



December

2023

DUMC News

Davidson United Methodist Church



A Service of Hope and Healing

REV. JIM HUMPHRIES - PASTOR OF CONGREGATIONAL CARE

It's the most wonderful time of the year - right? Unfortunately, not for everyone. A significant number of people are facing their first Christmas this year without the presence of a loved one who has passed away during the previous twelve months. So the holidays will not feel the same. The carols won't be as joyful, the lights not as bright, and the mood not so festive. Holiday gatherings often center around family and tradition and can be painful reminders of our loss.

And it's not just grieving a death that makes the holidays difficult for some to endure. Divorce (or the loss of other relationships), job loss and depression also keep folks from fully engaging in Advent and Christmas festivities. And importantly, loneliness plays a key role in adding stress to the holidays. Many people live alone and far away from family or friends. They may not feel comfortable attending Christmas or New Year's Eve events alone, which adds additional anxiety to their life as they watch others who appear to be filled with joy and cheer.

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If you are lonely, you should know you are “not alone” in those feelings. A recent PBS study showed that loneliness in the U.S. is reaching nearly epidemic levels, as some surveys reveal that around 60% of people report feeling lonely on a regular basis. And these feelings are often exacerbated during the holidays when we think it’s expected for us to become more socially active. So, knowing this research, we should all take some pressure off ourselves and not let the holidays add to our stress. Plus, we all have the opportunity to reach out in love and welcome someone during the holidays.

One way you may want to consider easing the pain of loss, grief or loneliness this season is by attending DUMC’s annual Service of Hope and Healing on Sunday evening, December 17, at 7:00 in the Chapel. This informal worship service offers times of quiet reflection, scripture, music, and Holy Communion. We will light candles of hope for everyone and offer a healing anointing for all who desire it. It’s a service designed specifically for those who want to feel closer to God but may not feel the joy of the holiday season.

Sadly, sometimes our life circumstances make the holidays less joyful. But in Christ, there is hope, and there is healing. We hope you can join us on December 17 to experience some of both.

Welcome to Our New Members



Terri Sapp



Brad and Adrienne Lewis



Jason and Katie Suggs



Alan and Danielle Guffy



Joyce and Brian Fox

*"So do not fear,
for I am with you;
do not be dismayed,
for I am your God.
I will strengthen you
and help you;
I will uphold you with my
righteous right hand."*

ISAIAH 41:10

Sympathy To

The Davidson family in the death
of Rick’s mother

The family of Robert “Bo”
Samuel McIntosh

The Jayne family in the death of
Shaun’s brother

The family of Dodson Matthias
Blair and Margaret Boggs in the
death of their son, Scott

To add your name or that of a
friend or loved one to the DUMC
Intercessory and Clergy
Prayer List, please contact
Jonna Eichorn at
jeichorn@davidsonumc.org or
704-892-8277 ext. 221.

A Hope House Thanksgiving

REV. DR. BRAD HINTON - PASTOR OF MISSIONS AND PATTY GRUCE

This month, our Missions article comes from the Abundant Life Circle who served a Thanksgiving meal at Hope House Foundation in Huntersville. Below is the story from Patty Gruce and the Abundant Life Circle:

Thank you, God!

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, always give thanks for everything to God the Father. Ephesians 5:20

It's that special time of year when we stop to say, "thank you, God!" We hear and read about this being the season of an "attitude of gratitude." Giving thanks is not a once-a-year occurrence, as we gather with family and friends in late November. Thankfulness is an attitude we should have every day, for God has blessed us in so many ways. The Bible asks us to live each day with praise in our hearts and to thank God for everything. "Let us come before Him with thanksgiving and sing joyful songs of praise" (Psalm 95:2).

God wants us to have thankful hearts and, in all things, praise Him! But quite frankly, that is not easy to do when you have no place to lay your head, no prospect of a job, no food to eat, no family to count on, or no safe place to be with your children. Fear and anxiety fill the soul instead of praise and thanksgiving. This could be the case for the women and their children who temporarily live at Hope House in Huntersville, NC, but thankfully, it is NOT! They have been blessed to find a safe place to sleep, a haven of rest and support, a place filled with the love of Jesus Christ.



