

## A Word From Our Pastor...

### Strive to be First

I still remember fondly, Christmas mornings as a child. Mom and dad would tuck us in our beds and it was a race to see who could fall asleep first. When the morning came, it was another race to see who could get to their presents first. My brothers and I have been competitive ever since.

An unknown author once said, "Strive to be first" and this is exactly what our society teaches us today. We want to be first in line, first to have the latest toys and gadgets. First, to experience the latest fads and first to accomplish the tasks that will take us to the top. The author of this statement further added how we should be... "First to nod, first to smile, first to compliment and first to forgive." If our firsts involve simple kindnesses and we give of ourselves first, we are showing others that they have value. When we further compliment and even forgive others, we express our deep concern for them.

Sitting down with his disciples, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be last and the servant of all." Then he took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking the child in his arms, Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

In some ways, it is amazing to me that we have to encourage and teach people to be friendly and kind. Of all the things we may be unable to give others; we all have the ability to offer a smile, a handshake, or a kind word of encouragement. It costs us nothing and it does wonders for those on the receiving end.

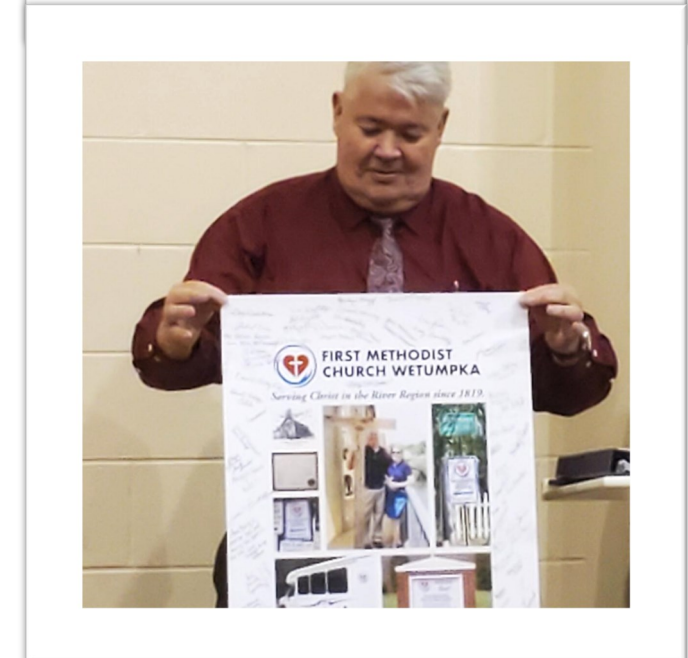
When God tells us, in his Holy Word to be kind to others, as always, he has a divine purpose. Paul told the Ephesians, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one *another*, as God in Christ forgave you." Kindness is God's plan for making our world work better. Kindness does not have to be extravagant to mean a great deal to others. I can still hear my mother telling us boys, "Be ye kind one to another." How often our acts of kindness are an answer to someone's deepest prayer.

During the month of December, let us strive to be first, first to forgive, first to act with kindness and first to love during this Advent season. May God continue to bless you and your family.

**In Christ's arms, Brother Matt**



## Pastor Appreciation



# DECEMBER

Thank you for providing beautiful altar flowers:

- December 3 Altar Guild
- December 10 Jerry & Alice Barnhart
- December 17 Bonnie Hall
- December 24 Eddy Brantley
- December 31 Altar Guild

## Our Christmas Angel Tree is set up in Wesley Hall.

So let's get excited and use the blessings God has given us to be a blessing to others this Christmas! Pick your angel(s) and/or donation cards off the tree and make sure all gifts (Important! WRAPPED AND WITH THE TAGS) are brought to the church no later than Sunday, December 10th.

Thank you for using God's love and grace to make a difference in the lives of so many!



Our Chancel Choir will present, *"A Promise Kept, The Blessing of Christmas"*. Sunday, December 3: ONE SERVICE at 10 A.M. Invite someone to this special worship service! You'll be blessed!

Thank you to everyone who supported our Annual United Appeal Fundraiser on Wednesday, November 8 Together we raised \$1,442.22 for our local charities.



### CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP...

Join us as a church family in a joint worship service at 10 a.m.

Annual Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion in the Sanctuary at 5 p.m. What a wonderful time to gather as a family.

## Coming in January 2024— Our **New Church Pictorial!**

**VERY IMPORTANT!**

If you have changed your contact information, please update with the church office asap so that we have the correct information for

our new pictorial.

More details coming soon!





Moving Forward  
*Together with Jesus*

### Consecrating Ourselves to Do the Lord's Work

When the church comes together, it is to glorify God. True worship is pouring out our hearts in praise, thanksgiving and adoration to God. As the old song goes, "Let us praise God together on our knees."

Together, such a beautiful word. Together, we are moving forward with Jesus. Together, we are sharing

the saving hope of Jesus. Together, we are offering the world Jesus' amazing love, grace and mercy. Together, we are doing the will of God in our world!

No generation of God's people, least of all our own, can afford not to do the work of the Lord. Much has changed in our world since the days of King David, but the challenge remains before us: "Who then will offer willingly, consecrating themselves today to the Lord?" (1 Chronicles 29:5 NRSV). Together, we willingly consecrate ourselves to do the Lord's work.

We praise God for working through our church family to make a significant difference in our lives and in our community. Working together, we can expect God to continue strengthening our momentum for serving him. We know the Lord provides a path for each of us to participate in Kingdom work. Deep thanks to all who have turned in Declaration of Giving cards to estimate your giving, as able, in the coming year. If you have not turned in a card, it is not too late. You may complete the attached form, then mail or bring it to our church office. The amount of your financial giving is always kept confidential.

Together, we pray unceasingly for the Holy Spirit to unite our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness . . . to ignite our fire to joyfully make disciples of Jesus Christ who worship passionately, love extravagantly, and witness boldly.

**Serving Him Together,  
Stewardship Team**



Moving Forward  
*Together with Jesus*

For your convenience, if you would like to send your declaration of giving card virtually, please **scan the QR code** below with your smartphone or visit our website ([www.wetumpkafirst.com/give](http://www.wetumpkafirst.com/give)).



FIRST METHODIST  
CHURCH WETUMPKA



Moving Forward  
*Together with Jesus*

*With gratitude and as God leads, I/We declare to give our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness, through which God creates a culture of encouragement for our church to share the saving grace of Jesus.*



FIRST METHODIST  
CHURCH WETUMPKA

### My/Our 2024 Declaration of Financial Giving

Estimate of Annual Giving \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be given:  Weekly  Monthly  Quarterly  Annually

*This estimate of giving may be revised or canceled at any time at my/our request.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please send information or contact me/us about:**

Online recurring gifts  Giving appreciated assets  Giving through Estate Planning

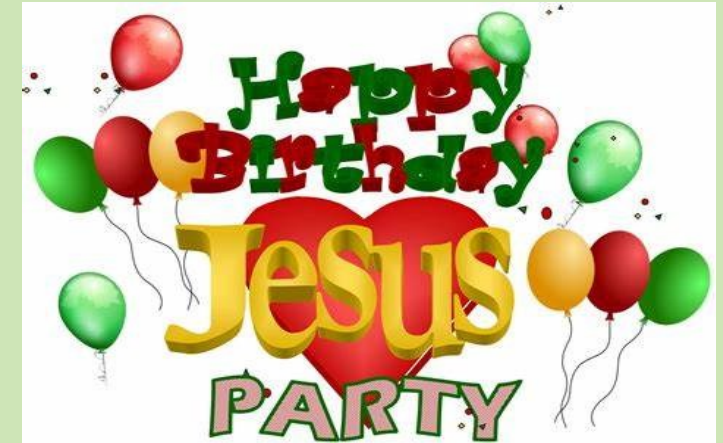
306 W. Tuskeena St., Wetumpka, AL 36092 • 334-567-7865 • [www.wetumpkafirst.com](http://www.wetumpkafirst.com)

**We are super excited to  
Welcome our New Children's Director...**

Hello! My name is Ashley Smith. My family and I have been members of the church for several years. I am beyond excited about my new journey as the children's director. I feel blessed to get to work with the kids here as they continue to learn and grow in their faith. I look forward to getting to know not only the kids better but their families as well. I cannot wait to see what God has in store!



