



The Connection

January 2025

A monthly publication of the

**Millington United Methodist
Church**

Our Mission: To Know Christ, and to

January Scripture Readings

1. 2 Corinthians 5:17
2. Jeremiah 29:11
3. Isaiah 43:18-19
4. Ephesians 4:22-24
5. Lamentations 3:22-24
6. Isaiah 40:31
7. 1 Peter 1:3
8. Exekiel 36:26
9. Philippians 3:13-14
10. Ecclesiastes 3:11
11. Matthew 7:7-8
12. Acts 3:19-20
13. Isaiah 65:17
14. Proverbs 3:5-6
15. Malachi 4:2
16. 2 Corinthians 7:14
17. Colossians 3:9-10
18. Psalm 73:25-26
19. Psalm 23:1-5
20. Romans 12:2
21. Romans 6:3-4
22. John 10:30
23. Isaiah 41:13
24. Philippians 4:6-7
25. Proverbs 16:9
26. Isaiah 60:1-2
27. Psalm 40:2-3
28. Galatians 6:14-16
29. Psalm 98:1-3
30. John 3:16-17
31. Revelation 21:4-5

January National Days

- 1 New Year's Day
- 2 National Buffet Day
- 3 National Chocolate Covered Day
- 4 National Spaghetti Day
- 5 National Keto Day
- 6 National Cuddle Up Day
- 7 National Tempura Day
- 8 National Bubble Bath Day
- 9 National Static Electricity Day
- 10 National Houseplant Appreciation Day
- 11 National Milk Day
- 12 National Curried Chicken Day
- 13 National Rubber Ducky Day
- 14 National Ratification Day
- 15 National Bagel Day
- 16 National Religious Freedom Day
- 17 National ClassyDay
- 18 National Thesaurus Day
- 19 National Imagination Day
- 20 National Cheese Lover's Day
- 21 National Hugging Day
- 22 National Celebration of Life Day
- 23 National Peanut Butter Day
- 24 National Compliment Day
- 25 National Fun at Work Day
- 26 National Spouses Day
- 27 National Chocolate Cake Day
- 28 National Kazoo Day
- 29 National Puzzle Day
- 30 National Croissant Day
- 31 National Hot Chocolate Day



- 1 Lucinda Hall
- 3 Jonathon Burks
- 8 Kenzie Trato
- 12 Gene Koski
- 13 Sarah Gleason
Zac Johnson
- 19 Mindy Fabbro
Aurora Johnson
- 21 Lee Scott
- 22 Marie Bolton
- 25 Kay Crawford
- 26 Kelsey Johnson
- 28 Lisa Hebner
Martin Snover
Heather Burks
Evening Buccaneer
- 29 Michelle Dickson

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Pastor David's Corner

I have always marveled at the ways in which we have ordered our world's calendar.... the end of one-year welcomes in the Baby Jesus. And as we begin a new year it is depicted as a baby coming in to replace the tired old man of the previous year. And each year, it seems, is more tired and worn out than the last, and the baby new year isn't quite as adorable as the ones we remember from our youth.

Let's contrast the world's idea of the new beginning with the regeneration offered through the coming of the infant Jesus. The world offers a slate erased from the previous year's mistakes. Jesus offers a new life cleansed from the sin that has been passed down for generations. This is more than a clean slate from one year to the next year. This is a new life cleansed for eternity through a total forgiveness of our sinful nature. It is not from one year, but from the beginning of our existence.

Jesus does more than usher in a new year – He ushers in a new LIFE! We don't need to toot horns and drink champagne. He only asks that we repent and believe.

Happy New Life in Jesus.

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor David



Finance



Moment

At the threshold of this New Year, we thank you for all you have contributed in the past year. Thank you for:

your prayers

your monetary support of our church and other worthy causes

your willingness to share your talents by volunteering where needed

your presence in worship services and other opportunities to learn how to serve others.

A new year brings many thoughts of new beginnings. We make resolutions about diet, or exercise, breaking a bad habit or forming some good practices.

Fresh starts are what God gives us every day, every week, and ever year. We can start this month with a fresh commitment to give generously to God, trusting that God will continue to give generously to us. 0119

Mission Notes



A big thank you to the following people who helped to make our pretzel dipping at Christmas in the Village a success:

Norma Coon, Lisa Hebner, Darla Gasper, Heather Burkes, Tammy Henderson. And to Bill Bushaw and Rich Hebner for all the moral support!

