

# FIRST NEWS AND NOTES

A Newsletter of The First United Methodist Church in Hagerstown IN

December 2023



The Advent Season is a very special time of year that sometimes gets lost in the bright lights of the Christmas season that follows it. Speaking of lights, have you ever considered the candles of the Advent wreath? Is lighting them just something we do? What do they mean? Why are they there?

The candles also have their own special significance. The four colored candles represent the four weeks of Advent, and one additional candle is lit each Sunday. The flames of candles are a representation of the Christmas light – the Christ Light - approaching, bringing hope and peace in the struggle against darkness.

- On the first week of Advent this year, we will light the first purple candle to mark the first week of Advent as we wait for the birth of our Savior. This first candle, sometimes referred to as the "Angel's Candle," symbolizes peace. It reminds us of the message of the angels: "Peace on Earth, goodwill toward men."
- The second candle this year is the pink candle. This candle symbolizes joy. It is called the "Shepherd's Candle," and is pink because rose is a liturgical color for joy. The Sunday of Advent is meant to remind us of the joy that the world experienced at the birth of Jesus, as well as the joy that the faithful look forward to.
- The third candle this year, which is the color purple, symbolizes hope. It is sometimes called the "Prophecy Candle" in remembrance of the prophets, especially Isaiah, who foretold the birth of Christ. It represents the hope-filled expectation felt in anticipation of the coming Messiah.
- This year, the fourth candle, also purple, represents love. It is also called the "Bethlehem Candle" as a reminder of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem. It symbolizes love to remind us of how Jesus came into the messiness of this world to show everyone how great God's love is.

At the center of the wreath (which symbolizes creation) and in the center of the four other candles stands the final candle that is lit on Christmas Eve. This candle is white and called the "Christ Candle." It represents the life of Christ. The color white is for purity because Christ is our sinless, pure Savior. It is placed at the center to show that Christ is the center of all creation, as well as the center of our peace, joy, hope, and love.

Light helps us to see in dark spaces. As we prepare for Jesus' arrival, will we help others see the peace, joy, hope, and love that God's Light brings into this world? May the light of the Advent season burn bright within you and may the Light of Christ be at the center of all you are and all you do. Amen. Pastor Nate

Christmas Eve<sup>\*</sup>  
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## Cookies & Carols

December 24, 7:30 p.m.  
199 S. Perry Street  
Hagerstown, IN

Cookies, Cocoa, and Cider served from 7:30 - 8pm  
Carols and the Christmas story begin at 8pm

A festive graphic for the Christmas Eve Cookies & Carols event. It features a green background with white stars, a green Christmas tree, a snowflake, and several gingerbread men. The text is in a mix of white, yellow, and orange fonts.

A graphic for the Bibles &amp; Brunch event. It features a white cross on a dark background, with a fried egg and a slice of bacon next to it. The text "BIBLES &amp; BRUNCH" is in a large, bold, serif font, and "A DIFFERENT KIND OF WORSHIP SERVICE" is in a smaller, sans-serif font below it.

To All of You, Some of you know that Jim Howell & family have a new home for Sharon @ Friends Fellowship, 2030 Chester Blvd, Richmond IN 47374. Jim sees her about every day. He stated she loves mail.

So Pastor Nate wants all of his congregation to shower her with cards. It surely will bring a smile to our friend Sharon Howell.



## The Church Mouse

### WHAT CAN I DO?

Last month I talked about Sarah Geise, one of the quiet ones who served her church and the community by sharing her time and love with others. I challenged you to use your gifts to help others to honor her and others like her in your lives. We have been inspired to follow the Biblical examples of generosity and gratitude in recent sermons. We were encouraged to volunteer our time and talents with others. OK, you get it and would like to help, but I can see the wheels of doubt turning in your brain. How can I help? Will they want me? What can I do? Listen to the suggestions of others who ask you to step up and help. We are giving you some more ways to serve. It is up to you to select some ideas that match your gifts and interests.

List of Opportunities: Sign up as Greeter or Usher, Bring Altar Flowers, Substitute for Pianist/Organist/Song Leaders, Play Drums, Join the Bell Ringers, Work in Kitchen for Meals, Donate food or cash for Meals, Alternate with or Assist for Child Care in Nursery, Kids in Church or Sunday School teachers, Offer Rides to Church, Join Prayer Chain, Sign Cards in Church Café, Help Put Up/Take Down Christmas Decorations, Participate in Trunk or Treat, Shovel Snow/Salt Sidewalks, Cut Grass, Weed on Church Grounds, Volunteer to serve on Leadership Table, Assist in Maintenance/Repairs for Church/Parsonage, Help Assemble Church Newsletters.

