



First United Methodist Church Clover, SC

# THE FIRST EDITION

[www.cloverfumc.com](http://www.cloverfumc.com) December 2020



## Mission:

We, the congregation, in humble and selfless service to God, will go forth joyfully, empowered and enabled by the Holy Spirit, to seek out, welcome, accept, and nurture persons to become faithful and effective disciples for Jesus Christ.



## Why is Christmas in December?

All the Bible tells us about the timing of Jesus' birth is that it was God's appointed time. Consider these facts. The shortest day of the year falls around December 22nd. This is the darkest day; the day with the least sunlight.

Ancient cultures recognized this, and shortly after this darkest day they had festivals. The Romans put lights in their windows to call back the sun. Germanic peoples decorated evergreen trees because they were a sign that the sun would come back.

It is no accident that we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the light of the world, at this time of year. It was into the darkness and coldness of this world that God sent the light and warmth of eternal Love in Christ.

Through the centuries Christians have noticed this parallel between the celebration of the birth of Christ and the seasons, and have adopted and reinterpreted the symbols used by their neighbors. Lights and lamps became symbols of Christ the light of the world. The greenery of evergreens, holly and mistletoe were used to symbolize the life that Christ brought. Christian symbols like angels and stars were given prominence in adorning evergreen trees.

So, when it gets dark around 5:00 and you turn on your Christmas tree lights, remember that Jesus, the light and life of God, came into the darkness of our lives.

May Christ's light be reborn in your heart this Christmas!



## Be Careful Out There

2020 is almost over, but we still have a month to go. There is the promise of a vaccine just around the corner in the new year, but in the meantime the pandemic numbers are going up. Even in our little corner of South Carolina, the positivity rate is rising and the infection and death rates are also going up.

We have had to suspend worship until December 6<sup>th</sup>, but hopefully we can resume and sustain our previous in person worship after this suspension. If we are careful, we can then continue to worship together through the rest of the Christmas season. If you feel sick and think you might have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, please stay home and take advantage of either the Virtual or Livestreamed services. The Outdoor Service provides the safest in person option. You can stay in your car and listen on the radio and stay warm. For the indoor service in the Mission and Fellowship Center we have chairs set up in 30 family units of 4 or 5 chairs. These sets of chairs are over 6 feet apart. Everyone has been very faithful about wearing masks at this service. We have plenty of homemade masks available if you need one. We also ask people to maintain a social distance. You can visit with and talk to people before or after the service, but please do so at a distance of at least 6 feet. The distance between sets of chairs in the Mission and Fellowship Center should act as a good way of judging that distance.

Please be careful during the holidays! Wear a mask in public. This not only protects you, but also protects others in the case you have the virus and are asymptomatic. It is also a Christian witness to your love of your neighbor. If enough Christians will wear a mask and respect a social distance from others, then our witness may not only influence others, but could also save lives.

## Announcements

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### Status of Worship at First Clover

Because someone who later tested positive was at some church events, we have had to suspend in person activities until Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>. Virtual Services will continue during this suspension. After the 6<sup>th</sup>, we will continue having an 8:30 indoor service in the Mission and Fellowship Center, and an 11:00 Outdoor Service, weather permitting. We will also continue having a prerecorded Virtual Service on the church website and Facebook, and a livestream of the 8:30 indoor service on Facebook. If the Outdoor Service gets rained out, we will have a second indoor Service that Sunday at 11:00. Please attend the service that best suits your needs.

The Task Force considered having services in the Sanctuary, but because the space would only allow for 12 family units to worship there, and because of the lack of circulation, and the rising infection rate and high positivity, we will not be able to do this at this time. The Task Force will continue to reassess the use of the Sanctuary on a month to month basis. We are making plans for when a service in the Sanctuary is a possibility.

### Advent began November 29th

“Advent” is from the Latin *adventus* which means “coming.” The season focuses on the hope of the coming of the messiah. The lectionary texts focus on preparing the way, or on prophecies of the coming of the messiah. Advent is primarily a season of preparation for the celebration of Christ’s birth, so purple is used mostly as the color of the season. However, the practice of using blue, instead of purple, as a symbol of the hopefulness and anticipation of the season can be traced back to the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Plan to prepare in hope to celebrate the coming of Jesus!

