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Pastor Tammy’s Ponderings



In Pursuit of Christmas Joy

...“Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people. Your Savior is born today in David’s city. He is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:10-11)

To my dear friends – Blessings on your Advent and Merry Christmas (just a little early)! As I write this piece, it’s just a little over 30 days until the end of the year. Wow! Can you all believe that we’re getting ready to say, “Goodbye” to 2025? Truly, it’s been an eventful year and many of us are in awe of “How We Made It Over!” But before we rush and start the year-end count down, let’s pause and take a few moments to reflect on this special Christmas season.

Christmas really *is* a wonderful time of the year as it offers a special season in which we celebrate His arrival in human form on this earth. Think of the Christmas carol, “Joy to the World.” It states, “The Lord has come, let earth receive her King!” Christmas offers the world a special time to offer praise and worship and to rejoice in Him.

With this in mind, we, the people of God, must constantly highlight Saint Luke’s passage 2:10-14 and be assertive and unyielding in presenting a Savior who loves humankind unconditionally and gives His children great joy unapologetically. To be clear, one of the most outstanding marks of the Christmas season is the idea that joy comes as a gift from God.

So, specifically, what are the reasons that the good news from God will produce “great joy” to the world?

#1. The Good News of Christmas applies to all of God’s people. This is WONDERFUL saints! God’s great joy is universal. It transcends cultures. It is joy for ALL the PEOPLE...no matter your age, ethnic background, gender, etc.

#2. The Good News of Christmas declares God’s Plan of Salvation. There can be no great joy without knowing the good news of the Creator God’s plan of salvation. The true JOY of Christmas is based on the eternal plan of God to offer salvation to humankind.

#3. The Good News of Christmas is Praiseworthy. You will never know great joy until the good news becomes yours and fills your heart and life with the praises and glory of God. The reason for great joy is that through Jesus Christ there is the possibility of being at peace with God and having eternal life. No more fear or anxiety. No more guilt over sins committed. "So, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed". (John 8:36)

So, for the remaining days we have in 2025, let us be bold Christians: Rejoice in the Lord; Worship with passion! Praise and glorify God for all we’ve seen and heard; we are now free to love God and our neighbor and live with joy. So, let’s sing the news: “Joy to the world! The Lord is come!” **granted.** It shines a spotlight on all that is good, highlights its presence, and reframes our ‘problems’ so that we can go through life with more joy and less resentfully.

Merry Christmas,  
Rev. Tamara Ingram

Come and Join Us for Worship

Every Sunday with worship services at 8:30am & 11am with 5th Sundays @10am (In person & all social media platforms) See Social Media Links Below:

**ZOOM** Video: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82293573333>, passcode 583845

**Audio:** Dial [1-929-205-6099](tel:1-929-205-6099), ID 82293573333#, passcode 583845

**FACEBOOK** <https://www.facebook.com/stmatthewsgreensboro>

# Pastor Haynes’ Newsletter Addition



## Advent Devotional — “A Season of Prayerful Expectation”

Before offering a brief reflection on Advent, I want to pause and emphasize the importance of prayer and thanksgiving. At the end of November, the youth and I — along with volunteers from North Carolina A&T — gathered for fellowship and conversation. We discussed how prayer is our way of communicating with God. Their reflections reminded me that prayer grounds us, guides us, and keeps us close to the One who loves us without condition.

Prayer takes many forms, but I want to highlight a few: **Thanksgiving** to God, **Adoration** for God and all creation, **Confession** of our sins, prayers for the well-being of **Others**, and petitions for **righteousness and God’s blessings**. These movements of prayer help us remember who God is, who we are, and how deeply God desires to be in relationship with us. As you continue strengthening your communication with God, I encourage you to intentionally incorporate these elements and develop a well-rounded rhythm of prayer.

This invitation is significant during **Advent**, a season of waiting, expectation, and preparation. Advent reminds us that God has come to us in Jesus, God is with us now through the Holy Spirit, and God will come again in glory. During this sacred season, we light candles of **Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love** — not only to mark the passage of time, but to align our hearts with the promise of Christ. Advent is a time to slow down, be present, and make room for Jesus in our lives, homes, and relationships. Just as Israel waited with longing for the Messiah, we too wait with trust for God’s transforming work — not with anxiety, but with hope.

