed over time:

Early Christians – In the 4th and 5th centuries, Advent was a time to prepare for the baptism of new Christians at Epiphany. Early Christians would fast, pray, and do penance for 40 days during this time.

Roman Christians – By the 6th century, Roman Christians associated Advent with the second coming of Christ, not His birth.

Middle Ages – It wasn't until the Middle Ages that Advent became associated with Christ's birth at Christmas.

Advent is a time of reflection on the coming of Christ and preparation for His second coming. Christians think about what they need to do to be ready for His return.

There. Now you have a touch of church history to muddle up your celebrations. But know this: It is never a bad thing to welcome Christ into your home and into your heart, whether it be as a Child or as a Savior on a cross.

I pray that you and yours will truly celebrate the coming King in your hearts this year.

Pastor David



Finance



Moment

More than a hundred years ago, Amy Carmichael, a missionary to India said, "You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving." During Advent, we think, dream and talk a lot about love.

In many, many households on Christmas morning, there will be presents opened, with paper and ribbon scattered around the room. There will be joy and happiness with gifts and new "things." For children, the delight will be highly anticipated. For adults, the greater joy may be, not receiving gifts, but in giving them, and seeing the delight of those who receive. But the real joy of Christmas is not in the **presents** that are wrapped in paper and tied up in ribbons. The real joy is the **presence** of the spirit of Jesus, who came as a child, but grew to a life of giving, even the giving of his life.

The coming of Christ into the world signals the depth of God's love for us. How do we exemplify our love for God, for the church and for the Children of God everywhere? According to Amy Carmichael, we cannot love without giving.

Thank you for the financial support you have given this year to our church and to organizations, both local and worldwide, who serve people in need. ¹²¹⁹



From the Staff Parish Relations Committee

Christmas blessings are right around the corner, and we would like to gift our faithful servants who may or may not be paid for their part in helping to keep our church family's home clean, working, welcoming, musical, and functional. Please consider slipping a little something extra into your offering, as you are able (please designate it for gifts), for the next few weeks. Every little bit helps!!!

Thank you!

Sharon Trato, Chair

SPRC

Walking with those who grieve

The holiday season can be difficult for people who are grieving a death or deep loss. As Christians, we do well to be aware that not everyone feels wholehearted joy this time of year. How can we support them?

Grief counselor Alan Wolfelt explains that walking alongside — “companioning” — one who grieves “is not about assessing, analyzing, fixing or resolving another’s grief. Instead, it is about being totally present to the mourner, even being a temporary guardian of [his or] her soul.”

Among Wolfelt’s 11 tenets for “companioning the bereaved”:

- It’s about being present to another person’s pain, not taking it away.
- It’s about listening with the heart, not analyzing with the head.
- It’s about walking alongside, not leading.

More tips are available at www.centerforloss.com/2019/12/

May God bless you as you share the love of the Christ Child, his caring parents and his compassionate heavenly Father with people who are hurting.



A hobby turned ministry

The internet has transformed shopping, whether for Christmas, major purchases or even groceries. I’ve spent hours scrolling Facebook Marketplace for just the right new-to-me items. Hunting for a great deal or a unique piece is part of the appeal.

But after reading Philippians 2:4, I also began paying attention to the people I encountered along the way. “Don’t look out only for your own interests,” that verse says, “but take an interest in others, too” (NLT).

A retired couple all but invited me to dinner when I bought a lamp from them. I remember the woman’s delight as she described her recipe. A young man with developmental challenges who sold me a video game communicated its quality much better than anyone I’ve encountered.

When a mom purchased some chairs from us, she shared her excitement while loading her van. Her family now had a “real home” after living in an RV during a tough time. Once I bought furniture from a woman who was visibly stressed, exhausted from helping her mother-in-law move out of state.

As my transactions turned into interactions, my heart was changing — for the better. My hobby became more enjoyable and meaningful as I took time to listen and care.

—Janna Firestone



Mission and Outreach Notes:

Plans are made to once again provide PRETZEL DIPPING at “Christmas in the Village” on Monday, December 2, from 3:30 to 8pm. Please consider volunteering for a shift by contacting Sharon Trato at (989) 737-8611. We will be at the same business spot, Cozy Cabin Spathecary, from 4pm until after the parade, which begins at 6pm. Be sure to swing through and dip a yummy pretzel!

ALSO, “**Hanging of the Greens**” will be this Saturday, November 30th at 9am at the church. ALL help is greatly appreciated because many hands make light work, and we will be adorned for the season of Jesus’ birth. (There will be someone there in the afternoon as well for those who will be out of town at Ford Field and would like to help later.)