This is only a partial list of suggestions. In the church bulletin you can find more information about The Loving Hearts and Helping Hands Ministry, the Food Pantry and other ways to help with the contact information. The Pastor will connect you with right person or more specific needs. We deeply appreciate all those already volunteering and doing many of the needed tasks. Thank you for your generosity and your loving heart for service. A personal thank you or praise for a job well done is always welcome. Some of our core groups of volunteers are getting older, tired or overworked. They need you to volunteer to help or offer to take turns to give them a breather. We need to do what we can, when we can and however, we can serve others.

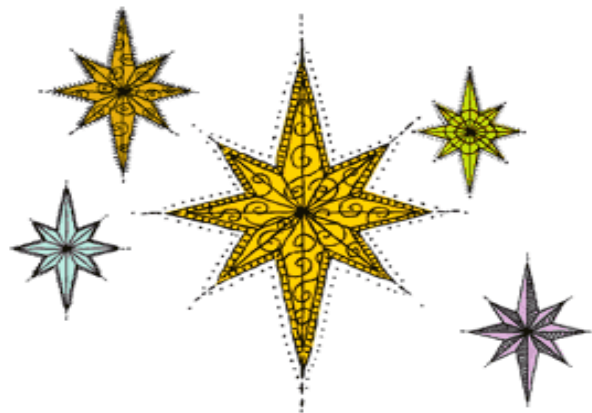
**Paula Guth, the Church Mouse**

**1 Peter 4:10 As each has received a gift,  
use it to serve one another ..."**



Linda Ford receives a quilt blanket from the Women In Faith. Jean Dilley, District President, presented this to Linda at our General Meeting in November. Linda experienced a house fire causing quite a loss. She is staying with her family.

The quilt was purchased at the Annual UMW – WIF meeting's Silent Auction. The proceeds (\$210.) went to the Lucille Raines Residence.



**Our sympathies to Allan Irvin and family at the recent death of his father, Lothair Irvin.**

**A new address for Member Linda Riley-10427 S  
Corgi Ranch Rd, Hereford AZ 85615-7771**



## ***Women In Faith Sharing by President Mindy Smith***

Hope this finds you all still glowing from a wonderful Thanksgiving celebration. We were blessed to have our usual celebration with our crew of about thirty family members at Erin's house. We all enjoy getting to be together and catching up with each other.

Now the rush to Christmas moves into full speed.

United Women in Faith have enjoyed a great year in 2023. We had many inspiring programs both locally with our groups and at different District meetings and the special celebrations including our sisters across the state at the Lucille Raines celebration at Saint Luke's in Indianapolis and the Annual Meeting at Community Of Hope in Muncie.

I'm proud and humbled by the many ways we've been able to help spread the love of Jesus through our gift of monies, supplies and service to multiple ministries.

At Lucille Raines we supported the Love Lifted Me campaign (new elevator), the Boiler Up campaign (new furnace), items for Raines Fest. Women's prison ministry with sewing supplies for their quilting group and diapers and wipes for their Nursery program.

Locally we supplied Mentors for students at Hagerstown High School and reusable water bottles at both the High School and the Elementary School. This ministry also benefits God's beautiful world by reducing plastic pollution.

We helped with a generous monetary donations to the Anthony Munoz Ridge Scholarship fund and the newly formed Nettle Creek Community Coalition.

I'm sure I have missed some other items, but this is a good representation of the work we do to share the Love of Jesus in our hurting world. We hope to be able to continue these kinds of ministry as we look forward to 2024.

Please be continuing to pray our Breakthrough Prayer as we look forward to new way to do ministry with our proceeds from the Cookie Walk and other opportunities God may present to us.

The Scripture I'm sharing for this month is Hebrews 2:1 (NRSVUE), "We must pay greater attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away." I think if we try to live this verse, especially for the month of December it would be a beautiful birthday gift to Jesus. Have a blessed Christmas season.

*Mindy*



## December Advent Sermon Series - The Light Has Come

**Big Idea of the Series:** This Christmas sermon series teaches the importance of the season of Advent, in which we prepare to receive from God. Preparation takes practice, readiness, waiting, and allowing God to go beyond our expectations to fulfill his will in our lives.

**Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> – Prepare the Way**

– Matthew 3:13

**Dec 10<sup>th</sup> – Waiting- Procrastinating**

– Matthew 25

**Dec 17 – Better Than Expected**

– Luke 2

**Dec 24<sup>th</sup> – He'll Be Here**

– Isaiah 40



The staff wishes everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Jesus is our best gift!

Pastor Nate, Secretary Carol Meyer, and Rick Peelle, Director of Music and Worship.

## Contact Us:

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**Connect with Us-**  
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Church Phone -  
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**First Hagerstown  
United Methodist Church**



## First United Methodist Church

199 South Perry Street  
Mailing Address PO Box 65  
Hagerstown, Indiana 47346

**Sunday School**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Adult, Youth, Children**

**10:15 a.m. (Kids In**

**Divine Service)**



**Worship 10:15 Join us!**

**Nursery available every Sunday.**



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