So, during this Advent season, I encourage you to adopt a posture of prayerful expectation. Gather with your family each week to light a candle and reflect on the theme. Pray intentionally with thanksgiving. Sit quietly and adore God simply for who God is. Confess the places where you long to be healed. Lift others who need strength and comfort. And ask boldly for God’s blessings — not for personal gain, but that God’s will might flourish in and through our lives. As we do these things, we not only prepare for the celebration of Christ’s birth — we prepare our hearts for Christ’s presence.

Guiding Scripture: Romans 12:12 “Rejoice in Hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.”



November Youth Group Meeting







What is Advent? As we move into this holiday season, let's not forget the true meaning of this holiday season. The church allows us to focus on God's word through Advent. Advent prepares us for the birth of Christ or the coming of the Messiah. To gain a better understanding of Advent, let's see what the church says about [Advent.resourceumc.org](http://Advent.resourceumc.org)

## Holiday Enjoyment and Stress Reduction Tips

To make your Christmas holidays **enjoyable and less stressful**, focus on a few key areas:

- **Plan and Budget:** Set a **realistic budget** for gifts and events, and start shopping early to avoid rush and overspending.
- **Prioritize:** Don't try to do everything. **Say "no"** to commitments that don't bring you joy and delegate tasks where possible.
- **Self-Care:** Schedule **"me time"** for rest, maintain healthy habits (sleep, exercise, diet), and don't neglect your regular routines.
- **Be Realistic:** Let go of the need for perfection. Accept that things might not go exactly as planned, and focus on enjoying the time with loved ones.

### SHEPHERDS CORNER



Check out the St. Matthews Shepherding brochure! It is located on the table in the front entrance and Britton Street exit.

We have designed this shepherding brochure to explain the ministry's purpose. After finding out about us, we pray you will volunteer to become a part of this Caring, Communicating and Connecting Ministry by contacting Wanda Edgerton at 336-207-5441.

Shepherding Ministry

# Joyous Christmas Traditions

I look forward to the family gathering on Christmas Eve at a family members' home. We enjoy being with family and friends, playing games, having a delicious meal and giving gifts to the children. Looking forward to the gathering this Christmas Eve!! Wanda Edgerton



## Blessings to All — It Is the Season of Advent!

As we enter a season filled with family, gatherings, love, and community, I encourage you to lean in and be fully present at every moment. A couple of our youth and children & families shared some of their most cherished Christmas and Advent traditions, which may serve as meaningful practices for all of us.

The Stimpson Family loves lighting candles each week of Advent and naming what they are grateful for in this season. For them, this practice creates a sense of calm and helps everyone slow down during a time often marked by busyness and consumerism.

The James Family lights a candle each week during Advent, grounding the season in scripture that reminds them of what matters most: the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For them, this yearly tradition places the true meaning of the season back into focus so that it isn't lost in the "hustle and bustle." They also create a nativity scene to serve as a visual reminder to reflect, rest, and embrace moments of peace and gratitude as the days of December rush by.

The Haynes Family enjoys decorating handmade ornaments that reflect the meaning of Advent. They also love watching all their favorite Christmas movies, such as Mary and Almost Christmas. We also go to light shows every year, which we enjoy as a family and use to spend time together.

During this season, many of us will take part in countless holiday events and traditions — and that is a joy. However, I encourage you to carve out moments over the next thirty days to spend quality time with family without technology. Reflect on the birth of Jesus Christ and on how your faith shapes your everyday life. Choose to slow down and be present, even while life pulls your attention in every direction. And last, but certainly not least, find time to pray with friends and family so that God remains at the center of a season that can easily become centered on gifts and events. Rev. Haynes



Have you seen Pastor Torey Haynes videos on YouTube titled "The Life of a United Methodist (Associate) Pastor. They are awesome and a great way to get to know Rev. Haynes better. Click this link to see the latest video he posted or to look up prior videos he has posted.

