

First Things

Issue No. 47

A weekly publication of First United Methodist Church, Oak Ridge, Tennessee

November 29, 2020

We Want Your Advent Photo

Our staff would love to include your photo in our recorded Advent season worship experiences. We want photos of as many different people (singles, couples, families) from within our congregation TAKEN WITH YOUR ADVENT WREATH OR CHRISTMAS TREE. How wonderful it will be to see familiar faces during this pandemic holiday season.

A photo from a phone camera will be fine. Email the photo to photos@fumcor.org. If you do not own a phone with a camera, you can certainly bring by or mail a photo print to the church office. Thanks for all your help in making this a wonderful Advent season.

Two Opportunities to Share Christmas with Our Community

We are still in need of helpers to create a Christmas float for Oak Ridge's "Reverse" Parade on Saturday, December 12, from 6:00–8:00 p.m. On that day, the floats will remain stationary and the cars will drive by.

Now we have another way to impact the community with the Christmas message, this time through a "Drive-Thru Christmas." Sponsored by the Oak Ridge Ministerial Association and planned for 6:00–8:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 19, the community will be invited to drive around the city, visiting designated churches. Those churches will decorate a drive-thru area with lights, sets, and people to allow visitors to be cheered, encouraged, and have all kinds of warm-fuzzies about their city and the season. The scenes will be (1) Angel and Mary; (2) Mary and Elizabeth; (3) Innkeeper; (4) Stable; (5) Shepherds and Angels; (6) Magi; and (7) Modern Day Christmas Home. The current plan is for FUMCOR to be the third of seven congregations—the Innkeeper turning the holy family away.

Interested in helping create the scene or performing as the Innkeeper? We need to hear from you! Contact Rev. Mark Flynn (mflynn@fumcor.org), and let's make an impact on our city this December.



Virtual Nativity Pageant

It might look and feel different this year, but we are still going to have our Nativity Pageant—just virtually. We will tape the kids in the various parts and create one video for Christmas Eve. Email Megan Alden

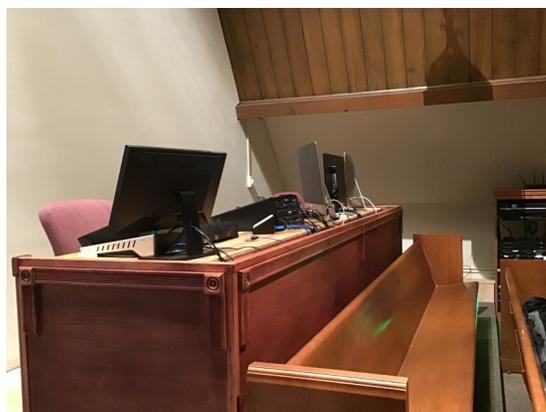
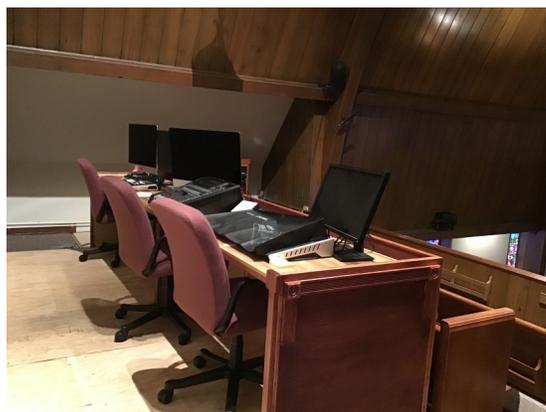
by December 1 (alden@fumcor.org) for details. Come help us tell the story and celebrate Christ's birth.

Welcome New Members

We are so very happy to welcome Judy and George Smith to our church family. Judy and George appreciate our efforts to be in ministry in spite of the pandemic and wish to be a part of our congregation. Welcome to First UMC!

Live-streaming Space in the Balcony

Below are updated photos of the live-streaming area recently built in the balcony of the Sanctuary.



Blue Christmas Service

Advent and Christmas are sources of great joy for many people, but for those grieving, experiencing depression, or struggling in other ways, they can be sources of deep pain. When someone is feeling low, it can be hard to hear the joyous sounds of the holidays while imagining everyone else is happy. Recognizing that this year has been difficult for many of us, we will offer a Blue Christmas Service.