However, much to my dismay, I recently learned that the residents of Hope House have never had a Thanksgiving meal prepared and given to them. As co-leader of the Abundant Life Circle of United Women in Faith, I enlisted our ladies' assistance to provide a meal and some encouraging words of "thankfulness" on word bracelets for the residents. We purchased, prepared, and delivered a festive meal for twenty with all the trimmings, pies, whipped topping, rolls, and even a floral centerpiece. We gifted them with twenty-seven sets of handmade, colorful bracelets made with beads and encouraging words like GRATITUDE, THANKFUL, HOPE, BLESSED, COURAGE, LOVED, FAITH, and other words to wear and remind them they have so much to be thankful for...the love of Jesus Christ! They also have the prayers and support of women in the Abundant Life Circle, our United Women in Faith members, and our church congregation. Anne Richardville, one of the Abundant Life Circle members who helped make the delivery, said, "What a blessing to be a part of ALC, spreading compassion, joy, and love throughout the lives of others in the community. It was so much fun making the bracelets but even more enjoyable watching the residents pick their favorite color or select one with their favorite word."

Every day, we are to look for and find gratitude in even the smallest things like food to eat, hearing an encouraging word, a hug from a child, or another day to live to be the hands and feet of Christ. As we move from Thanksgiving to Christmas, we are especially thankful for the most perfect gift God gave to us, Jesus Christ, His only Son, the gift of salvation – a gift for which we can truly be thankful. Take a moment to say "thank you" to God.

If you want to be part of spreading joy and seeing the smiles on the faces of the women and children in our community who need uplifting, then contact me, Patty Gruce, at pattygruce@msn.com or Lisa Delano, President of the United Women in Faith, at mybrowneyedgirls@msn.com.

Music Ministry Update

REV. DR. KEVIN TURNER - PASTOR FOR MUSIC AND WORSHIP

This Sunday, you will see the church is decorated for the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons. Our talented and dedicated Liturgical Arts Committee (and their spouses) have worked hard to make our spaces look beautiful. Think about the effort it takes to decorate your house, and then imagine trying to decorate numerous spaces. I am grateful for these servants who bring such beauty into our lives.



You may notice four words on the wall of the Sanctuary: hope, peace, joy, and love. These words are typically the themes of the four Sundays of Advent. I love that these words are on our wall to remind us of the core values of Advent, where we wait for the coming of our Savior, Jesus. In a real sense, these words take effort to master. It takes work to remain hopeful in these news cycles. The old joke about “fighting for peace” takes on a different meaning in December. I am also reminded that, in my younger years, I had a friend who would remind me to “choose” joy. Love is both a verb and a noun, and we must actively show love.

As the hectic nature of Christmas preparations increases, I encourage you to work on these words in your life actively. Pray that God will grant you hope, peace, joy, and love. We have many ways at Davidson UMC to help you find these words, but I challenge you to participate in each Sunday’s worship service during Advent and Christmas. “Let every heart prepare him room,” shouldn’t be just a warm feeling. Actively seek out hope, peace, joy, and love.

Merry Christmas

REV. DAVID HOCKETT - SENIOR PASTOR

Advent and Christmas point us to the often hidden and surprising ways God is present with us. No one expected the Messiah to come in the weakness of an infant, much less the poverty of a stable. And yet, the angels sing “Glory to God in the highest...,” because Jesus is Emmanuel – God with us. It is the gift of God with us that empowers our lives as friends and followers of Christ and our life together as a Church.



As we approach the seasons of Advent and Christmas and the end of 2023, I am mindful of all the ways you have been faithful over the past year. We are called to be the body of Christ in our community, and I see you engaged in that mission every day. So, thank you. Thank you for all the ways you are the ongoing incarnation of God’s love in all the places you live, work, learn, and play. Your witness is hope and light in a difficult and hurting world.