<https://youtu.be/ILzCjvOOzMc?si=WCikJRE6NsVJHbyu>

**The St Matthews United Women in Faith** went on an outing to NCA&T to see OHenry's The Gift of the Maji. This was a beautiful rendition of the play done by the Paul Robeson Theater







Cameron



Boy Scout Troop 441 presented and retired the colors for the Veterans Day program on Saturday, November 8, 2025 in the Coley Hooker, Jr. Fellowship Hall. Veterans from the Air Force, Army, Navy and Marines spoke at the program regarding their experiences while serving in the military. Troop 441 members also marched in the Annual Veterans Day Parade downtown with Troop 723, Bethel AME Church on Saturday. Scouts in the photo are Duval Nowlin, Isaiah Hamlin, John William III and

Gibson.



### Celebrating Our Pantry Birthday Rally Heroes!

A massive thank you to every member who contributed to the success of our **Pantry Birthday Rally**! Your dedication and hard work were truly inspiring and made this year's event the biggest success yet.

Whether you volunteered your time, donated essential items, or helped spread the word, your efforts directly supported our mission to combat food insecurity in our community. Because of your commitment, we raised enough resources to stock our shelves and serve hundreds of families in the coming months.

We are incredibly grateful for your generosity and spirit. Together, we are making a tangible difference. **FOOD PANTRY 2025 FUNDS**

JAN	FEB	MARH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
\$5,136	\$1,538	\$851	\$1,508	\$685	\$1,940
JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	TOTAL YTD
\$1,706	\$1,238	\$1,039	\$381	\$1,680	\$17,702

Thank you for being the heart of our organization! Jeffrey Lathan and Lisa Lathan.

## CHURCH COUNCIL UPDATE

The Church Council met on Thursday, November 18<sup>th</sup> and listed below are a few highlights from this meeting:

- For 2026, Altar flower arrangements should be potted plants or artificial flowers to avoid allergic reactions.
- Members that need help with Zoom meetings especially by dial in method can do a google search on how to use the command protocols. For example, type in search “zoom meeting controls tools for dial in participants” these instructions come up; dial-in participants can use **DTMF tones (keypad commands)** for basic controls like muting/unmuting (\*6) and raising/lowering their hand (\*9). For those that use the Zoom app, you can search for a Zoom tutorial.
- Finance Committee is asking online givers to check the box to offset the processing fee (which varies according to your payment method).

Merry Christmas  
From  
The Newsletter  
Committee!





Merry Christmas from the Creation Care Ministry

Greetings in Christ! Many Blessings for a Peaceful and Joyful Holiday Season with Love! As 2025, ends, there is BIG news from the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement and United Methodist Council of Bishops, [Council of Bishops: Homepage!](#)

I began working closely with the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement (UMCJM) in 2019. A cohort and fellow General Board of Global Ministries Earthkeeper, Crys Ziekiewicz, supplies our UMCJM Creation Care Tips printed in the weekly church bulletin.

In November, the UM Council of Bishops, in response to a letter composed and submitted on behalf of the UMCJM and by the UMCJM Coordinating Team, issued a statement prioritizing creation care, [Council of Bishops: COB Response: UM Creation Justice.](#)

**Key Points (not exclusive):**

- **The bishops affirmed their commitment to implementing the decisions made at the 2024 General Conference, including creating Green Teams in churches, districts and conferences.**
- **The council also encouraged church members to take action.**

*The Council of Bishops has designated a bishop to work directly with leadership of the UMCJM in developing a plan of action to bring creation care to the forefront within the denomination.* As part of the Western NC Creation Care Team Ministry, I will continue to provide updates as related information becomes available.

With UMC membership worldwide estimated to exceed 10,000,000 despite recent disaffiliations and church closings, this is great news for faith-based environmentalism! View the original letter submitted by the United Methodist Creation Justice Movement here, [September](#) You are also invited to visit the UMCJM website at, [Home | UMC Creation Justice.](#)

Wishing you and yours an Earth Friendly and Sustainable 2026! Hallelujah! Thank you, Jesus!

