

the Messenger

Volume 20, Issue 12

December 2019

Blessing from Bethlehem: House of Bread

Do you know what the town of Jesus' birth has in common with the tradition of Gingerbread houses for Christmas? Bread. In Hebrew, *beth lehem* means "house of bread". How the town came to be so named is a mystery. Then again, why this little town ends up as the birthplace of God's Messiah is also a mystery. But then again, God brings light to the most unexpected places amongst the most unlikely persons and communities.

This Advent Season, you are invited to explore the significance of this little town and the bread of life as we encounter it in its various forms: Communion (December 1 and Christmas Eve), Love Feast Sugar Cake (December 8, 5p), Gingerbread (December 15, 10:50a); the dinner loaf bread (December 22 Caroling); and by providing food on the shelves (month-long contributions to Crisis Assistance Ministry).

Lessons & Carols: Portrait of Hope

The Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols was first held on Christmas Eve 1918 at Kings College in Cambridge, England. The service uses nine scripture lessons mixed with carols and anthems to tell the story from the Fall of Adam to the Birth of Christ, telling the story of our need for a Messiah and the ever presence of God's Grace. This service has been used over the years across denominations and cultures to tell this story. In the same spirit as the very first Lessons and Carols, we are using the imaginative medium of art both visually and aurally to paint this Portrait of Hope.

New and Original art has been created based on the scriptures of the service. Members of Myers Memorial UMC have prayerfully created artwork that has been donated and will be auctioned off via Silent Auction to benefit Crisis Assistance Ministry. Artwork will be on display in the Sanctuary on December 15th and in the Narthex in the days following. Bidding will begin on December 15th at 4:30p and will go through December 22nd at 1p. Auction winners will be notified on December 23 and art will be available for pick up that day.

Advent Worship

December 1

First Sunday in Advent
10:50a Worship; Communion
Feeling the Kneel
Isaiah 61:1-4; Matthew 2:1-6

December 8

Second Sunday in Advent
10:50a Worship
Rising to Meet Us
Matthew 1:18-24; Luke 1:46-55

December 15

Third Sunday in Advent
10:50a Worship
The Scent Known 'Round the World
Isaiah 11:1-6; Luke 2:1-14

December 22

Fourth Sunday in Advent
10:50a Worship
The Bread of Life
Isaiah 9:2-7; John 1:1-5

December 24

Christmas Eve
5p Candlelight & Communion
11p Candlelight & Communion
Bethlehem's Gift: Bread for the World
Micah 5:2-5; Luke 2:1-20



Gingerbread
Sunday
December 15

Advent Devotions

The word “Advent” is a derivative of the Latin word, *adventus*, which means “coming”. During this season the church proclaims the coming of Christ - whose birth we prepare to celebrate again, who comes continually in Word and Spirit, and whose final victory we anticipate. You are invited to use this season to prepare you heart and mind to once again receive the gift of the Christ Child. This Advent, December 1st through Christmas Eve, we will explore the town of Bethlehem which means “*house of bread*”. Let us gather together this season

as we prepare for the coming of the Christ child, the bread of heaven, the bread of life.

Pauses for Advent Devotional Books are available in the Church office for \$10.

You are invited to pause and explore these words of wonder during what is often a chaotic season. Pausing for just a few minutes each day readies our hearts to receive the most wondrous gift of all—the Christ who is alive and present with us today and every day.



Service Opportunities

December is our month to stock the pantry at Crisis Assistance Ministry. If each person brought even one item every time they came to worship or a special event in December, we could overflow the shelves at CAM! Collection stations are outside the Sanctuary, in the church office and in the Education Wing.

Making Sandwiches | Dec. 2, 3p | Kitchen The first Monday is reserved for making sandwiches for the children at the West Gastonia Boys & Girls Club. Gather to assemble dinner for 200+ then serve it at The Club.

Angel Tree Deadline | Dec. 8 Please return your Angel Tree gifts to the Church by December 8. (This is different from the directions on the back of the card). It is helpful if you keep all gifts together in one large bag (large gift bag, large shopping bag or trash bag) with the angel tag on the outside.