We figure that at least 300 pretzels were dipped that afternoon/evening. Along with all the other events going on that day/night, Christmas in the Village was a huge success once again this year.

Sharon Trato,

Mission and Outreach Committee



When life gets out of control

In September 2024, a North Dakota teen's car malfunctioned, becoming unstoppable and reaching 113 miles per hour. For 40 minutes, 18-year-old Sam navigated a bridge into Minnesota, intersections with train tracks and highways, small towns and — almost — the road's dead end.

But after Sam called his mom and 911, multiple first responders gathered. Police drove near him, staying on the phone and calmly asking about the accelerator, emergency brake and remaining gas. Ambulance crews were ready. The highway patrol laid speed sticks to puncture the tires (it didn't work) and cleared intersections ahead of the runaway vehicle. All the while, Sam's mom prayed. Finally, an officer sped ahead so Sam could run into his squad car, bringing his own to a halt.

Not making light of what could have turned tragic, sometimes our lives get out of control too. We speed through work, school, relationships, parenting — trying to accomplish, achieve and gain faster than others. We cram as much in each day as possible, seemingly unable to slow down. The harried pace can endanger our physical, mental and spiritual health.

Often, we're "saved" only as people who care come alongside us to help. Perhaps family members express concern, professionals suggest remedies, loved ones pray for us. Finally, when all we can do is crash into the loving care of God, we come to rest. It may take time to recover emotionally, to dare get back "behind the wheel," to trust life to carry us at a safe speed again. But thanks be to God for placing support systems around us when we need them most.

—Heidi Hyland Mann

"Dyeing" with Christ

The Greek word *baptizo*, which means to immerse, became associated with the dyeing trade. When a cloth is immersed in dye, the union leads to an altered condition. The cloth's previous color no longer exists; it has a permanent new identity.

Baptizo, which has no English equivalent, is a spot-on description of what happens in the sacrament of baptism. When we're merged with Christ through water and the Word, we leave behind our original sinful condition. Through that union, Jesus gives us a new identity in him — so "we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4, NIV).

Bible scholar James Montgomery Boice offered another great example of *baptizo* from, of all places, a 200 B.C. pickle recipe. Nicander, a Greek poet and physician, explained that a vegetable must first be "dipped" (*bapto*) into boiling water and then "baptized" (*baptizo*) in a vinegar solution. "Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution, but the first is temporary," Boice writes. "The second, the act of baptizing the vegetable, produces a permanent change."

In the New Testament, *baptizo* "more often refers to our union and identification with Christ than to our water baptism," according to Boice. "Christ is saying that mere intellectual assent is not enough. There must be a union with him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle!" And like the cloth to the dye.

MLK on what really matters



Exactly two months before his assassination, Martin Luther King Jr. preached his final sermon at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta. On February 4, 1968, the civil-rights icon spoke about how he wanted to be remembered at his funeral. He preferred that people recall not his education or achievements but that he “tried to give his life serving others” and “tried to love somebody.”

Adapting a 1952 homily by J. Wallace Hamilton, King decried the “drum major instinct — a desire to be out front, a desire to lead the parade.” Humans often want to be great and first, as evidenced by the disciples James and John requesting prime seats in paradise. But King urged listeners to focus on the “reordered priorities” of Jesus, who wants us to “be first in love.”

As Jesus showed, “everybody can serve,” King said. Your background or status doesn’t matter, as long as you have “a heart full of grace” and “a soul generated by love.”

All about attitude

“The way you say ‘representative’ to an automated system reflects the real you,” a friend told me. After we laughed at that truth, I realized *everything* I say matters. Someone is always listening, whether the words and tone are positive or negative.

Ephesians 4:29 (NLT) says our language shouldn’t be “foul or abusive” but good, helpful and encouraging. Whether I’m peaceful, hurried, joyful, empathetic, frustrated, celebrating or hurting, I can carefully choose my words (and the attitude behind them). When I’m not ready to speak wholesomely, may God shut my mouth. When a friend needs encouragement, may I listen to God’s prompting. When I need to confront, may I do so lovingly.