Karlah Burton, North Carolina Earthkeeper Chairperson, SMUM,  
Creation Care Ministry  
Western NC Annual Conference Creation Care Team Ministry

## COLLEGE STUDENT SPOTLIGHT – ALEXANDER MARSH

My first semester at Shaw University has been a period of major adjustment, growth, and discovery. Coming in as a freshman, I wasn't entirely sure what to expect, but I quickly learned how important it is to manage my time, stay organized, and take responsibility for my own learning. The transition from high school to college was challenging at times—balancing coursework, navigating a new environment, and meeting new academic expectations—but each challenge pushed me to develop better habits and a stronger sense of independence. I also learned more about myself as a student and as a person, gaining confidence in my ability to adapt and succeed.

Beyond academics, this semester helped me build community and find my place at Shaw. I met new friends, connected with supportive professors, and got involved in campus life in ways that made the university feel like home. Being part of Shaw's culture—its traditions, values, and sense of pride—has motivated me to keep striving for excellence. Looking back, I'm proud of how far I've come, and I'm excited for the opportunities and accomplishments the next semester will bring.





# Liturgical Arts



*The Glory Train* cast kicked of 21 years of service to Saint Matthews and the Community with a performance on October 5, 2025, for the members and friends at Memorial United Methodist Church in High Point, NC. The members of Memorial were surrounded by visitors from other local churches, friends from Saint Matthews, as well as guests from Penny Byrn Independent Living. Rev. Dr John Henry served as accompanist in the absence of Mrs. Anne Turner. It was a beautiful program.

\*\*\*\*\*



Wow . . . just look at the big smile on Jaylah’s face when she takes hold of the flags for the first time along with Amilliana and Karmyn! During an orientation class for new **DayStar Dancers**, the girls were introduced to a deeper meaning of the Ministry and discussed some of the traits of a dedicated participant of the liturgical dance group. Long-time DayStar Dancer, Lena McNeill demonstrates the use of flags and ribbons used in dance choreography.



\*\*\*\*\*



The beautiful and graceful **DayStar Dancers** (Karmyn, Amindi, and Grace) blessed the congregants and friends of Raleigh’s Crossroads United Methodist Church during their “Unity in

Community” celebration on October 26, 2025. The dancers were well-received as they opened the program with lively choreography to Martha Munizzi’s “Glorious.”

\*\*\*\*\*



Our youngsters are making preparations for the Annual Liturgical Arts Christmas Program to be held on Sunday, December 21, 2025, at 2:30 pm in the Church Sanctuary. Please consider bringing guests and non-perishable food items for the Church Pantry. Let us bless others as we have truly been blessed!

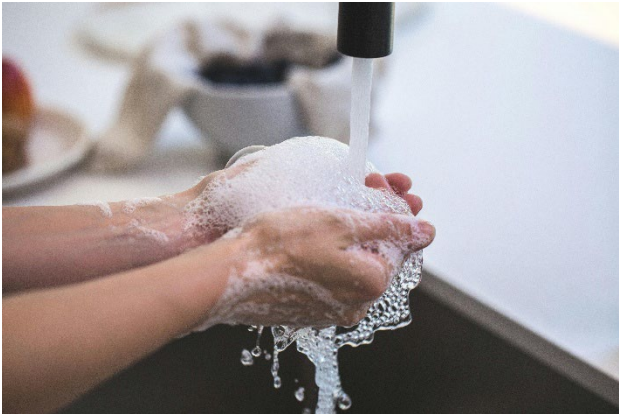




**The Gift of Clean Hands: Staying Healthy During Holiday Gatherings**  
**Dr. Jennifer Lewis, Health & Welfare Committee Coordinator**

As we enter the joyful season of Advent and Christmas, our church family comes together for worship, fellowship, and celebration. From candlelight services to family dinners, this time of year is filled with opportunities to connect, embrace, and give thanks. One simple but powerful way we can care for one another during this busy season is by practicing good hand hygiene.

Handwashing is more than a routine habit—it's a ministry of care and protection. For African American communities, where health disparities can increase vulnerability to illnesses like the flu, colds, and respiratory infections, keeping our hands clean is an easy, effective step that helps protect our loved ones. Our gatherings often include food, hugs, and shared surfaces, making hand hygiene especially important.