### **Upcoming Sermons for December**

December 6: Isaiah 40:1-11; Mark 1:1-8 **“Comfort, Not Condemnation”** Rev. Alex Stevenson

December 13: Virtual presentation of Handel's **“Messiah”**

December 16: Blue Christmas Service John 1:1-5, 14-18 **“Darkest Before the Dawn”** Rev. Alex Stevenson

December 20: Luke 1:26-38, 47-55 **“From Heaven to Nazareth - From Gabriel to Mary”** Rev. Alex Stevenson

December 24: John 1:1-14 **“What If God Was One of Us?”** Candlelight & Communion - Outdoor 4 pm/Indoor 6 pm

December 27: Galatians 4:4-7 **“Pleroma”** Rev. Kathy Pryor



## *Advent/Christmas Celebrations*

### **December**

**6<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday of Advent** - Virtual worship only

**13<sup>th</sup> Third Sunday of Advent**

Virtual **Messiah** at 8:30 indoor & 11 outdoor and virtual on web page and Facebook

**16<sup>th</sup> Blue Christmas Service**

Indoors at 6:30 pm and virtual on web page and Facebook

**19<sup>th</sup> Children's Shopping Spree** 8:00 am

**19<sup>th</sup> The Food Project** 8:30 am

**20<sup>th</sup> Fourth Sunday of Advent - Children's Christmas Play**

8:30 indoor & 11 outdoor and virtual on web page and Facebook

**24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve Services** – Virtual and in person

4 pm Outdoor Christmas Eve Communion Service

6 pm Indoor Christmas Eve Candlelight & Communion Service  
livestreamed on Facebook

**27<sup>th</sup> First Sunday of Christmas!**

8:30 indoor & 11 outdoor and virtual on web page and Facebook

## Blue Christmas

Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm

“It’s the most wonderful time of the year...” At least that’s what the song says, but sometimes it isn’t. Sometimes it can be time where loved ones who have passed away are missed to a greater extent, or a time when losses are felt more deeply.

It can be difficult to find comfort and room to grieve when the church’s worship is so focused on the Joy of the coming of Christ. This service recognizes those losses and is designed as an opportunity to grieve and to lift our pain, and our loss to God.

Join us at 7:00 pm in the Mission and Fellowship Center for this special worship opportunity. This service will also be livestreamed on Facebook and be available virtually.

### CONSECRATION SUNDAY REPORT

42 families have estimated their giving for next year! The total is:

\$258,880.00 *So Far!*

Continue to keep this campaign in your prayers!

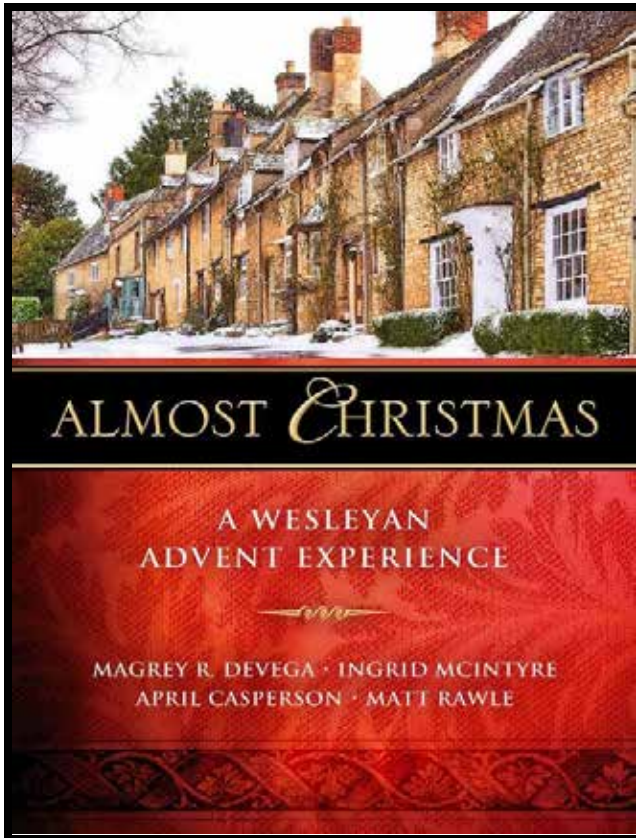
If you haven’t turned in your Estimate of Giving Card, please do so.







