



THE SPIRIT

FOUNTAIN CITY UMC
DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Advent is here—a season of preparation and anticipation. Rooted in the Latin word *adventus* (“coming” or “visit”), this sacred time invites us to celebrate Christ’s arrival while looking forward to the promise of Christ’s return. It’s a season of dual focus: rejoicing in God’s faithfulness through Christ’s first coming, and renewing our hope as we await the fulfillment of God’s promises. This week, we begin with the theme of hope. There are two passages I want to draw your attention to at the beginning of this season. They remind us of God’s transformative grace.



In Luke 1:41-44, Elizabeth experiences deep joy when Mary visits her. Upon hearing Mary’s greeting, Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit, and her child leaps in her womb. She exclaims, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!” This moment of connection between two women reminds us of the profound hope that comes when we recognize God’s presence in one another. Have you ever experienced that kind of joy in unexpected connection? Who has helped you see God’s work in your life? How might you be that voice of hope for someone else?

Luke 3:1-7 brings us John the Baptist’s bold proclamation: “Prepare the way for the Lord.” He paints a vivid picture of valleys being filled, mountains made low, and crooked paths straightened. This imagery reminds us of the transformation God brings to our lives. Advent is a time to reflect on what needs to be cleared or made smooth in our own hearts to prepare for Christ’s arrival. John’s message is one of repentance, but it is steeped in the hope of transformation. What in your life might need smoothing or clearing to make way for Christ this season? Where do you see opportunities for hope to break through?

Advent also marks the start of the Christian year, transitioning us into a new liturgical cycle. This season invites us into both action and reflection. The symbols and traditions of Advent—the lighting of the Advent wreath, Chrismon trees, and the colors of purple or blue in our sanctuaries—point to the hope and preparation that define this time. Purple, symbolizing penance and preparation, connects Advent with Lent, while blue emphasizes hope and anticipation. These traditions remind us that Advent is both solemn and joyful, calling us to actively prepare our hearts and embrace the grace that God offers.

Throughout the biblical narrative, we see God’s consistent pattern: providing grace, inviting humanity into redemption and offering hope. Advent is our opportunity to respond to God’s invitation. As St. Augustine reminds us, God’s grace is an infinite stream, always flowing into creation. This season challenges us to deepen our spiritual practices engaging in acts of piety like prayer and scripture reflection, and acts of mercy such as feeding the hungry, visiting the sick, and offering hospitality to strangers.

Take time this week to reflect on these questions:

- Where do you see hope in your life right now?
- How can you prepare your heart to welcome Christ anew?
- Who might need to experience the hope of Advent through your words or actions?

Let’s embrace Advent as a season to grow in faith and love, committing to practices that deepen our connection to God and neighbor. May we live expectantly, embodying the light of Christ for all to see.

Pastor Rachel

Pastors

Rev. Don Hanshaw, Senior Pastor
Rev. Rachel Collins, Pastor of Discipleship

Email: pastor.don@fountaincityumc.org
pastor.rachel@fountaincityumc.org

Pastor On Call

text or call 865-689-7894
(After Hours & Weekends)

Sunday Schedule

- 8:30 a.m. Traditional Service (Sanctuary)
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday Morning Discipleship
- 11:00 a.m. Journey Contemporary Service (Gym)
- 11:00 a.m. Traditional Service (Sanctuary)

Childcare & children’s ministry are provided from 8:30 a.m. through the conclusion of the 11:00 a.m. worship services.

PRAYERS, PRESENCE, GIFTS, SERVICE, AND WITNESS

OUR GIFTS:

WEEKLY OFFERING

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| Oct 21-27 | \$17,393.00 |
| Oct 28-Nov 3 | \$21,367.84 |
| Nov 4-10 | \$30,391.00 |
| Nov 11-17 | \$ |
| Nov 18-24 | \$ |

FAITH PROMISE

Faith Promise Sunday is December 22. This month we highlight these Faith Promise partners: Agape Outreach Homes, Volunteer Ministry Center, Project Crossroads & Africa University

An End-of-Year Giving Opportunity!

As we approach the final stretch of 2024, we find ourselves in need of \$75,000 to finish the year on solid financial ground.

The good news? Historically, the last four weeks of the year are the strongest for giving, and together, we can make this happen! We believe this goal is well within reach, but it will take all of us coming together to make a final, impactful push. We invite you to prayerfully reflect on how God is moving through you to support the incredible work being done through our church. Let's finish the year strong, ready to step boldly into 2025. Thank you for your faithfulness and generosity—let's do this together!

Come To Bethlehem Costume Fittings

If you are a soldier, shepherd, angel, Mary, Joseph, Innkeeper, Innkeeper's wife, or town gossip for Come To Bethlehem on December 8, you will be able to try on your costume on Sunday, **December 1 between 9:30 and 11 am.**

Costumes are located on second floor in the Room 207 across from the Whobodies classroom. David Carter and Kim Gentry will be there to assist you with your costume, which will be labeled with your name. You will pick it up in the same location to get dressed on December 8.

December 2024 Calendar of Events

December 1: WordPlayers Production • 6 pm in the Sanctuary

December 8: Come To Bethlehem • 5:30-8:00 pm

December 15: Come, Celebrate Christmas Concert 3 pm in the Sanctuary

December 16: Come, Celebrate Christmas Concert 7:30 pm in the Sanctuary

December 22: Service of the Longest Night 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary

December 24: Christmas Eve Worship Services
4 pm • Nativity Service
6:30 pm • Contemporary Service
11 pm • Traditional Service

December 25: Merry Christmas!

Combined 11:00 a.m. Worship Service Sunday, December 29, 2024

On Sunday, December 29, we will have an 8:30 a.m. Traditional service in the Sanctuary and a combined 11:00 a.m. Traditional worship service with the Journey in the Sanctuary. Don't miss a great way to help our church be united around worship!

Adopt A Senior

Christmas Mission for the Residents of Beverly Park Place



A big thanks to those of you who chose a senior from Beverly Park Place to assist with their Christmas wishes! **Return gift bags on Sunday, December 15** before or after any worship service in the hallway outside the church office, or contact Sandy Morgan at 865-679-0760 to make other arrangements. There are specific wrapping instructions which were given out with the senior's information when you selected your angel. Thanks for helping raise the spirits of Beverly Park Place residents this Christmas!

Special Events During The Season of Advent

Advent is a season of anticipation and hope, expectation and preparation as we reflect on both the nativity and the anticipation of Christ's second coming.

We remember the longing of Jews for a Messiah and our own longing for and need of forgiveness, salvation and a new beginning. Even as we look back and celebrate the birth of Jesus in a humble stable in Bethlehem, we also look forward anticipating the second coming of Christ as the fulfillment of all that was promised by his first coming.

Please check out the events and worship opportunities at Fountain City United Methodist Church during this special season of Advent.



WordPlayers Advent Production *Sleepers, Wake!*

December 1 • 6 pm in the Sanctuary

The greatest story ever told takes on new life with this short play with music by Ethan Norman. *Sleepers, Wake!* brings you into the room with the characters of the biblical account of the coming of Christ as told in Luke 2, with gripping music, thought provoking historical context, and humor that will have you dancing in your seat. Prepare to celebrate Advent with a vibrant, fresh, and timeless telling of the Story that changes the world. **WordPlayers welcome children to the production.** We will not have childcare for this event.



Come To Bethlehem • December 8

Join us for our annual Christmas experience Come To Bethlehem on December 8 from 5:30-8 p.m. We will offer a free community dinner, music, fun for the young, fun for the old, fun for the family!

Live music, live nativity, live animals and did we say fun? Admittance will be timed entry allowing everyone to enjoy each station sufficiently. Admission is free but donations will be gladly accepted. This is a community favorite!



Christmas Concert • December 15 at 3 p.m. and December 16 at 7:30 p.m.

Come! Celebrate Christmas!

The Chancel Choir, Tollers, and Fountain Voices will present this year's Christmas concerts on Sunday, December 15 at 3 p.m. and on Monday, December 16 at 7:30 p.m. This concert is a longstanding tradition, and one that is sure to bless all who attend. Our choirs and accompanists will be joined by a full orchestra, and our worship through music together will fill your hearts. Please, come! Celebrate Christmas in song!



Service of the Longest Night • December 22 • 6:30 p.m.

There are times when each of us succumb to our doubts, fears, exhaustion, grief- are simply overwhelmed. In the dark of night, those feelings can get the best of the love and compassion we know intrinsically are available to us through God's grace. But by the winter solstice, the literal longest night of the year, we are pushed and shoved by the bustle of all the holiday things, whatever your things may be- to manage, source, prep, and smile through. This service is for all who long for a silent night. A little slice of peace. A moment of encouragement.

Christmas Eve Worship Services • December 24

Family Nativity Service • 4 p.m.

A family-friendly worship service in the Sanctuary.

Contemporary Candlelight Service • 6:30 p.m.

This candlelight Holy Communion service will be in the Gym and will include contemporary Christian music.

Traditional Candlelight Service • 11 p.m.

This candlelight Holy Communion service in the Sanctuary will include traditional hymns.



To Keep A Neighbor Warm

On Sunday, November 10, our Church Council approved moving forward in becoming the North Knoxville Warming Center. Let me help you understand why we are doing this, what this means for us, and how you can help.

Why the Need?

The demand for housing assistance in Knoxville has surged, with the number of people seeking aid increasing from 1,000 in 2018 to 1,800 in 2024. This rise has highlighted the challenge of finding affordable housing and the need to protect our community's most vulnerable during extreme cold. We are one of four warming centers in Knoxville, and outside of KARM, they are all run by United Methodist Churches.

The goal is simple: prevent death and frostbite during frigid nights. The City and County Office of Housing Stability is partnering with us. We will be "on call" between December 15 and February 15 whenever temperatures are forecasted to drop below 25 degrees Fahrenheit.

What We're Doing

Our church is committed to offering warmth, shelter, and safety for those in need. The Old Fellowship Hall will serve as our designated warming center during qualifying cold nights, open from 9-10 p.m. with guests departing by 6:45-7:00 a.m. the following morning. Our capacity will be 12-15 guests. While the center is open, stairwells will be secured, and armed security (provided by the Office of Housing Stability) will be present to ensure everyone's safety. We will not accept pets, and individuals with children will be taken to

facilities prepared for them. KARM will supply evening food and transportation assistance through bus passes, and will help guests find shelter during daytime hours if necessary (provided by the Office of Housing and Stability). Should extreme weather make transportation unsafe, the center may remain open beyond nighttime hours. All guests will surrender weapons, medications, and drugs during the check-in process and submit to a handheld metal detector scan. A deep and thorough cleaning will happen each morning before other groups use the space.

How You Can Help

Volunteer

We need at least two volunteers each night, with an additional person on call. Learn more and sign up to volunteer with this QR code >>



Donate Supplies

Permanent needs include cots and two lock boxes for surrendered items. Other helpful donations include snacks, first aid items, earplugs, eye masks, COVID tests, and blankets. Financial gifts are also welcomed. Every contribution helps us serve those facing life-threatening cold with compassion and dignity.

Together, we can make a life-saving difference during Knoxville's harshest winter nights. To volunteer or support these efforts, reach out to our church office. Thank you for being a light in the cold, dark of winter! We truly are a church in the heart of Fountain City with a heart for Fountain City.

You Are A Living Letter

Have you noticed the letters posted on the walls in the hallway outside of the office sharing how our church has changed lives? I have included a few for you to read here:

- It's important to me that we are not all alike on all issues. We respect differences here. This has changed how I see others and gives me hope.
- I have not always felt accepted or seen at other churches. Here I feel accepted and loved.
- This church loves kids and goes the extra mile to teach them about Jesus. We love Wednesday nights!
- I see how our church is changing to meet the needs of the community. That is important to me and my family, and the future of the church.



This IS our story. This IS our legacy. And there many more stories like this being written each day.

If you have not yet made a financial commitment to this year's ministry campaign, I encourage you to do so soon. Your participation—whether large or small—helps write a new chapter in the story of God's grace that is being written on the hearts and lives of people around you, just like these. We're not asking you to help us maintain the church; we're inviting you to help foster hearts that are changed, impacting lives in ways that stretch far beyond our walls.

Trusting That God Is Writing A New Letter In You,
Pastor Don

Recreational Ministry

The goal of our recreational ministries is to foster relationships, promote physical and mental well-being, and create opportunities for individuals to connect with each other and with their faith in a relaxed environment. We have a variety of activities to choose from. All are welcome!

Volleyball

We meet on Thursday Nights from 6:30-7:45 p.m. in the Gym for fellowship and fun on the volleyball court. Join us!

Basketball

Enjoy some friendly basketball in the Gym on Thursday Nights from 7:45- 9:45 p.m. All ages and all experience levels welcome!

Pickleball

If you are interested in learning this popular game or you are an experienced player, everyone is welcome on Mondays from 12-3 p.m. If you don't have a paddle and want to try it out, extra paddles will be furnished. We hope you can join us for some good fellowship, fun, and exercise. For more information, contact Woody Farrell at 865-207-3367.

Yoga

Yoga's physical building blocks are breath and posture while strengthening muscles and releasing tension of body and mind. Katie Meade Goforth is the instructor, and this class is open to anyone, experienced or not. We meet on Mondays from 7-8 p.m. in Wesley Hall through February.

Exercise with Miss Donna at Planet Fitness

Do you belong to Planet Fitness? Join Miss Donna at 9 a.m. on Monday mornings at Planet Fitness on Broadway. Meet at the silver tables to the left after you enter the main door. We will have a moment of prayer for our church and community, then we'll head off to the treadmills and the amazing hydromassage bed. Yes, let's start our week with a workout, fellowship, and prayer!

YOUTH MINISTRY

Resurrection 2025

*Worship and spiritual growth event
for youth and youth mentors*



WHEN: January 24-26 at the LeConte Center in Pigeon Forge
WHO: Any student in grades 6th - 12th (and parent volunteers!)
LODGING: Splash Mountain Cabin in Sevierville, TN
WORSHIP: FRVR FREE

Resurrection 2025

January 24-26 at LeConte Center in Pigeon Forge, TN

Resurrection is an awesome annual event of worship and spiritual growth for youth and youth mentors. Each year, over 12,000 individuals come together to celebrate the God of The Resurrection. Through inspirational words and music led by nationally known speakers and musicians, young people encounter the Lord in new and deeper ways. FRVR FREE is leading worship again this year.

6th-12th students are invited to register for Resurrection. We will stay at Splash Mountain Cabin in Sevierville, TN. The total cost per student is \$200 which includes lodging, food, and entertainment. Please pay the \$50 deposit at the time of registration and the remaining balance is due on January 20, 2025. There is a discount for families with multiple students. Partial & full scholarships are available, just ask Tracie or Donna about it! Register with this QR code >>



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Fountain Kids Sunday School and Fountain Kids Bible Experience will be held every Sunday in December.

Fountain Kids' Float in the Christmas parade • December 21 • 9 AM

We invite our Fountain Littles and Fountain Kids to be on our parade float as well as parents. The parade begins at 9 a.m. stepping off from Gresham Middle School, crossing Broadway and ending at Central High School. The children can be dressed in Christmas Eve costumes to ride on float. Costumes will be available at the float site to be named later. Older children and parents or guardians can walk along parade route and give out Christmas Eve information about our church. What a fun experience, and who does not like to be in a parade? Merry Christmas to Fountain City from Fountain Kids!

Nativity Worship Service • December 24 • 4 PM

Children and parents will meet in Wesley Hall at 3:30 p.m. for children to choose their costumes. We need shepherds, angels, cows, lambs and even a donkey. This is a memory moment so feel free to take all the pictures you like. There will be photo opportunities for the entire family through the church. If you have grandchildren, nieces or nephews visiting for Christmas, bring them along. No rehearsal. This is the best FCUMC Christmas Pageant ever and a chance for you to have your visiting family kiddos in our fun production. Let's make more memories this Christmas!

SPECIAL HELP NEEDED!

Dear Church,

Looking at the our calendar from Thanksgiving through Christmas, we are truly blessed. What a blessing that is available to us each year with the diverse opportunities our church offers. Many volunteers and staff work tirelessly to provide Advent and Christmas experiences for our community. Scenery is ready, choir music is perfected, children are excited, trees line the hallways, and honestly folks have been working since August.

Now, **we need your help!** How can you help? Invite friends and family. Invite the checkout person at the grocery store. Invite your hairdresser or barber. Invite your workout buddies. Invite the families at your kiddos' ballgames. Invite families from school. Invite your neighbors. Invite, invite, invite. A simple invitation is easy. We never know when God will put people in our path who may need that invitation, or who may need a friendly face to care enough to invite them. Pray for those who are lonely at Christmas and know that you may be the very link to them having a special Christmas. What seems to be a "simple invitation" to the one giving it, may be a big blessing to the person receiving that invitation. Thank you in advance for your help.

Love you all, Miss Donna

Poinsettia Dedications 2024



Deadline is December 9

For \$11 per dedication, your loved one will be honored or memorialized in our bulletin.

Dedication Request >>



A Look Ahead at Fountain City Fellowship 2025

Join us beginning January 15, 2025 when Fountain City Fellowship returns. More details coming soon!

The Gifts of Imperfection

January 15-February 16

Leader: Jennifer Smith

The Chosen

January 15-April 30

Leaders: Carol Sewell, Sandy Failing & Lynn Dare

The History of These Halls

January 15 - February 16

Leaders: Rev. Jim Dougherty & Rev. Don Hanshew

The Season of Lent

February 19-April 2

Leader: Rev. Rachel Collins

Prayer Beads and the Lenten Season

February 19-April 16

Leader: Melissa Charles

Book Study for Connection

April 16-30

Leader: TBA

Prayer and New History

April 16-30

Leaders: Rev. Don Hanshew & Rev. Rachel Collins

IN MEMORY & IN HONOR

Choir Fund

In Memory of Bill Routh by Mahan & Laura Archer
In Honor of Ann & William Hunley by Tom & Emily Cloud
In Memory of Jerry Griffey by Mark Biagi, Shirley Black, Woody & Kathy Farrell, Jack & Nancy Hamilton, Polly Kelly, Rosemary Harrison, Wanda Majors, Phyllis Bostick, Martha Routh, Charles Smith and Dolores Smith

General Fund

In Memory of Fred Graves by Mahan & Laura Archer, Dana Brady, Barry & Louanne Clabough, Mark Hagewood, Lili Holbert, Larry & Alta Huskey, Troy Lawson, Karen Needy, Bishop Carlene Kammer, David Satterfield, Pat Satterfield and Natalie Schuette
In Memory of Jerry Griffey by Harold & Dottie Loy
In Memory of Quincy & Marvin Holtzclaw by Craig Holtzclaw
In Memory of Gary Masterson by Jack & Nancy Hamilton

Music Endowment

In Memory of Bill Routh by FCUMC United Women in Faith

Preschool Fund

In Memory of Iris Henson by Polly Kelly

Scholarship Fund

In Memory of Cynthia Schultz by Polly Kelly

UMCOR Disaster Relief

In Memory of Jerry Griffey by Rosemary Harrison, Karen Needy, Ellen Keith, Ralph & Tracey Paden, Martha Routh R. B. & Susan Schumpert, David Smith & Craig Holtzclaw

In Memory of Bill Routh by Ralph & Tracey Paden

In Memory of LeeAnn Johnson by Craig Holtzclaw

In Memory of Emily Hardin by Craig Holtzclaw

Youth Fund

In Memory of Fred Graves by Melody Johnson

In Memory of Jerry Griffey by Melody Johnson

We We Offer Our Sympathy To

Billie Graves, along with Rev. David Graves and Debra Graves, in the death of their husband and father, Fred Graves, on November 6, 2024.

Christa Edwards and Sharon Wise in the death of their father, Richard Sawyer, on November 15, 2024.