Angel Tree Sorting | Dec. 10, 10a Before we send off the Angels we need to make sure we have abundant gifts for them all! Join us in the CFC to sort and tag.

Weekend Backpack Ministry | Dec. 10, 2:30p | CFC Gather together to pack nutritious meals for children at Sherwood Elementary. This is a big project this month as many more meals are packed this month to help sustain the students nutrition during the winter break.

Festival of Trees - December 1

The United Methodist Women are sponsoring a new and exciting event for the entire family: A Festival of Trees! Join us on December 1 immediately following worship for a soup lunch among beautifully decorated trees that will in turn bless Angel Tree recipients from the Youth Angel Tree. We'll enjoy a light lunch of soup while enjoying the beauty of the season!

How Will We Raise Money for Angel Tree? By voting for our favorite decorated tree...with our money! \$1 equals 1 vote and the tree with the most votes by 1p on December 1, wins! Bring your cash or checks and place your votes for your favorite tree. The real winners will be the Salvation Army Angel Tree and Christmas Critter recipients.

How Else Can I Support This Event? By donating a pot of soup for lunch, helping with set up and clean up, encouraging others to participate, invite friends to lunch, by liking, sharing and commenting on the Facebook event. Please contact Tanya to offer your support.

Contact Tanya Lunsford with any questions or offers of assistance! lmartintm@gmail.com or 704-678-7122



Moravian Love Feast - December 8

The early Christians met and broke bread together to signify their union, fellowship and love. In 1727, the Moravian Church revived this practice and has established the custom of celebrating the great church festivals by partaking together of a simple meal known as a "Love Feast".

The Methodists have strong historical and spiritual ties with the Moravians. John Wesley became better acquainted with them while sailing to Georgia in 1735. He was deeply impressed with their fearlessness in the times of extremely violent storms at sea. Moravian leaders helped lead Wesley into the experience of "Salvation by faith, faith alone". After Wesley's Aldersgate experience in 1738, he visited Moravian settlements in Germany where the



Methodist and Moravians held joint love feasts. For over 200 years the love feast has been a part of the Methodist Tradition.

Since 1978, Myers Memorial UMC has been hosting a traditional Moravian Love Feast, a service of singing hymns and music that center on the themes of love and harmony. We will enjoy Moravian Spice Cake and sweet Coffee and light traditional beeswax candles as we gather together in the celebration of the season. We hope you'll join us on Sunday, December 8 at 5pm in the Sanctuary as we gather for this Christian Fellowship meal recalling the meals Jesus shared with disciples during his ministry and expressing the *koinonia* (community, sharing, fellowship) enjoyed by the family of Christ.

Women's Reading Group

The Reading Program of The United Methodist Women is a cherished tradition that brings together women in mission as they explore, share and discuss the books. A number of books on the 2020 Reading Program list have sparked the interest of women in our congregation and we would like to invite all women to read from this list together. You do not have to be a member of UMW to participate in this reading group.



The first book we will read together is When Others Shuddered: Eight Women Who Refused to Give Up by Jamie Janosz. Learn about eight women who were called to serve God and change the world. Their stories inspire us to follow God's calling in our own lives and teach us that each individual person can make a difference. We will gather in late January to discuss then select our next book from the list. You may order this book from your favorite book retailer or via Amazon (remember to select THaKO as your charitable organization when shopping via smile.amazon.com). The full UMW Reading Program list can be found at unitedmethodistwomen.org/readingprogram. If you are interested, please contact Sarah Davis, churchoffice@myersmemorialumc.com or 704-864-3222.

Whole30 Kick Off

Saturday, January 11, 11am to 1p

The Whole30 way of eating is a meal plan that changes your mindset about eating habits. Think of it as a short-term nutritional reset designed to change your life in 30 days. This event is to help you further understand this way of eating, the food plans, how and where to shop and provide support through this lifestyle change.