# Almost Christmas



The word “Advent” comes from the Latin word *adventus*, which means coming. When the Church celebrates Advent each year, we make present the coming of the Messiah. In 1741, John Wesley preached his famous sermon “Almost Christian” in which he encouraged people to follow Christ wholeheartedly, striving to be altogether Christian. In this Advent study we will make the same commitment to Christ during Advent, connecting our Wesleyan heritage with the traditional Advent themes of Peace, Hope, Love and Joy. The schedule is below. Come join us!

*Kathy Pryor*

kpryor@cloverfume.com

I. **Announcement**

- Sessions will always be via Email and posted on Church Facebook.

II. **Introduction** – Video

Post Saturday, Nov 28

III. **Lesson 1 – An Altogether Peace**

Post Tuesday, Dec 1

- Video lesson and Week 1 Advent Page

A. Devotional – surprise guest

Post Thursday, Dec 3

B. Devotional – surprise guest

Post Saturday, Dec 5

IV. **Lesson 2 – An Altogether Hope**

Post Tuesday, Dec 8

- Video lesson and Week 2 Advent Page

A. Devotional – surprise guest

Post Thursday, Dec 10

B. Devotional – surprise guest

Post Saturday, Dec 12

V. **Lesson 3 - An Altogether Love**

Post Tuesday, Dec 15

- Video lesson and Week 3 Advent Page

A. Devotional – surprise guest

Post Thursday, Dec 17

B. Devotional – surprise guest

Post Saturday, Dec 20

VI. **Lesson 4 - An Altogether Joy**

Post Tuesday, Dec 22

- Video lesson and Week 4 Advent Page

## FINDING THE MUSIC IN WAITING

As we observe the Advent season of waiting and anticipation, I immediately begin to reflect about all the 'waiting' we have already done this year. Maybe you can relate to that thought?

As I have thought about this waiting period, I've wondered what it is that I am waiting on exactly. "Waiting on the world to change" as artist John Mayer sings, or "waiting for a pot to boil or a better break or a string of pearls" as Dr. Seuss says?

When I reflect on this question, I think about what my own journey of 'waiting' has looked like over the past 9 months. Sometimes it has taken the wearying path of discouragement and grieving, the sobering dawn of acceptance, and finally the resting place of hope and expectation. It has been a journey of learning to let go of what was lost, to embrace the present moment, and to create room for the future.

What does this have to do with music, you might ask? It was only once I began to accept and let go of the things that held me in what I now call 'complacent waiting,' that I began to see new opportunities for 'active waiting.' Making the most of this time by trying to bring some light and peace to the world in whatever way possible. Matthew 5 says "You are the light of the world.....let your light shine before others" and in Matthew 4, "Come follow me and I will make you fishers of men." I then ask the question, how are we following Jesus and letting His light shine through us during this time of waiting?

Sadly, in our society today many people are too busy to come to church or do not believe it is relevant to their life. What if God has sent us a 'boat and net' in the form of a pandemic? What a unique opportunity we have before us to invite the world to our virtual church. In our music ministry what a beautiful opportunity we have, to not only invite artists from near and far into our service to encourage us with their gifts and talents, but also to give us an opportunity to show them the love of Christ in a real and tangible way. Your comment or note of thanks may be the only Jesus they will ever see. Many thanks to those of you who have reached out, loved and supported these folks on social media or a note of thanks. What an incredible opportunity we have, to be the light of Christ during this extended season of waiting. May our waiting be active, Christ centered, and full of joy.

The second Sunday in December we will be presenting a 'Virtual Messiah.' I hope you will tune in for this event and invite your friends and neighbors. We will be hearing readings, soloists, instrumentalists, and our beloved Chancel Choir sing the "Hallelujah Chorus" from last year's Christmas program.

Peace, Hope, and Light to you on your waiting journey, Cheri



## MISSION MOMENT

### The Stellie J. Jackson Enrichment Center

The Stellie J. Jackson Enrichment Center is located in the Kinard Elementary School attendance zone allowing designated children to participate in the program. Up to 15 students per year are transported from Kinard to the center, with parents or guardians responsible for picking them up at the end of our 2½ hour long session. The program provides educational, cultural, social, and faith-based activities to support academic, spiritual, and moral growth.

Summer reading readiness programs were begun in 2013, The program is designed to help preschool age children adjust to school and develop a love of reading, to have the best possible start as they enter kindergarten or 1<sup>st</sup> grade. In 2014, the program was expanded to include 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders needing reading improvement and serves 10-15 students each summer. Operated entirely through volunteers, it also attracts high school student volunteers, who receive a small incentive for their participation.

If you want more information regarding the center go to their website <https://www.sjiec.org> which the above was taken from.



### United Methodist Women (UMW) Update and Recognition

First UMW has been working hard despite the pandemic. Awards were given to the UMW and members of the UMW at the Rock Hill District UMW Annual Meeting in October. Due to COVID, First UMC was unable to host the meeting this year but it was held through Zoom from King's Mountain Chapel UMC. The speaker was our new district superintendent, Rev. Dr. Anthony Hodge. First UMW had three names read in memoriam. They were Lois Johnson, Frances Funderburke and Naurice Smith. First UMW received the Five Star Award for Pledge to Missions, Special Mission Recognition, Gift to Missions, Gift in Memory and World Thank Offering. There were four UMW members receiving awards for the Reading Program. They were Tammy Creech, Eleanor Eakes, and Joyce Shores for completing Plan 1 and Louise Jackson for completing Plan 4. If you see these ladies, please congratulate them on their award. First UMW welcomes any woman to join us. Hopefully, we can continue to make progress even with COVID. Praying 2021 will be a year that we can again have our meetings and First UMC can host the annual UMW meeting.

Thank you to all the UMW and FUMC women who took time out of their schedule to bake cookies to help make the Fall Festival drive thru a success.

2020 has been a different year for our UMW. I appreciate all the officers and members doing their part to make this year a success with all the restrictions we have dealt with. I will encourage any woman that is not a member to consider joining the UMW in 2021.



*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all*





## Who're You Gonna Call? Christine Payseur

By Windy Bartee

*Janet Harding, chairman of the SPRC of our First United Methodist Church, asked me to write about each of our staff. This article is about Christine Payseur.*

Do you remember the old "Ghostbusters" movie, that had this song "Who're you gonna call?"

In our church when you have a bug in your computer you call Christine Payseur. She is our computer technical guru or Computer Bug Buster.

When I needed help getting on line to teach my Sunday school lesson, I called Christine.

She got me online so I could teach.

Christine said, "My job is Church Business Tech Coordinator." How she got to be our tech is a long story.

Christine grew up in Charlotte. After graduating from West Mecklenburg High School, she took a nine month course at American Business and Fashion Institute in 1989. Meanwhile she was also working at Napa Auto Parts. A lady she was working with introduced her to Chuck Payseur. They got engaged in July 1992. They found a house in Clover on Halloween and bought it on November 30. They married December 11 and moved into the house on that same day. They spent their honeymoon in their new home in Clover.

When people ask, "Where did you go on your honeymoon?", they can answer, "Clover!"

However ten years later they traveled to Hawaii for a second (or first real) honeymoon.

They had married at Christine's church in Charlotte, Oak Grove United Methodist. While in Clover Christine said, "We kept saying we need to take our kids to church."