This quiet, introspective service will include scripture, prayers, music, and psalms. It will provide time for reflection and remembering people we've lost. It will be a chance to focus on the promise of hope. We will remember that at Christmas, Christ came to be the light of the world.

Originally, Blue Christmas services were celebrated around December 21, the longest, darkest day of the year. Our service will be available throughout Advent, beginning Monday, November 30. To watch, visit the Virtual Chapel on our website (www.fumcor.org) and click Blue Christmas. If you'd like to talk with a pastor about what you are experiencing, please contact Rev. Mark Flynn, Rev. Chris Black, or Rev. Jenny Caughman at the church.

In Loving Memory

Loraine Valentine

who joined FUMC on January 24, 1960, and died November 18. We extend love and sympathy to her daughter, Michelle Armistead, and family.

Hospitalized

No one that we know of

Our Gifts

Offering this Week \$10,276
2020 Year to Date \$1,209,439
2019 Year to Date \$1,196,290
Special Monthly Offering \$1,565

Pastors

Mark Flynn, lead pastor
Chris Black, associate pastor
Jenny Caughman, spiritual care

Contact Information

865.483.4357
www.fumcor.org
Pastor on call: 865.272.9862



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Together in Christ Campaign Update

Our congregation is entering the next phase of our financial stewardship campaign: encouraging everyone who has not yet sent in their 2021 Estimates of Giving to do so as soon as possible. Please help our leaders create an accurate budget for the coming year by mailing in your card, calling the church Finance Office with your information, or filling out an electronic version of the card on our website.

As of November 16, our Finance Office has received 222 Estimates of Giving (representing 77% of our goal of 290) for a total of \$1,038,433 (representing 87% of our \$1.2 million goal). These totals represent 12 NEW Estimates of Giving for a total of \$31,250; 85 increased Estimates of Giving for a total increase of \$56,740; 26 decreased Estimates of Giving for a total decrease of \$41,008; and 99 Estimates of Giving that remain the same. We hope to receive the remaining 68 donors' Estimates of Giving cards before year end to make up the difference of \$161,567 needed to reach our goal.

Drive-thru Shoppes Update

Thanksgiving: Wow, the Thanksgiving Shoppe drive-thru event was a true blessing in many ways. Fifty local families received the food, coats, shoes, blankets, masks, scarves, hats, books, and love you shared to make their holiday and winter a bit easier.

Christmas: Soon, 60 more families will drive through our parking lot to be served.

Focus this week:

- Deliver the items you've purchased no later than November 30. There are four drop-off locations listed on the website, including FUMC (Monday through Wednesday, 8:00 a.m. – noon).
- If you can shop and deliver really fast, we still have children to sponsor. Contacts: Nancy Kile (fnpkile@comcast.net) and Vicki Hinkel (vhinkel@comcast.net or 482.3931).

With Sadness...

We have received word that Wilson Pitt passed away in Cape Canaveral, Florida on November 15. Wilson's wife, Ann, served as church secretary at FUMC for many years in the 1970's. To read the obituary, visit the Wylie-Baxley Funeral Home website.

Special Monthly Offering: ADFAC Please Consider Donating

Aid to Distressed Families of Appalachian Counties (ADFAC) will use our donation to serve the needs of the low-income community in Anderson, Campbell, Morgan, and Roane counties. ADFAC helps prevent homelessness and utility cutoffs and assists with necessary home repairs, school supplies, and budget coaching.

Thanksgiving Shoppe

Below: Jeff Kile and
Scott Gillenwaters

Bottom:
Nancy Kile and Dorothy Cole



Above:
Martha Prazniak and
Scott Gillenwaters

Bottom: Chris Lee



Church-wide Advent Study Coming

Beginning Sunday evening, November 29, at 7:30 p.m., Rev. Chris Black will lead a four-week Advent Study on Rev. Adam Hamilton's book *Incarnation: Rediscovering the Significance of Christmas*. Chris hopes you will join him each week on Zoom for a great discussion and a time to be in virtual fellowship, study, and prayer together as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior.