



## Spreading The Love: Special Offerings

At their fall retreat, Church Council members reflected on our congregation's many wonderful ministries and how best to increase their impact on the community. As a result of their discussion, and with the approval of the Finance Committee, we will make a few changes to our 2024 Monthly Special Offerings.

In the past, our Mission Committee selected programs run by groups in our community to receive the benefits of these offerings. However, recognizing that need to supplement many of our own church ministries, our leaders have decided to broaden the pool of those receiving funds from our special offerings. Here are our Monthly Special Offerings for 2024:

- **January:** Community Assistance Fund
- **February:** Wednesday Night Community Meal
- **March:** Mission Committee to select an organization
- **April:** Children's Ministry
- **May:** Music Ministry
- **June:** Mission Committee to select an organization
- **July:** Mission Committee to select an organization
- **August:** First Recovery Ministry
- **September:** Youth Ministry
- **October:** Trustees – replenish our Contingency Fund
- **November:** Thanksgiving and Christmas Shoppes
- **December:** Mission Committee to select an organization

Our Mission Committee will still select community-based ministries to receive four of these special offerings, one each quarter of the year.

**For our January Monthly Special Offering**, we are inviting the congregation to go "above and beyond" their normal giving to support the Community Assistance Fund. This fund is used by our pastoral staff to help families who have received a cut-off notice from their utility company or to pay for a tank of gas for those who have a new job but won't receive their first paycheck for two weeks. Any and all financial gifts, regardless of the size, are much appreciated for this amazing ministry of compassion and grace.

## New Music Assistant

In November, we welcomed Fiona Page Boyd as the Music Assistant. Fiona has already made a significant impact on our music ministry, and she is excited to continue serving and upholding our tradition of excellence in music and worship. Welcome, Fiona!



## Community Announcement: Your Support is Needed

- **Event Date:** Wednesday, December 20 – We're serving our Christmas Community Meal.
- **Holiday Gesture:** We're providing a pie to each family, representing the holiday spirit.
- **Request for Donations:** Pies needed, preferably those that don't require refrigeration.
- **Donation Period:** You can donate from December 18 to December 20.
- **Deadline Reminder:** Please drop off pies by 3:00 p.m. on December 20.
- **Where to Donate:** Pies can be delivered to either the main office or the Welcome Center.
- **Your Contribution Matters:** Help us bring joy to our community this holiday season.



## The Image and Likeness of God

In Genesis, we read that we are made in the image and likeness of God (1:26), and as Christians, we believe that Jesus was God incarnate – God in the flesh. A favorite holiday tradition is the placing of Nativity sets as a reminder of that wonderful, world-changing occurrence. I (Jenny) personally love and collect Nativity sets and especially enjoy how different they are when they come from various parts of the world. How do we each envision Christ and his coming into the world? What does this tell us about our understanding of God?

In the Sunday School class taught last November by Rev. Leah Burns, we explored American Christianity's unfortunate affiliation with white supremacy and how many of us unknowingly and unintentionally harbor racist beliefs. Rev. Burns challenged us to look around our church to see how this may be depicted – having Jesus portrayed with northern European traits being an example. I could not help but recognize this depiction when I put the church's beautiful, hand-painted nativity set out and saw Jesus with his blond hair. To remind us that we are all made in God's image and likeness, each of us in a different way, we are putting out different nativity sets each week in the narthex outside of the Nave.

Come, enjoy the many ways different cultures depict and celebrate the arrival of Christ.



## Rehearsal Reminder

Our children's pageant rehearsal is this Sunday from 10:00 - 10:40 a.m. in the Nave. We're also meeting on Thursday, December 21, from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. For more information, reach out to Shelby at [sfowler@fumcor.org](mailto:sfowler@fumcor.org).

## In the Hospital

Rae Smith - MMC  
Carole Stoops - MMC  
Ann Snow - UTMC

## Discharged

Betty Pitts

## Our Giving:

Weekly offering:	\$ 24,009
2023 YTD offering:	\$ 1,216,651
2022 YTD offering:	\$ 1,224,337
Mission offering:	\$ 1,605

# Worship for December 17

## Third Sunday in Advent

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24  
Sermon: See With New Eyes: Joy

8:45 & 11:00 a.m. Traditional Worship - Sanctuary  
11:00 a.m. Contemporary Worship - Multipurpose Room  
Preaching: Rev. Mark Flynn



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## Church Building to Close after Christmas

To ensure that our staff can spend time with their families after a busy holiday season, our church building will be closed from Monday, December 25, through Friday, December 29. Community Meal and First Recovery will still meet at their regular times.

## Service of Lamentation and Hope

During Advent, we prepare for Christ's coming into the world. As Christians, we hold the belief that Jesus was and continues to be the Light of the World. While this season triggers a plethora of joy, lights, song, and celebration, it doesn't equate to a season of pure jubilation. Numerous individuals grapple with feelings of grief, sadness, loneliness, depression, and more during the holidays. Consequently, we will conduct a service that acknowledges these seasonal challenges while simultaneously reminding us of the precious promise that Christ is eternally with us.

This Sunday, December 17, we will gather in the Chapel at 7:00 p.m. to worship with honesty and hope. A Service of Lamentation and Hope will utilize scripture, song, and reflection to assure us that we are not alone in our struggles. It will reaffirm the presence of God, even amidst the enveloping darkness. Come, discover renewed hope and receive blessings.

## Join Our Re-Purposing Flower Ministry

Are you interested in spreading love and cheer to community members who need it the most? Do you enjoy working with flowers or want to learn? Join our ongoing Re-Purposing Flower Ministry! Often, those who purchase flowers for Sunday morning worship services allow us to extend the beauty of their gift. On Mondays or Tuesdays, we transform large floral arrangements from our sanctuary into multiple petite bouquets. These joyful blossoms are then delivered by church staff to friends in hospitals or those who are homebound. We need a few more volunteers to make this happen and would love to have you. Coordinator Lee McClure will guide you through the process.

Make a difference in someone's day! Choose when you can volunteer throughout the year. Please call Lee at 270-366-6594 to join or for more information.

**Pastors** Mark Flynn, lead • Jenny Caughman, spiritual care • Denna Hornby, associate  
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