



First United Methodist Church Clover, SC

# THE FIRST EDITION

www.cloverfumc.com January 2021



## 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.

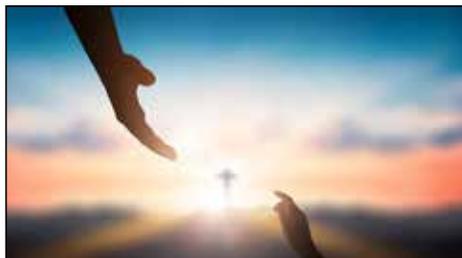


## Happy New Year?

I am sure we are all ready to bid 2020 adieu; the pandemic, racial unrest, political strife, economic woes, hurricanes, fires, etc. Hopefully 2021 will be better. A new year offers hope of something better especially after this past year. Yet, the turn of the new year is really an arbitrary thing. There is no ready why the change from December 31<sup>st</sup> to January 1<sup>st</sup> should mark a new year. The Earth's orbit around the sun is circular and any point in that orbit could be the marking of a new year's beginning. The problems that existed at 11:59 pm on December 31<sup>st</sup> are still there at 12:01 am January 1<sup>st</sup>.

Of course, one tangible sign of hope is the new vaccines! It will take time for them to be disseminated. In the mean time we will need to keep wearing our masks and maintaining social distance. We will also need to dedicate ourselves to getting vaccinated when our turn comes to do so. I know I am looking forward to getting the vaccine!

No matter what, we still have hope. This past month on the 23<sup>rd</sup> the planets Jupiter and Saturn aligned; a rare astronomical event. Some have called this the "Bethlehem Star" because some people think that it was a similar rare conjunction in the time of Jesus that signaled Jesus' birth to the Magi. Whether it was that or some other divinely timed event is speculation, but perhaps it can be a reminder to us that in the darkness of our world a light has shined in Jesus. No matter what the problems in our world, there is always hope in Jesus.  
Have a blessed New Year!



## The 12 Days of Christmas



When most people think of the Christmas season, they think of the days leading up to Christmas. So, after the 25<sup>th</sup> of December they think that Christmas is over. In the church Christmas has just begun! On the Christian calendar Christmas begins on the 25<sup>th</sup> and lasts for 12 days. These are the 12 days spoken of in the popular song “The 12 Days of Christmas.” So, in the church Christmas lasts until Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>! In some cultures, Jan. 6<sup>th</sup> or Epiphany, is the day for gift giving because that is the day that celebrates the wise men bringing gifts to Jesus. So, don’t let the joy of Christmas end on Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> this year. Carry it into the new year!

## Epiphany

In January we start the season of the Christian year called “Sundays After Epiphany.” “Epiphany” is Jan 6<sup>th</sup> and is the day that the church has traditionally celebrated the visit of the Wise Men. An “epiphany” is an appearance of God; a moment when God is revealed. During the season after Epiphany, between Christmas and Lent, the early ministry of Jesus is the focus of the Gospel lessons.



The basic color for Epiphany is green which represents Christian growth, but on special occasions, like Jesus’ baptism (the first Sunday after Epiphany) and his transfiguration (the last Sunday after Epiphany), white is used to represent his holiness and glory.

Keep your eyes open to see God revealed to you this Epiphany season!

## Baptism of Our Lord Sunday



The first Sunday after Epiphany, Jan. 10<sup>th</sup>, is the Sunday that the church celebrates Jesus’ Baptism. This event is important to Christians because it helps define who we are and whose we are as believers in Christ. At Jesus’ baptism God said, “This is my beloved son.” At our baptisms God says through the church “This is my beloved child.” That word of God defines who we are. On Baptism of Our Lord Sunday, it is traditional for churches to celebrate a Congregation Reaffirmation of Baptism. This is a moving service of rededication! Baptism of Our Lord Sunday is Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> this year. Plan to rededicate yourself to live as a child of God!

## Human Relations Sunday Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>

Human Relation Sunday is the Sunday before Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Your gifts to **Human Relations Day** provide avenues to restored relationships through ministries like Youth Offender Rehabilitation, Community Developers, self-improvement programs, and United Methodist Voluntary Services community advocacy programs. We will receive a special offering on Human Relations Day. To find out more about the programs supported by the Human Relations Sunday offerings go to: <http://www.umcgiving.org>, click on “Special Sundays,” then on “Human Relations Day.”

### Status of Worship at First Clover

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.

### Bible Study of Revelation on Zoom

The Book of Revelation is a message of hope given to the church in its hour of despair. It can give us hope in our time of need. Pastor Alex will lead a Bible Study of Revelation through Zoom. Unlike other virtual Bible studies, where we emailed out videos, Zoom will allow real time interaction and group discussion. We will also be able to record the Bible Study for those who cannot be present for a particular meeting to view at their convenience. The Bible Study time will be 7 pm on Tuesdays until further notice. If you want to participate, please contact Pastor Alex at [alex@cloverfumc.com](mailto:alex@cloverfumc.com) or the church. We will email you the class lessons and Zoom link so you can participate.

Here is a tentative schedule of classes:

- Jan 12 - "The Introduction:" Breaking the Code Ch 1-2; Revelation 1
- Jan. 19 - "Messages to Churches:" Breaking the Code Ch 3; Revelation 2
- Jan. 26 - "More Messages to Churches:" Breaking the Code Ch 4; Revelation 3
- Feb. 4 - "God and the Lamb:" Breaking the Code Ch 5; Revelation 4:1-5:14
- Feb. 11 - "Seven Seals on the Scroll:" Breaking the Code Ch 6; Revelation 6:1-8:5
- Feb. 18 - "Seven Trumpets:" Breaking the Code Ch 7; Revelation 8:6-11:14
- Feb. 25 - "The Dragon and The 1<sup>st</sup> Beast:" Breaking the Code Ch 8; Revelation 11:15-13:10
- March 4 - "The 2<sup>nd</sup> Beast and The 144,000:" Breaking the Code Ch 8; Revelation 13:11-14:20
- March 11 - "Armageddon:" Breaking the Code Ch 9; Revelation 15:1-16:21
- March 18 - "Death & Judgment:" Breaking the Code Ch 10; Revelation 18:1-20:15
- March 25 - "New Heaven and New Earth:" Breaking the Code Ch 11; Revelation 21:1-22:21

### Upcoming Sermons for January

January 3: Matthew 2:1-12 "How About the Gifts?" Rev. Alex Stevenson

January 10: Genesis 1:1-5, Acts 19:1-7, Mark 1:4-11 "There's Got to be More"  
Rev. Alex Stevenson

January 17: John 1:43-51 "Seeing and Believing" Rev. Alex Stevenson

January 24: Lay Associate Lynn Shore-Hollis

January 31: Mark 1:21-28 "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Devil?" Rev. Alex Stevenson



# January 2021



Forever Young and Friends made Christmas Cheer Bags to be delivered to some of the "elderly and homebound" members in their group. Items included homemade cookies, candy, a Christmas mouse, a knitted prayer square and much more. Committee members shown (left to right) are Renee Gallien, Pam Cato, Delores Killian, Evelyn Cameron, Linda Lowman, Suzanne Thompson, Louise Jackson and front row Beverly Woods, Rev. Kathy Pryor. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Cheer Bags!