Christmas Eve Worship
Services

Candlelight & Communion

Tuesday, December 24

5p & 11p

Stewardship Report

Prayers, Presence, Gifts, Service, Witness

December 2019

Living Out & Living into Our Faith

	Sunday School	Worship	Facebook Views	Offering Received
Oct. 27	105	227	227	\$10,225
Nov. 3	129	229	373	\$18,406
Nov. 10	98	173	247	\$6,488
Nov. 17	120	183	305	\$11,138

Gifts Given in Memory of

Joan Rooney Bonnie Brown

Gifts Given in Honor of

Bill Hagar Robyn Rhyne

End of Year Gifts

The Church Office is open Mondays through Thursdays, 9a-4p and Fridays, 9a-12p. We will operate under special holiday hours of 9a to 12p on Dec. 23, 27, 30 & 31. The church office will be closed Dec. 24, 25, and 26.

Cherry Bekaert, LLP is the CPA firm that handles our church finances. Their office will be closing at noon on Dec. 23 & 31. They will be closed Dec. 24 & 25. You may stop by their office or send mail to 322 Burtonwood Dr, Gastonia, NC 28054

Congregational Thanks

Thank you so much for taking the time to recognize Hudson in church a couple of weeks ago. We also appreciate the candle, blanket and Bible. We are excited to include God and Jesus in Hudson's life and love the support and love this church family has given us. Love Zach, Courtney & Hudson Hurst

Sunday Morning Volunteers

Coffee Fellowship Hosts		Head Ushers
Dec. 1	Asbury	Ken Avery
Dec. 8	Nurture Committee	David Snyder
Dec. 15	Asbury	John Crain
Dec. 22	Asbury	Dave Davis
Dec. 28	Everyone	Tanya Lunsford

Bring Christmas goodies to share!

Communion Stewards ~ December 1

Brad & Pat Rivers, Freida Pendleton, Greg Carnes, Jim & Phyllis Windham

Youth & Children Leading in Worship

	Scripture Reader	Crucifer
Dec. 1	Dawson Moore	Ashley Fehrs
Dec. 8	Jillian Medlin	Evan Falls
Dec. 15	Angelica Brown	Kathleen Sharp
Dec. 22	Brendan Rooney	Adam Anderson
Dec. 28	Sydney Shugart	Ella Queen

Acolytes

Dec. 1	Audrey Vincent & Charlotte Hearne
Dec. 8	Harrison Davis & Mattie Queen
Dec. 15	Andrew Walker & Brock Davis
Dec. 22	Laurelei Hearne & Rhett Buchanan
Dec. 28	Serenity Clay & Lilly Allen

Sunday Morning Nursery Caregivers

Nursery Coordinator, Janet Lagos, 704-907-4652

Dec. 1	Tanya Lunsford, Susan Carnes, Lori Kimble, Paula Phillips
Dec. 8	Allison & Sally Drennan, Dana & Mallory Wolfe
Dec. 15	Donna Fletcher, Jordan Erwin, Pam Shoemaker, Sydney Shugart
Dec. 22	Chris McCullen, Mevalyn Farris, Debbie & Angelica Brown
Dec. 28	Allison Buchanan, Jennifer Gross, Paige Falls, Jaclyn Tant

Myers Memorial United Methodist Church

www.MyersMemorialUMC.org/calendar

704-864-3222

Church Office

(M-Th) 9a to 4p
(Fri) 9a to 12p

Meals on Wheels

(M-F) 8:30a to 12:30p

Weekday Preschool

September-May

8:30a to 12p

Schedule of Regularly

Scheduled Events

Sundays

9a Aldersgate Ringers

9a Focus Prayer Group

9:30a Coffee Fellowship

9:45a Sunday School

10:50a Worship

Mondays

6p Cub/Boy Scouts

Tuesdays

10a Grief Share

11a AI-anon

6:30p Chancel Bells

6:30p DC/DC4K

6:30p Girl Scouts

Wednesdays

9:30a Women's Bible Study

7p Chancel Choir

Thursdays

6:15p Men's Basketball

7:30p NA

Fridays

7:15a Devotion



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1 Communion Sunday 8a UMM/UMW 9:15a Health Screenings, CFC 9:45a Advent Festival 12p Festival of Trees 5p Youth/IXB Shopping	2 3p Make Sandwiches for the WBGClub	3 10a Grief Share 11:15a Warlick Mentoring 6:30p Divorce Care/DC4K	4 9:30a Women's Bible Study	5	6 Pack 21 Lock In	7 2p 60+ Belmont Abbey Players
8 Angel Trees Due 5p Love Feast	9	10 10a Angel Tree Sorting 10a Grief Share 11a Memory Café Trinity UMC 2:30p Pack Weekend Backpacks 6:30p Divorce Care/DC4K	11 9:30a Women's Bible Study	12 12p Joy Circle	13	14 BSA Troop 21 Breakfast
15 Gingerbread Sunday 3:30p Youth/IXB Christmas Party 5p Lessons & Carols	16 4:30p The Shelter, Supper Club	17 10a Grief Share 11:15a Warlick Mentoring 6:30p Divorce Care/DC4K	18 9:30a Women's Bible Study	19	20 Weekday Preschool Closed until January 6	21
22 12p Community Caroling	23 Church Office Open 9a - 12noon	24 Church Office Closed 5p Christmas Eve Service 11p Christmas Eve Service	25 Merry Christmas Church Office Closed	26 Church Office Closed	27 Church Office Open 9a - 12noon	28
29 College Student Sunday	30 Church Office Open 9a - 12noon	31 Church Office Open 9a - 12noon	December			

Adult Ministry

Connie Elzey, Director of Christian Education
dce@myersmemorialumc.com 704-864-3222 ext. 105

60+ Fellowship | December 7 | Christmas at the Abbey We'll enjoy an afternoon at the Theater! Tickets have been claimed yet you can call the Abbey Players Box Office directly (704-461-6787) for the 2:30p performance of poignant, heartfelt and comedic readings and favorite music of the season. On January 16th we'll be visiting the Maurice Sendak exhibit at the Gaston County Library and enjoying lunch together.

Wednesday Connect Evenings will be taking a pause in December and restarting January 8 at 6p with opportunities for Body Mind and Soul. Thank you to the many leaders who made the fall season so beneficial to all!

Disciple 1: New Testament Start the year off with a commitment to study God's Word! Join Disciple 1 Fast Track on Wednesdays at 6p in Room 105 beginning January 8. Dive deep into the New Testament and the life of a baby that grew to transform the world and calls us to follow him!

Wednesday Morning Women's Bible Study will meet through December 18, take a break for the holidays and resume on January 8th.

Advent in a Box

Advent in a Box is a resource created by the staff of Myers Memorial UMC to help equip families to have faith conversations at home. While time at church is precious, it is never enough to convey the wonder, mystery, and importance of the Christmas story. That's where the home comes in.

Advent in a Box is designed to provide resources to support, love and connect families where and when they need it most. That means: at home, on the go – wherever! We hope that families will open the box with delight and think “We can do this. We can hold back some of the Christmas crazy, and spend a few special moments together on the real purpose of the season.



Children's Ministry

Connie Elzey, Director of Christian Education
dce@myersmemorialumc.com 704-864-3222 ext. 105

Advent Festival | Sunday, December 1 | 9:45a

It's time to prepare ourselves for the greatest gift, Jesus! This year's Advent festival will take place on Sunday morning during Sunday School. Parents, you will want your children to be here for this meaningful and fun time.



Children's Sunday School | December

Our children (preschool & elementary ages) kick off each Sunday at 9:45a in room E-110 on the children's hall before heading to their classrooms. This time with Pastor Sally is where children can share their highs and lows of the week then pray and sing together before heading to their respective rooms. Elementary children will return to this room at 10:40 for parents to pick up.

December 1 | Advent Festival | All children to meet in room E-110 for an Advent-ure in Bethlehem!

December 8 | Joseph's Story *Matthew 1:18-24*

December 15 | Jesus is Coming *Luke 2:1-5*

December 22 | Jesus is Born *Luke 2:5-7*

December 29 | Shepherd's Story *Luke 2:8-20*

Everything you need to do the activities will be in the box, aside from typical household supplies like tape or crayons. This box of treats includes a variety of Advent activities. We aim for variety, with items that are reflective and active, silent and silly, individual and group-oriented.

Each family represented at the Advent Festival on December 1 will receive a box. We will then deliver boxes to other families in our church. If you are a grandparent with grandchildren who would enjoy such a box, you may pick one up in the Church office after December 4th.