Changing how we think — that is, how we speak to ourselves — can be tough. But God wants to transform our reactions and motives, dispelling pride, a lack of confidence and anxiety. In this new year:

- *I’m alone* can become *God is with me*.
- *I can’t do this* can become *Anything is possible with God*.
- *I’m failing* can become *Just because I’m struggling, it doesn’t mean I’m failing*.
- *I’m not enough* can become *I’m God’s beloved child*.
- *I’m tired* can become *God will give me rest*.

Don’t stop there. Consider the concerns in your heart and let God give you new words and attitudes.

—Janna Firestone

A HUGE CATCH

Make a catch of fish to show what happens when Jesus calls his first disciples.

What you need:

- Cardboard egg carton
- Acrylic paint
- Paintbrush
- Darning needle
- Fishing twine
- Scissors
- Googly eyes or buttons
- Glue



What you do:

1. From the egg carton, cut out the 12 cups. From the lid, cut out two fish tails.
2. On a protected surface, turn the cups upside down. Paint the outside of each cup and both sides of the tails. Let dry.
3. Thread the needle with an arm's length of twine. Tie a knot at the end.
4. Thread the needle through the end of the tail. Tie another knot an inch from the tail.
5. Thread the needle through one upside-down cup. Pull the twine through until the cup rests on the knot.
6. Continue tying knots an inch above each cup and threading on another cup until you've strung six cups. Tie a knot above the last cup and leave a long string to hang the fish. (You can make two fish with each egg carton.)
7. Add googly eyes or buttons to the last cup to make a face.

A prayer for spiritual growth

When my spiritual vision is foggy, help me to find my way.

When my understanding is incomplete, open my mind and increase my patience.

When my indifference blocks my senses, touch my heart.

When worry or fear raise their voices, speak to my faith.

Let your Spirit permeate my longings as well as my living and my loving. Amen.

—Peggy Ferrell, *Prayers and Poems*

God in church or nature? Yes.

Church isn't designed to be an alternative to the real world. Worship is a time and space apart from the world in order for us to find our way out into the world. Worship isn't a man-made place distinct from the beauty of the natural world; at its best, church is a place where we realize God's glory in the world we find ourselves in. ... Do I find God in a church? or out in nature? Yes. ... In church I hope to sharpen my senses so I can discover the house of God everywhere.

—James C. Howell, *Everywhere Is Jerusalem*

Christian symbol

NOAH'S ARK — The image of an ark, or boat — often shown with pairs of animals — recalls the story of Noah and the “Great Flood” in Genesis. The floodwaters represent God's judgment on sin, while the ark reminds us of his gracious power to save and redeem. In this account, Christians see a foreshadowing of our baptism into Christ: “And baptism, which [God's rescue of Noah and his family] prefigured, now saves you ...” (1 Peter 3:21, NRSV).



◀ December	January 2025						February ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
			1 Happy New Year!	2	3	4	
5 10am Worship 9an Sunday School	6 Epiphany	7 8:30am Women's 4th Day	8	9	10	11	
12 10am Worship 9an Sunday School Baptism of the Lord	13	14 8:30am Women's 4th Day	15	16	17	18 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity begins	
19 10am Worship 9an Sunday School	20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 5pm -Finance mtg.	21 8:30am Women's 4th Day	22	23	24	25 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Ends	
26 10am Worship 9an Sunday School	27	28 8:30am Women's 4th Day	29	30	31		

A Note from Barb...

Have you ever been in a crowd, or with a bunch of friends and everyone is talking at once? I have found over the years that it tends to pay more by just listening to others speaking, instead of trying to get a word in edgewise. I don't know if it 's because I'm the youngest in the family or not, but I have noticed that if I do say something, people either interrupt or just talk "over" me, or they have something more important that has happened to them that they just need to share. So, I have found that if I just let them do all the talking, I may learn more than if I just try to "tell MY story".

So, in this New Year, I will listen to my friends and say something if asked to, but generally just let them give their own version. Who knows what I might just learn from that?

As you enter this New Year, see which one you are, the person who always must be the one talking, or the person who always listens. And whichever person you find out that you are, I hope you learn something about yourself and those around you.

*And I hope that you remember that no matter what, God is **always** listening.*



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Our Mission: To know Christ and to make Him known

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