Hey Kids...you're invited to our



**on Wednesday, December 13!!!**





The Advent and Christmas seasons are nearly here! Glory to God in the highest! During December we will continue our added focus on, counting of, and celebration of the many blessings God has given us (especially the epic, life-changing birth of Jesus and the amazing gift of one another) by writing them down and putting them on our group Christmas tree and showing the love of God to others by participating in church family and community outreaches. We'll also spend time making lifelong memories together at our Christmas party, as we watch the Christmas on the Coosa parade together, and as we cheer each other on at upcoming events we are using our God given gifts and talents in and at! Life is SO MUCH BETTER when we live it together! For additional details on how to join in the student ministry fam and fun or send me ideas, talk to me and/or contact me through my email below!

#### This Month's Discussion Focus:

Angels are everywhere during the Advent and Christmas seasons. They're on Christmas trees, ornaments, and greeting cards. They're also in Christmas carols, movies, and nativity sets. They're in all those places, though, because of important role we see them play in Scripture as part of the very first Christmas! This month as we explore and discuss stories from the Gospels together, we'll pay close attention to the announcements the angels made surrounding Jesus' birth and why the messages the angels shared back then still matter today — like the message that **God's timing is always right**, that **Jesus is always good news**, that **we can always share God's story**, and that **God is always ready to rescue**.

For all the other exciting, weekly, and community building things happening this month, check out our page on the church's website, and/or contact me at [Jamie@firstwetumpka.com](mailto:Jamie@firstwetumpka.com) if you have any questions! Please make sure you are on our text and e-mail list for all updates and access to other helpful tips, tools, and resources for growing a relationship with God personally and as a family!  
**In Him, Jamie**



# Senior Adult Ministry

Praying everyone had a blessed and thankful Thanksgiving. Now we're on that roller coaster that takes us to Christmas. Be sure that you get off the roller coaster several times to pray and remember what Christmas is really all about, **Jesus Christ!!!** And to be thankful that this savior was given as a gift to each one of us.

The Keenagers spent a great day on our November bus trip to Sweet Creek Farms. Now we are getting ready for our Happy Birthday Jesus Luncheon on Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 12 noon in the family life center. Please try and be good - Santa will be handing out trinkets to all the good little boys and girls. If you have been *really* good you might get a picture of you with this jolly old man that loves Christ as much as you do.



**Mark your calendar today for Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 12 noon in the family life center....see you there!**

*"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world". John 1: 29*

**Always Believe, Gloria (334/312-1764)**



## ***Serving Our Community...***

**THANK YOU** to those who gave so generously to our clothing drive!

This is how our hallways looked several times over. Your donations ensure that more people will be warm this winter season.

**A special thank you to David & Becky King for organizing and delivering the clothing.**

(Please note: A couple of donation boxes will remain for a period of time, if you're still busy going through those closets)



**On behalf of the church library,** we want to extend our sincerest gratitude to those of you who have already given books to the library. Your donations are important in helping the collection grow. Thank you for your kindness and thoughtfulness in supporting the library in this generous way.

We are making steady progress and have catalogued approximately one-third of the books in the library in the process of preparing the collection for check-out. The library hopes to serve as a vital resource to help all of us grow in relationship with Jesus and each other. We are, especially, excited to have a growing children's section.

**If you would like to contribute your time and talents to this important ministry, we would love to see you in 2024 on Tuesday mornings at 10 a.m. No experience required.**

Sincerely,  
The Library Volunteers

**Please take note:**  
**Sisters in Service** will not meet in December.  
Have a great Christmas!



***Ok walkers...***our next walk is Saturday, December 16.  
Meet at Jordan's Journey at 8:30 a.m.

### **How You can make a REAL difference!**

**On Monday evenings from 6 - 8 p.m. our Fresh Start Ministry meets in the FLC. The group provides a safe place for all people who are struggling.**

**This program has been proven to be very successful and the group is growing!**  
**VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS APPRECIATED!**

**Will you:**

- Provide a meal one Monday night,
- Come and just be present on Mondays to offer support to the group,
- Spend time with the children (Some parents wouldn't get to participate without bringing their children).

