



Dear Friends and Members of Union Presbyterian Church,

Merry Christmas! I don't know about you, but these days I sometimes have to actually work at focusing my attention in the right place at Advent & Christmas time. There is just so much going on in my life here at the church, at home, and in my extended family. It is easy to catch myself just going through the motions during Advent and sort of "miss" what Christmas is all about. I have had to make a habit each year, to really put aside a little time, push all the busyness and business of my day-to-day life to the side for just a little bit, and spend time focusing on what it means for Christ to have come into this world, how he utterly transformed it through his life, death, and resurrection, and to reflect on what it means that he is coming again.

This year, one devotion that helped me stop for this crucial moment before Advent came from an Advent Devotion from Biola University last year. This devotion was written by Dr. Adam Johnson. I pray that 3 of the many things Johnson shared in his devotion: (1) the lyrics to the song, "I Wonder as I Wander," (2) the picture by Rembrandt of Paul in Prison, and (3) Paul's words in 1 Timothy 1: 15-17 might touch you this year, like it has touched me.

"I Wonder As I Wander"
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky
How Jesus my Savior did come for to die
For poor ordinary people like you and like I
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
A star in the sky or a bird on the wing,
Or all of God's Angels in heaven to sing,
He surely could have it, 'cause he was the King.

I wonder as I wander, out under the sky
How Jesus my Savior did come for to die
For poor ordinary people like you and like I
I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.

1 Timothy 1: 15-17

This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost. But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life. To the King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

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December Elders

Glenn Sparrow
Sally McGinnis
Janice Meek

Communion

December 3

Stated Session

December 17

(continued from previous page)



In this picture, the Apostle Paul, with his belongings scattered about him, is shown sitting on his bed confined in a prison cell. But his expression does not indicate a man imprisoned, but a man determined to minister and pray on behalf of churches and believers around the world. The pen in his left hand suggests that maybe he was in the middle of writing one of his many letters to the churches of Colossae, Ephesus, or Philippi. Or maybe he was writing to a friend in ministry like Timothy or Titus. The light from the window envelops his head like a halo. The large sword leaning on the bed may be a symbol of his impending martyrdom or perhaps reminding us of the sword of the Spirit described in Ephesians 6:17. Despite his hardships and imprisonment, Paul did not despair in his incarceration, but saw it as an opportunity to further the Gospel and the Kingdom of God.

Paul reminds all of us in 1 Timothy 1: 15, that “this saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.” As we “wander about” this Advent, may each of us take the time to stop in WONDER of Christ, who came from heaven

to die for poor ordinary people like Paul, like you, and like me. Is it WONDER in Paul’s eyes as he sits in prison in Rembrandt’s painting? May that same sort of WONDER be found in our eyes this Advent!

Sincerely in Christ,
Pastor James

WORSHIP IN DECEMBER

Advent/Christmas Sermon Series: “O Come, Emmanuel”

December 3: Luke 1:57–79, “O Come, Emmanuel... Come, Dayspring of Hope”

-Celebration of Lord’s Supper; First Sunday of Advent

December 10: Proverbs 8: 22–36; 1 Corinthians 1:18–25, “O Come, Emmanuel... Come, Wisdom of Peace”

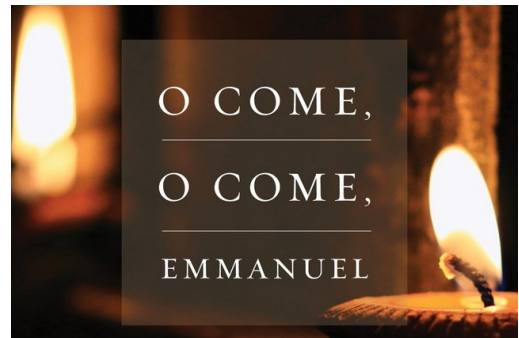
-Second Sunday of Advent

December 17: Revelation 1: 4-19, “O Come, Emmanuel... Come, Joyful Key of David”

-Third Sunday of Advent

December 24: Luke 1:26–38, 39–55, “O Come, Emmanuel... Come, Desire of Nations”

-Fourth Sunday of Advent; Christmas Eve



Lectionary Sermon Series: Christ in the Psalms

January 7: Genesis 1: 1-5; Psalm 29, “What’s the Real ‘Voice from the Mountain’?”

-Epiphany Sunday; Celebration of the Lord’s Supper

THANK YOU!!

A special thanks to Carter McSwain, Larry Meek, Eddie Moton, George Ratchford, Glenn Sparrow and Junior Thompson for their hard work in beautification of our prayer garden. The mulch was a donation by several of the men. Also, thanks to Tom Wollenberg for planting pansies and ornamental cabbage under the marquee and for caring for this area throughout the year.