Sharon Trato



The light of life

Most sand comes from coral and rocks that get ground into tiny grains. But in a few places, like some beaches of Japan, the bits of sand are shells or skeletons that once housed single-celled organisms. A magnifying glass reveals their star shape: a rounded middle and five or more spines, like a sea star.

These unique creatures live on undersea reefs and share their interior with algae called diatoms, which convert light into carbohydrates and oxygen through photosynthesis. The star points let light into the exoskeleton; in turn, diatoms produce energy to feed them both. When these organisms die, the star skeletons wash onto beaches, protecting the islands even after their own lives end. Our amazing God designed astounding creatures!

This same Creator made us able to take in light from Christ. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me ... will have the light of life” (John 8:12). When we receive his light, it becomes in us the “energy” we need to do good: to love others, care for people in need, appreciate nature — including star sand! — and give glory to the Artist of this entire incredible world.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

That's a (re)wrap!

The Reintgen family in North Carolina will always remember Christmas 2023. At 3 a.m. on December 25, their 3-year-old son woke them up, asking for scissors to open his new action-figure toy. "That's when we realized something had gone terribly wrong," said Scott, his dad.

A quick trip downstairs revealed a mess of unwrapped gifts under the family's Christmas tree. "There was not one thing that he left unscathed," Scott said. The boy, in his defense, said he was just trying to help everyone know what they'd received.

With only hours until their other children awoke, the Reintgens were determined to save Christmas. Mom Katie raced to rewrap gifts, even managing to get most nametags back on the correct packages. Instead of being angry, the parents found humor in the ordeal. Afterward, they explained to their son the joy that people experience from receiving — and opening — their own presents.

Morals of the story? Remember this 3-year-old when you get overeager for certain parts of the holidays. Don't rush through anything, and let others enjoy Christmas at their own pace too. When something goes wrong, don't panic. Like the Reintgens, find joy in any unexpected glitches and grins you encounter throughout the season.

—Stephanie Martin



Let us then meditate upon the Nativity just as we see it happening in our own babies. I would not have you contemplate the deity of Christ, the majesty of Christ, but rather his flesh.

Look upon the baby Jesus. Divinity may terrify people. Inexpressible majesty will crush them. That is why God took on our human flesh and blood, that God should not terrify us but rather that with love and favor God would console and comfort us.

—Martin Luther

Christmas Adam

Need a fun new tradition to liven up your Christmas celebrations? Then join the growing number of Christians who observe Christmas Adam — the day before Christmas Eve!

In honor of the first human, enjoy some barbecued ribs and an apple salad or dessert. Your family might exchange small gifts on Christmas Adam or do last-minute shopping together. Some people temporarily rename their pets that day, just as Adam named the animals in the Garden.

No matter how you celebrate, have fun on December 23 as you remember why Jesus had to come to earth in the first place!

December 2024						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10am Worship 1st Sunday of Advent	2 3:30 –8pm Christmas in the Village 6pm Parade	3 8:30am Women's 4th Day	4	5	6	7 Pearl Harbor Day 
8 10am Worship 2nd Sunday of Advent	9	10 8:30am Women's 4th Day	11	12	13	14
15 10am Worship 3rd Sunday of Advent	16	17 8:30am Women's 4th Day	18	19	20 Needy Family Delivery	21 
22 10am Worship 4th Sunday of Advent	23	24 7pm Christmas Eve candlelight service 	25 	26	27	28
29	30 New Year's Eve/ Watch Night	31 Happy New Year's Eve!	COMING SOON! MUMC BLOOD DRIVE JANUARY 16, 2025 NOON TO 5:45 PM CALL 1-800-RED CROSS TO PRE-REGISTER			

A Note from Barb...

My husband and I love to go to garage sales, estate sales, auctions and to re-purpose and second-hand shops. Sometimes we find something we think we can't live without, sometimes we don't. But our kids think we are crazy going to all these places and buying someone else's "junk". I (jokingly) tell them to "Don't knock it, this is your inheritance someday." I always told them that I started recycling LONG before it was a big thing. In fact, I knew that it wasn't always in our budget to purchase new, so "like-new" was good enough. And I saved LOTS of money over the years that usually benefited them in some way (new shoes, etc). But in truth, we not only had fun in "the hunt", but we made new friends along the way. And sometimes we got a history lesson and background story about a certain item that we had purchased, or a story about the now-deceased person who made or once owned an item. We have even made friendships that we still treasure to this day.

As we near the end of this year, think back to all the pleasures you have had sharing experiences with a "new" or old friend. Think about how perhaps you have changed someone's life by being interested in someone they loved and have lost. By you giving of your time and by listening to someone share their memories with you, you are helping to change the world one person at a time.



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Our Mission: To know Christ and to make Him known

Check out our Sunday sermon online on our Facebook page at :

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