**You will be so blessed hearing the testimonies of lives forever changed through coming to know Jesus Christ and following him!**  
**Contact the church office or Paul Henderson at 334/201-5428 if you are interested in learning more about Fresh Start Ministries.**



**READING THE BIBLE THROUGH: December**

- 1 Hosea 7-8 Ps. 137 Luke 24
- 2 Hosea 9-10 Prov. 20 Matthew 1
- 3 Reflect on God as Giver
- 4 Hosea 11-12 Ps. 128 Matt. 2
- 5 Hosea 13:-14 Prov. 21 Matt. 3
- 6 Joel Psalm 139 Matt. 4
- 7 Amos 1-3 Prov. 22 Matt. 5
- 8 Amos 4-5 Ps. 140 Matt. 6
- 9 Amos 6-7 Prov. 23 Matt. 7-8
- 10 Reflect on God as King of Kings
- 11 Amos 8-9 Ps. 141 Matt. 9
- 12 Obadiah Prov. 24 Matt. 10
- 13 Jonah 1-2 Ps. 142 Matt. 11
- 14 Jonah 3-4 Prov. 25 Matt. 12
- 15 Micah 1-3 Ps. 143 Matt. 13
- 16 Micah 4-5 Prov. 26 Matt. 14
- 17 Reflect on God as Savior
- 18 Micah 6-7 Ps. 144 Matt. 15
- 19 Nahum Prov. 27 Matt. 16
- 20 Habakkuk Ps. 145 Matt. 17
- 21 Zephaniah Prov. 28 Matt. 18
- 22 Haggai Ps. 146 Matt. 19
- 23 Zech. 1-3 Prov. 29 Matt. 20
- 24 Reflect on God as Emmanuel
- 25 Zech. 4-6 Ps. 147 Matt. 21
- 26 Zech. 7-8 Prov. 30 Matt. 22
- 27 Zech. 9-10 Ps. 148 Matt. 23
- 28 Zech. 11-12 Prov. 31:1-9 Matt. 24-25
- 29 Zech. 13-14 Ps. 149 Matt. 25-26
- 30 Malachi 1-2 Prov. 31:10-31 Matt. 26-27
- 31 Malachi 3-4 Ps. 150 Matt. 28

**Support Group**

Fresh Start meets at 6 p.m. each **MONDAY** in the **FLC**. Children's activities are provided! If you know someone who is struggling, please let them know that the Fresh Start Recovery Group is here for them. **For more information please contact Paul Henderson at 334-201-5428.**



12/01	Julie	Lawrence	12/23	Janice	Cash
12/02	Sharon	Riordan	12/23	Matt	Albritton
12/03	David	Tindal	12/23	Brayden	Cloud
12/04	Mary	Weldon	12/27	Asher	Boles
12/06	Deborah	Jenkins	12/28	Hughett	Williams
12/18	Deborah	Callahan	12/28	Gloria	Johnston
12/21	Geraldine	Perkins	12/30	Barbara J	Watts
12/21	Mallory	Glass	12/31	Mac	Patchel
12/22	Ed	Tatum	12/31	Layson	Jones



12/2	Tim & Julie Lawrence
12/5	Holly & Jeremy Chatman
12/5	Glen & Janice Gringas
12/17	Shelton & Linda Prine
12/18	J.D. & Pat Hobbie
12/19	David & Susan Barnes
12/28	Earl & Trish Singleton
12/28	Ashley & Blu Gilliland

*If you are a member of FMC and your birthday or anniversary is not listed, please notify the church office so that we can celebrate with you.*



**FIRST NEWS**

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**December 2023**



**IN THIS ISSUE:**

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- Our Children, Youth and Senior Adults
- Birthdays & Anniversaries
- Christmas Events
- News from our Stewardship Team
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**Our Chancel Choir presents,**  
*"A Promise Kept"*  
 on Sunday, December 3  
**ONE SERVICE ONLY**  
 10 A.M.



Connect with us any time on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and our website at @WetumpkaFirst and www.WetumpkaFirst.com