DECEMBER

Calendar of Events

ADVENT DEVOTIONS

Advent Devotions will be available to pick up this year on **December 3** (the first Sunday of Advent). There are 2 different devotions available this year and we invite you to pick up one or both. The devotion, **“Go + Tell,”** is distributed by Frontier Fellowship, highlighting Advent and Christmas songs from around the world to help us explore how God is at work in our lives and out on the frontier with the people least reached with the Good News of Christ in the world today. **“The Gifts of Christmas,”** contains 6 devotions from the books **“The God of Amazing Gifts,”** by Lizzie Laferton and **“The Message of Christmas,”** by Eugene Peterson. This devotion reflects on some of the blessings we receive through the gift of Christ.



CHRISTMAS CRAFTS AND MOVIE

Calling all kids! On **Saturday, December 9, starting at 3 PM**, you are invited to join the Kids of the Kingdom for an awesome afternoon! We will be gathering together to create a Christmas craft and then watch a holiday themed movie together (while eating some scrumptious snacks). Invite a friend or two and join us for a fabulous holiday afternoon together!



CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Come join us on **Sunday, December 10 at 2:00 PM** as we go Christmas Caroling around town and visit some of our shut ins! After we finish caroling, we plan to have a hayride through McAdenville! Come join us as we spread some Christmas cheer.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PLAY

Save the date on **Sunday, December 17th and 9 AM** and make plans to join us for breakfast and our Children's Christmas play! We hope to see you there, you won't be disappointed!



CHRISTMAS EVE

Because Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year, Worship & Commitment Committee plans to do things a little differently this year. We will have a slightly longer, family friendly, full **Christmas Eve Service** in the morning, at **10 AM**.

Then in the evening we will gather at the church at **4 PM** for **“Carols & Cocoa: A Christmas Evening of Praise.”** First, we will head out to a nearby neighborhood to sing some Christmas Carols. Then be back at the church at **5:15 PM** to sing some more carols together (this time by candlelight), hear the Christmas story in Luke, have a special Christmas prayer, and drink hot cocoa.

We hope that you can join us for the worship, songs, and fellowship this Christmas Eve.



UNION ENSEMBLE

Join us for rehearsal this month right after church at **11 AM on December 3rd**.

MEN OF THE CHURCH FELLOWSHIP EVENT

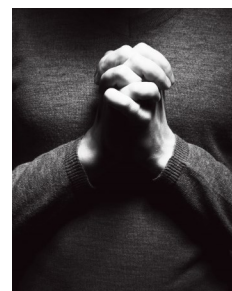
The next Men's Fellowship outing will be on **Tuesday December 5th at 6:00 PM** at Jackson's Cafeteria. All men and youth are encouraged to attend. Please let Larry Meek know if you are able to come.

BINGO AT TERRACE RIDGE

Make plans to join us for Bingo at Terrace Ridge on **December 21st at 3 PM**. Please join us if you are able, you are sure to be blessed

PRAYER WALK

The Witness and Service Committee invites everyone to join us for the December Prayer Walk. We will meet at the church at **6:30 PM, on December 21st**. We'll choose a neighborhood to walk or ride, praying along the way and leaving a door tag that says "Hello, we are your neighbor," inviting them to leave any personal prayer requests on our website. This gives us an opportunity to make our church known in the community and work on our prayer! Hope to see you there!



SANTA'S MAILBOX

Is snail mail costing too much for you? Consider sending your Christmas greetings to church friends using the church's internal "mailbox." **The Santa Mailbox** is located in the hall beside the Nursery and starting **December 3** we will have **new phone directories** that you can use to get the names right of everyone you want to send a card to! You might want to put some of the money you saved on stamps in the container on top of the mailbox (it will be added to our church's Christmas Joy Offering this year).

5 CENT A MEAL

The 5-Cents a meal offering taken on the first Sunday of each month will be contributed to the Blessing Box this December. The Blessing Box is an outreach from Union Church providing food at Stephen's Stump (next to Forestview High School) to those in the community who are struggling.

PEARL HENDERSON SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

Grades, new class schedules, and applications for the spring semester are due **Friday, December 15th**. If you have any questions, please contact Leslie Harris.

PASTOR JAMES VACATION

Pastor James and his family will be out of town on vacation from **December 25- January 5**. During this time, if you have a congregational care emergency, we encourage you to contact one of the current session elders of the church.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Please Note! There will be a brief Congregational Meeting held following worship on **December 10th** in order to elect a new class of elders to Session, a new trustee, and next year's nominating committee.



DISIPLESHIP TOOL WORKSHOP

This new year, there is a brand-new class on the horizon that will take place during the Sunday School hour at Union. But make no mistake, this is not a “normal” Sunday School class. It’s more like a workshop! Have you ever wondered if there is more to this whole “following Christ” thing? We all know that as Christians we are supposed to get better at listening to God through reading the Bible, to find ways to connect our hearts to His, and to attempt to better be Christ’s hands and feet in the world. But are there certain tools out there that we could be using to make all that listening, connecting, and following easier and would help us follow Christ more closely?



Starting December 7, our older youth, and interested young adults and older adults will have an opportunity to learn about some of the Christian discipleship tools that are out there and how we might better use them. Each week, we will start the class in the Gathering Area to learn more about a new discipleship tool and then break up into smaller groups where we can put that tool into practice!

The first workshop, **beginning January 7**, we be a six-week study on Matthew 14:13-21. That’s right! Six weeks on the same passage!! We will be **“Digging in Deep with the Feeding of the 5000!”** There’s a huge difference between Devotional and Deep Study when reading of the Bible. Both are important in our walks with God. But many of us do not **STUDY** God’s Word nearly as often as we read it devotionally. Some of us might not even know how to truly God’s Word. Join us as we explore 6 tools that anyone can use to dive into the Bible more deeply. The class will give you an opportunity to practice using some Bible tools that you might be a little rusty with. Some of the tools might even be brand new to you! Join us as we all grow in our ability to read, understand, and listen to God’s word for our lives.

JOY GIFT OFFERING

Our special Joy Gift Offering this year will be received during the children’s program and worship on **December 17**. As you may be aware, part of our church’s vision statement is to “enthusiastically welcome new additions to the community & be a place of Christian hospitality to our region.” This year’s Joy Offering will be added into our budget to be used to help those in our community in need. Like our Congregation Care line item helps care for those in our congregation, this will help our church be able to directly help those in need in our area. The Community Care line item will work much like Congregation Care line item and the funds will be accessible by any member of Session. We hope that you will give generously and please let an elder know when you see a way that we can use these funds to be blessing for those locally in need.



HAPPY YEARS

The Happy Years Club will be meeting on **December 6th (Wednesday) at 11 AM**. This will be our holiday gathering and we will meet at the Villa Roma. Please join us for a fun outing and great fellowship. Contact Kathy Kytly (704-861-1313 or kshasta@bellsouth.net) if you have any questions.

PRESBYTERY PRAYER CALENDAR & PRAYER CONCERNS

Good Hope
P.O. Box 784
Kings Mountain, NC 28086
goodhopepresbyterian@yahoo.com

Grace Covenant
789 Merrimon Avenue
Asheville, NC 28804
office@gcpcusa.org

Grassy Creek
167 Greenlee Lane
Spruce Pine, NC 28777

Green Mountain
P.O. Box 36
Green Mountain, NC 28740
elwe8@aol.com

- Hold Dick and Carol Larson in prayer. Dick is home and doing well after surgery to remove one lung due to Mesothelioma. Carol is recovering from recent amputation surgery. Dick is a former Moderator of Presbytery and General Council, a key leader and advocate for the Building Hope Campaign. Dick and Carol are active members of the Banner Elk Church.
- We continue prayers for the Rev. Beth Newman, pastor of Byson City Presbyterian. She is currently home in Atlanta from the hospital. A Caring Bridge website is available for communication and updates. You can reach it by clicking here.
- We offer prayers for healing and strength for John Auten of Shelby Presbyterian as he battles cancer.
- Hold Ronnie Puckett, husband of former PWNC staff member Marcia Puckett, in prayer as he continues immunotherapy every six weeks for his cancer. His last scan results showed that he continues to hold stable.





UNION CHURCH CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Sunday 9AM Sunday School 10 AM Worship					1	2 11 AM Nativi-"tea" 5 PM Potter's Clay Christmas Party
3 Communion 5 Cents a Meal 2:30 PM SOC	4 11 AM Golden Girls 7 PM Soul Sisters	5 10 AM Bible Study 6 PM MOC Fellowship @ Jackson's	6 11 AM Happy Year's at Villa Roma	7 8 AM HOME Co-Op	8 5 PM Older Youth Progressive Dinner	9 3 PM Kids of the Kingdom Movie and Crafts
10 2:30 PM Christmas Caroling 5 PM McAdenville Hayride	11	12 10 AM Bible Study 7 PM Building & Grounds	13	14 8 AM HOME Co-Op 6 PM HOME Co-Op Fellowship Hall	15 5 PM Christmas Play Practice	16
17 9 AM Christmas Play 2:30 PM Session	18	19 10 AM Bible Study	20 5:30 PM W & S	21 3 PM Bingo 6:30 PM Prayer Walk	22	23
24 4 PM Caroling 5:15 PM "Carols & Cocoa: A Christmas Evening of Praise."	25	26 NO Bible Study	27	28	29	30
Pastor James Vacation						
31	1	2	3	4	5	
Pastor James Vacation						

Union Presbyterian Church

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Non-Profit Organization
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Reverend James Holeman
Pastor

Tammy Biddix
Administrative Assistant

Jennifer Nelson
Communications Director

Jieeun Ha
Accompanist

Church Hours
3:00 PM—6 PM
Tuesday and Thursday



Save the Date



December 2	Nativi-”tea”
December 3	5 Cents of Meal & Communion
December 10	Caroling and Hayride
December 17	Breakfast & Play
December 21	Prayer Walk
December 24	Christmas Eve Caroling; “Carols & Cocoa: A Christmas Evening of Praise.”