They had Blake in 1995 and Rand in 1999. Blake was best friends with Taylor Wilson, who was taking Blake with him to church and youth activities. Blake came home telling his parents how much he liked our church and BIG. They visited the church and Randi became active. So before Rev. Paul Hutchinson moved away, both Blake and Randi were baptized by Paul. They joined our church. Then eight years ago Christine became part-time on our staff with her technical skills.

I asked Christine, "How did you get your computer knowledge with only that secretarial degree?"

She explained. When she left Napa Auto Parts, her last day was on Tuesday and she began with Mecklenburg County on Wednesday as an office assistant in 1989. Her supervising boss wanted her to attain different skills and sent her to classes.

The first being a spelling class at Central Piedmont. Then he added other computer classes. She worked her way up with on the job training. She recently retired in 2019 after 30 years working there. The good news is she brought all her technical training with her to Clover First United Methodist Church.



Christine Payseur

Christine does many jobs at church that you would not know because they are behind the scenes. Two years ago we had to install new software to keep our financial records. The learning curve was huge but Christine helped climb that hill.

She is instrumental with the payroll after Shirley Davis gets it ready. She double checks it and approves it. She helps to find and buy new computers for the church as needed. She understands and keeps the internet running. When the staff has difficulty making their systems perform, Christine is there. She is the one they call. With technology she is able to assist from her home. Now with COVID and her retirement she is at the church on Thursday mornings. A recent Thursday while at church in the office, she was able to set up the computer and projector for the Sunday inside service. She keeps the web page and the calendars up to date. She knows how to run the software so that she prints labels, business cards and other items such as newsletters. She prepares and updates the FUMC Ministry Book early in each new year. She also has printed the UMW book as a lay member.

Besides all this staff church work, Christine has served as the UMW president. She also has been active on our Nurture Committee taking care of one of our members. They had a common interest in cats.

Christine has two cats and two dogs in her care. She also has flock of chickens with two roosters, 18 hens and 11 chicks. They had a goat but she died at 15 years old.

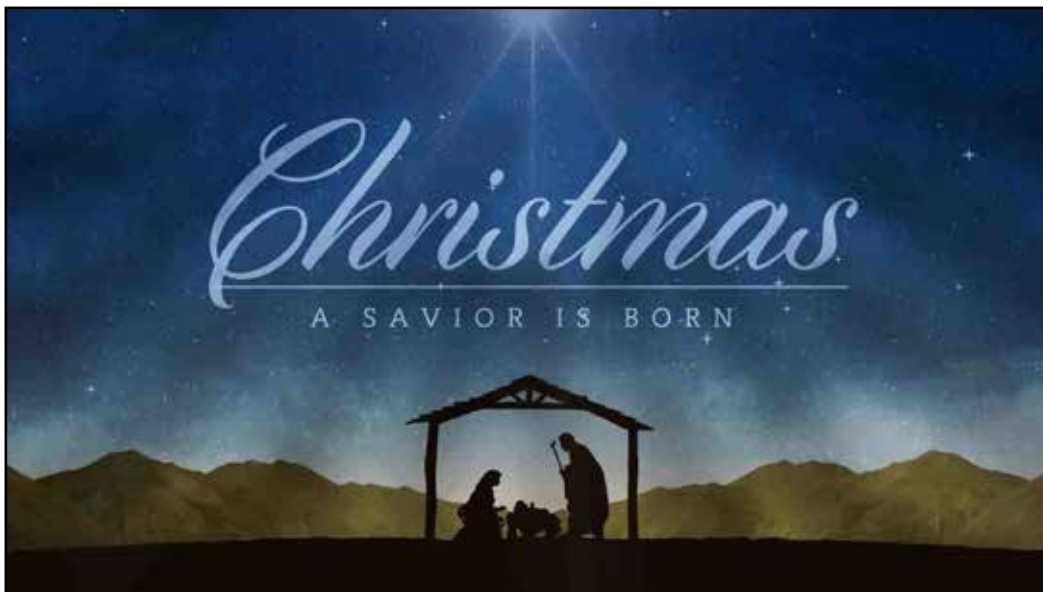
In addition to her animals she also takes care of her two grandchildren. She has filled her afternoon time with a part-time job at CVS since she has retired from her Mecklenburg County job. She is a busy lady.