- Here are a few reminders to help keep our celebrations healthy and joyful:
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds—especially before eating, after coughing or sneezing, and when coming into contact with shared items.
  - When soap and water aren't available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
  - Keep travel-size sanitizer in purses, pockets, or cars when attending church events.
  - Encourage children to wash their hands regularly and make it fun with a song or countdown.

By practicing these simple steps, we show love for our community and honor John Wesley's teaching to care for both body and soul. This holiday season, let clean hands be one more way we share God's grace, protect our families, and uplift our church community. Use the hand sanitizer made available by the Health & Welfare Committee during this holiday season and may your gatherings be filled with warmth, joy, and good health!




**Scholarship Corner**


<https://ronbrown.org/ron-brown-scholarship/> -- awards \$10,000-\$40,000 yearly -Deadline December 1, 2025

<https://jackierobinson.org/apply/> - up to \$35,000 - Deadline January 7, 2026

[FidelityScholarsProgram](#) - awards up to \$55,000 over 4 years - Deadline January 11, 2026



Western North Carolina Conference  
The United Methodist Church



JUSTICE & RECONCILIATION  
TEAM  
Western North Carolina Conference

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.  
COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAM


STANDING STRONG AND MOVING FORWARD

You are warmly invited to join the Western North Carolina Conference of The United Methodist Church for our 2026 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Program. It will be a time of worship, reflection, and recommitment to the work of justice, love, and hope. As followers of Christ and heirs of King's legacy, we gather to honor his life and to renew our dedication to a better world.

SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 2026  
10:00 AM  
UNIVERSITY CITY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
CHARLOTTE, NC

January  
19,  
2026



MARTIN  
LUTHER  
KING JR.  
— DAY —



**Faith, Fellowship, and Friends Sunday**

On Sunday, November 30th, we were blessed with beautiful music from our Men’s Choir and an inspiring Word from Pastor Tammy. After service, we gathered for a wonderful time of fellowship over a delicious Italian-themed lunch featuring baked spaghetti, chicken Alfredo, veggie lasagna, salad, and breadsticks. For dessert, we enjoyed cheesecake, cupcakes, and peach cobbler—truly a treat for everyone!

As we entered the Advent Season, the Liturgical Arts Ministry shared a beautiful and meaningful skit that touched our hearts. Thank you to the ladies and to Ms. Poole for sharing your gifts and allowing God to use you. It is always a joy to witness your ministry in action.

The 5th Sunday Team wishes each of you a Joyful Christmas Season and a Blessed New Year!



**St. Matthews UM Church – 4th Annual Turkey Giveaway**

On Monday, November 24th, we were blessed to host our 4th Annual Turkey Giveaway. This year, we were able to serve **111 families** with turkeys and all the fixings. What a joy it was to be a blessing to our community!

We would like to extend a **special thank you to Steve Bowden and his family** for their generous donation of 100 turkeys. Their continued support over the last three years has truly blessed our church and our community.

A heartfelt **thank you to St. Matthew’s Girl Scout Troop 1726** for providing five beautifully decorated turkey boxes filled with delicious sides, desserts, and special goodies. Your creativity and kindness brought smiles to many families.

I also want to extend a warm thank you to our **church family** for donating Green Beans, Corn, Stuffing, Cornbread, and Cranberry Sauce. Your generosity made it possible to give each family a full and joyful Thanksgiving meal.

A special thank you as well to **Pamela Moya** for her wonderful donation of Collard Greens and Sweet Potatoes. Your kindness added an extra touch of love to our giveaway.

We also want to give a **huge THANK YOU to all of our volunteers**, with an extra shout-out to the **N.C. A&T students** who spent their afternoon stuffing bags and stepping in wherever help was needed. Thank you for showing your Aggie Pride!

The Outreach Ministry is beyond grateful for our **amazing church family** and your commitment to serving others. We look forward to seeing what God has in store for us in **2026!**

See the pictures from the Turkey Giveaway on the next page!



Deadline for January Newsletter articles is December 26, 2025. Theme is "Transformed in 2026 for God's Purpose" Please send your articles & photos along with any photos to Wanda at [ponice1@yahoo.com](mailto:ponice1@yahoo.com) or Lisa at [smumctreasurers@gmail.com](mailto:smumctreasurers@gmail.com).



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