Over the next several weeks, we have many opportunities to gather for beautiful worship and impactful service. It’s a great time to bring a friend or neighbor and introduce them to life at Davidson UMC. The gift of God’s love incarnate in Christ offers a better way of being human and is good news for all people. So, whether you are a lifelong follower of Christ or are new to the faith, whether you are a mature Christian or have more questions than answers - Christmas is good news. And it is good news because no matter where you are in the faith journey, God is with you.

Our Advent Journey

REV. DIANNE LAWHORN - PASTOR OF FAITH FORMATION

This week, we began our study on the book by Pamela Hawkins *Simply Wait- Cultivating Stillness in the Season of Advent*. This resource focuses on approaching the season of Advent differently. So often, we rush right past the season of Advent to get to Christmas. We busy ourselves with the stress and hurry of Christmas preparations. Hawkins invites us to experience the Advent season as calm, quiet, and stillness. She offers us the simple practice of prayerfully focusing on one word each week of this season.

I always love the first class with any new group because it allows group members to get a feel for the intention of the resource before we begin reading. It also gives us a chance to get to know each other better. Since the Holy Listening process is a new process to many, it allows us to practice it. In our first sharing, we talk about where we find ourselves in this season of our journey and what our hopes are for our experience together.

One of the things that I appreciate most about the Holy Listening process is that it involves some spiritual preparation on everyone's part. While we gather our thoughts beforehand, we remain open to the Spirit as we learn to share what is on our hearts. Listening to each other without comment gives us the freedom to slow down and focus on each person's sharing. We listen to each person prayerfully as we seek to provide a safe and sacred place. I believe this process offers the opportunity to connect at a deeper level and to share with vulnerability about our journey. I find this process to be very supportive, enhancing our individual practice.

In our sharing this week, I was struck by how many participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to experience a safe place together. They named this place welcoming, loving, and accepting. They shared how much they valued and needed a place like this to experience real community through being vulnerable enough to share their authentic selves. At the end of our time together, one participant said she couldn't wait to return next week!

This sharing spoke volumes about what so many people long for spiritually. People are seeking places of welcome, acceptance, vulnerability, and authenticity. These communities speak to our souls, making a difference in our lives and having the potential to transform us. I am so grateful to shepherd a ministry that addresses these deeper spiritual needs and offers this safe and sacred space.

I look forward to traveling this Advent journey with this special group of women. I know that the group will help each other to experience Advent in a soulful way. May God bless us as we intentionally prepare our hearts for the coming of the Christ-child.





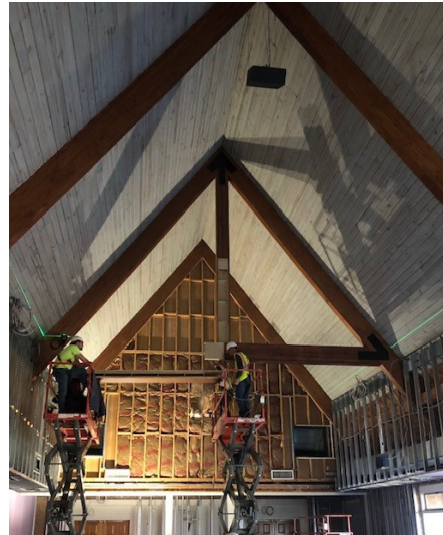
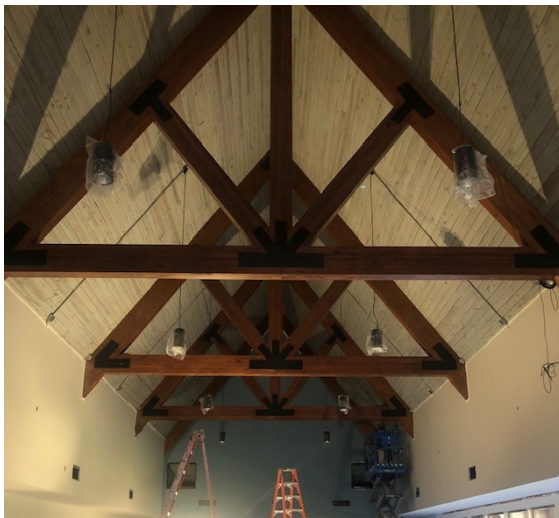
Davidson UMC Building Project