Christine helps our staff and church run much smoother. We are thankful to have Christine on board as our Computer Bug Buster or Business Tech Coordinator.



# FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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## FUMC Staff

Reverend Alex Stevenson, Senior Pastor – [alex@cloverfumc.com](mailto:alex@cloverfumc.com)

Kathy Pryor, Associate Pastor – [kpryor@cloverfumc.com](mailto:kpryor@cloverfumc.com)

Lynn Shore-Hollis, Lay Associate – [lshorehollis@cloverfumc.com](mailto:lshorehollis@cloverfumc.com)

Reverend J. Richard Gibson, Pastor Emeritus

Cheri King, Director of Music Ministries – [cking@cloverfumc.com](mailto:cking@cloverfumc.com)

Cathy Allen, BIG/Tweens Coordinator – [cmallen217@gmail.com](mailto:cmallen217@gmail.com)

Christine Payseur, Church Business / Technical Coordinator – [cpayseur@cloverfumc.com](mailto:cpayseur@cloverfumc.com)

Shirley M. Davis, Administrative Assistant / Financial Secretary – [sdavis@cloverfumc.com](mailto:sdavis@cloverfumc.com)

Nannette Carnes, Organist & Pianist – [jncar61@yahoo.com](mailto:jncar61@yahoo.com)

Tracie Kite, Sexton – [kitetracie@hotmail.com](mailto:kitetracie@hotmail.com)

Hope Long, Nursery Care Worker / Coordinator

Windy Bartee, Lay Leader

Ray Reavis, Bob Grindle, Renee Gallien, Sue Gover, Conference Lay Members

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
12:15pm - UMW General 4pm - Chasing Vines Bible 5pm - Cheri King - MFC	6:30pm - Boy Scouts - MFC 6:30pm - Scouts - Rm 104,			Happy birthday!		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
4pm - Chasing Vines Bible 5pm - Cheri King - MFC	9:30am - Staff Meeting via 6:30pm - Boy Scouts - MFC 6:30pm - Scouts - Rm 104,					UMM Shopping Spree - Bus 8:30am - Food Distribution
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
5pm - Cheri King - MFC	6:30pm - Boy Scouts - MFC 6:30pm - Scouts - Rm 104,		Church Office Closed	Christmas Eve 4pm - Christmas Eve 6pm - Christmas Eve	Christmas Day	
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
5pm - Cheri King - MFC	6:30pm - Boy Scouts - MFC 6:30pm - Scouts - Rm 104,			New Year's Eve		

# December Birthdays and Anniversaries

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Billie Faris Todd Blanton	2 Judy Falls	3 Teresa Glass Seth Stewart	4	5 Ethel Pendleton
6 Devin Pierzinski	7 Heather Dixon Ken Lowman	8 Maggie Amrhein	9 Anniversaries: Brandi & Bailey Bartee	10 Christine Payseur Quin Mosbacher Anniversaries: Anneliese & Jon Lowman	11 Ann Grindle Susan Killian Anniversaries Christine & Chuck Payseur	12 Kate Pearson
13 Jackie Abernathy	14	15 Natalie Adams Anniversaries: Larry Hollis & Lynn Shore- Hollis	16 Ginger Dixon David Wray	17 Doug MacAlpine	18 Kay Killian Ruth Wallace Katie Wise Anniversaries: John & Becca Bridges	19 Matthew Joye Jeannette Stabler
20 Carolyn Caldwell	21 Anniversaries Joyce & Wade Shores	22	23 Zachary Counts Janet Maslankowski Trevor Wise Anniversaries Jo & John Gossett	24 Linda Deal	25 Carter Farris	26 Geraldine Anderson
27 Tracie Kite Bill Archer Anniversaries: Joe & Tammy Creech	28 Chuck Payseur	29 Judy Miller Justin Skinnell Anniversaries Bill & Frankie Cooke	30 Melissa Kitts	31 Zetta Grace Bartee Sue Gover Anniversary: Blair & Elizabeth Preston		