Youth Ministry

Tresca McSwain, Director of Youth & Young Adults
thmcswain@gmail.com 704-477-7447

Sundays

9:30a Coffee Fellowship (food!)
9:45a Sunday School 10:50a Worship
No Youth Chorale in December
Special Times for Sunday Nights

Youth & InXbetween (5th-12th Grades)

December 1 | Shop till you Drop | 5p We'll gather at 5p for dinner and shopping for our Angel Tree kids! We'll be back to the church by 7p.

December 8 | Love Feast | 5p Enjoy a night of tradition, coffee and sweet cake! This ancient tradition is not boring but a way to celebrate how Jesus makes us family (and there are snacks!)

December 15 | Christmas Party | 3:30 to 5p
Bring a gender neutral ornament all wrapped up for gift giving as we enjoy fun and games together. Don't forget to bring your favorite party food! Come for an afternoon of games and fun as well as time to reflect on why we celebrate! Stay for Lessons and Carols immediately following in the Sanctuary at 5p.



December 22 | Community Caroling | 12p Buddy the Elf said it well: "The best way to spread Christmas Cheer, is singing loud for all to hear!" We'll meet in the CFC after worship and divide into groups, sharing Christmas joy through music to our community neighbors.

Holiday Schedule Changes

- Confirmation will meet December 1, 8, 15.
- We'll have combined Youth & InXbetween Sunday School classes on December 22 and 29 in the Youth Lounge.
- No Youth or InXbetween on December 22 or 29.

College Student Sunday - December 29

We look forward to our college students leading worship on Sunday, December 29. If any college students would like to participate, please contact Tresca McSwain.

Weekday Preschool

Janet Lagos, Weekday Preschool Director
preschool@myersmemorialumc.com 704-864-3222

The youngest among us will spend December learning about the baby that transformed the world! We'll celebrate the traditions of the seasons and the meaning behind them all ~ Jesus! We'll be making cookies, enjoying a pajama day and having a Christmas Party! Parents and families are invited to join us for the Christmas Party on December 19.

The Weekday Preschool follows Gaston County Schools for any weather related closures as well as holidays. Should there be inclement weather, please watch our Facebook page for confirmation of any closings. The Weekday Preschool will be Closed December 20th through January 3rd. Our first day back in 2020 will be January 6th.

We are currently accepting new students for Spring 2020. If you know of someone interested, please contact Janet for a tour and more information.

*The Teensy Weensy Shepherd
to the tune of Itsy Bitsy Spider
The Teensy Weensy Shepherd went up to Bethlehem.
Down shown the starlight to guide him to the inn.
Up came the sun to start a brand new day
and the Teensy Weensy Shepherd saw Jesus
in the hay.*



Coming in January

Put these dates on your calendar!

Leadership Summit ~ Sunday, January 5 ~ 2p to 5p (snow date of January 12)
Sunday Night Live Resumes ~ Sunday, January 5, 5p
Wednesday Connect Resumes ~ Wednesday, January 8 ~ Lunch at 11:30a-1p ~ Evening Small Groups at 6p
Whole30 Kick Off ~ Saturday, January 11 ~ 11a to 1p (CFC)
Soup Lunch Supporting Weekend Backpack Ministry ~ Sunday, January 12 ~ 12p
Troop 21 Breakfast ~ Saturday, January 18

Myers Memorial United Methodist Church

301 S. New Hope Road Gastonia, NC 28054

704-864-3222

www.MyersMemorialUMC.org

ChurchOffice@MyersMemorialUMC.com

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Advent 2019: Blessing from Bethlehem: House of Bread

December 1

9:45a Children's Advent Festival

10:50a Worship; Communion

Feeling the Knead

12p Festival of Trees, CFC

December 8

10:50a Worship

Rising to Meet Us

5p Love Feast

December 15

Gingerbread Sunday

10:50a Worship

The Scent Known 'Round the World

5p Lessons & Carols

December 22

10:50a Worship

The Bread of Life

12p Community Caroling

December 24

Christmas Eve

5p Candlelight & Communion

11p Candlelight & Communion

Bethlehem's Gift: Bread for the World

*Bring an offering of non-perishable food for Crisis Assistance
Ministry each time you come to Myers Memorial this month.*