Be silly. Be fun.  
Be different. Be crazy.  
Be you, because life  
is too short to be  
anything but happy.  
Unknown

**New Year's Prayer**  
"Heavenly Father, for this coming year, just one request I bring. I do not pray for happiness or any earthly thing. I do not ask to understand the way you lead me. But this I ask – teach me to do the thing that pleases you. I want to know your guiding voice, to walk with you each day. Make me swift to hear and ready to obey; and thus the year I now begin; a happy year will be if I am seeking just to do the thing that pleases You."  
----Anonymous

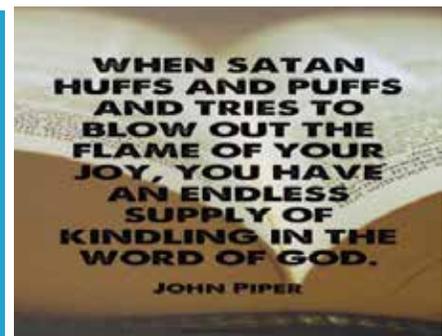


# Campus Ministries

**JANUARY 2021 - FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, CLOVER, SC**



2021 is here! A New Year with new days. 2021 is the *year of the Lord's favor*. Isaiah proclaimed a new year had come to his people. I proclaim to you the year of the Lord's favor for you. A year to walk with Jesus in his Word, to listen to God, to pray more, to love more, to serve him more. He has an army of angels guarding you. Go after 2021 with the Lord's might!



See you in 2021. Your church loves you and prays for you!

Your friend,  
Kathy Pryor  
704-609-7749

Has anyone ever told you that mask really brings out the color in your eyes?



## 2021 – The Coming Year of the Lord’s Favor

**Isaiah 61:1a, 2a** *“The Spirit of the Lord is on me because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor; to proclaim the coming year of the Lord’s favor.”*

The phrase, “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me”, occurs four times in Isaiah. It is associated with bringing understanding and comfort to those in need. Isaiah also speaks of the coming, “*Year of the Lord’s favor*”, as a time of peace, prosperity, and plenty for everybody who has had it rough in life up until now. It speaks of the oil of gladness and “double portions” of rebuilding of ruined cities around his people. Up until this time in the Old Testament, it was all about following rules and instructions, and sacrificing bulls and lambs and making grain offerings. And now Isaiah tells the people God has anointed him to preach **the coming year of the Lord’s favor**.

The book of Isaiah can be a troubling book. We read of the prophecies of the futures to come and the prophecies of relentless destruction of Israel. The prophet Isaiah also goes on and talks about the virgin birth, and, some of Isaiah’s teaching is done in the buff! Yes, in Isaiah 20:3, “*And the Lord said, ‘My servant Isaiah did walk naked and barefoot three years for a sign and wonder upon Egypt and upon Ethiopia’*”. Wow! Why would Isaiah walk naked for three years? The more I read the bible, the more I want to read the bible. The more I want to read the bible, I find I know so little. Let’s devote ourselves to reading the bible more and praying for our church more!

Just as Isaiah proclaimed over his people, we can proclaim 2021 is **the coming year of the Lord’s favor**. God send us the oil of gladness and double portions of your wisdom. Our church is a mighty fortress and our God is a mighty God. Come 2021! We are ready with a host of mighty angels!

Just a servant,

Rev. Kathy Pryor





## Nurture Committee brings Christmas Spirit to Elderly!

Teresa Glass, Nurture Committee Chairperson, stands with Christmas Bags ready for delivery. Her committee delivered bags the week before Christmas. Bags included candy, homemade cookies, Our Daily Bread, puzzle books, a Christmas mug, Christmas ornament and other items. This ministry is responsible for ministering to those with special needs within our congregation, who are elderly, homebound, or in nursing homes. The Nurture Committee focuses on sending cards, care bags, calling and visiting members on an ongoing basis, involving youth and children in caroling for the elderly population and hosting an Annual Fall Luncheon. **A big THANK YOU to church members who filled these bags with love and joy! They were so appreciated!**



Join us on Wednesday evenings from 6:00-7:00 via Zoom beginning **January 13** to learn basic sign language. We will have lots of fun! If you are interested, please email Melissa Stevenson at [melissa.stevenson.0902@gmail.com](mailto:melissa.stevenson.0902@gmail.com). The class will run for 10 weeks.

# FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Hope Long, Nursery Care Worker / Coordinator

Windy Bartee, Lay Leader

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