December 2023 Update

KEITH REAVIS - DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS

As we move forward, the staff, members, and volunteers of Davidson UMC are eagerly preparing our newly constructed and renovated spaces with renewed excitement. There are plenty of additional opportunities for decorating, and our volunteers have once again accepted the challenge to transform our Davidson UMC campus and buildings for the Christmas season. It's a wonderful experience to observe the annual adornment that our talented volunteers provide.

The completion of the overall construction and renovation we've undertaken is nearly upon us. For those who have had a sneak peek, most are pleased with the results thus far and are anxiously awaiting the reopening of our Fellowship Hall. As November has come to a close, painting, flooring, and cabinetry are ongoing. An extensive electrical and lighting infrastructure upgrade has taken a little longer than originally planned; however, the outcome will doubtlessly surpass the previous esthetic and infrastructure challenges our ministries have faced. I remain hopeful that this additional renovation will be completed soon. Thank you all for your continued prayerful support!



Advent Festival

BRITTANY VIEHMANN - DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

An annual tradition at DUMC is our Advent Festival, the first Sunday of each advent. People are invited to make a wreath to light in their homes each Sunday. Starting last year, we added a devotion for each week so that families can grow together in their faith in the familiar setting of home. It has been wonderful to see families experience peace, love, joy and hope together. If you are unable to attend the advent festival, please let us know, and we would be happy to get you the items so that you may also participate.



Youth News

REV. MEREDITH HINTON - NEXT GEN. ARCHITECT AND YOUTH PASTOR

We had a fantastic fall retreat with our youth in November. It was an incredible time of growth and fun. Here are a few student reflections from their time:

"There have been many experiences throughout retreats and youth group that have shaped where my faith is today. The biggest impact was giving me the strongest family who made me want to believe. I developed sisters, little brothers, and second moms. I can talk about my faith and ask questions without any judgment. I talk to these people every day, and God has shown me how amazing the people he put in my life are. I also get the opportunity to practice my faith in many ways, whether it be this past weekend singing and listening to stories or the winter ski trip, getting to laugh and experience his creation with my friends. The youth program has shown me that I do not have to be the perfect person to know God and want a relationship with Him." - Eliza



"I think a big thing for me was definitely just the connections I made with people and how I was able to be around incredible people and get to know them better and grow in my faith with them. I think that the theme of Romans 12, especially the part about loving each other like family and not conforming, really spoke to me because I interpreted it in the sense that my friends will love me as myself and I don't need to change anything for them to love and accept me similar to how nothing could break the love between family members." - Lizzie

"Being on this retreat has helped me grow closer to God through prayer. Praying with my friends and with other churches and leaders has helped me rediscover my faith and rethink the purpose of why God is in my life. Listening to the message and scriptures was very impactful, especially when it means something different to everyone, and you can engage in conversation about it in devotions and get different perspectives from people who interpreted the message differently. I really enjoyed the fall retreat this year, and I'm excited to go again next year!" -Gwendolynne

We look forward to a wonderful December: Christmas party, Angel Tree shopping, and skiing!



Don't miss these upcoming services...

10



*Trotta "Gloria" with
the Carolina Brass
Quintet*

9:30 and 11:00 a.m.

17



*Festival of Nine
Lessons and Carols*

9:30 and 11:00 a.m.

17



*Service of Hope
and Healing*

7:00 p.m. in the Chapel

24



Christmas Eve

3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00,
and 11:00 p.m.

25



Christmas Day

9:00 a.m.

DAVIDSON
UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH

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